



## **EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE SKILLS POSSESSED BY UNDERGRADUATE BUSINESS EDUCATION STUDENTS IN TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS IN DELTA STATE: BRIDGING THE NEED GAP**

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### **Abstract**

*Employers of labour complain about fresh graduate employees who, though with high grade points, perform very poorly in their managerial and leadership responsibilities. Despite their high intelligent quotient, they have been found to be lacking in emotional intelligence needed for successful work life. This study sought to determine the emotional intelligence skills possessed by business education students with the purpose of bridging the need gap. Four research questions and corresponding hypotheses based on the critical emotional intelligence skills of self-awareness, self-management, self-motivation and social skills guided the study. The variable for the study was the students' gender. The population for the study was penultimate graduating students of business education in four tertiary institutions in Delta State with undergraduate programmes. There was no sampling since the population of 249 students was small and manageable. The instrument for the study was a 40 item 5-point emotional intelligence self-assessment questionnaire which was validated by three experts. The reliability test of the instrument yielded a coefficient of 0.78. The data collected was analyzed using mean and standard deviation while the hypotheses were tested using z-test at 0.05 level of significance. The findings of the study showed that male business education students possessed self-awareness, self-management, self-motivational and social skills. The female students were found to possess only self-management skills. However, the male and female students did not differ significantly in the self-awareness and self-management skills possessed but differed significantly in the self-motivational and social skills possessed. It was recommended that emotional intelligence be taught in business education. This should be complemented with seminars and conferences while gender stereotyping, biases and discrimination against the woman folk should be discouraged.*

### **Introduction**

There is the age long notion that a high intelligence quotient is the strongest most single predictor of success in life. But Goleman (1998) believe that only 20% of a persons' success can be attributed to the possession of higher intelligence quotient. This is because there are many persons who are academically very brilliant and yet are socially inept and unsuccessful at work or in their personal lives. Although intellect is certainly important, intellectual capacity alone is not enough. Other critical factors are needed for success in life and in business. According to Jameson, Carthy, Mc Guinness and Mc Sweeney (2016), emotional intelligence is the building block for personal and professional success. It is the single best predictor of performance in the workplace and one of the strongest drivers of leadership and excellence in the present day highly competitive global economic environment. Feldman and Mulle (2009) defined emotional intelligence as using one's emotions intelligently to gain performance and to achieve interpersonal effectiveness with others. Emotional intelligence is the ability to identify, use, understand, and manage emotions in positive ways to relieve stress, communicate effectively, empathize with others,



overcome challenges and defuse conflict. Emotional intelligence involves the ability to perceive accurately, appraise and express emotion; the ability to assess and/or generate feelings when they facilitate thought; the ability to understand emotion and emotional knowledge; and the ability to regulate emotions to promote emotional and intellectual growth (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, 1999).

Today's highly competitive job markets require that students possess high emotional skills to be able to fit in and be able to wade through the many critical challenges of the present day global world of work. One cannot divorce emotions from the workplace because one cannot divorce emotions from people. Managers who understand the role of emotions and moods will significantly improve their ability to explain and predict their coworkers' behavior (Bellizzi, 2015). Business education students will, therefore, need to be prepared to integrate their emotional intelligence with their everyday behavior if they are to achieve success in whatever entrepreneurial endeavor they will find themselves upon graduation. Indeed short-lived disciplinary knowledge is no longer enough to guarantee a job at the end of university education but emotional intelligence skills will enable graduates to function more effectively, flexibly, and adaptively over a longer time frame in a changing environment (Davis & Bryer, 2003). Goleman (1998) had asserted that what one learned in school distinguishes superior performers in only a handful of the five or six hundred jobs. It is just a threshold competence; one needs it to get into the field, but it does not make one a star. It is the emotional intelligence abilities that matter more for superior performance. There is, therefore, the increasing recognition of a need to incorporate emotional intelligence into the regular business education instructional programmes (Ross, Powell, & Elias, 2002).

Graduates need to be able to solve problems, communicate effectively, think critically and creatively, be information literate and be able to operate as effective team members in the workplace (Davis & Bryer, 2003). Also success in the teaching of business education requires considerable capacities in emotional competence. Business teachers need emotional competencies to be able to build resilience to adversity in the field, to self-monitor performance, and to regulate emotions. They need to have sound organizational skills. They need to be self-aware of the abilities and skills required for the range of roles, responsibilities, and demands of their work. Teachers also need social-emotional competencies to be able effectively manage and develop students' emotionally.

