

**INFLUENCE OF PARENTAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS, AGE AND GENDER ON ACADEMIC ADJUSTMENT OF STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN IBADAN, OYO STATE**

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**Abstract**

This paper investigated influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo state. The paper maintained that ability of a student to adjust to a school environment leads to academic adjustment. However, it sees academic adjustment as one of the challenges the students with learning disabilities encounter in school. The main purpose of this study is to investigate influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. Three research questions were raised and answered in the study. A correlational research design was adopted in the study. The samples of the study comprised two hundred and eighty three (283) respondents (male-114 and female 169) that were purposively selected. A questionnaire with two sections: A demographic variables including age and gender, and B: parental socio-economic status and academic adjustment was used. It was validated by experts in learning disabilities and economics and it has a reliability of  $\alpha=0.78$  using Cronbach Alpha. The data collected were analysed using Multiple Regression Analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient. Results indicated joint contributions of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities was significant. This study has successfully demonstrated that all the variables significantly predicted academic adjustment. Built on the result of the study, it was recommended that academic adjustment of the students with learning disabilities should be given priority by all the stakeholders in the educational sector.

**Keyword:** Academic adjustment, Age, Gender, Learning disabilities, Parental socio-economic status

**Introduction**

Adjustment which is an individual ability to adapt to different circumstances of life plays vital role in what becomes of an individual in life, thus, one may propose that a student's ability to acclimatise to a school environment leads to academic adjustment. This assertion agrees with Shivagunde and Kulkarni (2012) that academic adjustment

impacts the academic achievement of students. By implication, if a student fails to adjust to the school environment he or she may not benefit from the opportunities that abound in a school setting. Hence, academic adjustment is one of the challenges the students with learning disabilities encounter in school, because students with learning disabilities by nature struggle with virtually all the academic areas, which leads to many problems in different academic endeavours. More often, students with learning disabilities have difficulties in acquiring basic academic skills or academic content due to their inability to comprehend spoken or written language. According to Council for Exceptional Children (2025), these difficulties may influence a student's ability to read, write, spell, think, speak, listen, or engage in mathematical calculation.

Learning disabilities as a condition consists of a variety of disorders that cause substantial alterations in learning (Prasadh & Burle, 2022). Odeilis and Paola (2023) as well affirmed that learning disabilities may affect the acquisition, organization, remembering, comprehension, and use of verbal or nonverbal information. Al-Mahrezi, Al-Futaisi, and Al-Mamari (2016) emphasised that a learning disability cannot be attributed to an emotional disturbance, cultural difference, or disadvantage. However, it is one of the most common neurodevelopmental disorders affecting 3%–10% of students in school (Shah, et al, 2019); this condition affects different areas of learning, thereby obstructed the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. Academic adjustment denotes the degree to which students can familiarise to the academic loads in their various school subjects, which according to Zhao, et al. (2022) is dependent on four separate aspects, such as motivation to learn and having clear academic goals; applying oneself to academic work; exerting effort to meet academic demands; and being contented with the academic milieu.

Vlachopanou, et al. (2025) emphasised that academic adjustment is a crucial factor in the success of students in school, because it is the outcome of students' dealing with the rigours and difficulties of the academic realm, and it is affected by physical variables, feelings associated with the studies, cognitive, emotional, and societal-resources that help deal with the academic loads (Casanova, et al., 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2018). A study by <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtese>

Chen et al. (2021) found that academic adjustment predicted science motivation among Chinese students. Ahmad and Rana (2023) findings also suggest that academic adjustment plays an important role in motivating students to learn. However, for students with learning disabilities to adjust well academically, certain factors need to be considered, such as parental socio-economic status, age and gender.

Parental socio-economic status is multidimensional in nature and it is a concept that is essential for the progress, development, health and educational outcomes of students with or without learning disabilities. Description of parental socio-economic status largely refers to the amount of parents' salary, employment position and level of educational accomplishment (Vukojevic, et al., 2017). Saifi and Mehmood (2011) specified that socio-economic status is a combined measure of an individual or family's income and social position relative to others. Ziyu (2025) maintained that parental socio-economic status is widely recognised as an important aspect in students' academic performance within academic setting, thus, discrepancies embedded in socio-economic status have become more obvious among students. Fakunle and Ajayi (2020) affirmed that parental socio-economic status is a significant factor that influences overall academic performance of students, because the students from low socio-economic backgrounds have tendencies to accomplish lower test scores and have a higher probability of dropping out of school system.

