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**EMOTIONAL STABILITY, GENDER AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES**

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Abstract

This study investigated emotional stability, gender and academic performance of secondary school students with Disabilities (SWLD's). The multi-stage sampling procedure was used. The three Senatorial Districts in Oyo State were enumerated. Simple random sampling procedure was adopted to select Ten (10) Local government from the thirty three local governments in Oyo State while Purposive sampling technique was also used to select Two hundred and eighty seven (287) participants. All these participants were screening using Screening Checklist for suspected Students with Learning Disabilities. Questionnaires were adapted for Emotional stability ($r=0.86$), Gender and Academic Performance ($r= 0.74$). Data were analyses using Pearson product moment correlation, and t-test at 0.05 level of significance. The following recommendations were emerged; i. students with learning disabilities should be properly guided on their Emotion to make them control their negative emotion towards Academic. ii students with LD should be monitored by the teachers and the parents/guardian in order to face their academic activities, iii, both gender should be properly encourage for academic achievement, iv. Repetition and recognition of words should be carefully taught to both genders. Therefore, schools and relevant government bodies should pay more attention to these factors in order to improve the academic performance of student with learning disabilities.

Keywords: Determinant, Academic performance, Emotional stability, Gender and learning disabilities

Introduction

Students with learning disabilities (LDs) often experience significantly poorer academic outcomes compared to their peers, even when they begin secondary school with similar levels of academic performance and behavioural patterns (Shrifer, Callahan, & Muller, 2019). These disabilities, which involve difficulties in processing, acquiring, and retaining new information, can severely impact a student's ability to reach their full academic and personal potential. Challenges in reading comprehension, writing, and mathematical reasoning can have long-lasting educational, social, and economic consequences. Academic performance represents the extent to which a student has achieved specific educational goals, both quantitatively and qualitatively (Lavin-Loucks, 2020). It encompasses more than just examination results, reflecting progress in knowledge, skills, and competencies over time. In all educational settings, achieving strong academic outcomes remains a central focus for students, educators, and parents alike.

Learning disabilities are often associated with neurological dysfunctions, particularly affecting key mental processes (Johnson, 2017). These dysfunctions may arise from brain damage or developmental delays within the central nervous system, leading to symptoms such as distractibility, poor memory, anxiety, and impulsiveness. As noted by Kircher, Munk and Brohi (2020), such impairments can disrupt the basic cognitive functions necessary for academic success, including reading, writing, and mathematical problem-solving.

The academic performance of students with learning disabilities (APSLD) is shaped by multiple interrelated factors including intelligence, environment, teaching methods, and individual personality traits. Students with LDs often struggle with working memory and executive functioning, both of which are essential for acquiring foundational academic skills (Oyinloye, 2020). Consequently, they may find it more difficult to retain information, stay organized, or apply learned concepts effectively.

One key factor under investigation in this study is emotional stability. Emotional stability plays a vital role in the lives of students with LDs. A lack of emotional regulation can lead to difficulties not just academically, but also socially and behaviorally. According to Adeyemo (2014), emotional stability is a core indicator of mental health and

refers to the ability to remain calm, adapt to challenges, and solve problems effectively. Students who are emotionally stable tend to be more resilient, manage stress better, and maintain a positive outlook, which can significantly enhance their academic performance.

Furthermore, emotionally stable students with LDs are better equipped to navigate school-related stressors, interpersonal conflicts, and self-regulatory challenges. Even in extreme conditions, these students are more likely to remain composed, focused, and motivated. As Li (2012) explains, such individuals are capable of long-term planning, delaying gratification, and adjusting their expectations to align with the realities of their situation.

Another variable of concern in this study is gender, this is the classification of individual as male or female. In some cases it may also include, non-binary or other gender. A recent, study conducted has demonstrated an equal number of boys and girls having learning disabilities. In fact, more boys than girls are formally identified as having learning disabilities. Learning disabilities is the most commonly diagnosed learning and behavioural problems in schools (Lack, 2015). Boys more often the girls are affected by all the cognitive developmental disorders of childhood. Differences in the etiology of learning disabilities, as well as general differences in learning styles in boys versus girls may explain the male preponderance in the prevalence of learning disabilities (Quinn & Wagner 2015). A well-known study of 400 students found no gender gap when it came to learning issues. But that was using scientific criteria. When teachers made the call, they recommended twice as many boys for LD programme. One reason may be the difference in behaviours between boys and girls. Boys may tend to draw attention that is more negative in schools. One report showed that boys represent around 85 percent of all discipline referrals. Another showed that 22 percent of boys had been formally disciplined, versus 8 percent of girls (Berninger, Vogel & Waish, 2004). With respect to a causal explanation for this gender differences, some believe in worldwide role stereotyping, or worldwide constitutional factors. Kohnstamm (1989) believed that the cross-cultural universality and the regularity of the differences found make a biological rather than a cultural explanation the most plausible (Vogel, Walsh, Jamie, Quinn, & Wagner, 2015).

