

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

The Role of Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Resilience in Managing Students' Disruptive Behaviours in Universities

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Abstract

Disruptive behaviours among students like regular absenteeism, tardiness, inattention during lectures, verbal aggression towards peers, and defiance against lecturers, have become increasingly common, as observed by the researchers and reported in secondary sources. To avert these adverse behaviours, this study investigated the roles of lecturers' emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in managing such behaviours in universities in Kwara State. . A cross-sectional survey design was employed to collect data from 552 lecturers using adapted questionnaires validated and tested for reliability. The research objectives were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). Findings indicated that emotional intelligence significantly and positively predicted psychological resilience among lecturers, while psychological resilience had a significant negative impact on students' disruptive behaviours. In contrast, emotional intelligence was a non-significant predictor of these behaviours. Also, the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on disruptive behaviours through psychological resilience was significantly negative in universities in Kwara State, North-central Nigeria. The study concluded that psychological resilience is a crucial mechanism enabling emotional intelligence to lead to better behavioural outcomes in higher education institutions in Kwara State, Nigeria.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, disruptive behaviours, empathy

Introduction

University education is widely acknowledged as an essential factor in national development, primarily by cultivating skilled human capital and enhancing students' intellectual, emotional, and social growth. For universities to successfully meet these objectives, students must show readiness to learn, actively participate in their academic pursuits,

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and adhere to institutional standards that nurture teaching and learning. However, modern university environments face various disruptive behaviours from students that can hinder instructional effectiveness and disrupt academic order. Effectively managing students' disruptive behaviours in universities requires more than administrative oversight or disciplinary action; it necessitates lecturers with high emotional intelligence and psychological resilience.

Emotional intelligence, especially in the area of self-control, relationship management, and emotional awareness, enables lecturers to recognise emotional signals, manage their own reactions, and respond constructively to students' excessive behaviours. Research consistently shows that academic staff with strong emotional intelligence cultivate trust, boost student engagement, and reduce conflicts in learning areas (Bonnici & Aquilina, 2019; Melekeowei, 2024). Among university students also, emotional intelligence has been linked to better adjustment and resilience, highlighting its importance for behavioural regulation and coping in academic contexts (Akpan et al., 2025).

In addition to emotional intelligence, psychological resilience further enhances lecturers' ability to handle disruptive behaviours by fostering sustained commitment, emotional stability, and constructive responses to challenges. Resilience, characterised by a sense of control, commitment, and the ability to embrace challenges, allows educators to remain effective even under stressful conditions, such as heavy workloads and large classes. Studies in educational settings indicate that resilience mediates the effects of emotional demands on performance and well-being (Wang & Chiu, 2024; Sudhaa et al., 2025). Research by Tekane et al. (2021) also indicated that resilience among lecturers is crucial for maintaining instructional effectiveness and for managing students' disruptive behaviours during periods of increased student unrest.

In Nigerian universities, including those in Kwara State, students' disruptive behaviours have evolved into complex and persistent issues, manifesting as distractions, classroom disruptions, habitual tardiness and absenteeism, aggression towards peers, and confrontational attitudes towards lecturers and personnel in positions of authority. These behaviours undermine classroom discipline, damage lecturer-student relationships, and negatively impact learning outcomes. Research indicates that factors like emotional dysregulation, socio-economic pressures, and broader psychosocial challenges significantly contribute to these maladaptive behaviours (Kashif et al., 2024). If not addressed, such disruptive actions can turn lecture rooms into emotionally charged environments that impose significant psychological burdens on lecturers.

Recent studies highlight a strong relationship between emotional intelligence and psychological resilience among educators. For instance, Villa and Valle (2025) found that teachers with higher emotional intelligence displayed greater resilience, allowing them to navigate classroom challenges more effectively. Similarly, López-Angulo et al. (2022)

and Gilar-Corbi et al. (2025) observed that emotionally intelligent educators are likely to exhibit greater resilience and psychological well-being, thereby reducing the risk of burnout and emotional exhaustion. Daniilidou et al. (2025) also identified that high-resilience lecturers characterised by greater emotional intelligence and lower burnout, underscores the significance of psychological resources in managing student behaviour.

In Nigeria, while empirical research directly linking lecturers' emotional intelligence and resilience to student disruptive behaviours at the university level remains limited, related studies provide useful insights. Ojo et al. (2025) found a significant negative correlation between resilience and disruptive behaviour among adolescents, indicating that resilience serves as a protective element against maladaptive conduct. Although this study focused on secondary school students, its findings suggest that resilience could similarly play a role in behaviour management in higher education. Qualitative evidence from Melekeowei (2024) further showed that lecturers recognise emotional intelligence as crucial for addressing disruptive behaviour through empathy, emotional regulation and non-aggressive strategies.

Kwara State universities operate in challenging institutional settings characterised by staff shortages, pressure for promotions, inadequate infrastructure, technological limitations, and growing students' population. These challenges often lead to burnout, emotional exhaustion, and diminished professional engagement among lecturers, which can hinder their ability to manage disruptive students' behaviours effectively. When lecturers lack adequate emotional intelligence and psychological resilience, behavioural issues may worsen, resulting in strained classroom environments and lowered academic standards.

