Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Resilience Among University Students in Nigeria

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Abstract: *The study investigated relationship between emotional intelligence and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria. The correlational design was adopted for the study. A sample of 1827 federal university students were used for the study drawn from a population of over 1.8 million spread across 43 federal universities. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to compose the sample. Five research questions were answered while five corresponding null hypotheses were tested in the study at 0.05 level of significance. Two instruments were used for the study which are the Emotional Intelligence Survey (EIS) and Academic Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ). The instruments were validated by experts in educational psychology, Measurement and evaluation. Reliability of the items in the EIS were 0.71 for Self-awareness, 0.77 for self-regulation, 0.82 for motivation, 0.88 for social skills and the ARQ was realized at 0.89 respectively using Cronbach alpha. Simple regression was used to answer research questions 1-4 while multiple regression was used to answer research 5. Hypotheses 1-4 were tested using independent sample t-test associated with simple regression while hypothesis 5 was tested using ANOVA and t-test associated with multiple regressions. Findings revealed among others that Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills jointly accounts for 79% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that universities should incorporate self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills training in their curriculum to help students build resilience. It was concluded that students who have high level of self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation usually have academic resilience.*
Keywords*: Academic resilience, emotional intelligence, Federal University students.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary educational settings, particularly in higher education, the role of emotional intelligence (EI) has gained considerable attention as a vital determinant of students' academic performance, well-being and resilience. Emotional intelligence, as first conceptualized by Salovey and Mayer (1990), refers to the ability to perceive, understand, regulate and manage emotions, both within oneself and in relationships with others. Over the years, scholars such as Goleman (1995) have popularized this concept, emphasizing that emotional intelligence is just as important as cognitive intelligence (IQ) for success in various life domains, including education.

The academic environment in Nigerian universities is increasingly becoming more demanding and stressful for students. Students are often expected to meet high academic standards while simultaneously managing multiple personal, social and economic challenges. These pressures can have a detrimental effect on students' psychological well-being and academic performance if not properly managed. In this context, academic resilience, defined as the ability to effectively deal with academic stressors and bounce back from setbacks (Martin & Marsh, 2006), has become a key focus of research. It is the capacity to thrive academically despite experiencing adversity or challenges, such as poor grades, personal difficulties, or financial constraints.

Recent studies have begun to explore the intersection between emotional intelligence and academic resilience, with findings suggesting that students with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to handle academic stress and are more likely to display resilience in the face of challenges (Nwokolo & Ifeanyi, 2022; Adeyemo, 2019). These students are able to use their emotional skills, such as self-regulation and motivation, to maintain focus, manage frustration and persevere in their academic pursuits. However, while there has been extensive research on emotional intelligence and academic resilience separately, there is a growing need to explore the specific ways in which these two constructs are related, particularly in the context of Nigerian university students.

Emotional intelligence is increasingly recognized as a crucial skill that influences a variety of educational outcomes. Goleman (1995) asserts that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more adept at understanding their emotions and using this understanding to guide their thinking and behavior. This ability enables them to navigate social complexities in academic settings, manage interpersonal relationships and make more informed decisions, all of which contribute to better academic outcomes. In the educational context, emotional intelligence can be broken down into four key components: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills. Self-awareness refers to the ability to recognize one's emotions and their impact on others, while self-regulation involves the ability to control or redirect disruptive emotions and impulses. Motivation, in the context of emotional intelligence, refers to a passion to work for reasons that go beyond

money or status and is driven by internal factors such as a desire to achieve. Social skills involve proficiency in managing relationships and building networks, which are essential in a collaborative academic environment.

Several studies have demonstrated the significant role of emotional intelligence in aiding academic success. For instance, Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2018) found that university students with high emotional intelligence were better at managing stress, which in turn enhanced their academic performance. Similarly, Nwankwo and Obi (2021) reported that emotionally intelligent students exhibited higher levels of self-regulation, which allowed them to manage academic deadlines effectively and stay motivated despite challenges. These findings underscore the importance of emotional intelligence as a vital component of success in higher education, particularly in challenging academic environments like those found in Nigerian universities. Academic resilience, defined as the ability to effectively manage and recover from academic adversity, is essential for students to succeed in a rigorous and competitive academic environment. Students who are academically resilient do not allow setbacks, such as poor grades or academic failure, to derail their long-term goals. Instead, they exhibit perseverance, self-efficacy and an ability to adapt to changing circumstances. As noted by Martin and Marsh (2006), academic resilience is not merely the absence of failure but rather the ability to bounce back from setbacks with renewed determination and effort.

