

## **Teacher Factor and School Environment as Correlates of Academic Adjustment of Students with Learning Disabilities in Ibadan Metropolis**

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### **Abstract**

Students with learning disabilities often exhibit distinct characteristics that may hinder their academic adjustment compared to their peers. This study investigated the relationships among teacher-related factors, the school environment, and the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Junior Secondary Schools within Ibadan metropolis. Specifically, it examined the extent to which teacher factors and school environment jointly and relatively contribute to the academic adjustment of these students. The research adopted a descriptive ex-post facto design. A total of 300 students with learning disabilities were selected through multistage sampling from Junior Secondary Schools across the metropolis. Five instruments were utilized for data collection: the Learning Disability Evaluation Scale Renormed Second Edition (LDES-R2), student academic records, a Teacher's Factor Scale, a School Environment Scale, and the College Adjustment Scale. The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was employed for data analysis. Findings revealed a significant relationship among teacher factors, school environment, and students' academic adjustment. Both teacher factors and school environment were found to contribute jointly and relatively to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. Based on the findings, the study recommends that the government prioritize teacher training and ongoing professional development. Such training should focus on equipping teachers with modern strategies for identifying and addressing diverse learning needs through differentiated instruction. Additionally, schools should invest in continuous professional development programs in special education and inclusive practices to enhance the capacity of educators working with students who have learning disabilities.

### **Article history**

Received: 21.7.2025.

Accepted: 3.9.2025.

### **Keywords:**

Teachers;  
School Environment;  
Learning Disabilities;  
Academic Adjustment

## Introduction

Students with learning disabilities are characterized with unique traits which distinguished them from other students in the classroom. These unique features are capable of hindering or limiting their academic adjustment. As academic adjustment could be attributed to the extent at which an individual was able to fit or align himself or herself with his or her immediate environment. Adjustment evolves around psychological, social, emotional, socio-political, socio-economical, financial, academic and host of others. Students with learning disabilities often struggle to make gains in their academic skills, even with intensive interventions such as special education support at school. Researchers have explored some of the ways that instruction affects how these students perform academically and whether they demonstrate growth in their academic skills. Teacher's attitude and school environment impact growth for students with learning disabilities and the academic adjustment experience for these specific students.

Learning disabilities is an umbrella term for a group of disorders, running through from childhood to adulthood and not medically treatable, unless it co-exists with other disorders. Learning disabilities can be remediated with cause unknown. The disorders are said to come from the faultiness of the cortical layers in the central nervous system. This is said to affect the ability to listen, spell, read or process information appropriately. Blair and Scott (2000) reiterated that the difficulties encountered cause discrepancy between the individual's intelligence quotients and academic achievement. The National Center for Learning Disabilities explained that, those with learning disabilities are of average or above intelligence, but still struggle to acquire skills that impart their performance academically, in the work place and at home (NCLD 2000). In the 1980s, the National Joint Committee on Learning Disabilities (NJCLD) defined the term learning disability as: a heterogeneous group of disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities. These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to Central Nervous System Dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (example, sensory impairment, mental retardation, social and emotional disturbance) or environmental influences (example, cultural interferences, insufficient/inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors) it is not the direct result those conditions or influences (Patti and Flanagan, 2005).

Students with learning disabilities have difficulty processing information in one or more of several areas of learning. They may have problems getting information into the brain (called an input problem). They may have difficulty with sound input (called an auditory perception or auditory processing disorder) or with visual input (called a visual perception disorder). This student may have difficulty integrating information once it is received in the brain. These problems may include the ability to sequence information, to infer meaning (abstract), or to organize information. Some may have problems with the storage and retrieval of information or memory. The memory problem might involve information still in the process of being learned (often called working memory or short-term memory) or material that has been learned but not retained (long-term memory). Students may have difficulty getting information out of the brain (called an output problem). This problem may impact their ability to send information to their muscles. For example, a student with this problem may have difficulty coordinating the muscles of the hand and have slow, tedious and awkward handwriting (called a grapho-motor problem).

Teacher's attitude plays an indispensable role in the academic adjustment of students

with learning disabilities. Olufemi (2018) observed that the leadership style of the school administrators creates a kind of learning environment. A cordial relationship between the head teacher and learners creates an environment conducive to learning as discussions are encouraged and learners are listened to. The head teacher works together with pupils on how to succeed in life and in academic work. In such a school, every member is useful in decision-making process and pupils are usually disciplined and possess positive academic attitudes. The head teacher has a formal relationship with several other people or groups of people both inside and outside the school system. He/she has dealings not only with the teachers and pupils, but also with parents, members of the community, which the school serves and educational officers.