Problem Statement

Ideally, university lecturers should leverage emotional intelligence, particularly self-control, effective relationship management, and purposeful use of emotion, to manage students' disruptive behaviours better, assisted by psychological resilience. When lecturers exhibit high emotional intelligence and resilience traits, such as a strong sense of control, commitment, and openness to challenges, they can more effectively regulate their emotional responses, maintain positive interactions, and respond calmly and strategically to students' behavioural issues. This approach can reduce disruptive behaviours like classroom distractions, student aggression, and conflicts with authority, ultimately creating a more organised classroom environment that enhances student engagement.

Universities in Kwara State, Nigeria, however, continue to face challenges, including, in some instances, worsening disruptive behaviours among students, manifesting as regular absenteeism, tardiness, lack of attention during lectures, verbal aggression towards peers, and defiance towards lecturers and authorities. . Shittu (2021) reported that the management of the University of Ilorin expelled a student after being found guilty of assaulting a female lecturer from his department. In a similar situation, Kwara

State University (KWASU) during the 2019/2020 and 2020/2021 academic sessions reportedly expelled no fewer than 87 students for alleged anti-social behaviour, which include involvement in examination malpractice, drug abuse, internet fraud, robbery, among others (Shittu, 2021). In fact, between October 2021 and March 2024, Kwara State University expelled 175 students for offences ranging from theft, using fake results to gain admission, assaults, and possession of firearms (Kwara State University, 2024). More recently, six Unilorin students were rusticated, six were rusticated for one academic session, while one was formally warned for engaging in one disruptive behaviour or the other (Abubakar, 2025).

While there is a growing body of research on emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in educational settings, significant gaps remain unstudied regarding their relationship with student disruptive behaviours in universities. Current studies have mainly examined emotional intelligence's link to academic resilience among students (Akpan et al., 2025), teachers' emotional intelligence and their resilience or well-being (Villa & Valle, 2025; López-Angulo et al., 2022; Gilar-Corbi et al., 2025), and its connection to educator burnout and performance (Wang & Chiu, 2024; Sudhaa et al., 2025). Some research has explored resilience in relation to disruptive behaviours, but it is typically focused on primary or secondary education (Ojo et al., 2025) or relies on qualitative assessments of teacher behaviour management (Melekewei, 2024; Bonnici & Aquilina, 2019). Furthermore, most studies treat emotional intelligence and resilience as separate factors, neglecting to examine psychological resilience as a mediating mechanism through which lecturers' emotional intelligence affects the management of disruptive behaviours. There is also a significant lack of research specifically targeting Nigerian universities, especially in Kwara State, that categorises disruptive behaviours into types like distraction, aggression towards peers, and aggression towards authority. Addressing these research gaps is crucial for producing empirical evidence that can guide targeted professional development for lecturers and comprehensive behavioural management strategies in Nigerian universities.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to investigate the role of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in managing students' disruptive behaviours in universities in Kwara State. Specifically, the study:

1. investigates the effect of emotional intelligence on lecturers' psychological resilience.
2. ascertains if lecturers' psychological resilience has a significant effect on students' disruptive behaviour;
3. examines if lecturers' emotional intelligence has a significant effect on students' disruptive behaviour; and
4. investigates the mediating role of psychological resilience on the effect of emotional

intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour.

Literature Review

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses Development

This research is anchored on Emotional Intelligence (EI) Theory, particularly the Ability Model introduced by Mayer and Salovey (1997), which defines emotional intelligence as a collection of interconnected cognitive-emotional skills that enable individuals to perceive, comprehend, regulate, and utilise emotions to navigate thoughts and behaviours effectively. In contrast to trait-based or mixed models that focus on personality traits, the Ability Model views emotional intelligence as a skill that can be learned and adapted, especially in complex professional settings such as university classrooms (Hodzic et al., 2018). This approach is especially significant in higher education, where lecturers often face emotionally charged situations stemming from student misconduct and classroom management difficulties.

Mayer and Salovey (1997) identified four primary abilities of emotional intelligence: perceiving emotions, facilitating thought through emotions, understanding emotions, and regulating emotions. In this study, these abilities are demonstrated through lecturers' self-control, relationship management, and effective use of emotions. These aspects highlight lecturers' ability to manage their emotional responses, accurately read students' emotional signals, and use emotional insights constructively during class interactions. Research shows that these emotional skills are crucial for managing disruptive behaviours in students, which are frequently associated with emotional dysregulation, frustration, unmet psychosocial needs, and low self-control (Brackett, et al., 2011).

Theoretically, lecturers with high emotional intelligence are more equipped to handle disruptive classroom behaviour calmly rather than reactively. Self-control allows them to curb negative emotional responses when faced with distractions or defiance, thus preventing conflict from escalating. Relationship management fosters empathetic interactions and effective communication with students, aiding in de-escalating tensions while upholding authority and respect (Corcoran & Tormey, 2013). Moreover, effective emotion utilisation helps lecturers leverage emotional information to improve problem-solving and decision-making, thereby promoting proactive solutions rather than punitive measures (Brackett et al., 2011).

Nevertheless, Emotional Intelligence Theory recognises that merely possessing emotional competence may not suffice for long-term behaviour management in challenging academic settings. University lecturers, particularly in places like Kwara State, often face large classes, insufficient resources, student indiscipline, and workplace stressors, which can diminish their emotional regulation abilities over time. In such cases, the efficient use of emotional intelligence necessitates an additional psychological mechanism to

maintain resilience and consistency amid prolonged stress. To address this gap, the study introduces psychological resilience as a mediating factor.

