

**EFFECT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL
LEARNING APPROACH ON SOCIAL
EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, CLASSROOM
CLIMATE AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT
AMONG SCHOOL STUDENT'S IN NIGERIA**

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EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, CLASSROOM
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AMONG SCHOOL STUDENT'S IN NIGERIA**

by

IBRAHIM AHMED

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements
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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late parents Alhaji Ahmadu Dalibi (Na'ibin Imamu) and Malama Aishatu Muhammad Manzo of blessed memory.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AA	Academic Achievement
CASEL	Collaborative Academic Social and Emotional Learning
CC	Classroom Climate
CTM	Conventional Teaching Method
EAT	English Achievement Test
FGN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FME	Federal Ministry of Education
JSS	Junior Secondary School
JSSC	Junior Secondary School Certificate
MANCOVA	Multivariate Analysis of Covariance
MOE	Ministry of Education
NCE	Nigerian Certificate in Education
NECO	National Examination Council
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPE	National Policy on Education
OSC	Out of School Children
OST	Out-of-School Time
PATHS	Promoting Alternative Thinking Strategies
SAFE	Sequenced Active Focused Explicit
SEL	Social and Emotional Learning
SEC	Social-emotional Competence
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science
SSCE	Senior Secondary School Certificate
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization

UPE	Universal Primary Education
USA	United States of America

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**KESAN PENDEKATAN PEMBELAJARAN SOSIAL DAN EMOSI
TERHADAP KECEKAPAN SOCIAL-EMOSI, SUASANA BILIK DARJAH
DAN PENCAPAIAN AKADEMIK PELAJAR SEKOLAH DI NIGERIA**

ABSTRAK

Pendekatan pengajaran sedia ada kelas-kelas di kebanyakan sekolah di Nigeria didapati sangat konvensional dan berpusatkan guru. Akibatnya, pelajar tidak mempunyai peluang untuk membangunkan kemahiran komunikasi yang baik yang mempengaruhi kecekapan sosial-emosi dan pencapaian mereka khususnya dalam kelas Bahasa Inggeris. Kelas Bahasa Inggeris menjadi fokus kajian kerana ia merupakan keperluan untuk maju dalam bidang seperti perdagangan, sastera dan sains, pendidikan, perundangan dan teknologi. Oleh itu, kajian ini bertujuan memperkenalkan pendekatan pembelajaran sosial dan emosi (RULER) dan mengkaji kesannya terhadap kecekapan sosial-emosi pelajar, suasana bilik darjah dan pencapaian akademik di negeri Gombe, Nigeria. Terdapat empat persoalan kajian dan tujuh hipotesis yang membimbing kajian ini. Sampel kajian terdiri daripada dua kumpulan pelajar, iaitu seramai 117 orang pelajar didedahkan kepada pendekatan pengajaran RULER (kumpulan eksperimen) dan seramai 90 orang pelajar diajar dengan menggunakan pendekatan pengajaran konvensional (kumpulan kawalan). Kajian ini menggunakan kaedah kuasi eksperimen dengan reka bentuk pra-ujian dan pasca-ujian. Latihan diberikan kepada guru bahasa Inggeris selama tiga hari mengenai cara mengintegrasikan pendekatan RULER dalam mengajarkan kandungan kurikulum bahasa Inggeris untuk sekolah menengah rendah. Kajian ini berlangsung selama 10 minggu, dengan pra-ujian diberikan sebelum intervensi dan pasca-ujian selepas intervensi. Hal ini diikuti oleh temu bual dengan lima orang peserta. Data kajian ini

dikumpulkan dengan menggunakan soal selidik dan temu bual. Soal selidik kecekapan sosial dan emosi (social and emotional competence questionnaire-SECQ) digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data kecekapan sosial-emosi dan skala suasana bilik darjah (classroom climate scale-CCQ) digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data mengenai suasana bilik darjah. Selain itu, Ujian Pencapaian Bahasa Inggeris (English Achievement Test-EAT) digunakan untuk mengumpulkan data mengenai pencapaian akademik. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) versi 25 digunakan untuk pengiraan. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) dan Regresi digunakan untuk menganalisis hipotesis dan analisis tema digunakan untuk analisis data kualitatif. Hasil kajian menunjukkan bahawa pendekatan pembelajaran sosial dan emosi (RULER) berkesan dalam meningkatkan kecekapan sosial-emosi dan pencapaian akademik pelajar dan menambah baik suasana bilik darjah. Walau bagaimanapun, hasil daripada MANCOVA Dua hala mendedahkan bahawa tidak ada interaksi yang signifikan antara jantina dan kumpulan dengan suasana bilik darjah. Hal ini bermakna pendekatan ini memihak kepada jantina tertentu, iaitu perempuan lebih banyak mendapat manfaat daripada kemahiran komunikasi berbanding lelaki. Walau bagaimanapun, untuk Regresi, hasil menunjukkan bahawa kecekapan sosial-emosi meramalkan pencapaian akademik, tetapi suasana bilik darjah tidak meramalkan pencapaian akademik. Sebaliknya, hasil temu bual menjelaskan cara pendekatan pembelajaran sosial dan emosi (RULER) meningkatkan kecekapan sosial-emosi dan pencapaian akademik pelajar serta menambah baik suasana bilik darjah. Oleh sebab pendekatan RULER didapati berkesan dalam meningkatkan kecekapan sosial-emosi dan pencapaian akademik pelajar serta menambah baik suasana bilik darjah, pendekatan ini dicadangkan untuk digunakan oleh para guru semasa proses pengajaran dan pembelajaran.

