

IMPACT OF EMOTIONAL AND SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT ON ACADEMIC MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE AMONG PUBLIC SENIOR SECONDARY STUDENTS IN KADUNA STATE

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Abstract

This study explored the impact of emotional and social adjustment on academic motivation and performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. A correlational research design was used, with a study population of 173,070 students from public secondary schools in the state. Using simple random sampling, 384 students from ten public secondary schools were selected based on the recommendations of Research Advisor (2006). Four research objectives and their corresponding hypotheses guided the study. Data collection involved three instruments: the Emotional Adjustment Scale (EAS), which assessed factors like self-esteem, resilience, and emotional regulation; the Social Adjustment Scale (SAS), which measured peer relationships, teacher interactions, and family support; and the Academic Motivation and Performance Questionnaire (AMPQ), which evaluated motivation through self-reported scales and academic performance based on recent school records. These instruments were validated by experts, and a reliability coefficient of 0.76 for each scale was confirmed through a pilot study. Data analysis was conducted using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. Findings indicated that emotional adjustment significantly impacts academic motivation ($p = 0.007$) and academic performance ($p = 0.000$). Social adjustment also showed a significant impact on both academic motivation ($p = 0.030$) and academic performance ($p = 0.000$). Based on these results, it was recommended that government and schools establish counseling services to support students' emotional and social development, and that schools actively engage parents to support their children's emotional and social adjustment.

Keywords: Emotional adjustment, social adjustment, academic motivation, and academic performance

Introduction

Adolescence, the developmental stage encompassing secondary school years, is marked by critical emotional and social transitions that shape students' overall academic experience. Emotional and social adjustment key aspects of adolescent development play a vital role in students' ability to navigate the school environment, build relationships, and maintain focus on academic goals (Parker et al., 2023). In today's educational landscape, particularly among senior secondary school students, the capacity for emotional and social adjustment has a profound impact on academic motivation and performance. Emotional adjustment refers to how well individuals manage their emotional states, cope with stress, and adapt to challenging situations, while social adjustment is concerned with students' abilities to interact positively with peers, teachers, and the broader school community. These two factors together influence students' overall psychological well-being and directly affect their academic engagement and success (Rahman, 2022).

Emotional adjustment, which includes managing stress, developing self-esteem, and building resilience, has been shown to impact students' academic motivation. Emotional adjustment is a predictor of students' ability to remain focused and motivated in their studies. Research indicates that emotionally

well-adjusted students manage academic stress better and exhibit higher engagement levels (Salami, 2010; Akpan & Ogbe, 2022). In a study by Alhassan and Musa (2021), it was found that Nigerian secondary school students with high levels of emotional regulation reported greater motivation and academic satisfaction. Another recent study by Li and Sun (2023) confirmed that emotional stability positively correlates with students' intrinsic motivation, as those who can manage anxiety and stress tend to set more meaningful academic goals.

In a study by Parker et al. (2023), emotionally well-adjusted students reported higher levels of academic motivation, as emotional regulation enables students to focus on tasks and remain persistent in challenging situations. This connection between emotional adjustment and motivation suggests that students with poor emotional regulation may struggle to stay motivated in academic environments, especially under stress. Students with strong emotional adjustment skills tend to have higher grades and better overall performance. According to a study by Durlak et al. (2011), interventions focused on improving emotional adjustment, such as emotional intelligence training, led to significant improvements in academic outcomes. More recently, Olawale and Azeez (2023) found that Nigerian students with better emotional adjustment skills performed better academically due to reduced anxiety and increased concentration.

Social adjustment, or the ability to develop and maintain supportive relationships with peers, teachers, and family members, is another critical factor impacting academic outcomes. Social adjustment has been widely associated with increased motivation. Research has shown that students with strong social support networks often experience greater academic motivation and better performance, as they benefit from encouragement, advice, and emotional support (Anderman & Freeman, 2022). Positive peer relationships, for example, contribute to a sense of belonging, which has been associated with increased academic engagement and persistence. Alegre (2014) highlighted that student who feel socially integrated are more likely to have higher motivation because they experience support and encouragement from peers and teachers. Adeyemi et al. (2021) explored social integration in Nigerian schools and found that students who felt connected to their peers demonstrated greater academic motivation. Similarly, Gbadamosi and Olajide (2022) noted that supportive social relationships in school can act as a buffer against academic stress, making students more resilient and motivated to perform well.

