

# Emotional Intelligence and Socio-Economic Background as Determinant of Academic Achievement Among Students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State-Nigeria

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## Abstract

This paper investigated the relationship of Emotional Intelligence, Socio-Economic Background and Academic Achievement among Students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State-Nigeria. Correlation designed was used for the study. Sample size of two hundred and seventy (270) students was drawn from five faculties in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. Hypotheses formulated for the study were tested with Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) and it was revealed from the study that all the hypotheses were rejected. The results showed that significant relationship exists between emotional intelligent and academic achievement ( $r = 0.761$ ,  $p = 0.001$ ). Also, significant relationship exists between socio-economic background and academic achievement ( $r = 0.711$ ,  $p = 0.000$ ). It was therefore recommended that, among others, The University counseling psychologists and lecturers should focus on teaching emotional intelligence as a strategy to develop academic behaviours and attitudes of students at the university. When students are educated to be emotionally intelligent, their general performance can be improved; and parents should give their children the adequate support needed, so as to enhance their academic achievement.

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## **Background to the Study**

Education is an important pillar of societal development, shaping individuals and communities while driving progress and development; it is of the most significant outcomes of an academic achievement of students' in tertiary institutions. Academic achievement is the attainment obtained by a child in the lesson taught, which may include experience, knowledge, skill and the likes. The knowledge and skill are measured in student's Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA); the child's good or poor performance does not depend solely on attribute the child is born with, but his family background, social contacts, teachers, overall climate in his school, and assessment procedure.

Academic achievement may be defined as excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as co-curricular activities. Cohen and Garcia (2006) define academic achievement as “knowledge attaining ability or degree of competence in school. Task usually measured by standardized test and expressed in a grade or unit based on students' performance/achievement”. Cohen and Apfel (2009) refer to academic performance as “the knowledge obtained or skill developed in the school subjects usually designed by the test scores or marks assigned by the teacher”. Achievement of student in the classroom takes a central role in the academic development of the students. Parents, teachers and school administrators take cognizance of the academic well-being of the students.

Yardsticks are set by school authorities to measure performance, the standard set by the university will determine whether a student is performing well or not. In the assessment of performance, Pekrun and Elliot (2006) argued that achievement is the behaviour of an individual that can be directly observed by another individual. Therefore, academic achievement has been seen as a term used for student based on how well they are doing in studies and classes. Academic achievement for university student is also seen as the extent to which a student has achieved his educational goals. This means that the student's academic performance is measured by the extent to which he or she has reached the educational goal he has set for himself. The university measures academic achievement in several ways which include Continuous Assessment Test (C.A.T) and a number of standardized test and examinations (Pekrun & Perry, 2007).

It has, however, been established that despite an individual having the intellectual potential to succeed at institutions of higher learning, he or she may experience difficulty dealing with emotional issues, have poor relationships, and be ineffective in his or her decision making (Goleman 1998 cited in Aruna 2014). These observations, among others, have led to the realization that individuals from changing populations may require more than intellectual abilities to exist and thrive academically. High emotional intelligence can contribute positively to student learning process (Svetlana, 2007). Students low on emotional intelligence may find failure more difficult to deal with, which undermines their academic motivation, (Drago, 2004 cited in Aruna, 2014). However, Yazici, Seyis and Altun (2011) observed that One of the dimensions of emotional intelligence "being aware of the emotions" was found to be a positive predictor of academic success of students, moreover the academic achievement differed by socio-economic status. Students with higher level of socio-economic

income had meaningfully higher academic average than academic average of students with middle socio-economic income and low socio-economic income.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In the educational landscape of Nigeria, specifically within Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State, there is a growing concern about the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence, socio-economic background, and academic achievement among students. This complex nexus warrants an in-depth exploration as it holds significant implications for both individual student success and the broader educational system. Emotional Intelligence concerns have garnered increasing attention in recent years due to their pervasive impact on students' overall well-being and academic performance. The University environment can be stressful, demanding, and unfamiliar, posing challenges to students' level of intelligence. Furthermore, the assumption that I know it all by most students often discourages them from seeking necessary support on their emotional intelligence which may hinder their academic progress.

Socio-economic background is a multifaceted factor that encompasses financial resources, family support systems, and access to educational opportunities. In a region characterized by varying degrees of economic disparities, understanding how socio-economic factors influence students' academic pursuits is crucial. Students from disadvantaged backgrounds may face additional barriers, including inadequate access to educational materials, limited access to extracurricular activities, and higher work-family responsibilities, which could affect their academic performance and overall well-being.

