



Teacher-Student Relationship and Social and Psychological Adjustment among Adolescents with Learning Disabilities in Public Secondary Schools in Ibadan North-Central, Nigeria

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Abstract

Teacher-student relationships are an important factor in adolescents' social and psychological development. Adolescents with learning disabilities may need additional emotional and instructional support in the school setting. Although inclusive education is slowly taking root in Nigeria, adjustment problems faced by adolescents with learning disabilities remain a source of concern. The study investigated the influence of the teacher-student relationship on the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive survey design was adopted. The study population was adolescents with learning disabilities in selected public secondary schools, and a sample of 607 respondents was selected using a multistage sampling technique. The study identified learners with learning disabilities in the selected public secondary schools, but the methodology should report the specific identification or screening procedure. The researcher gathered data using a structured questionnaire validated by specialists in Educational Psychology and Special Education. Adolescents participated and completed the questionnaire. It included measures of the teacher-student relationship and adjustment outcomes, such as social and psychological adjustment. Reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, but alpha coefficients for individual subscales should be reported. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson product-moment correlation, and multiple regression analysis at the .05 level of significance. The results indicated significant positive relationships between classroom management and social adjustment ($r = .315, p < .001$) and between teachers' communication skills and social adjustment ($r = .194, p < .001$). Teachers' social competence was not significantly related to social adjustment ($r = -.025, p = .531$). Teachers' communication skills were significantly associated with psychological adjustment ($r = .359, p < .001$), whereas emotional intelligence was not significantly associated with psychological adjustment ($r = .031, p = .442$). The overall regression model was statistically significant ($R = .641, R^2 = .411, \text{Adjusted } R^2 = .405, F = 69.641, p < .001$), indicating that the predictor variables explained 41.1% of the variance in the reported adjustment outcomes. Findings suggest that some dimensions of the teacher-student relationship, especially classroom management and teacher communication skills, are related to adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities. The study recommends enhancing teachers' classroom management, communication, and learner-centered instructional practices to facilitate the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities.

Keywords: Teacher-student relationship, Learning disabilities, Social adjustment, Psychological adjustment, Inclusive education, Adolescents, Nigeria

INTRODUCTION

School is a key context for adolescents' academic, social, emotional, and psychological development. Adolescence is a period of significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social change as young people gain greater independence, self-awareness, identity, and concern for peer relationships and social belonging. Teachers play an important role in this environment as instructors, classroom managers, and mentors, providing academic and interpersonal support. Therefore, the quality of teacher-student relationships may be linked to adolescents' experiences and responses to school demands.

The teacher-student relationship refers to how teachers and students interact in the school

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setting. It encompasses communication, trust, respect, acceptance, responsiveness, encouragement, support, and conflict. Warmth, empathy, effective communication, and support are generally linked to positive relationships. Rejection, poor communication, emotional distance, and conflict may be involved in negative relationships (Aldrup et al., 2022; Longobardi et al., 2021). Supportive teacher-student interactions can create classroom environments in which students feel accepted and safe, and are more likely to seek help, participate in learning activities, and voice their academic and social concerns.

These relationships may be especially important for adolescents with learning disabilities. Learning disabilities are long-standing difficulties in learning and using academic skills such as reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics, distinct from general academic underachievement (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). They are characterized primarily by learning difficulties, but their effects may extend into students' social and psychological experiences. Academic difficulties can lead to frustration, low self-esteem, negative self-perceptions, reduced classroom participation, and strained relationships with teachers and peers (Kirby & Lindstrom, 2019). However, poor adjustment is not necessarily due to learning disabilities. Other influences on students' experiences may include teacher support, peer relationships, family support, self-concept, and the broader school environment.

Adjustment is the ability of an individual to respond to environmental demands and to cope with social, emotional, and psychological challenges. This study discusses adjustment in terms of social and psychological adjustment. Social adjustment refers to the ability to establish and maintain interpersonal relationships, participate in social activities appropriately, cooperate with others, and handle interpersonal situations. Psychological adjustment is defined as emotional stability, coping, self-perception, and the ability to respond appropriately to psychological demands (Estévez et al., 2021). These dimensions are distinct yet related. An adolescent may have good social relations and experience psychological problems or be psychologically stable yet have difficulties in social participation.

Some teacher-related features may be relevant to students' adjustment. Classroom management involves organizing classroom activities, setting expectations, managing behavior, and ensuring an orderly learning environment. Effective classroom management strategies can provide the structure and predictability that students with attention, academic, or classroom interaction difficulties need. Teacher communication skills include clear explanations, active listening, constructive criticism, and respectful communication. Open communication is especially important for adolescents with learning disabilities, as unclear directions and a lack of opportunities to ask questions may lead to more problems at school and in their relationships with others.

