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# BALANCING ACT: ADVERSITY QUOTIENT, EMOTIONAL QUOTIENT AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENT – PARENTS IN A PRIVATE UNIVERSITY IN IBADAN, NIGERIA

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## ABSTRACT

*Student-parents in universities comprise a significant proportion of the population, yet they appear to be an “invisible” cohort. Navigating home and studies may present challenges in studies and result in negative academic outcomes. Consequently, student-parents are at risk of graduating on time or finishing their programmes of study. This research addressed emotional quotient and adversity quotient as factors that may influence perseverance in studies among such students. Adopting a cross-sectional design, data was collected from 106 student - parents in a private tertiary institution in Nigeria using a structured questionnaire. Participant’s ages ranged from 20 - 54 years with an average age of 33.04 (SD = 8.47). Findings revealed the independent influence of emotional quotient on academic performance ( $t(104) = -2.56, p < .05$ ). Adversity quotient also significantly influenced academic performance ( $r[106] = .219; p < .05$ ), especially the Reach and Endurance dimensions ( $t(104) = -3.84, p < .05$ ); ( $t(104) = .72, p < .05$ ). Findings further revealed a significant interaction influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance ( $F[1, 106] = 1.36; p < .05$ ). It is recommended that college administrators and faculty raise emotional and adversity quotients in students through awareness creation.*

**Keywords:** Student-parents, Academic performance, Emotional quotient, Adversity quotient

## INTRODUCTION

Balancing home and studies might prove to be challenging for students who are also parents. The combination of a heavy course load, assignments and parenting present a unique set of problems that may be overwhelming for student-parents (Reid, 2022). Education is important if one desires to be globally competitive. It also comes with social and financial benefits and better paying jobs as well as improved self-esteem. There is the additional benefit of some measure of economic security. Perhaps these are the reasons that motivate student-parents to pursue formal education. Certainly student-parents require resilience in their quest for an education (Rana, Osuna, Huffaker & Banerjee, 2022).

Juggling parenthood, studies and sometimes work can be a fine balancing act. Student-parents are a distinct group circumnavigating the dual responsibilities of academic pursuits and parenting, usually managing limited resources as well as other competing demands (Huerta, Rios-Aguilar & Ramirez, 2022). Combining coursework, assignments and the home front can thus, be quite challenging. This category of students may suffer from stress, burnout and anxiety. Yet they are often ignored in research (Mansoor, 2023).

Adversity Quotient is a person’s ability to manage difficulties and transform obstacles into opportunities (Pino & Merin, 2021). Emotional quotient or emotional intelligence, is “the ability to

accurately understand one's emotions, and to use it enhance thought to promote emotional growth as well as to understand the emotions of other people (Chugati, Zaheer, Farid, Niazi, Mujtaba, Islam & Malik 2022). The main research question in this study was how, and to what extent do adversity quotient and emotional quotient influence academic performance of student-parents?

Academic performance is a student's achievement and success in their educational pursuit. It is typically measured by assessing a student's grade point average, standardized test scores and overall academic achievement (Farb & Matjasko, 2012). Academic performance plays a critical role in shaping an individual and their future. It is important that students focus on their studies in order to succeed. Academic performance allows students to hone and develop essential skills required for success in life, and it is influenced by various internal and external factors. For student-parents, the challenge of balancing academic and parental responsibilities often leads to heightened stress levels, time constraints, and role conflict. These pressures can negatively impact their ability to meet academic demands and achieve optimal performance. However, certain internal attributes, such as Adversity Quotient (AQ) and Emotional Quotient (EQ) may play a pivotal role in mitigating those financial constraints, difficulties in managing time and limited social support. Raising adversity quotient may enable student-parents to persevere when faced with obstacles and stay focused on their academic goals. They may adopt adaptive strategies to overcome challenges.

Emotional quotient or emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, manage and regulate emotions. It involves adaptive thinking including the understanding of consequences. Emotional quotient is thus an important factor for student-parents as it may influence their ability to regulate the demanding stress of both parenting and studying. High emotional quotient may improve essential skills such as effective communication, the management of one's emotion and those of others.

