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# Relationship between Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation among Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State

**Sulaiman Salihu Usman**
Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria
tsauri9050@gmail.com

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**Abstract**

This study examined the Relationship between Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation among Undergraduate Students of the Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State, Nigeria. The study was guided by two objectives and two corresponding research questions and hypotheses. Correlational survey research design was employed in the study. The population comprised 300 level undergraduate students of Faculty of Education of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, with a total of 2629 male and female of 2021/2022 Academic Session that were still in the programme in the year 2023, while the sample size consisted of 346 respondents. Data were collected using adopted questionnaires from Merrell (2002) School Social Behaviour Scale (SBSS). The scale consisted of 15 items measured on a 5-point Likert-Scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, to strongly disagree with a reliability coefficient of 0.861 using Cronbach's Alpha. While Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) was adopted from Kotera, Conway, and Green (2020). The scale consisted of 14 items, measured on a 5-point Likert-Scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, to strongly disagree with a reliability coefficient of 0.704 using Cronbach's Alpha. Data


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collected were statistically analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. The findings of the study revealed that undergraduate students of the Faculty of Education have high level of academic motivation as indicated by the mean of 45.94 as guided by the scoring procedure. There is significant positive relationship between prosocial behaviour and academic motivation r=.745 and p= .001; a significant negative relationship exists between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation r = -.674 and P = 0.002 among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. The researchers recommended that educational psychologists, counsellors, lecturers and parents should encourage students to enhance academic motivation by creating a positive and supportive learning environment. Also, students should be taught and encouraged on how to practice pro-social behaviour by fostering positive relationships with peers and teachers, and promoting intrinsic motivation since it boosts academic motivation and should play a critical role in discouraging anti-social behaviour since it is having negative relationship on academic motivation.

**Keywords:** Social Behaviour, Pro-Social Behaviour, Anti-Social Behaviour, Academic Motivation

## INTRODUCTION

One psychological construct that plays an important role in learning process is motivation. Motivation determines the level of effort students expend towards tasks and assignment. It also determines students' retention capacity and memory level. Arnold and Rowaan (2014) stated that motivation affects the academic performance of students in the following ways: motivation determines the time spent by a student on assignments, tasks or studying; thus enabling good time management skills. This statement was also supported by Meyer (2014) who believed that motivation in students is often reflected in their personal investment in time and effort, cognitive, emotional and behavioural engagement in school activities. Tella (2017) found that motivation has impact on the academic achievement of secondary school students irrespective of the gender; and that highly motivated students perform better academically than the low motivated students.

Motivation is conceptualised as a stimulating force that gives direction to human behaviours; the concept of academic motivation which is also seen as learners' motivation to learn or student academic motivation, is related to learners' motive to make certain academic decisions, participate in classroom activities, and persist in pursuing the

demanding process of learning (Peng, 2021). Student academic motivation can also be viewed from these construct perspectives such as state-motivation and trait-motivation (Hiver & Al-Hoorie, 2020). While state-motivation refers to students' attitude toward a particular course or academic subject, trait-motivation, on the other hand, deals with students' general tendency toward the learning process. Students' trait-motivation, often, is typically constant during a whole course period, while their state-motivation is prone to radical transition and transmogrification. Hiver and Al-Hoorie (2020) have observed that students' state-motivation can be dramatically influenced by their viewpoints and attitudes toward their instructors, course content, and the learning environment as well. In the same way, Dornyei (2020) also posited that how students perceive their teachers' personal and interpersonal behaviours has a significant impact on their academic motivation. This implies that instructors who behave appropriately in classroom contexts have a beneficial impact on their learners' state motivation. Academic motivation is defined as the students' desire or interest in engaging with learning and their school experience (Hulleman, et al., 2017).

Research has consistently found that academically motivated students tend to perceive school and learning as valuable, like to learn, and enjoy learning-related activities (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002; Zimmerman, 2008; Koyuncuoğlu, 2021). Studies have identified lack of motivation as a primary reason for underachievement (Wigfield, Lutz, & Wagner, 2005; Scheel, Madabhushi, & Backhaus, 2009). Academic motivation is a broad term incorporating many concepts studied by scholars to include self-efficacy, determination, and resilience (Finogenow, 2017; Alharthi, 2020; Altakhyneh & Abumusa, 2020; Cayvaz, Akcay, & Kapici, 2020).