**EFFECT OF SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING APPROACH ON
SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL COMPETENCE, CLASSROOM CLIMATE AND
ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SCHOOL STUDENTS' IN NIGERIA**

ABSTRACT

At all level of education, classroom practices should reflect holistic pedagogical approach to allow students to get the best out of educational philosophy and curriculum planning to assure a well balance development among them. However, the current existing teaching approach of classroom in most schools in Nigeria, was reported as been very conventional and teachers centered. Consequently, students encounter lack opportunity to develop proper communication skills which later affect their Social-emotional competence, and their overall achievement. In specific, English classroom was meant to develop fluent communication skills exhibits appropriate emotional expression and grammatically sounds atmosphere which was missing from conventional and teacher centered classroom. besides, English for Nigerian students is an essential. Therefore, this research aimed to proposed social and emotional learning approach (RULER) and study the effectiveness on students' social emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement in Gombe state, Nigeria. Four research questions and seven hypotheses guided the study. The sample consisted of two groups of students, 117 students being exposed to the RULER teaching approach (experimental group) and 90 students the conventional teaching method (control group). The study employed a quasi-experimental methodology with a pre-test and post-test design. Training was given to the English teachers for three days on how to integrate RULER approach in teaching English language contents of the curriculum for Junior secondary schools. The study lasted for 10 weeks, with pre-test

given before the intervention and post-test after the intervention. This followed by teachers and students interview. The data of the study were collected using questionnaire and interviews. Social and emotional competence questionnaire (SECQ) was used for collecting data on social-emotional competence and classroom climate scale (CCQ) was used for the collecting data on classroom climate. Also, English Achievement Test (EAT), was used for collecting data on academic achievement. Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 25 was employed for the computation. Multivariate Analysis of Covariance (MANCOVA) and Regression were used to analysed the hypothesis and thematic analysis was used for the analysis of the qualitative data. The result indicated that social and emotional learning approach (RULER) was effective in improving student's social emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement. However, result of Two-way MANCOVA revealed that there was no significant interaction between gender and group on classroom climate meaning the approach favours certain gender (girl) benefitted more from communication skills compare to boy. However, for Regression, the result showed that social emotional competence made the strongest contribution compared to classroom climate in predicting students' achievement. The interview findings, on the other hand, explained how social and emotional learning approach (RULER) improved students social-emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement. It was recommended among others, that since the treatment (RULER approach) was found to be effective in enhancing student social emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement, the approach should be employed by teachers during teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

An essential means of considering students' ability to interact with one another, recognize reactions, handle pressure and achievement in classroom situation, depends on the type of teaching approach used. This teaching approach was designed to provide responsible outcomes about the performance of students and their social and emotional skills (Durlak et al., 2011; Brackett et al., 2012; Rivers et al., 2013; & Dymnicki et al., 2013). Therefore, using appropriate teaching approach that integrate mental and affective domains can provide helpful ways for enhancing student's social, emotional and academic abilities. Also, the use of such approach can make classroom setting and teaching and learning process friendlier to students and teachers.

However, the current pedagogical practices is reported not to have change the lens to which curriculum subjects, situations, events, and concepts used to be approach (Olatunji, 2012). In most schools, the teaching approach used in teaching curriculum subjects is in abstract manner; mainly concentrating on communicating phenomena, without students acquiring the opportunity to experience the said phenomena, effectively relate with one another and build positive relationship (Ojedokun & Aladejana, 2012; Han & Black, 2011; Weare & Nind, 2011). Consequently, some students have understanding or comprehension difficulty or defect, in the abstract fashions of conveying some phenomena in the classroom (Fakeye, 2012; Zhao et al., 2014; Adeyemi, 2010). Similarly, effective teaching of subjects of the curriculum particularly English Language as well as promoting fundamental basic social and emotional skills in classroom, is a challenge in Nigerian secondary schools and has

been of considerable worry and concern for a long time (Njoku & Abdulhamid, 2016; Akinwamide, 2012; Fakeye, 2012).

Studies has shown than most students are left with confusion about how to effectively communicate, identify and recognize emotions, build positive relationships, and manage stress when they are subjected to the conventional teaching method in the teaching and learning process (Dyminicki et al., 2013; Emaliana, 2017; Adunola, 2011) it was observed that, educators who promote new teaching intervention which integrate cognitive, social and emotional domains foster greater difference in engaging and preparing the students for better life task. Social and emotional learning (SEL) provide a framework for developing the entirety of the individual and preventing maladaptive outcomes because it integrated both cognitive, social and emotional domains (Weissberg et al., 2015; Bridgeland, Bruce & Hariharan, 2013). Through the implementation of SEL, schools can provide all students with opportunities to acquire and further develop social and emotional skills in a supportive and caring environment (Rivers et al., 2013) by engaging in positive activities in and out of the classroom (Blake et al., 2015).