Social adjustment is also positively correlated with academic success. Research by Chukwuemeka (2023) showed that Nigerian students who experienced a sense of belonging and received support from their peers and teachers were more likely to achieve high grades. Social support systems, whether from family, peers, or teachers, appear to create a conducive learning environment, which enhances students' academic performance. Yakubu and Bello (2024) examined the role of social support in Nigerian public schools, finding that students with stronger social networks were less likely to feel isolated or disengaged from academic tasks. This study underscores the importance of social adjustment in Kaduna State, where students may face limited access to family support due to socio-economic factors and limited school resources for fostering a supportive environment.

In the educational sphere, academic motivation is the internal drive that influences a student's engagement, persistence, and enthusiasm for learning. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes that motivation is shaped by intrinsic and extrinsic factors, which are often impacted by students' social environments and emotional well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2023). Research has shown that emotionally well-adjusted students, who can manage stress and regulate emotions, are more likely to engage in their studies with persistence and achieve higher academic success (Anderman et al., 2022). Furthermore, a supportive social network involving peers, teachers, and family members enhances motivation by promoting a sense of belonging and security, thus enabling students to thrive academically (Eze & Oluwatobi, 2023).

Studies in educational psychology frequently note that emotional and social adjustment often interact to affect academic outcomes. For instance, students who have both high emotional regulation and positive social relationships tend to perform better academically than those who lack either factor alone. This interaction suggests that emotional stability helps students navigate social challenges, while social support enhances emotional well-being, creating a positive feedback loop that boosts both motivation and academic success (Ryan & Deci, 2023).

Maslow's theory, which categorizes needs from basic physiological requirements to self-actualization, supports the idea that emotional stability and social belonging are foundational to achieving higher academic goals. Students must feel emotionally secure and socially integrated before they can be fully motivated to excel academically (Maslow, 1943). Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in motivation. According to Deci and Ryan (2000), students' emotional and social adjustments can enhance these factors, as a supportive environment fosters intrinsic motivation by satisfying their need for connection and competence. Social Cognitive Theory by Bandura highlights that an individual's beliefs, behaviors, and environment are interlinked. For students, positive emotional regulation and social integration can lead to improved self-efficacy, which in turn influences their academic motivation and performance (Bandura, 1986).

In recent studies within Nigeria, researchers have consistently identified the importance of emotional and social factors in student academic outcomes. Alabi and Bello (2023) conducted a study among senior secondary school students in Northern Nigeria, which demonstrated that emotional and social adjustments were significant predictors of students' academic motivation and performance. Abubakar and Ibrahim (2022) specifically looked at the impact of socio-emotional factors in Kaduna State and found that students with a strong support system were more motivated and performed better academically. This study highlighted that public schools with limited support services faced challenges in fostering emotional and social adjustment among students, which negatively impacted their academic outcomes.

Despite a growing body of research, there is limited focus on emotional and social adjustment among secondary students in Kaduna State. Much of the existing literature examines these factors in tertiary institutions or among younger students, creating a gap in understanding the unique experiences of senior secondary school students in this region. Understanding how emotional and social adjustments impact academic motivation and performance becomes essential for developing effective educational interventions. This study, therefore, seeks to explore the impact of these adjustments on senior secondary students' motivation and performance in Kaduna State, contributing to the growing body of research on socio-emotional factors in academic outcomes.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study are to determine.

1. the relationship between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
2. the relationship between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
3. the relationship between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
4. the relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What is the relationship between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State?
2. What is the relationship between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State?
3. What is the relationship between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State?
4. What is the relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested

1. There is no significant relationship between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
2. There is no significant relationship between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
3. There is no significant relationship between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.
4. There is no significant relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.

Methodology

The study employed correlational research design. This design is suitable as it enables the researcher to investigate relationships among variables without manipulating them. The study population comprises of 173,070 public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. Simple random sampling techniques was used to select 383 students from ten public secondary schools. The sample size of 383 students were based on the recommendation of research advisor (2006) which indicated that 383 sample size for population within one hundred thousand will represent the cross section of the entire population.

Three instruments were used to collect data namely, Emotional Adjustment Scale (EAS) to measure aspects like self-esteem, resilience, and emotional regulation, Social Adjustment Scale (SAS) to assess peer relationships, teacher interactions, and family support and Academic Motivation and Performance Questionnaire (AMPQ) to measure motivation using self-reported scales and performance based on recent academic scores from school records. The instruments were validated by experts and reliability coefficient of 0.76 and 0.76 respectively was established after pilot study. The researcher administered the questionnaires in selected schools, following ethical guidelines to obtain informed consent and maintain confidentiality. Trained research assistants were used to support data collection, ensuring clarity in the administration process. Data was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation.