Vukojevic et al. (2017) claimed that evidence indicated that the parental socio-economic status is highly influential in determining the child's physical and mental health and future outcomes; including his/her academic achievements and education attainment, as well as the parameters of his/her physical abilities, cognitive function and fundamental neurobiology affecting brain development. Ogunsola (2021) found that parental socio-economic status has positive influence on the social adjustment of students with learning disabilities. Oduro-Ofori, et al. (2023) as well found a significant relationship between parents' occupation and students' performance, as well as parental socio-economic status has a positive relationship with the performance of students, which aids self-motivation for learning among students.

Ziyu (2025) likewise found a direct impact of socio-economic status on academic performance and the mediating effect of parental educational contributions, demonstrated how parental participation may alleviate the challenges encountered by students from lower socio-economic status families. *Parental socio-economic status, employment, and family size significantly impacted children's educational attainment* (Okorn & Ojong, 2025). Similarly on age, Aloka (2023) found that older students showed better adjustments as compared to younger students, thus age at the point of entrance to school determines the students' academic adjustment. Aloka (2023) thus affirmed that age is a very significant factor which affects adjustments among students in school. Also, Çelikkol (2023) found that the students starting school at an early age had poorer achievement in the basic examination and academic achievement than their counterparts who started school at an older age. Hence, Akay and Ceylan (2019) critically suggested that one should recognise individual differences and the effects of the school starting age and school readiness on students' adjustment.

Dawborn-Gundlach (2018) reiterated that age, gender and first language spoken have been demonstrated as factors that influence academic adjustment. Bacon-Kaufman (2015) maintained that gender also positively impacts academic adjustment, with females reporting better academic and social adjustment than males, and males showing higher emotional adjustment. Contradictory findings have been reported, indicating no visible gender differences in academic and social adjustment of students (Ishak et al., 2011). However, Casanova et al. (2018); Dwyer et al. (2013) claimed that academic adjustment is significantly affected by gender. Therefore, this study investigates influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo state.

### **Statement of the problem**

Students with learning disabilities have challenges with academic adjustment which has led to their regular failure in the school subjects, thereby leading to high dropout rate. Many factors have contributed to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. One of such factors is parental socio-economic status. Undeniably, <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtese>

issue of low income and students' poor academic performance is predominant and apparent in schools today, mostly in Nigerian secondary schools. Parental socio-economic status significantly influences students' academic performance as families through various socio-economic status encounter significant problems in providing their offspring with ideal care and schooling. Also, age at which the students enter school may sometimes affect the students' abilities to adjust academically. As well, students' gender may be a contributing factor to poor academic adjustment among students with learning disabilities. Hence, this study determines influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo state

### **Purpose of the study**

The study investigates influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. Specifically the study:

1. Determines the composite contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities.
2. Establishes the relative contribution of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities.
3. Ensures the relationship of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities

### **Research Questions**

The following questions were raised and answered in this study:

1. What is the composite contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?
2. What is the relative contribution of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?
3. What is the relationship of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?

## **Methods**

A correlational research design was adopted in this study because none of the variables was manipulated. Also, the research only observed composite contribution, relative contribution and relationship among the variables in the study. The population of the study comprised all secondary school students with learning disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. The samples of the study consisted of two hundred and eighty three (283) respondents (male-114 and female 169) that were purposively selected from among students with learning disabilities in Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was adopted to select the sample for the study. The first stage was random selection of two local government areas from Ibadan lesser cities which are Ido and Akinyele local government areas of Ibadan, Oyo state, Nigeria. The second stage was random selection of two secondary schools which are known for yearly failure in external examinations. The third stage involved selection of respondents for the study through screening using Learning Disabilities Checklist developed by National Center for Learning Disabilities (2007). School adjustment scale was as well used to screen the students, only those with academic adjustment issues with years of school failure were purposively selected as the respondents.