Previous research has established the relationship between emotional quotient and academic performance. For instance, Quilez – Robres, Usan, Lozano-Blasco & Salaverra (2023) in a meta - analysis reported that emotional intelligence predicted academic performance with high effect sizes between geographical regions, particularly in eastern countries ( $r = 0.390$  and  $p < 0.001$ ). Sex and age did not moderate emotional intelligence. Chugati, Zaheer, Farid, Niahzi, Mujtaba & Malik (2022) also found an association between emotional quotient and academic performance amongst fourth year medical students. Likewise, Sanchez-Alvarez, Berios-Martez & Extremera (2020); they found a relationship between emotional intelligence and performance among secondary school students. Other researchers, e.g, Chamusdari (2013) have also reported similar results.

Adversity quotient is another pertinent variable that has also been linked to academic performance. Adversity Quotient is an individual's ability to withstand and effectively navigate adversities, including setbacks and challenges (Pino & Merin, 2021). Safi, Muttaquin, Sukino, Hamzah, Chotimah, Junaris & Rifa (2021) reported a significant influence on student's achievement, their learning autonomy and performance. Hariandayani and Nasution (2021) found a significant positive relationship between adversity quotient and achievement motivation of high school students. Likewise, Sugiarti, Nurlaili & Febriani (2020). Kuhon's (2020) study on adversity quotient and academic performance among students in an English subject test, found that it played a major role in students' academic performance. Majority of the students who excelled were the students whose test results showed that they had a high level of adversity quotient. In their study older student parents performed better than younger student-parents. Bakare (2015) posited that students' adversity quotient is likely to provide greater understanding and will better predict academic achievement. Bakare's study, examined prediction of Adversity Quotient in achievement in Mathematics and English Language in the West African Senior School Certificate

Examination (WASSCE) in Southwestern Nigeria. Majority of the students were of moderate adversity quotient and the higher the quotient, the higher the students' academic achievement.

Studies on emotional quotient, adversity quotient and academic performance have mostly looked at secondary school students and performance in specific tests, tasks, or subjects. Many of the studies ignored student-parents. The purpose of this research therefore was to explore the influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance of student-parents across various disciplines. Based on the findings from the review of literature, the following hypotheses were tested:

1. There will be a significant positive influence of emotional quotient on academic performance such that student-parents who score high on emotional quotient will report better academic performance than student-parents who score low on emotional quotient.
2. Adversity quotient will positively influence academic performance such that student-parents who score high in adversity quotient will score high in academic performance
3. There will be significant joint influence of adversity quotient and emotional quotient such that student-parents who score high on both quotients will perform better than student-parents who score low on both quotients
4. Male-students will report better academic performance than female student-parents

## **METHOD**

### **Design**

This research was a survey and approach to data collection was the use of questionnaires. (Ex-post facto design was adopted) Independent variables were emotional quotient (high and low) and adversity quotient (high and low). The dependent variable was academic performance.

### **Population and Setting**

The population for this study was student-parents and the setting was a private tertiary institution in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The choice of a private tertiary was informed by the higher fees paid in such institutions and therefore the pressure on students to perform in order to validate the fees that are paid

### **Sample**

Purposive sampling was used to select 106 male and female student-parents. This was because the research was interested in that specific cohort as they would probably be more adversely affected by juggling the duties of child care and academic activities. Participants were drawn from different departments from faculties of management and social sciences, law, arts and education, basic and medical health Sciences, clinical sciences, communication and information sciences, environmental design and built environment and public health.

Participant's ages ranged from 20 - 54 years with an average age of 33.04 and standard deviation of 8.47. Male student-parents comprised 36 percent while 63.2 percent were females. Married student-parents comprised 98.2 percent; 0.9 were divorced and 0.9 were widowed at the time of the study. Occupation of student-parents that were working ranged from teaching, public service, banking, nursing, business and health work. About 78.3 percent were Christians, 20.8 percent were Muslims while 9% were practitioners of traditional religion. A total of 22.6 percent were part-time students, while 77.4 percent were full-time students. About 1.9 percent were in 100level, 4.7percent in 200level, 19.8 percent in 300level, 54.7% in 400level, 11.3 percent in 500level, and 7.5 percent graduate students at the time of the study.