Within the framework of Emotional Intelligence Theory, resilience is seen as both a result of effective emotional regulation and a means of maintaining adaptive emotional functioning over time. Lecturers who possess emotional intelligence are more likely to develop resilience, as their capacity to manage emotions mitigates exhaustion, enhances perceived control over stress, and strengthens commitment to their roles (Extremera et al., 2020).

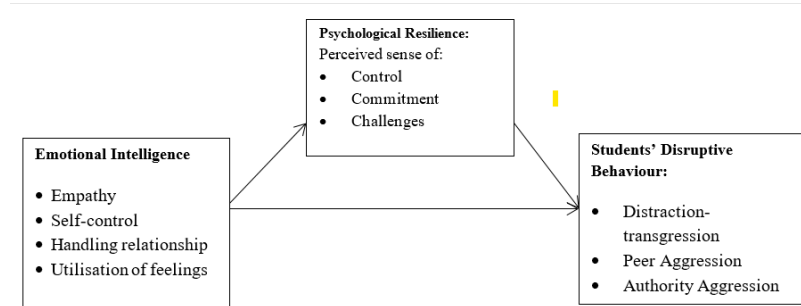
The theoretical support for psychological resilience as a mediating factor suggests that emotional intelligence enhances lecturers' internal coping resources, enabling them to manage disruptive student behaviours. With resilience, lecturers can remain composed amid frequent classroom disruptions, uphold behavioural expectations, and view challenges as manageable rather than overwhelming (Gu & Day, 2013). This aligns with the key premise of Emotional Intelligence Theory, which asserts that adaptive emotional functioning is crucial for effective professional practice and behaviour regulation.

In addressing disruptive student behaviours emotional intelligence theory proposes a stepwise approach. Emotional intelligence enables lecturers to recognise, interpret, and manage emotional triggers; psychological resilience stabilises their emotional reactions under persistent stress; together, these elements enhance their capacity for behaviour management. Thus, psychological resilience acts as the psychological link through which emotional intelligence has a lasting impact in managing disruptive behaviours in universities. Hence, it is formulated that:

Null Hypotheses

- H₀₁: Emotional intelligence does not significantly predict lecturers' psychological resilience.
- H₀₂: Lecturers' psychological resilience does not significantly affect students' disruptive behaviour.
- H₀₃: Emotional intelligence does not a significantly predict students' disruptive behaviour.
- H₀₄: Lecturers' psychological resilience does not significantly mediate the effect of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour.

Conceptual Framework



Source: Researcher's Design, 2026

Figure 1

Conceptual Framework on Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Resilience and Students' Disruptive Behaviour

Figure 1 shows the interconnections among emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and students' disruptive behaviour in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. From the figure, it can be deduced that the effect of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour is mediated by lecturers' psychological resilience, with emotional intelligence directly influencing students' disruptive behaviour. It indirectly affects it through lecturers' psychological resilience. This implies that lecturers' ability to be aware of their emotional state through self-control in tough situations, among other factors, could directly affect students' disruptive behaviour and indirectly affect it through lecturers' psychological resilience. Similarly, lecturers' sense of control in the face of challenges and obstacles, and their belief in their ability to overcome such challenges, could influence the extent to which they can manage students' disruptive behaviour in universities in Kwara State.

Review of Empirical Studies

Empirical studies consistently highlight the importance of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in fostering adaptive behaviours and effectively addressing challenges within educational contexts. While most of the research reviewed does not specifically target disruptive behaviour in universities, the findings offer valuable insights into behavioural regulation and management in higher education. Akpan et al. (2025) found that various aspects of emotional intelligence significantly predict academic resilience in Nigerian university students. Although disruptive behaviour was not

a primary focus, the results imply that students with high emotional intelligence are more capable of managing their emotions and dealing with stressors that can lead to disruptive behaviour. Similarly, Villa and Valle (2025) identified a positive connection between teachers' emotional intelligence and resilience, emphasising the crucial role that emotional skills play for educators in handling classroom challenges.

At the higher education level, Wang and Chiu (2024) demonstrated that psychological resilience acts as a mediator in the relationship between emotional intelligence and effective performance among lecturers, suggesting that resilience is a key factor through which emotional intelligence aids in successful behavioural and situational management. López-Angulo et al. (2022) and Gilar-Corbi et al. (2025) further corroborate the complementary relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience, especially in promoting psychological well-being and lowering stress-related problems that can hinder behaviour management. Research with a more direct focus on behavioural outcomes, such as that by Ojo et al. (2025), indicates that resilience, particularly supported by family and school, negatively correlates with disruptive behaviour, providing relevant insights in a Nigerian context.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopted quantitative methods. The method is based on the philosophy that our world is relatively stable and uniform, which will aid generalisation of findings to a uniform setting. Specifically, the research design is a cross-sectional survey. The cross-sectional design is suitable for examining characteristics of several samples measured using tools such as questionnaires to collect data on independent and dependent variables at a single point in time (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In addition, Hayes (2018) noted that mediation analysis does not require experimental data and is often conducted using cross-sectional survey data, provided the model is theoretically justified.