Teachers' social competence is the ability to build positive interpersonal relationships, empathize, communicate effectively, and respond appropriately to social situations. In classrooms with students who have a variety of learning needs, social competence may help teachers respond appropriately to individual differences. Teachers also regularly address students' emotional and behavioral needs, so emotional intelligence is relevant as well. Teachers who recognize and respond to students' emotions appropriately may contribute to supportive classroom interactions. However, these characteristics are considered adjustment-associated factors rather than causes because the present study used a cross-sectional survey design.

Ecological and social support perspectives can also help explain the importance of teacher-student relationships. Adolescents develop within a variety of interrelated environments, including family, school, peers, and the wider community (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). School is an important proximal environment where adolescents regularly interact with teachers and peers. Teachers can provide emotional, informational, and instructional support through encouragement,

feedback, academic assistance, and opportunities to participate. This support may be especially important for adolescents with learning disabilities, as ongoing academic struggles may heighten their need for support and reassurance.

Attachment theory is also valuable because relationships with important adults can provide security and support an individual's ability to deal with challenges (Bowlby, 1988). Teachers may not replace parents or primary caregivers, but they can be important adults in the school environment because they interact with students regularly. A teacher who is respectful, responsive, predictable, and supportive can help students feel safe and willing to participate and ask for help.

Inclusive education emphasizes the importance of students' everyday school experiences. Inclusion is more than simply placing learners with diverse educational needs in mainstream classrooms. It includes meaningful participation, acceptance, appropriate instruction, and access to needed support. Participation, belonging, and inclusion are highlighted as important dimensions of education by UNESCO. Teachers are crucial in translating these principles into practice in the classroom through communication, classroom organization, behavior management, responsiveness to individual differences, and encouragement.

These questions are set in the important context of Nigeria. Public secondary schools serve students from diverse social, economic, cultural, and educational backgrounds. However, inclusive education can be challenged by large class sizes, a lack of instructional resources, limited specialist services, insufficient counseling support, and variations in teachers' preparedness to support learners with special educational needs. These conditions may affect teacher-student interactions and adolescents' adjustment experiences with learning disabilities.

Previous studies have focused on inclusive education (Adewumi & Mosito, 2019), teachers' experiences (Olaleye et al., 2020), and instructional practices and challenges affecting learners with special educational needs. International studies have also found associations between positive teacher relationships and students' engagement, social competence, and emotional health (Aldrup et al., 2022; Longobardi et al., 2021; Roorda et al., 2021). However, findings from general student populations or larger populations of students with special educational needs cannot be automatically generalized to adolescents with learning disabilities in Nigerian public secondary schools. Differences in educational systems, teacher preparation, classroom conditions, and available support services are at play; thus, local investigation is necessary.

Existing literature has demonstrated the relevance of teacher-student relationships to students' educational and psychosocial experiences. The specific relationship between teacher-related variables and social and psychological adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities has not been sufficiently documented in the Nigerian context. Most current research has focused on academic achievement, access to education, teacher preparedness, and general inclusive education practices rather than on the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities.

The present study therefore examined the relationships among classroom management, teacher communication skills, teacher social competence, emotional intelligence, and the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Oyo State, Nigeria. Peer influence and self-concept were also included as additional variables in the analysis. The study is relationship-oriented rather than causal in nature because the cross-sectional design allows for the examination of associations among variables but does not establish cause and effect.

This study aims to provide context-specific evidence on factors associated with students' adjustment by focusing on adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central. The findings may contribute to the body of knowledge on inclusive education, special education, adolescent development, and school-based psychosocial support, and provide

useful information for teachers, school counselors, educational psychologists, school administrators, teacher educators, and education policymakers.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescents with learning disabilities often face significant challenges in the school environment that affect their emotional, social, and psychological well-being. Many of these students experience low self-esteem, anxiety, frustration, poor peer relationships, emotional instability, and difficulty adapting to school demands. Such students are often misperceived, stigmatized, or neglected in most public secondary schools, and they frequently receive inadequate emotional and social support from both teachers and peers. As a result, their ability to establish positive social relationships, maintain emotional balance, and adapt psychologically to school life is seriously affected. Many studies have shown that the relationship between teacher and student is very important for students' social and psychological adjustment, especially for students with special needs. In addition, supportive teacher behavior, effective communication, and positive classroom interaction have been shown to promote students' emotional stability, social competence, and school engagement (Researchers). Still, despite these findings, many adolescents with learning disabilities continue to show poor adjustment outcomes in schools.