Academic achievement is a central concern of any educational institution, as it reflects the effectiveness of the educational process. To ensure that students reach their full potential, it is essential to examine how emotional intelligence and socio-economic factors influence their academic outcomes. Low emotional intelligence can lead to decreased motivation, impaired concentration, and diminished overall cognitive functioning, while socio-economic disadvantages may limit access to resources that promote academic success. Therefore, this research aims to comprehensively investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, socio-economic background, and academic achievement among students at Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria.

### **Review of Related Studies**

In education, emotions have been considered as supplementary for learning process. It is an essential element of one's personality and also of life. In both personal and professional survival, emotional intelligence plays a significant role. Elias (2004), however, has started to indicate that Emotional Intelligence can be considered as a necessary component of any educational society, he defined it as a set of skills necessary for effective social interaction and classroom success: emotional recognition and regulation, self-control, goal setting, social responsibility, empathy, problem solving, conflict resolution, and skills needed for leadership and effective group participation. Goleman (1996) cited in Aruna (2014) concluded that Emotional intelligence can predict academic success better than traditional measures of

intelligence. There are numerous factors that affects Academic achievement of students and one of such is emotional intelligence.

In the span of last twenty-year, Emotional Intelligence (EI) concept has become very popular parameter of a person knowledge, skill and abilities in office, profession, school, personal life and overall success. Now it is being considered widely that emotional intelligence is also required for the job satisfaction, motivation, decision taking in adverse situations etc. It is felled now that inclusion of emotional intelligence in higher education is needed because it will make students able to reduce their academic pressure and in becoming a better decision maker. Emotional intelligence is not only useful for their academic life but also useful for post academic life.

Walsh-Portillo (2011) has reported a significant positive relationship between academic success and higher emotional intelligence on the basis of various studies. Therefore, Ahmad (2012), have asserted that the fundamental purpose of the school, college, and university education that students need is not only to get mastery in academics or subject matter but to study and realize how to manage their emotions, be responsible and empathetic, and get practice to make accurate judgments and sound decisions. Moreover, the students can make alternative choices and deal with conflict, and can play a positive role in the community as constructive, committed and effective citizens.

Jatinder (2014) found significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and Achievement scores while Nelson and Low (2004) in one of their studies emphasized that Emotional intelligence skills have a great impact on students' achievement and retention especially during transition period of high school graduates in the first year of college. Socio-economic background relates to a combination of an individual's income, occupation and social background. Socio-economic background is a key determinant of success and future life chances. According to Richman, Johnson and Boxham (2006), parent's education is one of the strongest predictors of cognitive performance and academic attainment of students, among other aspects of socio- economic status. Mukherjee (1999) states that socio economic status is used as a measure of an individual's or group's social position in the community.

Mukherjee (1999) also reported that mothers' education is the strong predictor of students' academic achievement. Socioeconomic status is a term used by sociologists, economists, and other social scientists to describe the class standing of an individual or group. It is measured by a number of factors, including income, occupation, and education, and it can have either positive or negative impact on a student's life (Ashley, 2019). Oakes and Rossi (2002) assert that it is a fact that in families where the parents are privileged educationally, socially and economically, they promote a higher level of achievement in their offspring. According to Jeynes (2002), the socio-economic status of a child is usually determined by parental occupational status and income level, and the environment in which the child is brought up.

It is also affected by parents' involvement in learning activities and effective parent-teacher relationship. It is understood that low socio-economic status negatively and depressingly

affects students' academic motivation and leads to test anxiety due to high additional stress and tension at home, thereby affecting students' academic achievement in the long run. Studies by Eamon (2005) and Jeynes (2002) have established that socioeconomic status affects students' outcome. According to McNeal (2001), socioeconomic status has also been shown to override other educational influences such as parental involvement in their children's schooling. Munir, Faiza, Jamal, Daud and Iqbal (2023) lamented that socio-economic status predicted academic outcomes and higher socio-economic students fare better academically.

On the basis of researches quoted it can be said that fair amount of studies has been conducted on Emotional intelligence and Socio-economic status and their correlation with Academic achievement but there is dearth of studies showing predictive value of Emotional intelligence and Socio-economic status on Academic achievement of students. An attempt was made to fill the research gap of the same. The present study aims to throw light by predicting Academic achievement of students in tertiary institution employing the variables Emotional intelligence and Socio-economic status.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of this study are as follows:

- i. To ascertain the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State-Nigeria.
- ii. To ascertain the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria, Kaduna State-Nigeria.