Population and Sample

The targeted population of the study is 1,963 lecturers in Kwara State universities of whom 577 were selected using Taro Yamane's formula at a 95% confidence level and a 3.5% margin of error. The data collection period lasted two months. Of the 577 questionnaires administered, 564 were retrieved, and 12 were screened out, leaving 552 for analysis. To select the lecturers, the study adopted a multi-stage sampling procedure. In the first stage, it stratified universities into manageable units of three, from which data were collected. In the second stage, it adopted a proportionate sampling technique to select respondents across the units (universities). Convenience sampling was used in the final stage to select lecturers who are willing to participate in the study. The proportionate technique is considered suitable because the study intends to ensure fair representation

for each university. In contrast, convenience sampling ensures that lecturers are not coerced and that all selected lecturers are willing and ready to participate.

Measuring Tool

Three adapted questionnaires used for this study are discussed as follows:

Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire

The Emotional Intelligence Scale, developed by Avadhani and Menon (2021) and Tapia and Marsh (2006), were adapted for this study. The scale consists of 13 items related to emotional intelligence, including four dimensions: empathy, self-control, handling relationships, and utilisation of feelings. The indicators of emotional intelligence were adapted from the study of Tapia and Marsh, while the items are adapted from the two studies. The dimensions of Tapia and Marsh are particularly favoured for this study because the indicators are more logically associated with the mediating variable. 15 items were subsequently added, bringing the total to 28 items.

Psychological Resilience Scale

The Psychological Resilience Scale developed by Isik (2016) was adopted for this study. The scale consists of 21 items related to psychological resilience, organised into three dimensions: perceived sense of control, commitment, and challenges. To ensure content validity, the questionnaire was reduced to 12 items, with four items per indicator. This is as a result of experts' advice on potential misinterpretation and ambiguity of some items in the scale.

Students' Disruptive Behaviour Scale

Students' Disruptive Behaviour, developed by Veiga (2008), was adopted for this study. The scale consists of 16 items related to students' disruptive behaviour, across three dimensions: distraction-transgression, schoolmates' aggression, and school authority aggression. These constructs were rephrased as distractions, peer aggression, and authority challenges, respectively, to ensure they are understandable to the respondents in the locale of the study.

The scales used were scored on a modified 4-point Likert scale, with 4 indicating "strongly agree" and 1 indicating "strongly disagree". Negative-worded items were reworded positively. Lecturers were required to appropriately check the items in relation to the given scale, as applicable to them. The questionnaires underwent a validity test. The instruments were given to five experts in the Department of Educational Management and Measurement and Evaluation Department to assess both face and content validity of the instrument. The experts' recommendations were incorporated, and the questionnaires

were administered to 10 lecturers (professionals) who were not part of the study sample to assess the relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items. Scale Content Validity Index S-CVI was used for this purpose. Similarly, factor analysis was conducted to assess the construct validity (convergent and discriminant) of the questionnaires using principal component analysis. The questionnaires were subjected to a reliability test to ensure they would yield consistent responses over time. To achieve this, the validated questionnaires were piloted with 20 lecturers who were not part of the study sample. The retrieved questionnaires were subjected to statistical analysis using Cronbach's alpha to assess internal consistency, yielding reliability coefficients of 0.72, 0.78, and 0.81 for the Emotional Intelligence Scale, Psychological Resilience Scale, and Students' Disruptive Behaviour Questionnaire, respectively.

Data Analysis

Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was employed to analyse the quantitative data, following a two-step process that includes evaluating both the measurement and structural models. The measurement model assessment ensured that items had strong factor loadings, along with adequate composite reliability (CR), convergent validity (AVE), and discriminant validity. The structural model assessment focused on determining the path coefficients and their significance. PLS-SEM is considered more appropriate than CB-SEM, as the primary focus of the study is to assess the correlation and contribution of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience to students' disruptive behaviour. PLS-SEM is suitable when the study is prediction and variance-explanation oriented with a particular interest in explaining the endogenous construct (Hair and Alamer, 2022). The analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) and SmartPLS software.

Ethical Consideration

The researchers, aided by five research assistants, collected the data involved in this study. The lecturers were informed that participation was voluntary, and all responses were kept confidential. An introductory letter was obtained from the researchers' institution and presented to the relevant authorities. Ethical clearance was also obtained from the researchers' institution, which cleared the researchers to carry out and publish the study. The researchers sought the respondents' willingness and gave them the option to opt out if they were not willing or ready to participate in the study. This step ensured that no participant was coerced and that every participant in this study chose to participate voluntarily. This study ensured there are no risks or negative consequences for the researchers, their assistants, or the participants throughout the data collection process and beyond. To uphold participants' confidentiality in this research, data collected were stored in a password-protected folder accessible only to the lead researcher. The researcher safeguarded participants' privacy and ensured that their information remains confidential.

throughout the study. Afterwards, the researcher destroyed all questionnaires used and retained only files that are required for academic purposes.