Teacher acceptance is another very important factor in the social skills and academic development of school aged children. In school-aged children, factors such as physical attractiveness, cultural traits, and disabilities greatly affect the level of acceptance accorded them by the teachers. Thomas and Scotch (2017) stated that a child's degree of social competence is the best predictor of teachers' acceptance. While the peer groups interactions especially teens, are often based on athletics, games, sports and other play activities, teacher acceptance is normally based on social, academic interests and abilities. Joseph (2012) opined that children who are able to secure teacher acceptance and are popular in class have fewer problems in middle and high school. Pupils who are teacher-accepted have fewer emotional and social adjustment problems as adults. Teacher-accepted children may be shy or assertive, but they often have well-developed communication skills.

Belo (2018) and Ikegbusi (2019), physical environment plays a central role in any activity and makes it more conducive, successful and achievable. Physical facilities are one of the stimulating factors that play a fundamental role in improving academic achievement in the school system (Ikegbusi, Egwu & Iheanacho, 2021). These include; school buildings, accommodation, classrooms, libraries and information centers, furniture, laboratories, recreational facilities, apparatus, information and communication technology facilities, multipurpose halls and performing art spaces, health, conveniences, sanitation, maintenance culture, aesthetics and other instructional materials (Ikegbusi, Onwuasoanya & Chigbo-Okeke, 2016) and (Akwara, 2018). Furthermore, their availability, relevancy and sufficiency affect academic achievement positively (Aslam, 2017).

Adjustment is the extent at which an individual irrespective of their impairment, condition or status was able to maintain an alignment between himself or herself and the immediate environment or circumstance in order to be fit or function in such environment. Adjustment ranges from academic, psychological, social, medical, physical, emotional and a host of others (Abodunrin and Adelabu, 2025).

Students with learning disabilities academic adjustment is influenced by school environment. Barrett, Davies, Zhang and Barrett (2015), good classroom arrangement inspires and encourages children to easily interact with each other and develop various skills including language and social behaviour. Poor classroom physical arrangement may affect children's free movement and can result into social behaviour problems. Classroom physical environment plays important role in pupils' educational success. Osagiede (2016) defines physical environment as the physical characteristics of classroom. Physical classroom environment includes different things like size of classroom, floor, walls, desks, lighting, school structure, school climate, computer etc. Hence, the learning environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance pupils' academic performance. On the other hand, poor school buildings maintenance, overcrowded classrooms, poor lighting, noise, high levels of carbon dioxide, inconsistent temperatures, ineffective ventilation, lack of proper security system, power supply, water, recreational facilities, lack of health facility, lack of

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furniture, affect academic achievement negatively. Therefore, it is right to say that academic achievement has a close link with the availability of educational facilities (Hussain, 2016) and (Adeyemo & Ejikeme, 2018).

Thomas and Amaechi (2019) described environment as a system within which living organisms interact with the physical elements, while educational environment is a place where the learners learn to interact with learning facilities in order to be socialized and face the challenges in the society. According to Ikegbusi (2019), school environment which includes school climate, instructional facilities, physical structures, spaces for conveniences, planning, accessories foreplaning, the teachers as well as the preschoolers themselves are essential for teaching and learning to properly take place. The extent to which pupils' learning could be enhanced depends on their location within the school compound, the structure of their classroom, availability of instructional facilities and accessories. It is believed that a well-planned school would gear up expected outcomes of education that would facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation, effective teaching and learning process and academic performance of pupils. Byoung-suk (2012) found the relationship between environment and design within the classroom from a theoretical perspective. They found that physical environment of the classroom acts as 'silent curriculum' means that classroom environmental design could facilitate and improve the learning process like the overt curriculum. Therefore, paying attention to these elements reduces how much time teachers spend maintaining safety and order. This frees up time for higher levels of teaching, which ultimately increases pupils' learning (Lawrence, 2012)

Education which is given in group settings to the age of round about three up to five years old children is called preschool education. It is also called nursery, kindergarten outside the US. Preschool education is designed to investigate and assist the mental, physical, emotional, linguistic, and also social upbringing of children (Justice & Vukelich, 2017). Bibi (2012) referred to preschool as a systematic programme in which young children participate before they enter into primary schools that is designed to promote children's social, emotional, academic, linguistic, and literacy skills, and health and above all wellbeing. According to Wana (2010) and Ernest-Ehibudu and Peter-Kio (2017), preschool is an important developmental period for children as they learn and acquire skills that would eventually aid them in academic achievement in school. It is also a time that marks great variability in the experiences children have, because some children stay at home with their families, others attend private child care programmes, and others attend public preschool. While children's development has been a topic of interest for centuries, children were not viewed as having specific age-defined needs until the late 19th century (Jessica, 2014).