A structured questionnaire titled “parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment, and School adjustment scale were used as instruments. The questionnaire has two sections. Section: A focuses on demographic variables including age and gender, while section: B focuses on parental socio-economic status and academic adjustment scale. The instrument is on a four likert scale: Strongly Agreed (SA)-4, Agreed (A)-3, Disagreed (D)-2 and Strongly Disagreed (SD). It was validated by experts in learning disabilities and economics and it has reliability of =0.78 coefficient using Cronbach Alpha. The researchers with their four research assistants visited the selected secondary schools within Ibadan to seek the permission to conduct the study. Afterward, the researchers interacted with the respondents and screened them. The structured questionnaires were administered on the respondents through the services of the research assistants engaged by the researchers and the questionnaires were as well retrieved <https://journals.unizik.edu.ng/jtese>

immediately by the research assistants. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were analysed using simple frequency and percentages, while the data collected were analysed using inferential statistics of Multiple Regression Analysis, and Pearson Products Moment Correlation Coefficient to show the relative contribution and relationships among the variables in the study.

## Results

The following are the results of the findings as presented below:

**Table 1: Demographical characteristics of the respondents**

Variables	Labels	Frequency	Percentage
Age	10-15 years	133	47.0
	16-20 years	150	53.0
Gender	Male	114	40.3
	Female	169	59.7
Class	SSS 1	159	56.2
	SSS 2	124	43.8

Table 1 above showed the demographic characteristics of respondents. In terms of age distribution, those within the ages of 10-15 years are (47.0%) and those within the ages of 16-20 years are (53.0%), with a slightly higher representation from the older group. This suggested a relatively balanced distribution, though majority are in the older age bracket. The gender distribution showed that most of the respondents are females (59.7%) compared to males with (40.3%), indicating a higher female representation in the sample. In terms of class levels, the respondents were grouped into SSS 1 (Senior Secondary School 1) and SSS 2 (Senior Secondary School 2), with a larger proportion of the sample in SSS 1 (56.2%) compared to SSS 2 (43.8%). This indicated that majority of the respondents are in their first year of senior secondary school.

**Research Question One:** What is the composite contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?

**Table 2: Summary of Regression analysis showing joint contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities**

<b>R</b>	.562
<b>R Square</b>	.316
<b>Adjusted R Square</b>	.308
<b>Std. Error of the Estimate</b>	7.90574

<b>Analysis of Variance</b>						
<b>Model</b>	<b>Sum of Squares</b>	<b>DF</b>	<b>Mean Square</b>	<b>F</b>	<b>Sig.</b>	<b>Remark</b>
Regression	8040.919	3	2680.306	42.884	.001	Sig.
Residual	17437.717	279	62.501			
Total	25478.636	282				

Table 2 above showed the joint contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities were significant. The table also showed a coefficient of multiple correlation ( $R = .562$  and a multiple  $R^2$  of  $.316$ ). This means that 31.6% of the variance was accounted for by three predictor variables when taken together. The significance of the composite contribution was tested at  $\alpha = 0.05$ . The table also showed that the analysis of variance for the regression yielded F-ratio of 42.884 (significant at 0.05 level). This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance.

**Research Question Two:** What is the relative contribution of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?

**Table 3: Summary of regression analysis showing relative contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities**

<b>Model</b>	<b>Unstandardized Coefficient</b>	<b>Standardized Coefficient</b>	<b>t</b>	<b>Sig.</b>
	<b>B</b>	<b>Std. Error</b>	<b>Beta</b>	
(Constant)	19.524	4.024		4.851
Gender	1.770	.975	.091	1.815
Age	0.149	.159	.047	0.936
Parental SES	1.210	.111	.543	10.890

Table 3 revealed the relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable, expressed as beta weights, viz: Gender ( $\beta = .091$ ,  $p > .05$ ), Age ( $\beta = .047$ ,  $p > .05$ ), and Parental Socio-economic status ( $\beta = .543$ ,  $p < .05$ ) respectively. Hence, parental socio-economic status was significant, that is, it could independently and significantly predicts the academic adjustment of students.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relationship of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities?