Analysis and Results

Table 1

Common Method Bias Diagnostics

Paths	VIF	Paths	VIF
Cha -> DT	1.157	HR -> DT	1.372
Cha -> Sag	1.157	HR -> Sag	1.372
Cha -> Sau	1.157	HR -> Sau	1.372
Com -> DT	1.307	SC -> Cha	1.183
Com -> Sag	1.307	SC -> Com	1.183
Com -> Sau	1.307	SC -> Con	1.183
Con -> DT	1.428	SC -> DT	1.228
Con -> Sag	1.428	SC -> Sag	1.228
Con -> Sau	1.428	SC -> Sau	1.228
EM -> Cha	1.038	UF -> Cha	1.212
EM -> Com	1.038	UF -> Com	1.212
EM -> Con	1.038	UF -> Con	1.212
EM -> DT	1.046	UF -> DT	1.261
EM -> Sag	1.046	UF -> Sag	1.261
EM -> Sau	1.046	UF -> Sau	1.261
HR -> Cha	1.285		
HR -> Com	1.285		
HR -> Con	1.285		

Note: Cha= Challenge; DT = Distraction-Transgression; Sag= Students' Aggression; Sau= Authority Aggression; Con= Control; Com= Commitment; EM= Empathy; HR= Handling Relationship; SC= Self Control; and UF= Utilisation of Feelings

Source: Personal data, 2026

The inner Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were used to assess collinearity among predictor constructs. From Table 1, it was shown that the VIFs were below the threshold of 3.3 (Kock, 2015) (1.038–1.428), indicating that there are no multicollinearity issues and reducing the chances that common method variance inflated the structural estimates (Hair et al., 2022).

Model Assessment

In this study, both higher-order formative constructs and lower-order reflective constructs were analysed.

Assessment of the Lower-Order Construct

Validating Lower-Order Construct

Table 2

Convergent Validity and Correlation Coefficients

SN	Variable Name	AVE	CR	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	Perceived Sense of Challenge	.774	.873	1.000									
2	Perceived Sense of Commitment	.558	.833	.198	1.000								
3	Perceived Sense of Control	.624	.831	.260	.464	1.000							
4	Distraction-transgression	.794	.884	.032	-.192	-.074	1.000						
5	Empathy	.727	.914	.120	.002	.031	-.127	1.000					
6	Handling Relationship	.536	.822	.207	.261	.346	-.009	.083	1.000				
7	Peer Aggression	.732	.845	-.060	-.207	-.231	.570	-.017	.026	1.000			
8	Authority Aggression	.618	.827	-.032	-.184	-.162	.605	-.113	-.129	.488	1.000		
9	Self-Control	.576	.872	.226	.205	.260	-.040	.158	.355	-.077	-.076	1.000	
10	Utilisation of Feelings	.591	.851	.264	.156	.248	.016	.142	.389	.005	-.003	.251	1.0

Note: Average Variance Extracted (AVE); Composite Reliability (CR)

Source: Personal data, 2026

Factor loadings were examined with a minimum threshold of 0.6, while the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and CR for lower-order constructs were assessed against thresholds of 0.5 and 0.7, respectively. The results in Table 2 confirmed both convergent validity and reliability, as the loadings and values surpassed the required thresholds except for peer aggression. The correlation coefficient matrix presented established that there is a correlation among the variables involved in the study.

Table 3
Discriminant Validity Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Perceived Sense										
2. of Challenge Perceived Sense	.306									
3. of Commitment Perceived Sense	.374	.618								
4. of Control Distraction-transgression	.080	.222	.109							
5. Empathy	.154	.130	.095	.153						
6. Handling Relationship	.290	.366	.487	.125	.121					
7. Peer Aggression	.093	.290	.322	.776	.088	.181				
8. Authority Aggression	.066	.249	.209	.773	.133	.195	.700			
9. Self-Control	.293	.280	.329	.114	.193	.465	.132	.163		
10. Utilisation of Feelings	.355	.224	.332	.083	.186	.524	.116	.036	.306	

Source: Personal data, 2026

The study employed the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) to assess the discriminant validity. The HTMT values ranged from .066 to .776, which did not exceed the commonly used limits of .85 or .90, supporting the notion that the indicators represent distinct empirical constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

Validating Higher-Order Construct (Reflective-Formative)

The constructs of emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and students’ disruptive behaviour are identified as higher-order reflective-formative constructs. Emotional intelligence encompasses four lower-order constructs: empathy, self-control, relationship handling, and the utilisation of feelings. Psychological resilience comprises perceived control, commitment, and challenges as its lower-order constructs, whereas students’ disruptive behaviour includes distraction-transgression, peer aggression, and authority aggression.

Table 4*Validation of Higher Order Construct*

SN	Variable Name	VIF	Outer weight	T statistics	P values	Outer Loadings	P values
A Psychological Resilience							
1	Perceived Sense of	1.081	.355	3.644	.000	.586	.000
2	Challenge Perceived Sense of	1.285	.279	2.808	.002	.663	.000
3	Commitment Perceived Sense of	1.324	.676	7.832	.000	.898	.000
B Students' Disruptive Behaviour							
1	Distraction-transgression	1.870	-.426	1.811	.035	.359	.030
2	Peer Aggression	1.557	1.018	4.074	.000	.941	.000
3	Authority Aggression	1.657	.338	1.116	.132	.578	.004
C Emotional Intelligence							
1	Empathy	1.038	-.022	.201	.420	.141	.112
2	Handling Relationship	1.285	.553	4.512	.000	.840	.000
3	Self-Control	1.183	.427	3.439	.000	.708	.000
4	Utilisation of Feelings	1.212	.353	3.176	.001	.672	.000

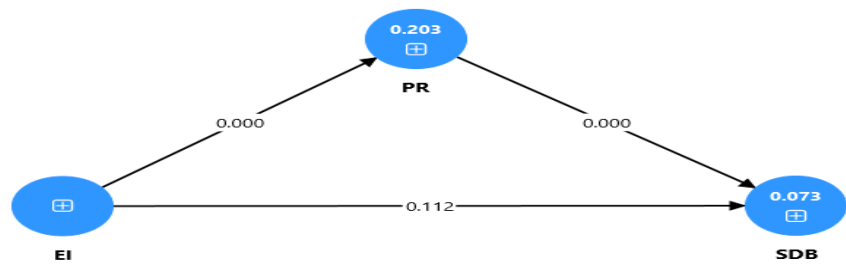
VIF: Variance Inflation Factor**Source:** Personal data, 2026