### **Measures**

Emotional Quotient was measured using Wong and Law's Emotional Intelligence Scale. In this study the short 16-item measure of emotional intelligence was used. The response format for the scale ranges from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). High scores indicate better or high emotional quotient while low scores indicate poor or low emotional quotient. The authors reported reliability for the four factors in the scale as ranging from .83 to .90. In this study, the Cronbach alpha for the scale was .95.

Adversity Quotient was measured using the Adversity Response Profile version 9.0. The scale was developed by Paul Stoltz (1997) to assess the unconscious pattern of how people respond to adversity and how individuals effectively deal with adversity. The questionnaire was developed and validated by Peak Learning (2008) with over 7,500 participants from diverse organizations and institutions all over the world. It has also been validated in Nigeria (Bakare, 2015). The scale consists of 14 items that cover the four dimensions of Control, Ownership, Reach and Endurance (CORE) that determine the overall adversity quotient of an individual. The C represents Control and measures the degree of control of the person in adverse situations. Ownership measures the extent to which a person holds himself/herself accountable for improving the adverse situation. The Reach dimension measures the degree to which a person perceives positive and negative events encountered in life. The Endurance dimension measures the persons' perception of how long the adversity would last. The adversity quotient scale has a reliability coefficient of .79 and content validity coefficient of .70 as reported by the author. Response format of the scale is a five-point Likert type scale ranging from, 1 not at all to 5 completely responsible. High scores indicate better response to adverse situations with a strong measure of resilience. In this study, the Cronbach alpha for the scale was .81.

Academic performance was measured using the Academic Success Inventory developed by Welles in 2011. The Academic Success Inventory is a self-report scale used to assess performance in university students. The instrument consists of 50 items measuring: general academic skills, career decidedness, internal motivation, external motivation future and current, lack of anxiety, concentration, socializing, personal adjustment and efficacy of the instructor. The internal consistency of the sub scales are as follows: general academic skills .93; concentration .87; External motivation .88; socializing .84; career decidedness .87; lack of anxiety .77; personal adjustment .86; and external motivation current time .62. The response format for the scale ranges from strongly agree 5 to strongly disagree 1. High scores indicate better academic performance, while low scores indicate poor academic performance. In this study, the Cronbach alpha for the scale was .72

### **Procedure**

Data for this study was collected within one month. The researcher met with the heads of various departments within the university to sought permission to conduct this study. This was critical because their approval facilitated the administration of questionnaires. Participants were provided with an informed consent form which included a brief summary of what the research entailed and their rights as participants. Those who consented were administered the questionnaire. The participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity of the data provided. A total of one hundred and fifty copies of questionnaires were administered, one hundred and six were properly completed and analyzed for the study.

## RESULTS

**Table 1: t – Test showing differences between low emotional quotient high emotional quotient and academic performance**

	Emotional Quotient	N	Mean	SD	df	T	P
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Low	37	54.10	12.03	104	-2.56	<.05
	High	67	59.71	10.09			

Hypothesis 1 stated that there would be a significant positive influence of emotional quotient on academic performance such that student-parents who score high on emotional quotient will report better academic performance than students who score low on emotional quotient. The results in Table 1 revealed a significant influence of emotional quotient on academic success ( $t(104) = -2.56, p < .05$ ). Student -parents who reported high on emotional quotient ( $\bar{x}=59.71, SD=10.09$ ) significantly reported better performance in their academics than student - parents who reported low on emotional quotient ( $\bar{x}=54.10, SD=12.03$ ). These findings suggest that student - parents who have high emotional quotient are more likely to succeed in their studies than those who have low emotional quotient. Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