In relating social behaviour to academic motivation, anti-social behaviours are inimical to students, their academic performance and to those in the environment. Adeleke and Adeleke (2021), found that non-delinquent students performed better in academic than delinquent students. Girma, Hassen, and Garuma (2019) further stated that students with anti-social behaviour earn lower grades, are less likely to pass classes, and experience higher rates of school dropout than typical students. Social behaviour has been categorised into prosocial and antisocial behaviours in this Study.

Pro-social behaviour is a broad class and tame of positive behaviours and interactions that involve costs for the self and resulting in benefits for others (Brazzelli, Pepe, &

Grazzani,2022). Components of prosocial behaviours include academic behavioural engagement, compliance, and cooperation, though this is not limited. Within the academic environment antisocial behaviour is a broad construct that encompasses disruptive behaviours such as aggression, breakdown of rules and orders, academic behavioural disengagement, and intellectual laziness. At its core, antisocial behaviour encapsulates actions that deviate from the accepted norms of the academic environment (DeWit-DeVisser, Rijckmans, Vermunt, & Van-Dam, 2023).

**School Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation**

School social behaviour refers to how students interact with their peers, teachers, and other individuals within the school environment. Positive school social behaviour contributes to a healthy and supportive school climate, while some key aspects of school social behaviour have been highlighted by various scholars (Akey, 2006; Berger & Archer, 2020; United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2021; Greenberg, 2023), and these inlcude :

1. Peer Relationships: Developing positive relationships with peers is important for students' emotional and social development. Healthy friendships can provide support, reduce stress, and enhance the overall school experience.
2. Teacher-Student Relationships: A positive relationship with teachers can foster a sense of trust and motivation. When students feel respected and valued by their teachers, they are more likely to engage in learning activities.
3. Bullying and Conflict Resolution: Addressing issues like bullying and conflicts is crucial for maintaining a safe and inclusive school environment. Schools often implement anti-bullying programs and conflict resolution strategies to promote positive social behaviour.
4. Involvement in Extracurricular Activities: Participation in clubs, sports, and other extracurricular activities can help students build social skills, develop a sense of belonging, and stay motivated in school.

**Academic Motivation**

Academic motivation refers to a student's desire, interest, and drive to engage in learning and perform well academically. It plays a vital role in a student's ability to set and achieve academic goals. Some scholars (Yilmaz, Sahin, & Turgut, 2017; Berestova, Burdina,

Lobuteva, & Lobuteva, 2022) have captured some factors that influence academic motivation and these include:

1. Intrinsic Motivation: This type of motivation comes from within and is driven by personal interest and a sense of enjoyment in learning. When students find meaning and satisfaction in their studies, they are more likely to be intrinsically motivated.
2. Extrinsic Motivation: Extrinsic motivation comes from external sources, such as rewards, grades, or recognition. While external incentives can be effective in the short term, long-term academic motivation is often best supported by intrinsic factors.
3. Goal Setting: Setting clear and achievable academic goals can enhance motivation. When students have a sense of purpose and direction, they are more likely to stay focused and persistent in their studies.
4. Self-Efficacy: Self-efficacy is the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks. When students have high self-efficacy in their academic abilities, they are more likely to be motivated to take on challenging tasks and persevere through difficulties.
5. Supportive Environment: A supportive school and home environment that values education, provides resources, and encourages open communication can bolster academic motivation.

Prosocial behaviour and antisocial behaviour can have significant effects on academic motivation, as they shape a student's social and emotional environment within and outside of school. Here's how these behaviours can influence academic motivation:

**Prosocial Behaviour and Academic Motivation**

Peer Support and Collaboration: When students engage in prosocial behaviours like helping their peers, collaborating on projects, or providing emotional support, it creates a positive and supportive learning environment. This sense of belonging and cooperation can enhance academic motivation by making students feel valued and connected to their classmates.

Teacher-Student Relationships: Prosocial behaviour also extends to interactions with teachers. When teachers exhibit prosocial behaviours, such as providing encouragement, showing empathy, and offering guidance, it fosters a positive teacher-student relationship.

Students are more likely to be motivated academically when they feel respected and supported by their teachers.

Intrinsic Motivation: Prosocial behaviours often stem from intrinsic motivation – the genuine desire to help others. When students engage in prosocial actions, they may experience a sense of satisfaction and fulfilment. This intrinsic motivation can spill over into their academic pursuits, making them more eager to learn and excel.

Positive School Climate: Schools that promote prosocial behaviour and kindness create a positive school climate. A nurturing and respectful school environment can boost students' overall well-being, including their motivation to engage in academic activities.