Furnham (2016) conducted a study that looked at what accounted for the successes and failures of most entrepreneurs. The results showed that emotional intelligence was the key quality that distinguished the successful from the unsuccessful. If you have a high level of emotional intelligence you will find it easier to build healthier and stronger relationships, create success at work, achieve your career and personal goals, recognise your own emotional state and the emotional states of others and engage with people in a way that draws them to you and lead a more fulfilling life. Workers with high emotional intelligence are better able to work in teams, adjust to change and are more flexible. No matter how many degrees or other paper qualifications a person has, if one does not have certain emotional qualities, that person is unlikely to succeed (Heidi, 2010).



Persons who possess high emotional intelligence skills have been found to handle pressure more healthily, possess well-developed people skills that let them build relationships with a diverse range of people and possess ability to listen well and respond to others. They are less defensive and more open to feedback especially when it involves areas of improvement. They always put their own emotions and desires aside and take others' into account. They set examples for others to follow. They make better judgments about how their decisions will impact others and they behave more proactively (Abraham, 2006).

Emotional intelligence then, is the *x-factor* that separates average performers from outstanding performers. It separates those who know themselves well and take personal responsibility for their actions from those who lack self-awareness and repeat the same mistakes over and over. It separates those who can manage their emotions and motivate themselves from those who are overwhelmed by their emotions and let their emotional impulses control their behaviors. It separates those who are good at connecting with others and creating positive relationships from those who seem insensitive and uncaring. It separates those who build rapport, have influence, and collaborate effectively with others from those who are demanding, lack empathy, and are therefore difficult to work with. Above all, emotional intelligence separates those who are successful at managing their emotional energy and navigating through life from those who find themselves in emotional wreckage, derailed, and sometimes even disqualified from the path to success (Jones & Abraham, 2009).

Goleman (1998), Mayer, Caruso and Salovey, (1999) developed a four category models of emotional intelligence:

**Self-awareness skills:** If a one has a healthy sense of self-awareness, one understands one's own strengths and weaknesses, as well as how one's actions affect others. A person who is self-aware is usually better able to handle and learn from constructive criticism than one who is not.

**Self-Management skills:** One with a high emotional intelligence can maturely reveal one's emotions and exercise restraint when needed. Instead of squelching one's feelings, the person expresses them with restraint and control.

**Self-motivational skills:** Emotionally intelligent people are self-motivated. They are not motivated simply by money or a title. They are usually resilient and optimistic when they encounter disappointment and driven by an inner ambition.

**Social Skill** This has to do with the ability to manage, influence and inspire emotions in others. It involves being able to handle emotions in relationships and being able to influence and inspire others for successful teamwork and leadership.

There is the long-standing and widely held belief that women are both more emotional and more emotionally expressive than men. Women are believed to feel and express sadness more frequently than men, whereas men are believed to feel and express anger more frequently than women (Simon, 2004). Fernández - Berrocal, Cabello, Castillo and Extremera, 2012) found that women scored higher than men on emotional intelligence measures: Women were found to be more capable of decoding nonverbal emotional information, have greater emotional understanding, are more sensitive to the emotions of others and show greater interpersonal competencies. Hall and Mast (2008) asserted that women are more familiar than men with the emotional



world and that this is because they are biologically prepared to perceive emotions. Also Sánchez-Núñez, Fernández-Berrocal, Montañés & Latorre (2010) observed that since girls develop verbal skills earlier than boys, they are more skilled at articulating their feelings and have greater expertise in the use of words. This enables them to have a larger, richer range of verbal resources at their disposal that can re-place emotional reactions like physical fights.

In Nigeria there are culturally and socially acceptable displayable emotions with regard to gender and both gender are expected to express their emotions to meet these expectations. Men were expected to react with more happiness and serenity during negative emotional situations: Thus under very ugly situations a man is required to '*be a man*' – not to be prone to display of emotions. But at such occasions it is permitted when the woman wails, cries very loudly and pummel herself. Also in Nigeria women are accorded lower status and power than men. Thus men have more rights and privileges in political and social life while the woman's place is said to be more in the kitchen (Parkins, 2012). The woman's social life is highly guided and restricted while the man can fly like a dove. Indeed in some societies it is considered a sign of moral weakness for a married woman to frequent herself in social occasions or to display high social skills.