Similarly, the twenty first century skills have posed challenges to the current pedagogical practice. This is because of the speed at which the world is changing into a global village where the internet has brought different pedagogical practices and peoples of different context and cultures under one cyber-roof. From the previous studies, (Emaliana, 2017; Zhao et al., 2014; Adeyemi, 2010; Adunola, 2011), it was observed that, the existing current teaching approach in most Nigerian schools was reported as been very traditional or conventional where the teacher become the most powerful authority in most schools (Adunola, 2011).

In addition to that, it was opined that, the conventional teaching practices do not provide opportunity for the support of fundamental basic life task such as self and social awareness, self- and relationship management and effective and decisive decision which represent social-emotional competence (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). More so, in ability to promote fundamental social and emotional skills may result in student's lacking opportunities to develop effective communication and relationship building skills, problem solving skills, self-directed and reflective learning, and motivation. These mindsets later affect student social-emotional competence, teacher and peer relationship, and academic achievement.

Therefore, for student's to be competent and compete favourably in this global society, their learning should go beyond mastery of core subjects of the curriculum and include the integration of the fundamental basic social and emotional soft skills (that is skills of recognizing strengths and weaknesses, been empathetic and appreciate diversity, self-discipline and motivation, stress management, problem solving, negotiation, communication, relationships building and social engagement) so that they are able to meet the demands of the global social world as well as engage in good studentship and be confident, concerned, active member in the school community. These skills are fundamental for the social-emotional competence of students in schools and are positively associated with healthy development, caring classroom, and academic achievements. On the other hand, lack of such skills leads to power communication skills, anti-social behaviours and possibly quitting schooling completely (Bernstein-Yamashiro & Noam, 2013; Murray & Zvoch, 2011; Spilt, Koomen & Thijs, 2012). Thus, the avenue for improving such unwanted behaviours is the adoption of a social and emotional learning (SEL) intervention.

Social and emotional learning (SEL) refers to the process through which individuals learn and apply a set of social, emotional, behavioural, and character skills required to succeed in schooling, the workplace, relationships, and citizenship (Humphrey et al., 2011). This knowledge improves students' and teachers' confidence and contributes to their awareness of sense of purpose; raises learning achievement and builds confidence in the quality of learning and teaching in the school (Blomeke et al., 2008). Social and emotional learning is an essential component of education. It is an inform method through which we learn to recognize and manage emotions, care about others, make good decisions, behave ethically and responsibly, develop positive relationships, and avoid negative behaviours (Elias, 2010). These key features need to be developed for students' to be successful not only in school but also in life. These competences are essential abilities for learners to learn and become aware of, because they are linked to a variety of behaviours with long-term inter and intra personal consequences.

The need to tackle the social-emotional challenges that interfere with students inter and intra personal relationship and academic performance in school are critical. Issues such as discipline, unexpressed emotions, disaffection, lack of commitment, alienation, and dropping out frequently limit success in school, social interaction in the classroom and even lead to poor social-emotional competence. Therefore, the need for social and emotional learning related instructional approach become essential to enable, students learn how to promote positive classroom social interaction, and intra and interpersonal relationships between students and teachers and students themselves.

Accordingly, Sameroff (2010) Eisenberg, Valiente and Eggum (2010) and Mbaya (2013) reported that, classroom social interactions, intra and interpersonal relationships and emotions affect how and what we learn and how we use what we learn in classroom, school, family, and community contexts. Also, Khuvasanond (2013) and Ganyaupfu (2013) mentioned that, the difficulties in promoting social interaction in classroom, positive intra and interpersonal relationship and expressing emotional experiences, are derived from the unfriendly nature of the traditional teaching approach, where teacher becomes the master and determines what to do and what not to do in the classroom, he gives directives and students follows without complain (Mbugua et al., 2012; Oludipe & Awokoye, 2010; Andiema, 2016). Therefore, Students' in ability to develop positive social interaction in the classroom, recognize and express emotional experiences affect their self-efficacy, achievements in English, respect for others, social engagement, and the friendly nature of the classroom climate (Halverson & Smith, 2010; Selwyn, 2010).

Besides difficulties in establishing social interaction in the classroom, the nature of students, based on their ages also, determine a kind of teaching approach that is suitable for them. This is particularly important when the students are in the transition period between primary to junior or intermediary secondary school. In Nigeria, such children fall within the ages of 12 or 13 to 15 or 16 and they usually occupy grades 7, 8, and 9. What is known as Grade 7 in many countries, it is called Junior Secondary 1, and so Grade 8 will be JSS 2, Grade 9 as JSS 3 respectively. Students at these levels are usually in the prime adolescence period and for them to effectively learn anything to a satisfactory level, there is need for an all-encompassing approach that include all aspects human development for them to explore their full potentials. Such approaches should potentially offer better outcomes for all children

(less children experiencing difficulties and more children likely to ‘thrive’ rather than ‘survive’ in later life (Freeman, 2010; CASEL, 2012; Jones & Bouffard, 2012).

According to Kaufmann et al. (2016) RULER approach is one of integrated social and emotional learning which is based on the idea that real-world issues or 21st century skills requires multiple perspectives, skills, and knowledge to be productively addresses (Kraft, Marinell & Shen-Wei Yee, 2016). Integrated SEL is a process where elements of SEL are integrated with the teaching subject during lessons (Lopez et al., 2017). Integrated SEL can potentially enhance students’ performance and interest in English language as well as motivate them to pursue careers in English Language fields. The future success of students is highly dependent on effective SEL (Hough, Kalogrides & Loeb, 2017).