Recent studies show that mathematics disorder is a learning disorder. Children with this disorder have math skills is much lower than mean for their age, intelligence, and education. The disorder affects the Child's success at school. It is thought that up to 7% of children have this disorder. It affects boys and girls equally. It is also caused dyscalculia. The cause of this disorder is not known. Like other learning disorders, it occurs more in some families. Mathematics disorder may also be the result of damage in certain parts of the brain. It also has led to a weak understanding of mathematical concepts and increased realization of mathematics. Findings indicated that there is not meaningful difference between genders.

More so, Gender is another critical dimension explored in this research. Gender, unlike biological sex, encompasses the roles, expectations, and behaviors associated with being male or female in a given society (Filgona & Sababa, 2017). Gender roles can influence educational experiences, access to support, and societal expectations regarding academic performance. For instance, gender-based stereotypes may affect how students with LDs are treated by teachers and peers, further influencing their academic outcomes. In light of these socio-cultural dynamics, it is essential to consider gender when examining the academic performance of students with LDs.

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there is a lack of studies that simultaneously investigate emotional stability and gender in relation to the academic performance of students with learning disabilities. This study seeks to fill that gap by examining how these two factors influence academic performance among secondary school students with LDs in Oyo State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The academic performance of students with learning disabilities (SLD), particularly at the secondary school level, is not only an indicator of school effectiveness but also a crucial determinant of the future well-being of individuals and the development of society at large. However, the academic outcomes of SLD have continued to raise concerns among educators, policymakers, and other stakeholders. Despite numerous interventions, poor academic performance among this group remains a persistent issue. Students with learning disabilities often face significant barriers in their academic pursuits due to a combination of cognitive,

emotional, and environmental factors. These challenges sometimes manifest in problematic behaviours such as truancy, bullying, vandalism, lying, stealing, and involvement in social vices such as cultism, drug abuse, alcoholism, and examination malpractice. These behaviors may, in part, be linked to the frustration and low self-esteem that stem from repeated academic failures.

One critical factor that may influence both behavior and academic outcomes in SLD is emotional stability. Emotional instability can lead to increased anxiety, low motivation, and difficulty coping with academic pressures, all of which negatively impact learning. In contrast, emotionally stable students may be better equipped to manage academic stress, stay motivated, and persevere in the face of challenges. Furthermore, gender may also play a role in how emotional stability affects academic performance. Research suggests that male and female students often experience and respond to emotional and academic stress differently, which may result in varying academic outcomes among SLD. Despite the potential importance of emotional stability and gender in influencing the academic performance of students with learning disabilities, these variables have not been sufficiently explored in many educational settings. This study, therefore, seeks to investigate the relationship among emotional stability, gender, and academic performance in SLD. By doing so, it aims to provide insights that could inform targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance learning outcomes for this vulnerable group.

Purpose of the Study

- i. The main purpose of this study is to examine the independent variables (emotional stability and gender) on academic performance of secondary school students with learning disabilities in Oyo State, Nigeria.
- ii. To determine the gender differences and academic performance of students with learning disabilities.

Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female student with disabilities and Academic Performance.

Methodology

The descriptive survey research design of the correlational type was adopted in carrying out the study. The population comprised all secondary school students with learning disabilities in Oyo state, Nigeria. Oyo State has three senatorial districts with and Thirty three local government in which only ten (10) local governments were selected by simple random sampling technique. Purposive sampling procedure was used to pick twenty-nine (29) students with learning disabilities from each of the 10 secondary schools to participate in this study making total number of 290 participants. But only two hundred and eighty-seven was accounted for (287). Also, a checklist screening test was used to select the suspected students with learning disabilities that participated in this study. Emotional stability and gender and academic performance questionnaires were adapted by the researchers and pilot tested for two weeks interval among students with disabilities who are not part of this study and the readabilities of Emotional stability yielded $r = 0.86$ while gender and academic performance was $r = 0.74$.

Ethical / Parent Consent

In line with the ethics of world standard research, this researchers sought for the permission of Oyo State head of service before the commencement of this study. The permission was granted with an approved letter to visit all the secondary schools used in this study. More so, because of the fact that the participants are to receive parental consents to participate in this research work, a form designed by the researchers was given to the students to give their parents for official approval to participate in the research work, the form was returned with indication of approval to kick start the study.

Method of Data Analysis

The data collected were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to analyse the relationship between the independent variables (emotional stability and Gender) and dependent variable (academic performance). The t-test statistics was employed to

test the mean differences of student with learning disabilities based on gender. at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

H01: There is no significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Academic Performance of Students with Disabilities.

