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## Research Article

# Emotional Intelligence, Academic Motivation and Self-Efficacy as Predictors of Academic Burnout Among Undergraduates in Adekunle Ajasin University, Akungba-Akoko, Ondo State Nigeria

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### Abstract

School burnout is an increasing area of research in the adolescent education literature. Therefore, this study investigated emotional intelligence, academic motivation and self-efficacy that predict academic burnout. The study was a cross-sectional survey that involved 250 undergraduates that were accidentally selected from a public university in Akoko region of Ondo State Nigeria. The sample comprised 98 females and 108 males, whose age's ranges between 18 years and 26 years. Data were collected with a questionnaire made up of four sections that measured the variables of interest in the study. Results of the data analysis showed that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, academic motivation jointly [ $R=.91$ ,  $R^2=.82$ ,  $F=312.64$ ,  $P<.05$ ] predict academic burnout. Result also confirm that emotional intelligence ( $\beta=.03$ ,  $t=.82$ ,  $p<.05$ ), academic motivation ( $\beta=.16$ ,  $t=4.7$ ,  $p<.05$ ), self-efficacy, ( $\beta=.84$ ,  $t=26.77$ ,  $p<.05$ ) independently predict academic burnout among university students. Demographic factor like gender also had no influence on academic burnout, while religion had influence on academic burnout. Based on these findings, the study recommended that the Ministry of Education and other stakeholders should provide platforms for developing and sustaining academic development through policy implementation programmes geared at improving learning abilities among undergraduates in impoverished societies.

**Keywords:** Burnout and Self-Efficacy; Emotional Intelligence; Motivation

### Introduction

#### Background to the Study

University students face many challenges in their pursuit of higher education. The continuing demands of schoolwork and presence of stressors may lead to negative outcomes like burnout. The term burnout was first introduced by Freudenberg, who defined it as "to fail, to wear out, or become exhausted by making excessive on energy, strength, or resources". The concept was further popularized with the development of the Maslach Burnout Inventory [1]. Maslach defined burnout as a syndrome

that is composed of three dimensions: emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and reduced personal accomplishment [1].

Burnout is a term mostly applied in organizational setting, and refers to a state of physical, emotional, and mental exhaustion that may result from long-term involvement in work situations that are emotionally demanding [1]. Burnout may be viewed as a syndrome that incorporates emotive breakdown and sense of depersonalization, decreased effectiveness at work, and a poor evaluation of one's performance. Conceptually similar to job/work burnout, school burnout is also in three dimensions, consisting of exhaustion due to academic demands, pessimism and detached attitude toward one's school/studies, and feelings of inadequacy/incompetency as a student [2]. Put simply therefore, school burnout

may be construed as a chronic school-related stress syndrome presenting as fatigue, experiences of cynicism about school and a sense of inadequacy as a scholar.

Previously, the research community had believed that burnout was strictly a 'job-related' condition that affected only workers, and sustained a perception which promoted the idea that persons not directly involved in economic-oriented activities could not experience burnout. However, emerging evidence from studies with samples drawn from student population has shown that students can and indeed do experience burnout. Findings from previous studies suggested that burnout may be a psychological phenomenon related to any activity involving exertion of mental and physical effort in pursuit of a goal of which academic pursuit is one [2].

Academic motivation is considered as an important factor in school adjustment and is largely anchored in the Self-Determination Theory [3]. This theory views motivation as a continuum with intrinsic and motivation at either end, and extrinsic motivation in the middle. Intrinsic motivation refers to engaging in an activity for its own sake and the experience of pleasure and satisfaction derived from participation. Individuals who are intrinsically motivated tend to have an internal locus of control, are driven to accomplish, seek intellectual stimulation, and are enthusiastic about learning new things while extrinsically motivated individuals pursue education to achieve contingent goals, rather than for an intrinsic enjoyment of learning [3]. The third major component of academic motivation, motivation (neither intrinsic nor extrinsic), refers to the relative absence of motivation. Unmotivated individuals experience feelings of incompetence and expectancies of uncontrollability. It occurs when individuals perceive their behaviors not resulting in a certain outcome and instead perceive their behaviors as caused by forces beyond their own control [3].