### **Research Questions**

The study answered the following research questions:

- i. What is the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students in the study area?
- ii. What is the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students in the study area?

### **Hypotheses**

The following hypotheses were tested at 0.05 alpha level of significance:

- i. There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students in the study area.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students in the study area.

### **Methodology**

The design adopted in conducting this research is correlation design. The population of this study was made up of 300 level students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Their number stands at eight hundred and eighty-seven (887) students across the five (5) faculties that was



randomly selected. The sample of this study is 270 students. This sample is drawn from the entire population of 300 level students which is 887. The selection conforms with the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) prescription. The proportionate sampling technique was used in the allocation of samples to the various five faculties. This is because the faculties differ in their population and to ensure equitable distribution of the sample, a proportionate sampling technique was appropriate. However, the research purposefully targets 300 level students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. These students at 300 level have stayed enough in the college. Three instruments were used for this study. The instruments are Emotional Intelligence Inventory (EII), Socio-Economic Background Inventory (SEBI) and Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) of students. To ascertain the validity of the instrument, the researchers submitted the copies to experts in the field of educational psychology for validation. All the instruments were validated to determine the face and content validity, their relevance and appropriateness in the study. The reliability coefficient was established using Cronbach Alpha. Thus, emotional intelligence has the reliability of .763 while socio-economic background scale has the reliability index of .879. The instruments are reliable as both have an appreciable internal consistency. The data collected were analyzed using inferential statistics. Pearson Product Moment Correlation PPMC(r) was used to test the study hypotheses. The hypotheses were tested at a 0.05 alpha level of significance. SPSS version 25.0 was used for the analysis.

## Results

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

**Table 1:** Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement

Variables	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Df	Correlation matrix	P
Emotional Intelligence	270	30.38	12.35	268	0.761**	0.001
Academic achievement	270	3.02	0.589			

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that a significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. This is because the computed p-value of 0.001 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance with a correlation index r level of 0.761. The relationship between the two variables is directly proportional. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University Zaria is hereby rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

**Table 2:** Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) statistics on the relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. dev.	Df	Correlation matrix	P
Socio economic background	270	50.2593	8.92115	268	0.711**	0.000
Academic achievement	270	3.02	0.589			

\*\**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)*

Results of the Pearson product-moment correlation (PPMC) statistics showed that a significant relationship exists between socio-economic background and academic achievement. This is because the computed p-value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index  $r$  level of 0.711. The relationship between the two variables is directly proportional. Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between socio-economic background and academic achievement among students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is hereby rejected.

### Discussions

The finding of this study revealed that a significant relationship exists between emotional intelligence and academic achievement. The relationship between the variables is directly proportional. It enables individuals to realize their potential, productivity, possible contribution to the community they live in and to adequately cope with everyday stressful situations. This finding agrees with that of Jatinder (2014) who found significant correlation between Emotional intelligence and Achievement scores while Nelson and Low (2004) in one of their studies emphasized that Emotional intelligence skills have a great impact on students' achievement and retention especially during transition period of high school graduates in the first year of college.

Finding of this study also revealed that a significant relationship exists between socio-economic background and academic achievement. This finding collaborates with that of Munir, Faiza, Jamal, Daud and Iqbal (2023) lamented that socio-economic status predicted academic outcomes and higher socio-economic students fare better academically. The finding also agrees with that of Jeynes (2002) who posited that the socio-economic status of a child is usually determined by parental occupational status and income level, and the environment in which the child is brought up. It is also affected by parents' involvement in learning activities and effective parent-teacher relationship. It is understood that low socio-economic status negatively and depressingly affects students' academic motivation and leads to test anxiety due to high additional stress and tension at home, thereby affecting students' academic achievement in the long run.

### Conclusion

From the result of this study, it is concluded that emotional intelligence and socio-economic background have significant relationship with academic achievement. Thus, students with high emotional intelligence will show a positive attitude toward learning while students from low socio-economic background will have poor academic achievement and vice versa.

## Recommendations

1. The university counseling psychologists and lecturers should focus on teaching emotional intelligence as a strategy to develop academic behaviours and attitudes of students at the university. When students are educated to be emotionally intelligent, their general performance can be improved.
2. Parents should give their children the adequate support needed, particularly in the area of finance. This will further enhance their academic achievement.

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