However, since the application of SEL model remain uncertain in Nigerian context. This intends to integrate the approach into instructional delivery and investigate its effect on social-emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement among Junior Secondary School’s students in Gombe State, Nigeria.

1.2 Background to the Study

There are three sectors of education in Nigeria. First is the primary sector which is a nine-year compulsory education followed by three years of education as senior secondary sector where students are prepared for choosing academic career suitable to their aptitude. The last sector is tertiary which itself is divided into monotechnic like school of nursing, polytechnic, colleges of education and university. Years of study at this final stage vary from three to even six years depending on what line a student takes. And this is the sector that accommodates undergraduates, graduates, and

vocational and technical education. One of the main objectives of education in Nigeria is the enhancement of all skills mental, physical, social, and emotional competencies so that after school, the students will have a better life and will be able to give their quota in the development of their larger community. As reinstated by the National Policy on Education, the aim of education is to produce effective and patriotic citizens that are sound morally, socially, emotionally, and physically (Federal Government of Nigeria (FGN, 2015). The dream of having young generation that will meet their potentialities to the fullest, is attached to the need for them to engage into activities that will prepare them mentally, physically, socially and emotionally for the task ahead as responsible adults (FGN, 2015). In other words, for our younger one to achieve their full potentials as productive adult, their schools should focus explicitly on activities that promote social and emotional learning (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2014).

Practically speaking, secondary schools across the globe are full of enthusiastic young children that are courageous, determinant, bold, and willing to bring positive change and solve the nagging problems hindering development. They are typically ambitious, ready to achieve their goals. But unfortunately, these children are prone to make less progress because they are imprecise and have uncontrollably swaying emotions. There is more to be done on the side of the teachers and school authority to bring these potential youths back to the contemporary track as they seriously need proper coaching and guidance concerning their emotion. The teachers must harness the students' emotions; thus, their energy and talent will benefit the society in which they are. Otherwise, the kids will grow with power but no control over it and they end up as nuisance or disaster to the society as some may become uproarious political hooligans, bandits, fraudsters and even armed robbers. (Durlak et al., 2011; Eaton et al., 2006). A typical scenario is that, now at global scale, one out of every five

adolescents has a record of anxiety, aggression or even depression, because of emotional imbalance (Delate et al., 2004; Olfson & Marcus, 2009) and more and more youth are put under antidepressants at an alarming rate (Delate et al., 2004; Olfson & Marcus, 2009). It is apparent that youth receive education and moral training from schools and at homes but still cases of improper behaviours are increasing on daily basis among these young adults. They are rather adamant on socially and emotional unproductive attitudes that may at the end of the day lead to moral and social vices such as drug and substance abuse, lonesomeness, dropping out of school, and cases of bullying from colleagues (Eaton et al., 2006). These behaviours threaten students social-emotional competence and mental wellbeing and as well diminished ability to engage in positive learning engagement (Durlak et al., 2011).

The social-emotional malfunctioning is evident among Nigerian secondary school's youths, which almost destroys the education, social, political and economic status, because of socio-emotional malfunction, many students disassociate themselves from schools and join religious and political group as thugs and religious extremist thereby pathetically serve as threats to their colleagues, teachers, head teachers, and the general community (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2014; Adeyemo, 2005). Such thugs used to instigate political violence in various Nigerian schools by making the social environment unfavourable for conducive learning and psychologically unfriendly.

Psychologically human beings are acknowledged as a complex social and emotional beings whose well-being depends on learning to communicate their needs to each other effectively and managing their emotions in healthy ways. These needs and capabilities are universal. Every human brain develops to enable social and

emotional skills such as empathy, compassion and perspective taking. Empathy is the general capacity of individuals to recognise emotion and to also resonate with others' emotional states such as happiness, excitement, sorrow, or fear (Baird, Scheffer & Wilson, 2011). Perspective taking may be described as the ability to consider others' points of view and requires some understanding of others' thoughts, feelings, motivations, and intentions. Compassion is the ability to take positive action to alleviate suffering in the other and requires behavioural action motivated by the need and desire to improve the other's well-being (Klimecki et al., 2012). The development of these skills may be hampered by difficult life circumstances and contexts or conversely, nurtured by an appropriate social and emotional learning environment.

Over the years, developmental psychologist promotes appropriate social and emotional learning setting for effective cognitive, emotional, physical, social, and educational growth. This perhaps, help children and adults develop fundamental skills for life effectiveness. Such as recognizing and managing our emotions, developing caring and concern for others, establishing positive relationships, making responsible decisions, and handling challenging situations constructively and ethically (CASEL, 2013). Therefore, schools should promote social and emotional learning skills that make students relate with each other socially, emotionally, physically, and mentally for proper growth and holistic development.

Studies have observed that, globally, there is a growing concern that secondary school students need more than academic skills for holistic development and to effectively navigate in this 21st century (Acara, 2013; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). Because SEL supports students to acquire skills and knowledge necessary to be successful team members and problem solvers in a learning environment. Such as

preventing negative social interaction, risky behaviours, prepare for the demands of changes in a learning environment, and ultimately promotes wellbeing, academic achievement and good citizenship (Durlak et al., 2011; Miyamoto, Huerta & Kubacka, 2015; Nielsen et al., 2015). Thus, teaching and learning in schools should integrate social and emotional learning skills for students to overcome the 21st century challenges.