**Table 2: t – Test showing differences between low and high adversity quotient and academic performance**

	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
<b>Endurance Adversity Quotient</b>						
Low	48	55.31	10.21	104	.72	<.05
High	58	59.58	10.78			
<b>Ownership Adversity Quotient</b>						
Low	53	56.73	11.34	104	-.85	>.05
High	55	59.58	10.78			
<b>Reach Adversity Quotient</b>						
Low	47	53.27	10.01	104	-3.84	<.05
High	50	59.58	10.78			
<b>Control Adversity Quotient</b>						
Low	63	56.61	11.51	104	-1.15	>.05
High	43	59.16	10.50			

**Dependent variable: Academic Performance**

Hypothesis 2 stated that student - parents who score high on adversity quotient would report better academic performance than student - parents who score low on adversity quotient. The



results in Table 2 showed a significant influence of Endurance Adversity Quotient on academic performance ( $t(104) = 0.72, p < .05$ ). The findings suggest that student-parents with high Endurance Adversity Quotient ( $\bar{x} = 59.58, SD = 10.78$ ) significantly performed better than student-parents with low endurance adversity quotient ( $\bar{x} = 55.31, SD = 10.21$ ). The results also revealed a significant influence of Reach Adversity Quotient on academic performance ( $t(104) = -3.84, p < .05$ ). The findings suggest that student-parents with high Reach adversity quotient ( $\bar{x} = 61.13, SD = 10.81$ ) significantly reported better academic performance than student-parents with low Reach Adversity quotient ( $\bar{x} = 53.27, SD = 10.01$ ). However, the results revealed no significant influence of ownership adversity quotient ( $t(104) = -0.85, p > .05$ ) and control adversity quotient ( $t(104) = -1.15, p > .05$ ) on academic performance.

The findings indicate that whilst Endurance Adversity quotient and Reach Adversity Quotient influenced academic performance. Ownership and Control adversity quotient did not significantly contribute to better performance in academics. Hypothesis 2 was partially supported

**Table 3: Summary of 2x2 ANOVA showing main and interaction influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance of parent students**

Source	SS	Df	MS	F	Sig.	$\eta^2$
Emotional Quotient	341.547	1	341.55	2.91	.009	.028
Adversity Quotient	215.245	1	215.25	1.84	.017	.018
Emotional Quotient x Adversity Quotients	159.162	1	159.16	1.36	.024	.013
Error	11963.839	102	117.29			
Total	365321.000	106				

**Dependent variable: Academic Performance.  $R$  Squared = .081 (Adjusted  $R$  Squared = .054)**

Hypothesis 3 stated that there would be significant joint influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance. Student-parents with high emotional quotient and high adversity quotient will significantly report better academic performance than student-parents with low emotional and low adversity quotient. The results in Table 3 indicated that emotional quotient ( $F[1, 106] = 2.91; p < .05$ ) and adversity quotient ( $F[1, 160] = 1.84; p < .05$ ) had a statistically significant main influence on academic performance of student-parents. The findings suggest that student parents with high emotional quotient and high adversity quotient reported better academic performance.

The results also revealed a statistically significant interaction between emotional quotient, adversity quotient and academic performance ( $F[1, 106] = 1.36; p < .05$ ), indicating that together, emotional quotient and adversity quotient jointly influenced academic performance.

**Table 4: Summary of descriptive statistics showing the distribution of students into levels of emotional quotient, adversity quotient and academic performance**

		Mean	SD	N
Low Emotional Quotient	Low Adversity Quotient	52.55	12.76	29
	High Adversity Quotient	<b>58.60</b>	8.67	10
High Emotional Quotient	Low Adversity Quotient	59.44	10.49	27
	High Adversity Quotient	<b>59.90</b>	9.96	40
Low Emotional Quotient	Low Adversity Quotient	55.88	12.12	56
High Emotional Quotient	High Adversity Quotient	<b>59.64</b>	9.65	50

**Dependent variable: Academic Performance**

Table 4 shows that student - parents with low emotional quotient but high adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 58.60; SD = 8.67;  $P < .05$ ) significantly reported better academic performance than student - parents with low emotional quotient and low adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 52.55; SD = 12.76;  $P < .05$ ). Results further showed that student-parents with high emotional quotient and high adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 59.90; SD = 9.96;  $P < .05$ ) significantly reported better academic performance than student -parents with high emotional quotient and low adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 59.44; SD = 10.49;  $P < .05$ ). Thus, student - parents with high emotional quotient and high adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 59.64; SD = 9.65;  $P < .05$ ) significantly reported higher academic performance than student - parents with low emotional quotient and low adversity quotient ( $\bar{x}$  = 55.88; SD = 12.12;  $P < .05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 3 was supported.