A significant conception related with school burnout is self-efficacy. Efficacy can be defined as the indispensable understanding, abilities and attitudes to successfully engage in a task [4]. The concept of self-efficacy, which is related with the self-perception of one's own competencies, was first introduced by Albert Bandura. Bandura (1986) [5] referred to it, as the belief of having the capacity to perform the expected tasks efficiently by organizing and carrying out the necessary activities. According to Bandura (1986) [5] self-efficacy is formed through four mechanisms. The first mechanism, experience or enactive attainment designates increase in the self-efficacy belief as a result of success in particular tasks because self-efficacy increases as a result of success.

Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer (2000), [6] individuals differ as to their abilities to practice effective control over their emotional lives. Such individual differences are now thought of as difference in emotional intelligence [7]. Oginska-Bulik (2005) [8] held that the ability to effectively deal with emotions and emotional

information in the workplace or school assist employees and student in addressing occupational or academic stress and retaining psychological health. According to Mayer and Salovey (1997) held that emotional intelligence consists of specific competencies that orchestrate skills in perceiving emotions, facilitate thought, understand emotions and manage emotions.

### **Statement of Problem**

Over the last decade, the Nigerian educational system has clamored for improved academic outcomes across all geo-political zones in the country. This is against the background that the academic system in Nigeria is not meeting up with the Millennium Developmental Goals for education. This has led to education stakeholders in Nigeria, to draw the attention of research in this direction, to bring about development in the overall outcome of academic performance across all spheres of academic endeavor and this has spurred research in this direction.

However, several studies have highlighted the issues such as poor grade, poor school engagement, school absenteeism among others has been the major output of academic burnout. These studies have provided short-term solutions and failing to ascertain and account for behaviours that may predict academic burnout among undergraduates in Afrique noire. It therefore follows that, research into this area of research interest becomes imperative; this is because it will lead attempts to providing long term solutions to academic problems and provide body of research on psychological variables that predicts academic burn among Nigeria students. This is attempt will help fill the lacuna that previous studies have neglected.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The general purpose of this study is to examine the relationship among emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, academic motivation and academic burnout. The specific objectives of the study were;

1. To examine whether emotional intelligence predicts academic burnout among undergraduates.
2. To examine whether academic motivation predicts academic burnout among undergraduates.
3. To examine whether self-efficacy predicts academic burnout among undergraduates.

### **Statement of Hypotheses**

Hypotheses for this study are as follows:

1. Emotional intelligence will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates.
2. Academic motivation will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates.

3. Self-efficacy will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates.
4. Emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and academic motivation will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates.

## Methods

### Research Design

The research employed a cross sectional survey design. The dependent variable was academic burnout and independent variables are; emotional intelligence, academic motivation and self-efficacy.

### Participant

Participants in the study were 207 student of Adekunle Ajasin University Akungba Akoko Ondo State, participant were accidentally sampled from 5 faculties in the university. Participant age ranged between 18-26. Sample distribution revealed that 98(47.3%) were female and 109 (52.7%) were males. Categorizations according to level indicated 47(22.7%) were 100 level student; 39(18.8%) were 200 level student; 59(28.5) were 300 level student; 51(24.6) were 400 level student; 11(5.3) were 400 level student. Categorization base on religion affiliation indicated that 137(66.2%) were Christian; 56(27.1%) were Muslim; 14(6.8) belong to traditional religion.

### Research Instrument

The instrument used was questionnaire. The questionnaire comprises of five sections (A-E) **Section A:** This section measure participant response to the demographic variable which are; gender, age, level, religion, and department.

**Section B:** Emotional intelligence Scale, the scale measure Emotional intelligence by Schutte (1993) is a Self-Report using four sub- scales: emotion perception, utilizing emotions, managing self- relevant emotions, and managing others' emotions. The SSEIT includes a 33-item self-report using 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree) scale for responses. Each sub-test score is graded and then added together to give the total score for the participant. The scale yielded a high reliability of  $r=.70$  for the study, Schutte and her colleges report a reliability rating of 0.90 for their emotional intelligence scale. Higher score indicates higher level of emotional intelligence vice versa

**Section C:** Academic Motivation Scale, the scale measure academic motivation by Vallerand (1992) This scale is designed based on the theory of autonomy (self-regulation) and three main dimensions of motivation examined namely: intrinsic motivation, external motivation and motivation. This scale has 28 questions with 7 subscales 4 items is dedicated to each subscale. This scale is a self-report and test subjects that is on 5-point scale (from

strongly agree = 1 to strongly disagree = 5) That any of mentioned words to what extent to his or her reasons going to school. The scale has a high reliability of .89 for the study, Vallerand Has reported Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of academic motivation test subscale between 0.83 to 0.86 higher score on the test indicate higher motivation vice versa.