### **Statement of Problem**

Today's global economic situation requires everyone to have emotional intelligence to be able to effectively deal with the pressures and demands of daily life and work. This is pertinent against the understanding that unmanaged emotional behaviours of employees can be very costly and can derail even the best organizational or entrepreneurial venture. Out-of-control emotions can have a tremendous effect on one's performance, on how others perceive one and on how those in power ultimately judge a person.

The World Economic Forum (2010) asserted that emotional intelligence will be one of the top job skill requirements in 2020, even surpassing technical and intellectual abilities. In a 2010 career survey by the Consortium for Entrepreneurship Education, using more than 2,600 hiring managers and human resource professionals, 71% stated that they valued emotional intelligence in an employee over IQ and 75% said they that were more likely to promote a highly emotionally intelligent worker. Thus employers are indeed putting high premium on emotional intelligence. Therefore, with the rates of change and pressures in the workplace rising, persons with higher level emotional intelligence will become even more sought after than ever before.

Jameson, Carthy, Mc Guinness and Mc Sweeney(2016)had observed that business schools are graduating students who are ill-equipped to wrangle with complex, unquantifiable issues on personal and interpersonal competence, leadership and supervisory skills, conflict resolution, diversity and communication skills. The World Bank (2012) had also stated that the employability skills among business school graduates is comparatively poor and that the shortages were more in emotional skills; often resulting in problematic time for graduates as they often feel ill-prepared for the challenges and realities of employment. It, therefore, become imperative that



business education should infuse and emphasis the teaching of emotional intelligence skills in its curricula offering if its graduates are to be employable and successful in their future career.

To be able to do this, it is desirable to determine the emotional intelligence skills possessed by business education students with a view to filling the skill gaps. This study, therefore, sought to determine the emotional intelligence skills possessed by graduating business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The major purpose of this study was to determine the emotional intelligence skills possessed by undergraduate business education students in tertiary institutions in Delta State, Nigeria. Specifically the study sought to determine the:

1. Self-awareness skills possessed by undergraduate business education students.
2. Self-management skills possessed by undergraduate business education students.
3. Self-motivational skills possessed by undergraduate business education students.
4. Social skills possessed by undergraduate business education students.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What are the self-awareness skills possessed by undergraduate business education students?
2. What are the self-management skills possessed by undergraduate business education students?
3. What are the self-motivational skills possessed by undergraduate business education students?
4. What are the social skills possessed by undergraduate business education students?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

1. There is no significant difference in the self-awareness skills possessed by male and female undergraduate business education students.
2. There is no significant difference in the self-management skills possessed by male and female undergraduate business education students.
3. There is no significant difference in the self-motivational skills possessed by male and female undergraduate business education students.
4. There is no significant difference in the social skills possessed by male and female undergraduate business education students.

### **Method**

This study adopted the descriptive survey design. The population for the study was the graduating students of business education programmes in tertiary institutions in Delta State. The students' population distribution by institutions is Delta State University, Abraka 123; COE, Agbor 31; COE, Warri 35 and FCE(T), Asaba60. The



total population of the students was 249. There was no sampling as the population was relatively small. The instrument was a 40 emotional intelligence self-assessment item questionnaire structured on a 5-point rating scale. The response options were; Never true about me (1), Rarely true about me (2), Sometimes true about me (3), Often true about me (4), Always true about me (5). The instrument was validated by three experts. The reliability of the instrument was established using test-retest with overall co-efficient of 0.78. The instrument was administered by the help of four research assistants. Of the 249 copies of the instrument administered 198 copies were returned and found useable. This represented 79.5 % return rate. Data collected were analysed using simple descriptive statistics of mean and standard deviation. The null hypotheses were tested using the z-test statistical tool at 0.05 level of significance. The null hypotheses were accepted where the calculated z-value is less than the critical z-value. The hypotheses were rejected where the calculated z-value is higher than the z-critical value

**Results**

**Research Question 1**

What are the self-awareness skills possessed by business education students?