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) is an integral part of education and human development. SEL is the process through which all young people and adults acquire and apply the knowledge, skills, and attitudes to develop healthy identities, manage emotions and achieve personal and collective goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain supportive relationships, and make responsible and caring decisions (Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008; Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). SEL advances educational equity and excellence through authentic school family- community partnerships to establish learning environments and experiences that feature trusting and collaborative relationships (Zins, Bloodworth, Weissberg & Walberg, 2004; Guerra & Bradshaw, 2008).

The SEL intentional goals of teaching and practicing collaborative relationships are to nurture the development of the five core interrelated sets of cognitive, affective, and behavioural competencies: self-awareness, management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making (Weissberg & Cascarino, 2013). According to Castillo et al. (2013), Pendry et al. (2014) SEL increases students' ability to integrate thinking, feeling, and behaviour to achieve academic success and life tasks.

Research increasingly suggests that SEL components contributes significantly to important life tasks in children and adolescents such as better mental health, school success, school attendance and completion (Bradley et al., 2012; Bavarian et al., 2013; Caemmerer & Keith, 2015; Greenberg et al., 2017). Moreover, in addition to promoting positive life tasks, it efficient in reducing depression (Schonert-Reichl et al., 2015) general anxiety (Bavarian et al., 2013) social anxiety (Coelho, Marchante & Sousa, 2015) and other emotional problems (Wigelsworth et al., 2010; Muratori et al., 2015). Similarly, SEL acts as a buffer to the effects of intra and interpersonal problems, exposure to risk factors (Domitrovich et al., 2017) such as substance abuse (Sandler et al., 2014) aggression, bullying, and disruptive behaviour (Cook et al., 2010). Studies also shows that Social and Emotional Learning can be taught and nurtured in schools (Jones et al., 2017).

Consequently, schools are considered as an essential place for the promotion of students' social and emotional skills, happiness, comfort and wellbeing (Domitrovich et al., 2017; Vostanis et al., 2013) and are, by their nature, a fundamental developmental setting in which many worries and concerns arise and can be well addressed (Greenberg, 2010). furthermore, apart from the provision of knowledge and academic skills, they are gradually encouraged to offer candid support to help improve students' social-emotional competence (Farrington et al., 2012) such as self-awareness (e.g., distinguishing, understanding and recognizing emotions, self-efficacy), self-management (e.g., impulse control and managing tension, and pressure, help seeking), social awareness (e.g., responsiveness, empathy, compassion, and respect for others), relationship skills (e.g., communication, rapport and relationship building), and responsible decision-making (e.g., problem solving, personal, social, and ethical responsibility (CASEL, 2013). Universal social and emotional learning (SEL)

programs afford a framework for averting maladaptive outcomes by encouraging socioemotional skills (CASEL, 2013; Zins & Elias, 2007).

Social-emotional skills provide students with a sense of who they are in the world, how they learn, and helps them establish quality relationships with others. It is what drives an individual to communicate, connect with others, and more importantly, helps resolve conflicts, gain confidence and reach goals. Building a strong foundation of social-emotional competence as a student will help them thrive and obtain happiness in life. They will be better equipped to handle stress and persevere through difficult times in their lives as an adult (Ee, Zhou & Wong, 2014). However, in the case of Nigeria, the practice is quite different and fails to embrace the global shift in developing students' social emotional competences (Adeyemi & Adeyemi, 2014). Moreover, teaching in Nigerian secondary schools gives much emphasis on academic skills development; the system neglects the social and emotional aspect, which is an essential component of human development (Sklad et al., 2012). Thus, students' socioemotional potentials are not fully realized and utilized in Nigerian secondary schools.

Therefore, schools in their teaching and learning process should target integrating both cognitive and socioemotional competences (Farrington et al., 2012). Such competences can prevent maladaptive outcomes and make students become aware of sense of self, strengths and weaknesses, feelings and other dispositions. Again, it will help them to understand others' perspectives for effective negotiation, positive interaction, problems solving and making responsible decisions in life (Nielsen et al., 2015; Bashir, 2013). Promoting and applying social and emotional learning skills in school can make students become competent and resilient person,

capable of overcoming peer pressure, crisis and adversities happening in the school environment (Ee, Zhou & Wong, 2014).

Many school's social interventions and promotion initiatives are fragmented, which does not contribute to their collective effectiveness. Schools mostly implement preventive practices (among them, metal detectors, advisory periods, recreational activities, school change management practices, and informational posters and brochures) to prevent problem behaviour and promote safe environments (Jones et al., 2017) so it is easy to understand why such efforts may not be coordinated. The result is lost opportunities to reinforce skills across programs and activities, as well as competition for resources. However, SEL approach most especially RULER can serve as the organizing framework for a broad array of prevention and improvement efforts (Rivers & Brackett, 2010; Elias et al., 1997).