**Table 5: t– Test showing gender differences and academic performance**

	Gender	N	Mean	SD	Df	T	P
<b>Academic Performance</b>	Male	39	56.82	8.57	104	-.584	>.05
	Female	67	58.13	12.41			

Hypothesis 4 stated that male student parents will report better academic performance than female student parents. As shown in Table 5, there were no significant differences between male and female student - parents in their academic performance ( $t(104) = -.584$ ,  $p > .05$ ). Therefore, hypothesis 4 was not supported in this study.

## DISCUSSION

This study examined the influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance among student-parents in a private tertiary institution. An academic institution is an important environment for developing emotional competencies. Classroom instructions facilitate the ability to reason logically and make informed decisions. An environment that is conducive to learning, the variety of courses and support system contribute to development of emotional quotient. It also contributes to task performance. Emotional intelligence acts as a background for understanding the association between cognition and emotions. In this study there was a high positive joint influence of emotional quotient and adversity quotient on academic performance among student-parents. This finding is consistent with other studies e.g Aesrop, Muttaqin, Hamzah, Chotimah, Junaris, & Rifa (2021); Rohman & Lataruva, (2023). Emotional quotient and adversity quotient also had positive independent influence on academic performance of student - parents. The study findings suggest that intelligent learners perceive themselves as having the ability to cope with challenges emerging from the environment. It is apparent that if a student is emotionally intelligent, he or she will achieve outstanding academic results. In other words, since emotional intelligence is linked to academic performance, so the better the emotional intelligence, the better the academic performance.

Endurance adversity quotient and Reach adversity quotient were found to significantly influence academic performance. The significant findings for Endurance and Reach dimensions suggest that participants in this research believe the influence of adversity can last a long time and can extend to other areas of their lives. This is consistent with Wang, Liu, Tee & Dai (2021). Performance of college students can be better explained



by the tendency of a person to take responsibility for life adversities more than other aspects of the adversity quotient construct. This insight is significant to educators, guidance counsellors, and parents to nurture in students' personal efficacy and self-regulation to facilitate success in their academics. It is ironical that there were no gender differences or age differences in performance among student-parents. Women usually bear the brunt of the home, so it would not be unreasonable to assume that they would be more influenced by the juggling of roles. It would also be expected that maturity would also influence academic performance. Future studies should further investigate gender and age in a larger population.

## **Conclusion**

Both emotional quotient and adversity quotient are key constructs in improving the adaptability of parent-students to face challenges. The constructs have positive and strong association with performance. These constructs are useful in different professions. As a result, college administrators and faculty should encourage the engraining of these qualities in students, by creating awareness in order to lead to the achievement of their educational goals. Policy makers, college administrators and faculty are encouraged to practice equity and inclusion for student - parents by offering financial support through bursaries, study grants and establishment of day care centers.

One of the limitations in this study is that it focused on internal factors of the individual rather than on external factors such as institutional or social support. Another limitation is the measurement of perceived performance, rather than real measures of GPA or test scores. Lack of a comparison group; non student parents, was also a limitation. Future studies may want to look at Real measures of GPA and institutional support. These studies could also look at these variables in relation to mental health.

Programmes stimulating emotional intelligence in universities can improve personal development and academic performance. This study also revealed that adversity quotient influenced students who performed well in their studies. It suggests that they were resilient enough to overcome obstacles in their academic journey. The findings on adversity quotient are consistent with previous studies e.g. Hariandayani & Nasution, 2021; Sugiarti, et al., 2020, Susanti and Putra, 2021.

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