Preschool education is the first step in a child's educational journey. Early childhood experts have the opinion that attending high quality preschool programme helps to promote children's social and emotional development and prepare them for kindergarten and beyond Wana (2010) and (Ikegbusi, 2019). When you walk into a well-designed preschool classroom, you see children and adults working together in a productive surrounding. The children are constructively engaged and teachers busy observing, facilitating, and challenging the children (Adewale, 2012). The environment supports all these by assuming several of the responsibilities one typically associate with teachers. It helps the children interact, learn, and avoid unproductive activities, such as running and getting in each other's ways. Thus, this research work therefore takes a look into teacher factor and school environment as predictors of academic adjustment among students with LD in Ibadan metropolis.

## Methods

This study adopted descriptive research design. The sample for this study comprises of 100 respondents who are students with learning disabilities in Junior Secondary Schools. The multistage sampling technique was used to select the sample for this study. The respondents were screened using Learning Disability Evaluation Scale and students academic record. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression analysis was used to analyse the data which was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

## Results

### *Analysis of Socio-Demographic Characteristic*

Table 1 shows that 165 representing 55.0% of the respondents were female and 135 (45.0%) were male. Therefore the above result implies that majority of students with learning disabilities use for this study were female.

**Table 1. Frequency Distribution by Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	135	45.0
Female	165	55.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Table 2. Frequency Distribution by Religion**

Religion	Frequency	Percentage
Muslim	123	41.0
Christianity	140	46.7
Others	37	12.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>300</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2 reveals that 140 representing 46.7% of the respondents were Christians while 123 (41.0%) were Muslim and other were 37(12.3%) of the total respondents. Therefore the above result implies that majority of the respondents were Christians.

### Answers to research questions

This section consists of the results from the inferential statistics on the account of the three questions raised and answered.

**Research question one:** What is the relationship that exist among teacher's factors, school environment and academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis?

**Table 3.** *Descriptive Statistics and Correlation among the variables*

Variables	1	2	3
Academic adjustment	1.000		
School environment	.991**	1.000	
P<(0.05)	.000		
Teacher's factors, P<(0.05)	.989** .000	.994** .000	1.000
<b>Mean</b>	<b>81.38</b>	<b>30.83</b>	<b>44.77</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>27.026</b>	<b>12.845</b>	<b>19.211</b>

Table 3 shows Mean, Standard Deviation and zero order correlation among the variables. It was observed that there was significant relationship between the independent variables teacher's factors, and school environment on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis in the following order of magnitude: school environment ( $r=0.991$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ), and Teacher's factors, ( $r=0.989$ ,  $p< 0.05$ ) has significant relationships with academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis. It implies that there is significant relationship that exist among teacher's factors, school environment and academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis.

**Research question two:** What are the joint contributions of teachers factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis?

**Table 4.** *Summary of Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the interactive effects of the Independent Variable on the Dependent Variable*

Model	Sum of Df	Means Square	F	Sig.
Regression	214712.417	2	107356.208	9040.895
Residual	3526.730	297	11.875	
Total	218239.147	299		
R =	.992 <sup>a</sup>			
R <sup>2</sup> =	.984			
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup> =	.983			
Std. Error of the Estimate =	3.44594			

\*Denotes significant relationship at 0.05 significance level.

Table 4 shows that there is joint contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis is significant. The result yields a coefficient of multiple regressions  $R = .992$ ;  $R^2 = .984$  and adjusted  $R^2 = .983$ . This suggests that these two factors combined account for 98.3% ( $Adj.R^2 = .983$ ) variance in the prediction of academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. This implies that there is joint contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. The other factors

accounting for the remaining variance are beyond the scope of this study. The ANOVA result from the regression analysis shows that there is joint contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities ( $F_{(2, 297)} = 9040.895$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). This thus implies that there is joint contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities.