**Section D:** Self-efficacy Scale, this scale measure self-efficacy is a self-report measure of self-efficacy by Schwarzer (1993). Is a 10 Items questionnaire with a Cronbach's alphas between .76 and .90 for the study the scale is on five response format 1= strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree, The General Self-Efficacy Scale is correlated to emotion, optimism, work satisfaction. Negative coefficients were found for depression, stress, health complaints, burnout, and anxiety. The total score is calculated by finding the sum of the all items. For the GSE, the total score ranges between 10 and 40, with a higher score indicating more self-efficacy.

**Section E:** Academic Burnout Scale, the scale was devise by Oldenburg (1990) The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory was adapted to measured academic burnout the scale has three subscales namely depersonalization, disengagement, exhaustion. Is a 16 item questionnaire, that is on a five-point response format ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 strongly disagree the scale yielded high reliability of  $r=.90$  for the study, Oldenburg report a subscale reliability for depersonalization  $r = .45$  to  $r = .68$ . The reliability of the exhaustion subscale has been found to range from  $\alpha = .74$  to  $\alpha = .85$ , and the reliability of the disengagement subscale from .73 to .85, and entire scale reliability of .09 score means higher tendency for academic burnout.

### Procedures

An oral inform consent was obtaining from participant who agreed to participant in this study. The administration and collection was done within five weeks because most of the participants took them home. At the end of this exercise, out of the 250 questionnaires that was distributed, 230 was retrieve, 207 were found to be good enough for analysis. 16 was not completely filled, 7 was mutilated. The sampling method used was accidental sampling technique, those who took it home were ask to return the questionnaire the next day

### Data Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation test was used to test the extent of relationship among study variables. Multiple regression was used to test hypothesis 1, 2, 3, and 4.

## Results

### Test of Relationship among the Study Variables

The first analysis involved inter-correlations of all the variables of the study.

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4
1. Emotional Intelligence	2.11	0.44	1			
2. Academic Motivation	2.31	0.49	.42**	1		
3. Self-Efficacy	2.2	0.72	.31**	.26**	1	
4. Academic Burn Out	2.22	0.55	.36**	.39**	.89**	1
** p < .01, *p < .05, N= 200						

**Table 1:** Correlation Matrix Showing the Mean, SD and Inter-Variable Relationships among Variables of the Study.

Table 1 above, show the result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation among study variables, it follows that emotional intelligence showed significant positive correlation with academic burnout ( $r = .36, p < .01$ ). Academic motivation showed significant positive relationship with academic burnout ( $r = .39, p < .01$ ) and self-efficacy indicated significant positive relationship with academic burnout ( $r = .89, p < .01$ ).

Variables	$\beta$	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	P	F
Emotional Intelligence	0.03	0.82	0.91	0.82	<.05	312.64*
Academic Motivation	0.16	4.7				
Self-Efficacy	0.84	26.77				
** p < 0.01, * p < 0.05						

**Table 2:** Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Prediction on Resilience.

Table 2 above, confirmed that emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .03, t = .82, p < .05$ ), academic motivation ( $\beta = .16, t = 4.7, p < .05$ ), self-efficacy ( $\beta = .84, t = 26.77, p < .05$ ) independently predict academic burnout. Therefore, hypothesis 1, 2, and 3 were accepted. Furthermore, emotional intelligent, academic motivation and self-efficacy jointly predict academic burnout [ $R = .91, R^2 = .82, F = 312.64, P < .05$ ] based on these results hypothesis 4 was accepted. Therefore, hypothesis 4 was confirmed.

## Discussion

From the above results in Table 1 and 2, the results show that hypothesis 1, which stated that emotional intelligence will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates was confirmed, and hypothesis one was accepted. This result was supported by theoretical insights offered by Hobfoll's Conservation of Resources (COR) theory [9]. According to COR theory, individuals who lack adequate and relevant resources are likely to experience cycles of resource losses, perceived threats of resource loss, or stress caused by failure to offset resource loss. Each of the above may lead to chronic depletion of emotional, cognitive, and physical resources, namely, to progressive job burnout [10].