To validate the higher-order formative construct, multicollinearity was assessed using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). VIF values of 5 or less indicate that multicollinearity is not problematic (Hair et al., 2021). In this study, all VIF values were below 5 (see Table 4), indicating no multicollinearity. The statistical significance and relevance of the outer weights were then examined (Sarstedt et al., 2019). Except for authority, aggression, and empathy, all other weights were statistically significant. Further analysis showed that each indicator related to emotional intelligence, psychological resilience, and students' disruptive behaviour showed significant outer loadings (Sarstedt et al., 2019) except for empathy. However, given the role of empathy and its theoretical relevance, the researchers decided to retain the indicator. As a result, the higher-order construct was successfully validated.

The model fit was assessed using the standardised root mean square residual (SRMR) and Normed Fit Index (NFI). Based on SRMR guidelines, values under 0.08 are considered acceptable, while NFI scores closer to 1 indicating a better fit. Acceptable SRMR values fall between 0.08 and 0.10, while NFI scores should be between 0.70 and 0.90 (Hair Jr et al., 2014). In this study, the model showed SRMR of 0.046 and NFI of 0.931, indicating an overall acceptable fit.

Structural Model Assessment

After the required model assessment was confirmed, the structural model was tested as follows:



Source: Personal data, 2026

Figure 2
Path Model of the Mediating effect of Psychological Resilience on the effect of Emotional Intelligence on Students' Disruptive Behaviour

Figure 2 illustrates how psychological resilience mediates the impact of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour. The path from emotional intelligence to psychological resilience is significant, whereas the path from psychological resilience to students' disruptive behaviour is significant in the opposite direction. The direct effect of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour is not significant. Thus, emotional intelligence influences students' disruptive behaviour only through psychological resilience.

Table 5

Path Coefficient								
Hypotheses	Relationship	β	Sd	t-value	p-value	Percentile Bootstrap 95% confidence interval		Decision
						Lower	Upper	
H ₀ ₁	EI -> PR	.451	.035	13.042	.000	.383	.497	Rejected
H ₀ ₂	PR -> SDB	-.299	.059	5.032	.000	-.372	-.175	Rejected
H ₀ ₃	EI -> SDB	.090	.074	1.217	.112	-0.036	.199	Supported

Note: EI= Emotional Intelligence; PR= Psychological Resilience; SDB= Students' Disruptive Behaviour

Source: Personal data, 2026

Table 5 shows the path coefficients for the hypotheses (H_{01} - H_{03}) in relation to direct effects. The results indicate that the null hypotheses H_{01} and H_{02} were rejected, thereby supporting the corresponding alternative hypotheses, while the null hypothesis H_{03} was retained. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence is a significant positive predictor of lecturers' psychological resilience ($\beta = .451$; $t = 13.042$, $p < .05$). In addition, psychological resilience negatively and significantly influences students' disruptive behaviours ($\beta = -.299$; $t = 5.032$, $p < .05$), whereas emotional intelligence is a non-significant predictor of students' disruptive behaviours ($\beta = .090$; $t = 1.217$, $p > .05$) in Kwara State universities in North-central, Nigeria. The findings suggested that when lecturers are emotionally balanced and stable, their psychological resilience improves. In addition, when lecturers have high resilience, the maladaptive behaviours exhibited by students in schools reduce.

Table 6*Coefficient of Determination (R^2)*

Endogenous Construct	R square	T statistics	P values	Adjusted R-Square	T statistics	P values
Psychological Resilience	.203	6.387	.000	.202	6.329	.000
Students' Disruptive Behaviour	.073	2.903	.002	.070	2.759	.003

Source: Personal data, 2026

The coefficient of determination (R^2) for the endogenous constructs was utilised to assess the explanatory power of the model. Based on the findings on Table 6, the model explains 20.3% of the variance in psychological resilience ($R^2 = .203$; adjusted $R^2 = .202$) and 7.3% of the variance in students' disruptive behaviour ($R^2 = .073$; adjusted $R^2 = .070$).

Table 7*Effect Size (f^2)*

Path	F Square
EI -> PR	.255
EI -> SDB	.007
PR -> SDB	.077

Source: Personal data, 2026

Effect sizes are determined by the value of f^2 in Cohen's f^2 test, which aids in assessing the relative significance of each exogenous construct in explaining the variance of the endogenous constructs. Based on the findings on Table 7, the effect size for $EI \rightarrow PR$ is $f^2 = .255$, $EI \rightarrow SDB$ is $f^2 = .007$, which is low, and $PR \rightarrow SDB$ is $f^2 = .077$. These f^2 values are interpreted using standard benchmarks (Cohen, 1988) in line with PLS-SEM reporting guidelines (Hair et al., 2022).