**Research question three:** What are the relative contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis?

**Table 5.** *Relative contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variables (Test of significance of the regression coefficients)*

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	17.570	.527	-	33.352	.000
School environment	1.424	.137	.677	10.380	.000
Teachers factors	.445	.092	.316	4.850	.000

*Dependent Variable: academic adjustment; \*Denotes significant at  $P < 0.05$ .*

Table 5 reveals the relative contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis.

These independent variables constitute the potent predictors of academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. The result shows that there is a significant relative contribution of school environment ( $\beta = .677$ ;  $t = 10.380$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), and there is a significant relative contribution of teachers factors ( $\beta = .316$ ;  $t = 4.850$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ), to academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis. As the results reveal, the most potent predictor is school environment followed by teachers' factors, respectively. Thus, there is significant relative contribution of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis.

## Discussion

The findings show that, there is a significant relationship that exist among teacher's factors, school environment and academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis. This was in line with the view of (Ozdemir, et al., 2015) who asserts that, academic success of the school is the school environment. The school environment expresses families' socio-economic and socio-cultural values, their perspective on education, and the meaning and importance of the school in terms of society. Furthermore, the environment where the school is located can be expressed as transport facilities and activities that reinforce or inhibit teaching and learning. Important environmental factors can be listed as adequacy of the infrastructure of the area served, housing and heating, activities for personal development, facilities for social activities, transport and safety, access to healthcare services, and hygiene training. A safe and organised environment and school-family cooperation are among effective school characteristics. Anxiety, achievement motivation, the family's social and economic

level, the school and education conditions, environmental factors, and nutrition and health conditions all have an impact on the student's academic achievement.

According to Belo (2018) and Ikegbusi (2019), physical environment plays a central role in any activity and makes it more conducive, successful and achievable. Physical facilities are one of the stimulating factors that play a fundamental role in improving academic achievement in the school system (Ikegbusi, Egwu & Iheanacho, 2021). These include; school buildings, accommodation, classrooms, libraries and information centers, furniture, laboratories, recreational facilities, apparatus, information and communication technology facilities, multipurpose halls and performing art spaces, health, conveniences, sanitation, maintenance culture, aesthetics and other instructional materials (Ikegbusi, Onwuasoanya & Chigbo-Okeke, 2016) and (Akwara, 2018). Furthermore, their availability, relevancy and sufficiency affect academic achievement positively (Aslam, 2017).

The students' academic adjustment is influenced by school environment. According to Barrett, Davies, Zhang and Barrett (2015), good classroom arrangement inspires and encourages children to easily interact with each other and develop various skills including language and social behaviour. Poor classroom physical arrangement may affect children's free movement and can result into social behaviour problems. Classroom physical environment plays important role in pupils' educational success. Osagiede (2016) defines physical environment as the physical characteristics of classroom. Physical classroom environment includes different things like size of classroom, floor, walls, desks, lighting, school structure, school climate, computer etc. Hence, the learning environment remains an important area that should be studied and well managed to enhance pupils' academic performance. On the other hand, poor school buildings maintenance, overcrowded classrooms, poor lighting, noise, high levels of carbon dioxide, inconsistent temperatures, ineffective ventilation, lack of proper security system, power supply, water, recreational facilities, lack of health facility, lack of furniture, affect academic achievement negatively. Therefore, it is right to say that academic achievement has a close link with the availability of educational facilities (Hussain, 2016) and (Adeyemo & Ejikeme, 2018).

Teachers play an indispensable role in the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. The teacher can be described as a building block that contributes to the student's cognitive, affective and behavioural development, provides careers, raises compatible individuals for society, fosters thinking styles, perspectives on life and a broad worldview, and shapes the society of the future. The teacher's sympathetic approach, warm-hearted behaviours, and tolerance towards errors made have a positive effect on relations between teacher and student (Sadik, 2002). In the development of students' academic achievements, teachers display behaviours aimed at enabling students to grasp the subject of the lesson and reinforcing it with exercises, applying the correct assessment methods, using time efficiently, keeping students active in class, and enabling them to generate ideas (Can, 2004).