Table 1: Significant Relationship between Emotional Stability and academic Performance of Students with Disabilities

Variables	N	X	SD	df	r	P
Emotional Stability	187	24.31	4.19	285	-	
Academic Performance	100	32.42	5.54	285	.23**	<.05

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2- tailed).

Table one revealed that there was positive relationship between emotional stability and academic performance of students with learning disabilities

($r = .23^{**}$, $df = 285$, $p < .05$) The result implies that emotional stability of students with learning disabilities has to do with their academic performance.

H02: There is no significant difference between male and female student with disabilities and Academic Performance.

Table 2: Significant Difference Between Male and Female Students with Learning Disabilities and Academic Performance

	N	X	SD	285	t	P
Male	187	20.19	5.62			
Female	100	21.59	5.09	285	-2.19	<.05

The t-test of the significant difference between male and female students with learning disabilities and academic Performance ($X = t(285) = -2.19$, $p < .05$). This implies that there was significant difference between male and female and academic performance because the hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion of findings

This current study revealed a positive correlation between the independent variable and the dependent variable. This implies that the research questions raised was supported Cullinan and Sabornie(2004) who reported that students with emotional instability commonly engage in behaviours such as verbal and physical aggression; social skills acquisition and performance deficits that negatively influence both their ability to successfully negotiate peer and adult relationships and their educational experience. They stated further that, when students are unable to negotiate social demands and meet teachers' expectations for school success, school becomes a formidable task.

In the absence of effective interventions, these behaviour patterns become more firmly established and less amendable. In terms of specific areas of academic functioning, students with LD exhibit broad deficits including underachievement in math, reading, reading comprehension, vocabulary, and written language. Researchers also have examined how students with Emotional stability progress over time. Unfortunately, the literature consistently indicates that students with emotional instability and academic deficits do not improve over time (Nelson, Benner, Lane and Smith 2004).

However, Reid (2004) reported that across all placements (i.e., general education, resource, self-contained and special school placement), students with LD who are emotionally unstable continued to exhibit significant academic delays. In studies conducted by Lane (2005) who compared the academic profiles of students with LD with emotional instability in self-contained classrooms and self-contained schools, found that although students in both settings demonstrated broad academic deficits, students in self-contained schools had lower academic performance than students in self-contained classrooms. More, so researches revealed that students made limited academic progress in either setting on reading and math skills. This lack of academic progress may be due to a number of factors including (a) the greater emphasis on behavioral programming and social skills instruction relative to academic instruction (Lane 2005, Mooney 2003; Reid 2004), (b) outcomes measures that may not be sensitive to change (Lane 1999), or (c) the presences of other variables (e.g., hyperactivity, externalizing, internalizing behaviors) that may influence students' academic progress Reid 2004).

The aim of this research was to study the relationships between emotional stability, gender and academic performance of student with learning disabilities. The findings of this study revealed that, emotional stability and gender had positive contributions to the academic performance of the students with learning disabilities. The reason for this development could be aligned to the fact that the factors such as gender, and emotional stability have impact positively on the academic performance of the SLD.

The current study also revealed that boys more often the girls are affected by all the cognitive developmental disorders of childhood. Differences in the etiology of learning disabilities, as well as general differences in learning styles in boys versus girls may explain the male preponderance in the prevalence of learning disabilities (Nass, 2018). A well-known study of 400 students found no gender gap when it came to learning issues. But that was using scientific criteria. When teachers made the call, they recommended twice as many boys for LD programme. One reason may be the differences in behaviours between boys and girls. We know that boys in general tend to draw attention that is more negative in schools. One report showed that boys represent around 85 percent of all discipline referrals. Another showed that 22 percent of boys had been formally disciplined, versus 8 percent of girls (Berninger, 2004).

Conclusion

It is obvious in this current study that emotional stability and the gender of students with learning disabilities (LD) play an important role in the accomplishment of their academic achievement. The findings highlight the significance of emotional well-being as a key factor that can either enhance or hinder academic success among this group. Additionally, the influence of gender suggests that tailored interventions may be necessary to address the unique challenges faced by male and female students with disabilities differently. These insights emphasize the need for educators, counselors, and policymakers to consider both emotional and gender-specific needs when designing support strategies for students with LD, ultimately foster a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward:

- i. Students with learning disabilities should be properly guided on their Emotion to make them control their negative emotion towards Academic.
- ii. Students with LD should be monitored by the teachers and the parents/guardian in order to face their academic activities.
- iii. Both gender should be properly encourage for academic achievement.
- iv. Repetition and recognition of words should be carefully taught to both genders.

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