Mediation Analysis

Table 8

The mediation role of psychological resilience on emotional intelligence and students' disruptive behaviours

Hypotheses	Total Effect			Direct Effect			Indirect Effect			Percentile Bootstrap 95% confidence interval	
	coeff- icient	t- value	p-value	coeff- icient	t- value	p- value	Coeffi- cient	t- value	p- value	Lower	Upper
Ho ₄ : EI=>PR=>SDB	-.045	.679	.249	.090	1.217	.112	-.135	4.893	.000	-.168	-.073

Source: Personal data, 2026

To explore the mediating effect of psychological resilience on the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' disruptive behaviours, a mediation analysis was conducted. Table 8 illustrates that the indirect effect of emotional intelligence on disruptive behaviours through psychological resilience was significant ($\beta = -.135$; $t = 4.893$, $p < .05$). However, the total effect of emotional intelligence on disruptive behaviours was non-significant ($\beta = -.045$; $t = .679$, $p > .05$), and the direct effect considering psychological resilience as a mediator was also non-significant ($\beta = .090$; $t = 1.217$, $p > .05$). These results point to a complete mediating effect of psychological resilience on the connection between emotional intelligence and students' disruptive behaviours, which support the alternative hypothesis while rejecting the null hypothesis. Hence, psychological resilience mediates the impact of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviours.

Discussion

The findings showed that emotional intelligence has a significant and positive influence on lecturers' psychological resilience. This suggests that lecturers who can effectively perceive, regulate, and manage their emotions are better equipped to handle stress, bounce back from challenges, and maintain psychological stability in their academic settings. Numerous empirical studies support this connection. For instance, Akpan et al. (2025) found that self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, and social skills together accounted for 79% of the variance in academic resilience, while Villa and Valle's (2025) study showed that high emotional intelligence positively correlates with enhanced resiliency among teachers. An investigation by Wang and Chiu (2024) also confirmed that emotional intelligence and psychological resilience are critical factors influencing adaptive performance, revealing that psychological resilience significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance. More recently, research in higher education and teacher training contexts indicates that those with high emotional intelligence utilise greater resilience and employ more effective coping strategies

when confronted with challenges (Guo et al., 2025).

Another finding also highlighted that psychological resilience negatively predicts students' disruptive behaviours. This means that resilient lecturers are more adept at managing classroom stress, remaining emotionally composed, and applying effective classroom control techniques, all of which can lead to fewer disruptions. Consistent with the findings of this study, López-Angulo et al. (2022) found that both emotional intelligence and resilience are important for addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic. In a similar study, Gilar-Corbi et al. (2025) found that resilience positively affects psychological well-being. Recent research in Nigerian educational system has also indicated that greater resilience is associated with lower disruptive behaviour among adolescents (Ojo et al., 2025). In higher education in Kwara state, where socio-economic challenges and youth dynamics may exacerbate classroom disruptions, lecturers with greater resilience can manage these behaviours more effectively.

The results further revealed that emotional intelligence is a positive, though not statistically significant, predictor of students' disruptive behaviours. This indicates that although emotionally intelligent lecturers may have strong interpersonal and regulatory skills, these alone do not necessarily reduce disruptive behaviour without the mediating role of resilience. Therefore, the lack of a significant direct effect in this study supports the view that emotional intelligence functions through intermediary psychological processes rather than exerting an immediate influence on behaviour.

The results of this study align with those of Ojo et al. (2025), which indicated a significant negative correlation between disruptive behaviour and dimensions such as family support and empathy, with only family and school support significantly predicting disruptive behaviour. However, the results of the study differ from the conclusion of Melekeowei (2024), which acknowledged the necessity of emotional intelligence for effectively managing disruptive behaviours and emphasised that training in emotional intelligence should be part of teacher development programmes to improve behaviour management.

The finding also disagrees with the result of Bonnici and Aquilina (2019), which shows that emotional intelligence fosters trust and enhances motivation among lecturers and students, potentially improving student retention and development. The differences in the findings of the study could be largely because of the variations in design, methods of data analysis, and conceptualisation of emotional intelligence. Melekeowei (2024) adopted focus-group discussions to examine teachers who believed emotional intelligence was integral in managing disruptive behaviour. In the same manner, Bonnici and Aquilina (2019) utilised the technique of grounded theory on the participants they thoroughly interviewed.

The studies concluded that emotional intelligence helps in developing trust and motivation among the lecturers and the students, which can have a retention effect on the students

and help them grow. The lack of statistically significant effect does not lessen the importance of improving lecturers' emotional intelligence; it only means that emotional intelligence effects are not prompt in yielding changes. Mediation analysis demonstrated that psychological resilience mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and students' disruptive behaviours. Specifically, emotional intelligence reduced disruptive behaviours only through its positive impact on psychological resilience. When resilience was taken into account, both the total and direct effects were non-significant, indicating complete mediation.

Similar indirect pathways have been documented in previous studies. López-Angulo et al. (2022) model explained 43.5% of the observed variability in resilience, concluding that both emotional intelligence and resilience are vital for addressing the challenges posed by the pandemic. Also, the results of this study are well supported by those of Wang and Chiu (2024), which revealed that psychological resilience significantly mediates the relationship between emotional intelligence and adaptive performance. Also, it aligns with the study by Gilar-Corbi et al. (2025), which found that emotional intelligence improves well-being indirectly through resilience, with the model explaining 85.3% of the variance in psychological well-being. This mediation pattern implies that emotional intelligence improves lecturers' ability to manage stress and adversity, and that this heightened resilience ultimately contributes to less disruptive student behaviour. In the absence of resilience, emotional intelligence alone may be inadequate for effecting behavioural change in complex classroom environments. The obtained R^2 value of .073 is found to be very low. This indicates that the proposed mechanism is better considered as a partial explanation for students' disruptive behaviour. As evident from the high percent of unexplained variance, that is, 92.7%, it becomes clear that factors such as the background of the students, their surrounding environment, peer pressure, family's financial background, academic pressure, university's policies and many other such factors together play a crucial role in making students feel pressurised.