In Nigerian universities, where students often face a range of challenges, including large class sizes, inadequate resources and sometimes harsh socio-economic realities, the need for academic resilience is paramount. Research by Eze and Anene (2020) revealed that many Nigerian students struggle with balancing academic demands and personal challenges, leading to high levels of academic stress and burnout. However, students with high academic resilience were found to cope better with these pressures and were more likely to achieve academic success despite these challenges. The role of emotional intelligence in aiding academic resilience has been highlighted by several scholars. Adeyemo (2019), for example, found that emotional intelligence significantly predicted academic resilience in a sample of Nigerian undergraduates. His study revealed that students who were better able to manage their emotions were more likely to bounce back from academic setbacks and persist in their academic endeavors. Similarly, Nwokolo and Ifeanyi (2022) demonstrated that emotional intelligence, particularly components such as motivation and self-regulation, played a key role in helping students remain resilient in the face of academic adversity. The relationship between emotional intelligence and academic resilience is rooted in the ability of emotionally intelligent students to regulate their emotions, maintain motivation and develop effective social relationships, which in turn help them to navigate academic challenges. Research by Ogundokun and Adeyemo (2018) suggests that emotionally intelligent students are more likely to exhibit resilience because they are better able to manage their emotions in response to academic stress. This emotional regulation allows them to maintain focus on their academic goals even in the face of adversity. Furthermore, the motivational component of emotional intelligence is critical in aiding resilience. Students with high motivation are driven by a strong desire to succeed and

this intrinsic motivation enables them to persevere through academic difficulties. Studies by Nwankwo and Obi (2021) have shown that motivation is a key predictor of academic resilience, as students who are highly motivated are less likely to be discouraged by academic setbacks and more likely to keep striving towards their goals.

In addition, social skills, another component of emotional intelligence, are crucial for building supportive relationships that can enhance academic resilience. Students with strong social skills are better able to form positive relationships with peers, instructors and mentors, which provides them with a supportive network that can help them cope with academic challenges. Eze and Anene (2020) found that students who had strong social connections within their academic community were more likely to exhibit academic resilience, as they were able to seek help and encouragement from others when faced with difficulties. Emotional intelligence plays an important role in aiding academic resilience among university students. In the Nigerian context, where students face unique academic and personal challenges, the ability to manage emotions, stay motivated and develop strong social skills is essential for academic success. As highlighted by recent scholars, emotional intelligence not only helps students manage academic stress but also enables them to bounce back from setbacks and continue pursuing their academic goals. Future research should continue to explore the nuanced ways in which emotional intelligence influences academic resilience, particularly in different cultural and educational contexts, to better understand how these constructs interact to promote student success.

Academic resilience which is the ability to effectively adapt and persevere in the face of academic challenges is essential for university students especially in Nigeria, who often face numerous stressors such as limited resources, high competition, economic pressures and large class sizes. These challenges can lead to heightened stress, decreased academic motivation and increased dropout rates, making resilience a key factor in student success and retention. Students with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to cope with stress, manage frustration and stay motivated in the face of academic adversity. However, despite this potential connection, there is limited research specifically on how various components of EI (such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills) influence resilience among university students in Nigeria. Without a deeper understanding of this relationship, it is challenging to develop measures that could support students' emotional and academic well-being, reduce dropout rates and improve academic outcomes. The problem of the study therefore is to investigate relationship between emotional intelligence and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

The aim of this study is to investigate relationship between emotional intelligence and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria. Specifically, the objectives of this study are:
1. To determine the extent of relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.
2. To examine the extent of relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

3. To investigate the extent of relationship between motivation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.
4. To find out the extent of relationship between social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.
5. To determine the extent of joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

This study was guided by three research questions as follows:
1. What is the extent of relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?
2. What is the extent of relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?
3. What is the extent of relationship between motivation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?
4. What is the extent of relationship between social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?
5. What is the extent of joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance to guide this study.
1. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.
3. There is no significant relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.
4. There is no significant relationship between social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.
5. There is no significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

METHODOLOGY

The researcher adopted the correlational research design. The population of the study consists of all undergraduate students in federal Universities in Nigeria. As at the time of the study, 2024/2025 academic session, the total number of undergraduate students in federal universities in Nigerian was estimated at over 1.8 million spread across 43 federal universities (Statista, 2024). A sample size of 1827 federal university students. Stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used to draw the sample for the study. Two instruments were used for the study which are the Emotional Intelligence Survey (EIS) and Academic Resilience Questionnaire (ARQ). The EIS was adapted from Swinburne University Emotional Intelligence Test (SUIET) by Palmer and Stough

(2001) while the ARQ was adapted from Wagnild (1993). Instruments were validated by experts in Educational Psychology/Measurement and Evaluation. Reliability of the items in the EIS were 0.71 for Self-awareness, 0.77 for self-regulation, 0.82 for motivation, 0.88 for social skills and the ARQ was realized at 0.89 respectively using Cronbach alpha. Simple regression was used to answer research questions 1-4 while multiple regression was used to answer research 5. Hypotheses 1-4 were tested using independent sample t-test associated with simple regression while hypothesis 5 was tested using ANOVA and t-test associated with multiple regressions. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23 was used for the analysis.