Result

Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r**	P
Emotional Adjustment	384	42.451	7.176	0.898**	.007
Academic Motivation	384	35.793	5.808		

Correlation is at 0.05 level of significance

The findings from the table 1 revealed that the calculated p value of 0.07 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index r level of 0.898**. This means that there is a correlation between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship

between emotional adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State was rejected

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r**	P
Emotional Adjustment	384	42.451	7.176	0.625**	.000
Academic Performance	384	28.955	7.262		

Correlation is at 0.05 level of significance

Table 2 revealed that the calculated p value of 0.00 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index r level of 0.625**. This means that there is a relation between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between emotional adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State was rejected

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r**	P
Social Adjustment	384	28.953	7.176	0.563**	.030
Academic Motivation	384	35.793	5.808		

Correlation is at 0.05 level of significance

The findings from the table 3 revealed that the calculated p value of 0.030 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index r level of 0.563**. This means that there is a correlation between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social adjustment and academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State was rejected

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation on relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r**	P
Social Adjustment	384	28.953	7.260	0.903**	.000
Academic Performance	384	28.955	7.262		

Correlation is at 0.05 level of significance

The result of Table 4 revealed that the calculated p value of 0.000 is lower than the 0.05 alpha level of significance at a correlation index r level of 0.903**. This means that there is a relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State. Therefore, the Null Hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between social adjustment and academic performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State was rejected.

Discussion

The study investigated the impact of emotional and social adjustment on academic motivation and performance among public senior secondary students in Kaduna state. The study revealed that emotional adjustment has a significant impact on academic motivation among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State (p = 0.007) this is in line with the study by Alhassan and Musa (2021), who

found that Nigerian secondary school students with high levels of emotional regulation reported greater motivation and academic satisfaction. Similarly, Li and Sun (2023) confirmed that emotional stability positively correlates with students' intrinsic motivation, as those who can manage anxiety and stress tend to set more meaningful academic goals. Additionally, Parker et al. (2023) asserted that emotionally well-adjusted students reported higher levels of academic motivation, as emotional regulation enables students to focus on tasks and remain persistent in challenging situations.

The study also revealed that emotional adjustment has significant impact on academic performance among public senior secondary students in Kaduna state ($p = 0.000$). This aligned with Durlak et al. (2011), interventions focused on improving emotional adjustment, such as emotional intelligence training, led to significant improvements in academic outcomes. More recently, Olawale and Azeez (2023) found that Nigerian students with better emotional adjustment skills performed better academically due to reduced anxiety and increased concentration.

The study also revealed that social adjustment has significant impact on academic motivation among public senior secondary students in Kaduna state ($p = 0.030$). This finding agreed with the assertion of Anderman and Freeman, (2022) who stated that students with strong social support networks often experience greater academic motivation and better performance, as they benefit from encouragement, advice, and emotional support. More so, Alegre (2014) highlighted that student who feel socially integrated are more likely to have higher motivation because they experience support and encouragement from peers and teachers. Additionally, Adeyemi et al. (2021) explored social integration in Nigerian schools and found that students who felt connected to their peers demonstrated greater academic motivation.

The study finally revealed that social adjustment has significant impact on academic performance among public senior secondary students in Kaduna state ($p = 0.000$). This corresponds with a study by Yakubu and Bello (2024) who examined the role of social support in Nigerian public schools, finding that students with stronger social networks were less likely to feel isolated or disengaged from academic tasks. Similarly, Research by Chukwuemeka (2023) showed that Nigerian students who experienced a sense of belonging and received support from their peers and teachers were more likely to achieve high grades. By implication, social support systems, whether from family, peers, or teachers, appear to create a conducive learning environment, which enhances students' academic performance.

Conclusion

The researchers investigated the impact of emotional and social adjustment on academic motivation and performance among public senior secondary students in Kaduna State. The study concluded that there is a significant impact of emotional adjustment, social adjustment on academic motivation and performance among public senior secondary school students in Kaduna State.

Recommendations

Based on findings the recommends as follows:

1. Government and Schools should establish counseling services focused on emotional and social development to support students in managing their emotions and developing social skills.
2. Schools should actively involve parents in supporting their children's emotional and social adjustment. Workshops for parents can help them understand the importance of emotional stability and social skills on their children's academic success and provide strategies for supporting these at home.
3. School administrators should work to establish safe, inclusive spaces where students feel accepted and valued. Reducing bullying and promoting inclusivity can have a positive effect on students' social adjustment, which is closely tied to their motivation and academic performance.

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