RULER approach is a SEL intervention based on emotional intelligence and its acronym stands for Recognizing, Understanding, Labeling, Expressing and Regulating emotions. It is an intervention for students in Nursery, primary, and Junior secondary school that builds social and emotional skills through instruction on emotion-related concepts and the introduction of tools for leveraging emotions in the classroom (Rivers & Brackett, 2010). The intervention integrates student skill-building for leveraging and managing emotions within the context of a standard academic curriculum in a practice-based manner. RULER approach includes various aspect and different combination of anchor tools. Studies showed when students are engaged in meaningful social and emotional activities they learn and developed social and emotional skills (Rivers et al., 2013; Brown et al., 2010; McCormick & O'Connor, 2015).

Taking care of social and emotional issues using RULER approach create meaningful learning in authentic context. However, few studies in the literature reported through integration of Social and emotional learning into RULER approach but these studies are not enough especially at school level (Brackett et al., 2012; Hagelskamp et al., 2013; Rivers et al., 2013). RULER approach is described as instructional method that center around building student social and emotional skills by focusing on the teaching and learning of emotion-related concepts or “feeling words” and by introducing tools for leveraging emotions in the learning environment. In today’s society (leveraging on RULER approach will enable) an addition teacher and students analyse the emotional aspects of personal experiences, academic materials, and current events; evaluate how various people, characters, and historical figures feel and manage their feelings; and discuss techniques and use tools for identifying, problem solving about, and regulating their own and others’ emotions.

Emotions are dynamic processes ever present in the daily lives of students and their educators and families (Schutz & Pekrun, 2007). Among the many processes and behaviours that affect and are affected by emotions are social interactions, learning, self-reflective thinking, and perspective taking. The need to implement social and emotional learning approach RULER is based on the social and emotional challenges that hinder with students’ linking to and performance in school, which is critical in Nigeria. Issues such as discipline, disaffection, lack of commitment, alienation, and dropping out frequently limit success in school or even lead to failure.

Given that SEL education is the fundamental supportive foundation of an advanced society, the key to the production and maintenance of student’s productivity well-versed in these fields is the integration of SEL component and improvement of

teaching approaches in Nigeria (Igbalajobi, 2016). However, with reference to Nigerian policy of education (FGN, 2015) the government planned to strengthen quality of education that support the 21st century challenges of the society. However, in the Nigerian education system there is shortage of appropriate teaching approaches that go a long way with the global social trend that reinforces self-discipline and regulation, good citizenship, and active membership in the society. Hence the need for social and emotional learning approach (RULER) in the operation of school system.

Similarly, to foster student self and social awareness, self-discipline, and positive development, educational settings must meet students' multifaceted developmental needs (Catalano et al., 2004). The setting of the learning environment describes relationships between and among students and teachers as demonstrated by supportive and caring interactions, positive feelings, a shared sense of cohesion and respect, and teachers' sensitivity to student needs (Lopez et al., 2017). Classroom interactions have a powerful influence on student's development. In a highly interactive classroom, students are respectful, granted autonomy in the learning processes, teaching is organized, discipline is fair, and instructions are appropriate and effective (Catalano et al., 2004; Jennings & Greenberg, 2009). Students in these environments most likely tend to have less misconduct problems, perform better academically, develop strong socioemotional, communication and language skills as well as retain motivation to work and learn (Durlak et al., 2011).

Though, majority of secondary school students across the globe experience very low quality classroom interaction (Pianta & Allen, 2008). Regrettably, sufficient attention is not equally given to this. In the case of Nigeria, the negligence is simply undependable and rough (Igbalajobi, 2016). Many classroom environments fail to

engage students' socio-emotionally, send-off learning potential untapped, and provide little structured opportunity for building pro-social skills. In the worst cases, student–teacher conflict and peer bullying are high and academic failure most especially in the subject of English language (Aud et al., 2010). Therefore, SEL will be a better approach in way that it gives opportunity for all i.e. holistic approach. Meaning that students who have low IQ, moderate IQ or high IQ can benefit from the approach (SEL). This conveyed how SEL promote better learning, in that way it could include academic achievement in English language and other subjects as well.

Considering the importance of English language, it is taught as a compulsory subject from primary to tertiary level. However, conditions under which English language is taught in Nigerian educational institutions, besides few schools and colleges, are not satisfactory (Steinmayr et al., 2014). The academic achievement under which English language achievement is assess in Nigeria is fraught with myriad problems. Francisca (2012) states, despite studying English in schools and colleges for years, students, especially those from public schools are not able to perform satisfactorily and even communicate in English with relative ease and success (Dörnyei, 2003). Such failures are mostly associated with educational institutions, such as lack of appropriate teaching methodology, teacher-student relationship and trained and qualified teachers.

English language achievement is of significant concern in Nigeria. This is because, student academic achievement in English helps students to understand how language functions as a key component of social interactions across all social situations. Through close reading and discussion of imaginative and persuasive texts, students experience and evaluate a range of personal and social behaviours and

perspectives and develop connections and empathy with characters in different social contexts (Acara, 2013; Wiriyachitra, 2002).

English language academic achievement facilitates the development of communication skills and self-expression. This assists students' personal and social development as they become effective communicators, able to articulate their own opinions and beliefs and to interact and collaborate with others. However, procedures and methods used in teaching English language to Nigerian students are not favourable to promote student's English achievement. This has compelled researchers to find the way of improving the factors behind the setback in English language achievement in Nigeria and Gombe state.