Research Question 1: What is the extent of relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

Table 1: Simple regression analysis of the extent of relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.855	.752	.749

a. Predictor (Constant) Self-awareness

Table 1 shows that self-awareness and academic resilience obtained a correlation coefficient of R = 0.85 indicating a very high positive relationship. In answer to the research question, an R^2 of 0.752 was obtained and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.749. Based on the R^2 value of 0.752, it shows that 75% (0.752 x 100) variations in the academic resilience of undergraduate students is predicted by self-awareness while the remaining 24.8% are beyond its prediction.

Research Question 2: What is the extent of relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

Table 2: Simple regression analysis of the extent of relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.792	.703	.698

a. Predictor (Constant) Self-regulation

Table 2 shows that self-regulation and academic resilience obtained a correlation coefficient of R = 0.79 indicating a high positive relationship. In answer to the research question, an R^2 of 0.703 was obtained and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.698. Based on the R^2 value of 0.703, it shows that 70% (0.703 x 100) variations in the academic resilience of undergraduate students is predicted by self-regulation while the remaining 29.7% are beyond its prediction.

Research Question 3: What is the extent of relationship between motivation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

Table 3: Simple regression analysis of the extent of relationship between motivation and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.811	.784	.781

    a.   Predictor (Constant) Motivation

Table 3 shows that motivation and academic resilience obtained a correlation coefficient of R = 0.81 indicating a very high positive relationship. In answer to the research question, an R^2 of 0.784 was obtained and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.781. Based on the R^2 value of 0.784, it shows that 78% (0.784 x 100) variations in the academic resilience of undergraduate students is predicted by motivation while the remaining 21.6% are beyond its prediction.

Research Question 4: What is the extent of relationship between social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

Table 4: Simple regression analysis of the extent of relationship between social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.566	.435	.432

    a.   Predictor (Constant) social skills

Table 4 shows that social skills and academic resilience obtained a correlation coefficient of R = 0.56 indicating a moderate positive relationship. In answer to the research question, an R^2 of 0.435 was obtained and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.432. Based on the R^2 value of 0.435, it shows that 43% (0.435 x 100) variations in the academic resilience of undergraduate students is predicted by social skills while the remaining 56.5% are beyond its prediction.

Research Question 5: What is the extent of joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria?

Table 5: Simple regression analysis of the extent of joint relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience among university students in Nigeria.

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2
1	.896	.799	.795

    a.   Predictor (Constant) self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills

Table 5 shows that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience obtained a correlation coefficient of R = 0.896 indicating a moderate positive relationship. In answer to the research question, an R^2 of 0.799 was obtained and an adjusted R^2 value of 0.795. Based on the R^2 value of 0.799, it shows that 79% (0.799 x 100) variations in the academic resilience of undergraduate students is predicted by self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills while the remaining 20.1% are beyond its prediction.

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Table 6: t-test analysis of the significant relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.816	.162		4.997	.000
	Self-awareness	.347	.062	.548	12.526	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Academic resilience						

Table 6 revealed that β = 0.347, with a standard error value of 0.62. The t test value of t = 12.526 with an Sig of .000 was obtained. The Sig. of .000 is significant at 0.05 alpha level (t = 12.526, p > Sig. .000) therefore, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria is rejected and the alternative is accepted. Therefore, there is significant relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Table 7: t-test analysis of the significant relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.629	.276		2.822	.000
	Self-regulation	.427	.042	.687	11.344	.000
a. Dependent Variable: Academic resilience						

Table 7 revealed that β = 0.427, with a standard error value of 0.42. The t test value of t = 11.344 with an Sig of .000 was obtained. The Sig. of .000 is significant at 0.05 alpha level (t = 11.344, p > Sig. .000) therefore, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria is rejected and the alternative is accepted. Therefore, there is significant relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Table 8: t-test analysis of the significant relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

| Model | | Unstandardized Coefficients | | Standardized Coefficients | | |
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.591	.178		1.632	.000
	Motivation	.528	.039	.738	11.628	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Academic resilience

Table 8 revealed that β = 0.528, with a standard error value of 0.39. The t test value of t = 11.628 with an Sig of .000 was obtained. The Sig. of .000 is significant at 0.05 alpha level (t = 11.628, p > Sig. .000) therefore, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria is rejected and the alternative is accepted. Therefore, there is significant relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 4: There is no significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Table 8: Summary of ANOVA on the significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	47382.127	4	2748.561	182.322	.001
	Residual	18933.628	1822	21.42		
	Total	66,315.755	1826			

a. Dependent Variable: JS

b. Predictors: (Constant), Divergent, Holistic, Analytic

Table 8 reveals that an *F*-value of 182.322 was obtained at degree of freedom of 4 and 1822 at .001 level of significance (p = .001 ≤ 0.05). Thus, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria is rejected. In other words, there is significant relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria.