Also, Maslach and her colleagues conceptualized burnout, and referred to it as a constellation of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and diminished personal accomplishment [1]. Schaufeli and Enzmann (1998) further corroborated that the

emotional exhaustion component of burnout (gauged by the MBI) and depression share on average 26% variance in their study. Another reason for the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and burnout was explained by Winefield & Anstey, (1991); Kirwan & Armstrong, (1995) cited in, Adebayo & Osagu, (2013) [11] who stated that individuals are usually involved in social interaction, and this relationship with others involves high interpersonal or emotional demands, which can lead to feelings of emotional exhaustion.

However, in hypothesis two, which state that academic motivation will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates was accepted and hypothesis two was accepted. This finding is in consonance with the study of Cazan, (2015) [12] who conducted a study among two hundred and two undergraduates reported that significant correlation between learning motivation, engagement and burnout. Pizarik, (2009) [13] examined the motivational orientation and burnout among undergraduate college students, Pizarik, (2009) [13] reported that intrinsic motivation to attend college was associated with lower levels of burnout, while amotivation and external regulation were associated with higher levels of burnout. Nix, Ryan, Manly & Deci, (1999) [14] suggested that individuals who experience greater levels of a motivation (e.g., lack of purpose, or intent regarding their reasons for attending college) were more likely to experience higher levels of exhaustion and cynicism, and lower levels of professional efficacy. These results support prior studies which

have found intrinsic motivation to be associated with positive affect and greater wellbeing and a motivation to be association with negative psychological outcomes such as decreased perceptions of competence and poor general wellbeing [13].

In hypothesis 3, which state that self-efficacy will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates was confirmed. Therefore, hypothesis three was accepted. This result is in consonance with the study of Friedman (2003) [15] who examined self-efficacy and burnout in teaching, Friedman (2003), [15] reported that perceived sense of self-efficacy was inversely correlated with perceived burnout. The lower the sense of sense of self-efficacy, the higher the perceived burnout, the salience of organizational influence efficacy, and consideration efficacy both are relations efficacies were noted as important variables in predicting burnout dimensions. Additionally, Aloe, Amo & Shanahan (2014) [16] investigated the role of classroom management self-efficacy and burnout, these authors reported in their findings that there is a significant relationship between classroom management self-efficacy and the three dimensions of burnout, suggesting that teachers with higher levels of classroom management self-efficacy are less likely to experience the feelings of burnout.

In hypothesis 4, which states that emotional intelligence, self-efficacy and academic motivation will significantly predict academic burnout among university undergraduates was confirmed. Therefore, the hypothesis was supported. The total contribution of all study variables jointly predicted burnout. Charkhabi, Abarghuei, and Hayati, (2013) [17] examined the association of academic burnout with self-efficacy and quality of learning experience among Iranian students. Charkhabi and his colleagues reported that correlations coefficients indicated that relationships between academic burnout and its components were statistically significant. They further explained that academic burnout and all of its dimensions had significant correlations with quality of learning experience among students.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings, the study has empirically demonstrated that students who perceived an increase sense of emotional intelligence, academic motivation and self-efficacy, showed higher tendency to academic burnout. Moreover, the results revealed the implications of academic burnout to psycho-social factors. The result of this study also showed that all the independent variables (emotional intelligence, academic motivation and self-efficacy) jointly predicted academic burnout.

## Limitations of the Study

The study has some limitations, and these limitations have both practical and research implications. The present study only made use of two hundred students which may not be adequate for

generalization. The study may also be susceptible to responder bias which is a common feature in survey studies such as the present study. Also, the study made use of accidental sampling technique due to time constraint which did not allow for more rigorous sampling technique.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made;

1. Ministry of education and other educational parastatals should use this study to formulate policies that will provide for the improvement and understanding of the roles of psycho-social factors in the education system.
2. Training and symposiums are to be organized in such a way that academic instructors and other mavens of the academic can train and enlighten students on the need and importance of emotional intelligence, motivation and self-efficacy in learning and overall development to equip them in acquiring competence in academic endeavors.
3. Policies and programmes are to be developed that help reduce burnout tendencies among students. This can be achieved by providing incentives that motivate learning in students. For example, the award of scholars and career possibilities for students who have excelled in the academic achievements.

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