**Antisocial Behaviour and Academic Motivation**

Peer Conflicts and Distractions: Antisocial behaviours like bullying, aggression, and conflicts with peers can negatively impact a student's academic motivation. Students who are victims of bullying or who experience conflicts may become anxious, stressed, or disengaged from school, leading to a decrease in academic motivation (Skues, Cunningham, & Pokharel, 2005; Young-Jones, Fursa, Byrket, & Sly, 2015; Gomes et al., 2020; Samara, DaSilva-Nascimento, El-Asam, Hammuda, & Khattab, 2021).

Classroom Disruption: Antisocial behaviours can disrupt the learning environment. When students engage in disruptive actions, it can be challenging for both teachers and classmates to focus on academic tasks, which can hinder academic motivation for all involved.

Negative Teacher-Student Relationships: If a student engages in chronic antisocial behaviours, it may strain their relationship with teachers, leading to reduced academic motivation. Teachers may find it challenging to motivate and engage students who exhibit disruptive or disrespectful behaviour.

External Stressors: Experiencing or witnessing antisocial behaviours can create external stressors that distract students from their academic pursuits. These stressors may include fear, anxiety, or concerns about personal safety, which can negatively affect motivation.

Muhammed, Olayiwola-Adedoja, and Iretor-Oscar (2021) conducted a study on students' motivation for learning is largely dependent on how effective their goal settings are in their activities. This study examines the impact of academic goal setting for students' motivation for learning in the University of Ilorin, Nigeria. A descriptive survey of the differential type research design was used in carrying out this study. The population for this study consisted

of undergraduates in University of Ilorin estimated at 44,566. A sample size of four hundred and twenty (420) participants was selected using a proportional and simple random sampling technique. The research instrument used was a researcher designed questionnaire titled "Impact of Academic Goal Setting on Students' Motivation for Learning Questionnaire (IGSMLQ)". The instrument was validated by experts in the Department of Counsellor Education while the reliability of the instrument was ascertained through test-retest method and a coefficient of 0.85 and 0.90 were obtained for the Parental Involvement Scale and Achievement Motivation Scale respectively. Two main research questions were answered while two null hypotheses were formulated and tested for the study. The data obtained for the study were analysed using percentages and mean scores. The hypotheses formulated were tested using t-test and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) at 0.05 level of significance.

Noyens, Donche, Coertjens, Van-Daal, and Van-Petegem (2018) conducted research on the directional links between students' academic motivation and social integration during the first year of higher education in Flanders, Belgium. In the study, a sample of 930 first-year bachelor students were the participants. The Dutch version of the Academic Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQA) and the Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) were instrument used in the study. All items were scored on a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). shows that students' score on identified regulation at time 1 was weakly positively related to students' experience of social integration ($r = 0.17$, $p < 0.01$). At time 2, this correlation was also weakly positively significant ($r = 0.19$, $p < 0.05$). Therefore, the results show that students who are feeling more socially integrated also have a higher score on identified regulation, both at the start and at the end of the first year of higher education. The cross-lagged effect of social integration at time 1 on identified regulation at time 2 was positively significant ($B = 0.15$, $p < 0.05$), after controlling for the score of identified regulation at the start (T1) and gender.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem of low academic motivation has assumed a worrisome dimension in the university educational system. Desperate to make it anyhow, students have devised various illegal means to succeed in examinations and academic activities even when they are not academically competent. This low academic motivation may be connected with students'

too much engagement in social activities on campus such as participating in students' unionism, social gatherings, parties, social networking and a host of other social activities which militate against proper academic engagement in university. These insights provide new perspectives to the researchers to study the holistic and complex pictures of the relatedness of social behaviours and academic motivation.

Objectives of the Study

This study has the following objectives, and these are:

1-To find out the relationship between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University.

2-To determine the relationship between antisocial behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University.

**Research Question**

The following research questions were raised in the study:

1. What is the relationship between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?
2. What is the relationship between antisocial behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria?

**Hypotheses**

This study has the following hypotheses:

1. There is no significant relationship between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
2. There is no significant relationship between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

## METHODS

The study employed a correlational survey research design in investigating relationship between social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria. Correlational research is a type of non-experimental research that measures two variables and their statistical relationship without controlling extraneous variables (Bhandari, 2021). Thus, since this study intends to find out relationship between social behaviour and academic motivation correlational design is appropriate.

The population of the study comprises all 300 level undergraduate students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, which constitute a population of 2629 as at 2021/2022 Academic Session, that were still in the programme in 2023. A sample of 346 was drawn based on the recommendation of Research Advisor (2006). Simple random sampling technique was used to administer the instruments. This gave all the participants equal right of being selected to participate in the study.

School Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation Scales were used to collect data from the participants. The instrument were validated by professionals in the Department of Educational Psychology and Counselling Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria and found it valid for data collection. Social Behaviour Scale was developed and adopted from Merrell (2002) The scale consisted of 15 items, measured on a 5-point Likert-Scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree to strongly disagree. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.861 using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. While Academic Motivation Scale (AMS) was developed and adopted from Kotera, Conway, and Green (2020). The scale consisted of 14 items, measured on a 5-point Likert-Scale ranging from strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree to strongly disagree. The reliability coefficient of the scale was calculated as 0.704 using Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. Thus, data collected were statistically analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) respectively.

## RESULTS

Relationship between Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation among Undergraduate Students of Faculty of Education Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Kaduna State.

Aademic motivation scale adopted from Kotera, Conway, and Green (2020) was scored as follows:

**Scoring Guide for Academic Motivation**

1. 15-30 Low Academic Motivation.
2. 31-45 Moderate Academic Motivation.
3. 46-60 High Academic Motivation.
4. 61-75 Very High Academic Motivation.

*Source: (Field Work, 2023)*

**Hypotheses Testing**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant relationship between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

**Table 1: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) on Relationship between Pro-Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation**

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r | p-value | Decision |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Pro-Social Behavior | 346 | 21.56 | 1.72 | .745 | .001 | Rejected |
| Academic Motivation | 346 | 45.94 | 3.41 | | | |

Table 1 shows that significant positive relationship exists between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation r = .745 and P = .001 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the pro-social behaviour the higher the academic motivation and vice-versa. Thus, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is hereby rejected.

**Hypothesis 2:** There is no significant relationship between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

**Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (r) on Relationship between Anti-Social Behaviour and Academic Motivation**

| Variables | N | Mean | SD | r | P-value |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anti-Social Behaviour | 346 | 24.56 | 2.53 | -.674 | 0.002 |
| Academic Motivation | 346 | 45.94 | 3.41 | | |

Table 2 shows that significant negative relationship exists between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation r = -.674 and p = 0.002 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the anti-social behaviour the lower the academic motivation and vice-verse. Thus, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation among undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria is hereby rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, have high academic motivation as vindicated by the mean of 45.94 and Standard Deviation of 3.41 which falls under high academic motivation as indicated by the scoring guide of the instrument, this is in line with the study conducted by Muhammed, Olayiwola-Adedoja, and Iretor-Oscar (2021), who found that the level of undergraduates' motivation for learning was high, for example, the students know the importance of what they are learning to their ambition, they have a clearer picture of learning task they have planned, they having total concentrations in their studies, they are learning new things that they never believe they can understand, they experience pleasure and satisfaction while learning new things related to their studies and final, they want to widen their knowledge.

The finding study shows that significant positive relationship exists between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation with the r = .745 and P = .001 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the pro-social behaviour the higher the academic motivation and vice-verse. These findings corroborated with the findings of Noyens, Donche, Coertjens, Van-Daal, and Van-Petegem (2018), which demonstrated that students' experiences of social integration are positively related to

their academic motivation. First-year students who are more socially integrated are more identified regulated to study, have less controlled regulation and are less motivated to study in higher education. Likewise, first-year students who experience their interaction with fellow students positively have a better quality and quantity of motivation for studying and vice-versa.

Another finding of this study shows that significant negative relationship exists between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation r = -.674 and P = 0.002 which is lower than 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient indicates that the higher the anti-social behaviour the lower the academic motivation and vice-versa. These show that students with anti-social behaviour such as aggression, poor relationships, lack of cooperation, non-compliance, disobedience to rules and regulations and inability to adjust to the academic environment will have low academic motivation.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded undergraduate students of Faculty of Education, Ahmadu Bello University have high level of academic motivation, also significant positive relationship exists between pro-social behaviour and academic motivation. It is also concluded that significant negative relationship exists between anti-social behaviour and academic motivation among Undergraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

### Recommendations

Based on the finding of this study the following recommendation were offered:

1. Educational psychologists, counsellors and lecturers should encourage students to enhance academically motivated behaviours by creating a positive and supportive learning environment.
2. Educational psychologists, counsellors and lecturers should teach and encourage students on how to practice pro-social behaviour by fostering positive relationships with peers and teachers, and promoting intrinsic motivation since it boosts academic motivation.

3. Educational psychologists, counsellors, lecturers and parents should play a critical role in discouraging anti-social behaviour among learners since it has a negative effect on academic motivation.

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