Table 9: Relative contribution of components of emotional intelligence (self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills) on academic resilience.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	7.089	.826		8.580	.000
	Self-awareness	.926	.032	.729	29.001	.000
	Self-regulation	.059	.070	.067	.838	.002
	Motivation	.103	.086	.103	1.197	.002
	Social skills	.067	.060	.038	.349	.001

Table 9 revealed the beta value in relation to the relative contribution each of the emotional intelligence have on academic resilience shows self-awareness contributed highest (0.926), followed by motivation (0.103), self-regulation (0.067) and then social skills (0.067). It is found that all the components of emotional intelligence made a significant impact on academic resilience of university students in Nigeria

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The findings of the study are discussed as follows:
Self-awareness accounts for 75% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between self-awareness and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. This indicates that when the self-awareness of students increases, there is the tendency that their academic resilience would increase and vice and versa. This finding was envisaged by the researcher as a student with low self-awareness would find it difficult to cope with school activities which will invariably affect his/her academic activities. This finding agreed with Adebayo (2018) where he revealed that self-aware students are better able to set realistic academic goals, seek help when necessary and apply adaptive strategies, which are all components of academic resilience. Similarly, the finding also agreed with Babatunde and Oladipo (2020) where they revealed that resilient students are more likely to achieve academic success despite obstacles, contributing positively to Nigeria's overall educational progress.

Self-regulation accounts for 70% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between self-regulation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. This indicates that when the self-regulation of students increases, there is the tendency that their academic resilience would increase and vice and versa. This finding was also envisaged by the researcher as a student with high self-regulation should be able to set achievable goals and manage stress and invariably do well in their academic activities. This finding agreed with Owolabi and Iyiola (2019) where they revealed that students who exhibit high levels of self-regulation are better equipped to remain focused, manage stress and adapt to setbacks, which are core aspects of academic resilience. Similarly, the finding also agreed with Eze (2020) where he revealed that self-regulated students are more likely to set realistic goals, manage their time effectively and utilize adaptive coping strategies, which helps resilience in academics.

Motivation accounts for 78% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between motivation and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. This indicates that when the motivation of students increases, there is the tendency that their academic resilience would increase and vice and versa. This finding was also envisaged by the researcher as motivation goes a long way in achieving goals at any circumstance which include academic activities. This finding agreed with Bamidele (2020) where he revealed that students with strong intrinsic or extrinsic motivation are more likely to persevere, adapt and recover from setbacks in their educational journey, contributing to academic resilience. Similarly, the finding also agreed with Oladipo and Agboola (2018) where they revealed that motivated students are more likely to set achievable goals, use effective study strategies and seek support when needed.

Social skills accounts for 43% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. This indicates that when the social skills of students increase, there is the tendency that their academic resilience would increase and vice and versa. This finding was envisaged by the researcher as a student with low social skills would struggle in a university environment in navigating through the challenges of academic activities. This finding agreed with Adewale and Olanrewaju (2018) where they revealed that students with well-developed social skills are better able to access social support, resolve conflicts and form connections with peers and teachers, which helps them remain engaged and persistent in their studies despite setbacks. Similarly, the finding also agreed with Ogunleye and Afolabi (2019) where they revealed that social skills contribute to positive relationships that increases a sense of belonging, which can bolster resilience and help students persevere in their educational pursuits.

Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills jointly accounts for 79% variation in academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. It was also revealed that there is significant positive relationship between self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, social skills and academic resilience of university students in Nigeria. This indicates that when all the components

of emotional intelligence of students increase, there is the tendency that their academic resilience would increase and vice and versa. This finding was envisaged by the researcher as emotional intelligence helps students to manage stress, maintain motivation and stay focused. This finding agreed with Ifeanyi & Afolabi (2020) where they revealed that emotional intelligence helps better relationships with peers and teachers, creating a supportive environment that enhances academic resilience.

CONCLUSION

It was concluded that students who have high level of self-awareness, self-regulation and motivation usually have academic resilience. Social skills do not have much effect on academic resilience of university students. Emotional intelligence have high impact on academic resilience of university students.

Recommendations
Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:
1. Integrate Emotional Intelligence Development in Curriculum: Universities should incorporate self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation and social skills training in their curriculum to help students build resilience.
2. Provide Counselling Services: the university management should establish accessible counselling services focused on emotional intelligence, particularly in managing stress and maintaining motivation.
3. Students with low emotional intelligence should be encouraged to read books that can help improve their emotional intelligence.

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