**Table 4:** Zero order correlation showing the relationship between parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities

	Academic adjustment	Gender	Age	Parental SES
<b>Academic adjustment</b>	1			
<b>Gender</b>	.140* (.018)	1		
<b>Age</b>	.049 (.412)	-.153* (.010)	1	
<b>Parental SES</b>	.554* (.001)	.103 (.084)	.029 (.622)	1
<b>Mean</b>	55.68	1.60	15.18	25.68
<b>Std. Deviation</b>	9.51	0.49	2.99	4.26

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

Table 4 showed that there was a positive significant relationship between academic adjustment and gender ( $r=.140, p(.018<.05)$ ), as well as parental socio-economic status ( $r=.554, p(.001)<.05$ ), but there was no significant relationship between academic adjustment and age ( $r=.049, p(.412)>.05$ ) respectively. Hence, gender and parental socio-economic status influenced academic adjustment among respondents in the study.

## Discussion

Based on the research question one which says what is the composite contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities? The results showed that the joint contribution of parental socio-economic status, age, and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities were significant. This implies that the joint contribution of the independent variables to the dependent variable was significant and that other variables not included in this model may have accounted for the remaining variance. The results agree with Ziyu (2025) who stated that parental socio-economic status is widely recognised as an important aspect in students' academic performance within the school system. The findings also corroborate Fakunle and Ajayi (2020) who affirmed that parental socio-economic status is a vital factor that influences overall academic performance of the students, because the students from low socio-economic backgrounds tend to accomplish

lower test scores. Also, the level of significant under age supports Aloka (2023) who found that older students showed better adjustment as compared to younger students, thus age at the point of entering school determines the students' academic adjustment. The findings as well supported Bacon-Kaufman (2015), who maintained that gender strongly impacted academic adjustment, with females reporting better academic and social adjustment than males, while males only showed higher emotional adjustment.

In line with the research question two which says what is the relative contribution of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities? The findings revealed the relative contribution of the three independent variables to the dependent variable. However, only parental socio-economic status was significant, that is, it could independently and significantly predicts the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities. The finding that says parental socio-economic status significantly predicts academic adjustment agrees with Okorn and Ojong (2025) that parental socio-economic status, employment, and family size significantly impacted children's educational attainment. While the result which showed that age and gender do not have significant relative contribution to the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities negates Çelikkol (2023) finding that the students starting school at an early age had poorer achievement in the basic examination and academic achievement than their counterparts who started school at an older age. Even, the finding also contradicts Dawborn-Gundlach (2018), who admitted that age, gender and first spoken language have been demonstrated as factors of influence in academic adjustment.

Consistent with research question three which says what is the relationship of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities? The results showed that there were positive significant relationships between academic adjustment and parental socio-economic status, as well as gender. Nevertheless, there was no significant relationship between academic adjustment and age respectively. Hence, gender and parental socio-economic status influenced academic adjustment among the respondents. This finding supports Oduro-Ofori, et al. (2023) result

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which showed a significant relationship between parents' occupation and students' performance.

### **Conclusion**

The study has successfully demonstrated that parental socio-economic status, age and gender significantly predicted academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in secondary schools. The finding showed the influence of parental socio-economic status, age and gender on academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in secondary schools within Oyo state and by implications the same can be replicated among other secondary schools within the nation. Also, these findings revealed how parental socio-economic status, age and gender can influence academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities anytime within the school system when the need for such arises. Therefore, for students with learning disabilities to adjust well academically, there is need to consider age of entrance to schools. As well, the gender of the students with learning disabilities determines the level of their performance, so there should be total consideration of all these factors before learners are admitted to secondary schools. Similarly, parents must be aware that their socio-economic status plays lots of roles in the choice of school for their wards. Hence, the parents should avoid competitions with their well to do friends, rather the parents should enlist their wards in the schools they can afford and procure their wards with adequate school materials. Thus, all the earlier mentioned variables should be well coordinated in order to aid the academic adjustment of students with learning disabilities in a school setting.

### **Recommendations**

In line with the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. The academic adjustment of the students with learning disabilities should be given priority by all the stakeholders in the education of students with learning disabilities in secondary schools, in order for the student to adjust well academically.
2. Parents should also strive to provide their wards with learning disabilities with all the necessary supports needed to adjust academically in order to succeed in the school system.

3. Also, age of admission to school system matter a lot, therefore parents should ensure that their wards are ready for the school before enlisting such children in school, so that they can adjust better academically.
4. Likewise, gender of the students should be well considered before comparing them with one another in term of performance and adjustment in school setting, since studies have indicated that performance and adjustment in school varied in term of gender.

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