**Table 1 Mean rating of male and female business education students on the self-awareness skills possessed**

S/N	Item Statement	Male (77)			Female (121)		
		XSD	RMK		XSD	RMK	
1	I always know which emotions I am feeling and why	2.28	1.37	NA	2.26	1.09	NA
2	I realize the links between my feelings and what I think, do, and say	2.90	1.02	NA	2.91	1.44	NA
3	I recognize how my feelings affect my performance	3.65	1.23	A	2.34	1.10	NA
4	I have a guiding awareness of my values and goals	3.12	1.16	A	3.22	1.11	A
5	I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses	2.83	1.83	NA	2.63	1.07	NA
6	I am reflective and try to learn from experience	3.07	1.45	A	3.16	1.18	A
7	I present myself with self-assurance;	2.90	1.54	NA	2.74	1.13	NA
8	I can voice views that are unpopular and stand for what is right	3.12	1.29	A	2.73	1.07	NA
9	I am open to candid feedback and new perspectives,	3.22	1.27	A	2.28	1.11	NA
10	I am decisive, and able to make sound decisions despite uncertainties and pressures	3.68	1.33	A	3.70	1.24	A

The data in Table 1 show that male business education students accepted to have possessed six self-awareness skills. The mean responses for these items 3,4,6,8,9 and 10 were 3.00 and above. The male students did not accept to possess self-



awareness skills for items 1,2,5 and 7 with mean responses below 3.00. The female students accepted to possess self-awareness skills for items 4, 6 and 10, with mean scores of 3.00 and above. The self-awareness skills not accepted to have been possessed by female students are items 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 9.

**Hypotheses 1**

There is no significant difference in the self-awareness skills possessed by male and female business education students.

**Table 2: z-test of significant difference between male and female business education students on the self-awareness skills possessed**

Students	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	3.08	1.34	77	196	1.55	1.96	Accept
Female	2.80	1.15	121				
Total			198				

The data in Table 2 show that at 0.5 level of significance and atdf 196, the z-cal is 1.55, while the z-critical is 1.96. Since the critical z-value is higher than the calculated z-value, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus male and female business education students do not significantly differ in the self-awareness skills possessed.

**Research Question 2**

What are the self-management skills possessed by business education students?

**Table 3 Mean rating of male and female business education students on the self-management skills possessed**

S/N	Item Statement	Male (77)			Female (121)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
11	I manage my impulsive feelings and distressing emotions well	3.30	1.28	A	3.37	1.28	A
12	I stay composed and positive even in trying moments	4.22	0.94	A	3.85	1.05	A
13	I build trust by being reliable and authentic	3.14	1.18	A	2.79	1.14	NA
14	I rarely lose my anger at other people	2.34	1.20	NA	2.88	1.29	NA
15	I am organized and careful in my work	3.03	1.25	A	2.83	1.20	NA
16	I smoothly handle multiple demands,	3.71	1.34	A	2.68	1.34	NA
17	I am flexible in how I see events	3.07	1.09	A	2.74	1.19	NA
18	I meet commitments and keep promises	2.17	1.23	NA	3.80	1.81	A
19	I seek out fresh ideas from a wide variety of sources	2.19	1.05	NA	3.45	0.97	A
20	I take fresh perspectives and risks in my thinking	3.66	1.23	A	2.64	1.20	NA



The data in Table 3 show that male business education students accepted to have possessed seven self-management skills. The mean responses for items 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17 and 20 were 3.00 and above. The male students did not accept to possess self-management skills for items 14, 18, and 19 with mean responses below 3.00. The female students accepted to possess self-management skills for items 11, 12, 18 and 19, the mean for these items is 3.00 and above. The self-management skills not accepted to have been possessed by female students are items 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 and 20.

**Hypothesis 2**

There is no significant difference in the self-management skills possessed by male and female business education students.

**Table 4: z-test of significant difference between male and female business education students on the self-management skills possessed**

Students	X	SD	N	df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	3.08	1.18	77	196	0.12	1.96	Accept
Female	3.10	1.25	121				
Total			198				

The data in Table 4 show that at 0.5 level of significance and df196, the z-cal is 0.12, while the z-critical is 1.96. Since the critical z-value is higher than the calculated z-value, the null hypothesis is retained. Thus male and female business education students do not significantly differ in the self-management skills possessed.

**Research Question 3**

What are the self-motivational skills possessed by business education students?