The result also shows that there is joint contributions of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. According to Ikegbusi (2019), school environment which includes school climate, instructional facilities, physical structures, spaces for conveniences, planning, accessories for planning, the teachers as well as the preschoolers themselves are essential for teaching and learning to properly take place. The extent to which pupils' learning could be enhanced depends on their location within the school compound, the structure of their classroom, availability of instructional facilities and accessories. It is believed that a well-planned school would gear up expected outcomes of education that would facilitate good social, political and economic emancipation, effective teaching and learning process and academic performance of pupils. Byoung-suk (2012) found

the relationship between environment and design within the classroom from a theoretical perspective. They found that physical environment of the classroom acts as 'silent curriculum' means that classroom environmental design could facilitate and improve the learning process like the overt curriculum. Therefore, paying attention to these elements reduces how much time teachers spend maintaining safety and order. This frees up time for higher levels of teaching, which ultimately increases pupils' learning (Lawrence, 2012).

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The findings also reveals that,, there is significant relative contribution of teachers' factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan metropolis. This was in line with the view of Duruji (2014), Ikegbusi (2019) and Ikegbusi, Egwu and Iheanacho (2021) who maintained that the learning environment plays a vital role in determining how students perform or respond to circumstances and situations around them. This implied that no society is void of environmental influences. The learning environment determines to a large extent how a pupil behaves and interacts, that is to say that the environment in which one finds him/herself tends to mold his/her behaviour so as to meet the demands of life whether negatively or positively (Oleribe, 2016). The author opined that the desire for both qualitative and quantitative education has multiplied the problem of providing an effective and conducive learning environment for teaching and learning. In Nigeria, there is an increase in the number of students' enrolment in schools with little or no regards to improving the learning environment so as to better their performance. Ikegbusi, Egwu and Iheanacho (2021) stated that learning environment should have good infrastructural development, adequate trained teachers, good leadership and adequate instructional materials among others. Do all these characteristics have positive impact on academic achievement of pupils in preschools? Therefore, this paper is designed specifically to study the conception of how school environment affects the academic achievement of preschool pupils in Eti Osa Local Government Area of Lagos State.

Also, Olufemi (2018) observed that the leadership style of the school administrators creates a kind of learning environment. A cordial relationship between the head teacher and learners creates an environment conducive to learning as discussions are encouraged and learners are listened to. The head teacher works together with pupils on how to succeed in life and in academic work. In such a school, every member is useful in decision-making process and pupils are usually disciplined and possess positive academic attitudes. The head teacher has a formal relationship with several other people or groups of people both inside and outside the school system. He/she has dealings not only with the teachers and pupils, but also with parents, members of the community, which the school serves and educational officers.

Another factor that can have a significant effect on the student's academic achievement and is located at the centre of the education system is the teacher. The teacher can be described as a building block that contributes to the student's cognitive, affective and behavioural development, provides careers, raises compatible individuals for society, fosters thinking styles, perspectives on life and a broad worldview, and shapes the society of the future. The

teacher's sympathetic approach, warm-hearted behaviours, and tolerance towards errors made have a positive effect on relations between teacher and student. In the development of students' academic achievements, teachers display behaviours aimed at enabling students to grasp the subject of the lesson and reinforcing it with exercises, applying the correct assessment methods, using time efficiently, keeping students active in class, and enabling them to generate ideas. Identifying the contribution of the society in which teachers is one of them to the adjustment of individual with disabilities, Abodunrin and Komolafe (2017) reported that the ability of such individual to adjust to situation, condition or challenges that may arises as a result of their disabilities depends on their level of acceptability, accommodation and recognition by the society has significant impact on their adjustment.

## Conclusion

This study examined teachers' factors and school environment as correlate of academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. The study has established that, significant relationship exists among teachers' factors, school environment and academic adjustment, also from the study it was confirmed that, both teachers' factors and school environment has joint contributions to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities and the relative contributions of teachers factors and school environment to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities was also significant

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the study recommends that:

- Government should embark on teacher training and professional development so as to equip teachers of students with learning disabilities with the modern and sophisticated methods of handling students with diverse needs. The government and schools should invest on continuous professional development programmes that provides teachers with advance knowledge in special education and inclusive teaching practice. Teachers should be equipped to identify and work with students who have learning disabilities through differentiated instructions
- All hands must be deck in the provision of a better learning environment students with learning disabilities. Such school environment should be made in way that facilitate successful learning for this set of students as this will helps in motivating them which gives room for their academic adjustment.
- There should be collaborative teacher-student relationship as this can help in fostering positive teachers-students relationship through regular individualized support and encouragement. Teachers should be approachable and empathetic coupled with understanding of the students needs. And also there should be inclusive school environment which helps in creating welcoming and inclusive school culture that values diversity and support students with learning disabilities, implementing universal design for learning principles to ensure accessibility and engagement

## Conflict of Interest

None.

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