However, the choice of Gombe state, in Nigeria, is because, the state has experienced countless youth violence that can have a negative effect on their social and emotional development. The state is confused today than it has been since its creation in 1996 during the military eras, as it grapples with issues such as Boko haram insurgency, internally displace persons, herder and farmers conflict, Kalare youth violence, ethno-religious conflicts, political and interpersonal violence, student riots in schools, indiscipline and general sense of insecurity and fear. This may likely be attribute to its strategic location been the Centre of North-East sub-region, whatever happens to the neighbouring states, tend to reflect the state. This make the youth more vulnerable, unfocused, depressed, and more emotionally unstable. These youth, if the right education is not given to them instead they are alienated, they can also be thugs, anarchic, members of criminally minded group such as boko haram, and kalare.

However, despite the different measures adopted by different governments through policies and programmes to curb the menace, and channelled their energies in a positive direction, the student's social problem, indiscipline behaviours and thuggery has remained pervasive in the state secondary school. The menace become treats to educational and human development of young adolescent. The treat resulted to high rate of drop-out and socio-emotional imbalance. These tendencies may likely be due to the living situation in the state that includes lack of awareness, socio-emotional skills, and teaching approaches that has elements of social and emotional learning. As a result, the young generation involve themselves in the act (violence) as a means of survival.

Based on the literatures (Durlak et al., 2011; Brackett & Rivers, 2013; Lopez et al., 2017) it appears that students with social-emotional imbalance could likely get improvement if their social and emotional competence is enhanced. Rivers et al. (2013) reported that RULER approach to social and emotional learning modify quality of classroom social interactions so that the climate becomes more supportive, empowering, and engaging. They opined that classrooms in RULER schools were rated as having higher degrees of warmth and connectedness between teachers and students, more autonomy and leadership among students, and teachers who focused more on students' interests and motivations compared to classrooms in comparison schools. The approach uses a skill-based approach to foster social, emotional, and academic competence through teaching how to recognize emotions in one self and in other people, understand the causes and consequences of a wide range of emotions, label emotions using a sophisticated vocabulary, express emotions in socially appropriate ways, and regulate emotions effectively (the "RULER" skills). RULER

helps students to learn these skills by integrating formal lessons and opportunities to practice using them into regular classroom instruction.

The premise is that teaching and providing opportunities to develop the RULER skills is necessary to enhance outcomes related to both academics, social and emotional competence e.g., build healthy relationships, promote healthy living, better decision- making, prevent problematic behaviour, and increase academic achievement (Rivers et al., 2013). These skills are essential life skills that support social-emotional competence, wellbeing and positive mental health. Youth who have developed such skills find it easier to manage themselves, relate to others, resolve conflict, enhance academic success and feel positive about themselves and the world around them. They are less likely to act out frustrations at school and elsewhere.

Given the understanding and importance of Social Emotional Competence, Classroom Climate and Academic Achievement, it is then important to ensure that; youth's development is appropriate and supported positively, so that they grow up with the right values and attitudes to become confident and well-adjusted adults in the future. Therefore, schools must facilitate SEL skills in students with suitable intervention approaches. Consequently, the availability of an appropriate and valid approach of social and emotional learning, must especially (RULER), is critical to determine the status of students' SEC, CC, and AA. It is against this background that the researcher intends to explore whether Social and Emotional Learning Approach (RULER) Improve student's social emotional competencies, classroom climate and academic achievement in Nigeria.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The poor state of student's social emotional competence in Nigerian secondary schools challenges the application of social and emotional domain in teaching and learning process. Studies have reported that, teaching methodologies in Nigerian secondary schools have been very traditional where the teacher become the authority in most schools (Adunola, 2011). Also, studies, (Emaliana, 2017; Zhao et al., 2014; Adeyemi, 2010) observed that, the current teacher training programme does not provide proper opportunities for student teachers to develop competency in the application of social and emotional skills in teaching practice because there is no close matching between the work schedule of the teacher in the programme and school adopted for teacher preparation in a training college. These result in producing teachers that used traditional pedagogical practices that do not promote fundamental social and emotional skills, positive interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships which represents the social emotional competence (Rivers et al., 2013; Bohlin & Hagekull, 2009; CASEL, 2013; Durlak et al., 2011). The consequences are students lack opportunities to developed proper social, emotional, communication and relationship building skills.

In addition to in ability to promote effective communication and relationship building skills. Studies (Blake et al., 2015; CASEL, 2015; Ifamuyiwa & Ajilogba, 2012; Olanipekun & Aina, 2014) have reported that students have difficulties in establishing social interaction in classroom as well as recognizing and expressing emotional experiences. According to Sameroff (2010), Eisenberg, Valiente and Eggum (2010) and Mbaya (2013) emotions and social interactions affect how and what we learn and how we use what we learn in classroom, school, family, and community

contexts. Khuvasanond (2013) and Ganyaupfu (2013) mentioned difficulties in promoting social interaction in classroom, and expressing emotional experiences, are derived from the unfriendly nature of the traditional teaching approach, where teacher becomes the authority (Mbugua et al., 2012; Oludipe & Awokoy, 2010; Andiema, 2016). Therefore, students' inability to develop social interaction in the classroom, recognize and express emotional experiences result in low social and emotional competence (Halverson & Smith 2010; Selwyn, 2010).