**Table 5 Mean rating of male and female business education students on the self-motivational skills possessed**

S/N	Item Statement	Male (77)			Female (121)		
		X	SD	Decision	X	SD	Decision
21	I am results-oriented, with a high drive to meet objectives and standards	3.40	1.17	A	3.04	1.08	A
22	I set challenging goals and take calculated risks	3.05	1.20	A	2.74	1.14	NA
23	I continuously learn in order to improve my performance	3.64	1.29	A	2.22	1.14	NA
24	I am willing to make personal or group sacrifices to meet a larger organizational goal	3.09	1.35	A	2.33	1.04	NA
25	I actively seek out opportunities to fulfil the group's mission	3.79	1.26	A	2.14	1.16	NA
26	I pursue goals beyond what's required or expected of me	3.18	1.32	A	2.69	1.46	NA



27	Delayed gratification is a virtue that I hold on to	2.57	1.29	NA	2.45	1.23	NA
28	I mobilize others through unusual, enterprising efforts	2.59	1.23	NA	2.26	1.11	NA
29	I am persistent in seeking goals despite obstacles and setbacks	2.72	1.24	NA	2.35	1.11	NA
30	I operate from hope of success rather than fear of failure	3.20	1.06	A	2.62	1.30	NA

The data in Table 5 show that male business education students accepted to have possessed seven self-motivational skills. The mean responses for these items; 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 30 were 3.00 and above. The male students did not accept to possess self-motivational skills for items 27, 28, and 29 with mean responses below 3.00. The female students accepted to possess self-motivational skills for only item 21. The mean for this item is 3.00 and above. The self-motivational skills not accepted to have been possessed by female students are items 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29 and 30.

**Hypothesis 3**

There is no significant difference in the self-awareness skills possessed by male and female business education students.

**Table 6: z-test of significant difference between male and female business education students on the self-motivational skills possessed**

Students	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	3.12	1.24	77	196	3.76	1.96	Reject
Female	2.48	1.17	121				
Total			198				

The data in Table 6 shows that at 0.5 level of significance and df196, the z-cal is 3.76, while the z-critical is 1.96. Since the critical z-value is lower than the calculated z-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus male and female business education students differ significantly in the self-motivational skills possessed.

**Research Question 4**

What are the social skills possessed by business education students?

**Table 7 Mean rating of male and female business education students on the social skills possessed**

S/N	Item Statement	Male (77)			Female (121)		
		X	SD	RMK	X	SD	RMK
31	I can sense others' feelings and perspective, and take an active interest in their concerns.	2.83	1.55	NA	2.64	1.40	NA
32	I seek ways to increase customers' satisfaction and loyalty	2.77	1.13	NA	2.84	1.77	NA
33	I can sense what others need, use it to develop and bolstering their abilities.	2.68	1.20	NA	2.48	1.13	NA
34	I respect and relate well to people from varied backgrounds	2.97	1.41	NA	2.60	1.31	NA



35	I consistently challenge bias and intolerance	2.51	1.22	NA	2.91	1.19	NA
36	I am skilled at the art of persuasion	3.84	1.05	A	2.44	1.25	NA
37	I listen well, seek mutual understanding, and fully welcome sharing of information	3.39	1.23	A	2.02	1.10	NA
38	I see working with difficult people as simply a challenge to win them over	3.62	1.24	A	2.38	1.06	NA
39	I am good at reconciling differences with other people	3.66	1.22	A	2.21	1.13	NA
40	I generally build solid relationships with those I work with	3.60	0.94	A	2.08	1.11	NA

The data in Table 7 show that male business education students accepted to have possessed social-awareness skills. The mean responses for items 36, 37, 38, 39 and 40 were 3.00 and above. The male students did not accept to possess social-awareness skills for items 31, 32, 33, 34 and 35 with mean responses below 3.00. The female students did not accept to possess social-awareness skills for any item as their mean for all the items were below 3.00.

#### Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference in the social-awareness skills possessed by male and female business education students.

**Table 8: z-test of significant difference between male and female business education students on the social skills possessed**

Students	X	SD	N	Df	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Male	3.19	1.22	77	196	4.35	1.96	Reject
Female	2.45	1.25	121				
Total			198				

The data in Table 8 show that at 0.5 level of significance and df196, the z-cal is 4.35, while the z-critical is 1.96. Since the critical z-value is lower than the calculated z-value, the null hypothesis is rejected. Thus male and female business education students differ significantly in the social skills possessed.