Emotions and psychological hardiness affect lecturers' conduct, the students whom they teach, and educational outcomes at large. While the model provides a convincing explanation for this, it indicates that these psychological traits make only a minimal contribution to factors that cause disruption. So, just because the regression model does not explain a greater percentage of the variance in students' disruptive behaviour does not mean that being emotionally intelligent or being psychologically resilient is not an important factor of management of students' disruptive behaviour.

Conclusion

The study examined the role of emotional intelligence and psychological resilience in managing students' disruptive behaviours in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. The results indicate that emotional intelligence is a significant positive predictor of lecturers'

psychological resilience, psychological resilience negatively and significantly influences students' disruptive behaviours, emotional intelligence is a non-significant predictor of students' disruptive behaviours, and psychological resilience mediates the effect of emotional intelligence on students' disruptive behaviour. It is concluded that emotional intelligence alone is inadequate for directly reducing disruptive behaviours among students in universities in Kwara State, Nigeria. While lecturers' emotional intelligence did not show a significant direct effect on student disruptive behaviour, it did significantly boost their psychological resilience, which, in turn, effectively diminished the undesired disruptive behaviours exhibited by the students. Thus, the findings position psychological resilience as a crucial mediating factor in how emotional intelligence impacts behavioural management in higher education. Furthermore, the research indicates that lecturers with high emotional intelligence are better equipped to develop adaptive coping mechanisms, emotional stability, commitment, perceived control, and resilience when facing academic and classroom challenges. These resilience traits subsequently aid in managing disruptive behaviours among students, in the areas of peer aggression, authority challenges, inattentiveness, and distractions. To reduce disruptive student behaviours and enhance classroom environments, institutional administrators should move past isolated interventions focused solely on emotional intelligence and instead adopt comprehensive staff development strategies that bolster lecturers' psychological resilience.

Recommendations

The research reveals that emotional intelligence does not directly mitigate disruptive behaviour among students; instead, it operates indirectly through lecturers' psychological resilience. This suggests that institutions should focus less on isolated emotional intelligence programmes and more on developing resilience among staff. In light of this, universities should implement comprehensive psychosocial development programmes that integrate emotional intelligence training with resilience-building initiatives. For instance, academic staff experiencing continuous work-related stress should be encouraged to participate in counselling services. These may include workshops on stress management, cognitive-behavioural coping skills, emotional regulation coaching, burnout prevention strategies, peer mentoring, reflective practices, and trauma-informed support systems. Such initiatives should be seen as fundamental to institutional effectiveness and the assurance of academic quality rather than occasional welfare efforts.

The study also highlights that lecturers with strong emotional intelligence are better equipped to cultivate adaptive coping mechanisms. This finding underscores the need for university administrators to incorporate emotional intelligence metrics into processes for hiring, promotions, leadership training, and performance evaluations. For instance, during recruitment and promotion exercises, behavioural interview questions that assess how lecturers would respond or manage crises, react to criticism, and communicate in an

environment laced with tension should be included. Beyond academic qualifications and research output, institutions should acknowledge psychosocial capabilities as essential aspects of lecturer effectiveness in higher education landscape, which faces increasingly complex student misbehaviour.

As psychological resilience is significantly linked to reduced disruptive behaviours in students, university administrators should recognise lecturers' wellbeing as an issue of organisational effectiveness rather than a mere individual concern. Factors such as excessive workloads, poor working conditions, role confusion, insufficient administrative support, overcrowded classrooms, and inadequate institutional backing can undermine lecturers' resilience and aggravate student disruptions; for instance, when assigning responsibilities, relevant authorities such as the heads of various departments should ensure utmost transparency that could promote and strengthen the sense of support. These would in turn create an atmosphere that enables lecturers to respond constructively towards work stress and students' disruptive behaviour. Therefore, university management should adopt supportive leadership strategies that foster staff wellbeing, emotional safety, inclusive governance, and conducive work environments.

Limitations and Future Directions

The research gathered data from university faculty members in Kwara State, North-central Nigeria, which may restrict the generalisability of the findings to other locales or institutions like polytechnics, where perspectives might differ. In addition, the cross-sectional survey design captures data at one specific moment, making it challenging to ascertain definitive cause-and-effect relationships among the variables. While this approach yields valuable statistical insights, it overlooks qualitative factors that could enhance understanding. Furthermore, reliance on self-reported information from lecturers coupled with the collection of data on multiple variables at a single point in time may introduce common method biases, and the cross-sectional nature limits causal interpretations. In addition, the convenience sampling technique adopted allows for willing participants; however, this could introduce self-selection bias. Examining the higher-order constructs, empathy show loadings below the threshold, which could have been deleted but were retained using a theoretical-based argument. Future studies could extend this research to polytechnics in various geopolitical regions and utilise mixed methodologies to deepen comprehension and validate or contest these results. Also, subsequent research needs to consider relevant student-level and institutional-level variables for a better understanding of disruption in universities.

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The authors declare no potential conflicting interests.

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