So, besides difficulties in establishing social interaction in the classroom, low teachers' and students' supportive relationship in the classroom has contributed to the declining state of a supportive, feelings of a sense of belonging, trust for another and well-managed learning environments among Nigerian secondary schools (Muratori et al., 2015; Hightower et al., 2011; Obioma, 2012). It was reported that poor competency skills, inappropriate teacher's methodology, punitive orientation and the use of auxiliary teachers in classroom interaction affect the climate of the classroom (Blake et al., 2015; Khuvasanond, 2013; Ganyaupfu, 2013; Olanipekun and Aina, 2014).

Low supportive relationship in the classroom may refrain students from planning activities that they perceive to be important in improving efficacy (Castillo, 2013; Dotterer, 2011). Similarly, (Jennings & Greenberg, 2009; Mowat, 2011; Sandler et al., 2014) mentioned that, lack of supportive relationship usually makes students' stay away from exploring the difficulties of the new social life task in the classroom. Therefore, having teacher training programme that emphasize cooperation, courage to tackle challenge, mutual respect, knowledge of human development and its application in teaching and learning process will help in promoting, supportive relationship,

positive atmosphere of the learning environment and improved intra and interpersonal relationships (Castillo, 2013; Dotterer, 2011).

More so, Teachers can raise the atmosphere of the classroom by employing a supportive teaching approach that integrate social and emotional practices (Coe et al., 2014). RULER approach could proper a solution for improving classroom climate. This is because RULER approach has an array of practices and routines designed to enhance children's and adults' lives and positively influence classroom and school climate (Brackett et al., 2012). The integration of RULER approach in teaching probably will produce friendly classroom learning environments. Hence, the relationship between social and emotional learning to achievement in secondary school is strong (Tebabal & Kahssay, 2011; Durlak et al., 2011).

The academic achievement of Junior school students going to higher school in English language has been reducing. Most Secondary school students in Nigeria have less opportunities to freely express their ideas in English language class (Adunola, 2011; Anyanwu & Iwuamadi, 2015). It was observed that the conventional teaching instruction was the most common type of instruction in practice, which is teacher's centred and where teacher assumes authority (Adeyemi, 2010; Oludipe & Awokoy, 2010; Andiema, 2016). Such instructional practice does not engage students more, thereby discourage classroom discussion, cooperative learning, and free exchange of ideas and opinions (Brown et al., 2010). These short comings pose a significant risk to student's communication skills, analytical skills, and ultimately academic achievement in English language (Emaliana, 2017; Soneye, 2008).

Therefore, to improve student's achievement in English language, new teaching methods need to be introduced into English education. This is aimed to achieve the learning outcomes that satisfy all the objectives of the learning process (Mbugua et al., 2012; Obioma, 2012). RULER approach could be a solution to raise the low achievers in English language and their supportive relationship in the classroom. This is because RULER approach has an array of practices and routines designed to enhance children's and adults' lives and positively influence classroom and school climate (Brackett et al., 2013). The integration of RULER approach in teaching probably will produce friendly, classroom learning environments.

However, research (Falkner et al., 2016; Sapolsky, 2017) has also shown that these problems can be managed using the behavioural approaches of social and emotional learning (SEL) which could proffer better wellbeing, improve positive path of student's socioemotional abilities, classroom climate and academic achievement. Therefore, it is against this background that the study intends to use social and emotional learning approach (RULER) to examine whether it will improve student's social-emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement.

1.4 Research Objectives

The main objective of this study is to explore whether the integration of RULER approach may improve students' Social Emotional Competence (SEC), Classroom Climate (CC), and Academic Achievement (AA).

Specifically, this study intends to achieve the following objectives:

1. To determine the effect of RULER approach on linear combination of students' social emotional competence, classroom climate and academic

achievement in the experimental and control group of Gombe state junior secondary schools.

2. To determine the combined effects of RULER approach and gender factor on students' social emotional competence, classroom climate and academic achievement in the experimental and control group of Gombe state junior secondary schools.
3. To determine whether social emotional competence and classroom climate predict academic achievement of students in experimental group of Gombe state junior secondary schools.
4. To identify the strength and weakness of RULER approach from the perspective of teachers and students.

1.5 Research Questions

The following research questions guided the research

1. Are there any significant differences on the linear combination of post-test mean scores of social-emotional competences, classroom climate, and academic achievement between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of mean scores of pre-test are controlled?
2. Are there any significant interaction effect between gender and group on the linear combination of post-test mean scores of social-emotional competences, classroom climate, and academic achievement between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of mean scores of pre-test are controlled?

3. Do social emotional competence and classroom climate predict academic achievement of students in experimental group of Gombe state junior secondary schools?
4. What is the strength and weakness of RULER approach from the perspective of teachers and students?

1.6 Research Hypothesis

The Following Null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of confidence for answering research question 1, 2, 3, and 4

H₀₁: There are no significant differences on the linear combination of post-test mean scores of social-emotional competences, classroom climate, and academic achievement between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of pre-test mean scores is controlled.

H_{01a}: There is no significant difference on the post-test mean scores of social-emotional competences between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of pre-test mean scores is controlled.

H_{01b}: There is no significant difference on the post-test mean scores of classroom climate between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of pre-test mean scores is controlled.

H_{01c}: There is no significant difference on the post-test mean scores of academic achievements between students who follow RULER approach and conventional teaching method after the effect of pre-test mean scores is controlled.