#### Discussion of Findings

The findings of the study revealed that male business education students possessed self-awareness skills while the female students did not. The self-awareness skill possessed by the male students are the abilities to recognize how their feelings affect their performance, having guiding awareness of their values and goals, being reflective and being able to learn from experience, being able to voice views that are unpopular and stand for what is right, being open to candid feedback and new perspectives and the ability to be decisive in decision making. The male students do not possess the abilities to be able to know which emotions they are feeling, realise the link between their feelings and what they do and say, being aware if their strength and



weaknesses, being able to present themselves with self-assurance. The female students possess the abilities of having a guiding awareness of their values and goals, being reflective and the ability to learn from experience and being decisive and sound in decision making despite uncertainties and pressures. Male students were shown to have a higher measure of self-awareness than the female students. However, the differences in the self-awareness skills possessed by male and female business education students as revealed by the study were not significant. This finding contradicts that of Fernandez-Berrocet Cabello, Castillo and Extremera (2012) who found women to have scored higher on emotional intelligence skills.

The study also revealed that both male and female business education students possessed self-management skills. The female students had a higher possession level. They, however, differed in the self-management sub skills possessed. The male students could manage impulsive feelings, distressing emotions, stay positively composed even in trying moments, could build trust, are organized and careful at work, could handle multiple demands, are flexible and could take fresh perspectives and risks. This finding aligns with Perkin's (2012) assertion of the cultural self-management skills demanded of the male folk; where they were expected to react with more happiness and serenity during negative emotional situations.

The study equally revealed that male business education students possessed self-motivational skills, while the female do not. Male students accepted that they were result oriented, set challenging goals, learned continuously, made personal/group sacrifice, actively sought for opportunities, pursued goals beyond what was required and did not fear failure. Except for accepting that they were result oriented and standard conscious, the female students did not possess any other self-motivational skill. One would not be surprised at this finding because in Nigeria there are cultural biases, discriminations and stereotypes against the woman folk which seem to stifle their self-motivational skills. Gino, Wilmuth and Brooks (2015) had frowned at a finding which showed that women associated high level position with conflict and thus their low desirability for professional advancement. The situation is reflected in the findings of this study where the self-motivation skills of female students fell short significantly from those of the male students. The implication of this is that they may not likely succeed in their careers, as only those with self-motivational skills make things happen.

The study has also revealed that male business education students possessed social skills while the female students did not possess even one of the social skills. The social skills possessed by the male students were ability to persuade, listen, work with difficult people, and reconcile differences with people and build relationships. The male students lacked the skills in sensing feelings, increasing customer satisfaction, bolstering the need of others, respecting and relating well with people and ability to change bias and intolerance. These findings contradict that of Simon (2004), Hall and Mast (2008) Fernanades – Berrocet, Cabello, Castillo and Extremera (2012) that women are more expressive than men because they are biologically prepared to perceive emotions. The differences in the cultural settings may have accounted for the contradictions in the findings. For example in Nigeria women do not enjoy high social freedom and participation. They are restricted by many taboos.



The implication of this is that these female students in Nigeria may not be able to obtain, grow and retain their jobs in the present global economic situation as they may not be able to genuinely connect to people, inspire, motivate or lead effectively.

### **Conclusion**

Based on the findings of this study, it is concluded that:

Male business education students possessed higher measures of emotional intelligence in self-awareness, self-motivational skills and social skills than the female students but the female students possessed a higher level of self-management skills than the male students. Male and female business education students did not differ significantly in the self-awareness and self-management skills possessed but they differed significantly in the self-motivational and social skills possessed. On the aggregate, the emotional intelligence skills possessed by both male and female business education students fall short of the desirable qualities. This implies that the graduating business education students, especially the female students, are ill-equipped to face the many emotional challenges required for successful work life. It thus requires that business education programmes in the area must strive to meet the need gap.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this study it is recommended that;

1. Emotional intelligence skills development be included and emphasized in the business education programme for success in employment and business life.
2. Seminars and workshops should be organized to periodically train business education students on the development of emotional intelligence skills more especially for the females.
3. Cultural stereotyping, bias and discrimination against the woman folk should be discouraged to enable them realize their self-awareness, self-motivation and social skills.

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