In addition, the majority of existing studies have focused more on academic performance and general inclusive education practices rather than on the specific impact of the teacher-student relationship on the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities, especially in Nigerian public secondary schools. This study therefore aims to investigate the relationship between the teacher-student relationship and adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria. The study seeks to generate empirical evidence that may contribute to improving classroom practices for teachers, teacher-student interaction, and better social and psychological adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities. It is expected that the findings will guide teachers, school administrators, counselors, and education policymakers in developing strategies to improve the supportive learning environment for adolescents with learning disabilities.

Objectives of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the teacher-student relationship and adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Examine the relationship between the teacher-student relationship and social adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.
2. Determine the relationship between the teacher-student relationship and psychological adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.
3. Investigate the combined influence of teacher-student relationship variables on adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities.
4. Examine the relative contributions of teacher-student relationship variables to the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided the study:

1. What relationship exists between the teacher-student relationship and social adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria?

2. What relationship exists between the teacher-student relationship and psychological adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria?
3. What is the combined influence of teacher-student relationship variables on adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities?
4. What is the relative contribution of teacher-student relationship variables to the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities?

Research Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between the teacher-student relationship and social adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between the teacher-student relationship and psychological adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.

Ho3: Teacher-student relationship variables will not significantly contribute to adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.

Ho4: Teacher student relationship variables will not significantly predict the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria.

Significance of Study

The findings of this study will be useful to teachers, school counselors, parents, educational psychologists, curriculum planners, policymakers, researchers, and adolescents with learning disabilities. The study will help teachers recognize the importance of maintaining a supportive, positive relationship with adolescents with learning disabilities to improve their emotional stability, classroom participation, and psychosocial adjustment.

The study will also benefit school counselors and psychologists by informing the design of intervention programs that enhance the social and psychological well-being of adolescents with learning disabilities. The findings may also be valuable to parents, helping them better understand the emotional and adjustment needs of adolescents with learning disabilities. The research findings can also guide policymakers and curriculum planners in developing inclusive education policies and support systems that promote positive teacher-student relationships in secondary schools. Additionally, the study will contribute to the body of knowledge on inclusive education, special needs education, adolescent psychology, and psychosocial adjustment.

Scope of the Study

The study investigated the teacher-student relationship and adjustment outcomes among adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central, Nigeria. Social and psychological adjustment were the dependent variables, and the teacher-student relationship was the independent variable. The study was limited to adolescent learners with learning disabilities in selected public secondary schools in the Ibadan North Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Concept of Learning Disabilities

Learning disabilities are persistent difficulties in acquiring and using academic skills, including reading, writing, spelling, and mathematics. They are not primarily due to intellectual disability, sensory impairment, insufficient instruction, or environmental disadvantage ([American Psychiatric Association, 2022](#)). Among adolescents, learning disabilities may extend beyond academic difficulties, affecting confidence, classroom participation, peer relationships, and psychosocial functioning. However, the presence of a learning disability does not always lead to poor adjustment, as students' experiences may also depend on the support available from teachers, peers, families, and the school environment.

Teacher-Student Relationship

The quality of interaction between teachers and students, which comprises trust, acceptance, communication, responsiveness, support, warmth, and conflict, is called the teacher-student relationship ([Aldrup et al., 2022](#); [Longobardi et al., 2021](#)). Positive relationships can provide learners with a sense of belonging and emotional security and encourage students to participate in classroom activities and seek help when difficulties arise. This may be especially important for students with learning disabilities, who may need additional academic explanation, encouragement, and emotional support. Recent research underscores the importance of teacher-student relationships for students with learning disabilities. [Polychroni et al. \(2025\)](#) found that students with specific learning disorders showed lower levels of psychosocial adjustment and higher teacher rejection than their peers, whereas perceived teacher acceptance was a positive predictor of psychosocial adjustment.

Teachers' Communication and Classroom Management

Classroom management involves organizing classroom activities, setting expectations, managing behavior, and creating an environment conducive to learning. Effective classroom management provides structure and predictability, helping students who struggle with learning and class participation. Teacher communication includes clear explanations, active listening, appropriate feedback, and respectful interactions. Effective communication helps learners understand expectations, ask questions about what they don't understand, and voice academic and social concerns.

This is important in classrooms with students with learning disabilities because the quality of teacher-student interactions can affect students' experiences and engagement in school. Research on students with learning disabilities and other special educational needs has underscored the importance of the quality of the teacher-student relationship for students' behavioral, academic, social, and relational experiences.

Social and psychological adaptation

Social adjustment involves the capacity to establish and sustain mutually satisfying interpersonal relationships, to engage successfully in social activities, to cooperate with others, and to respond appropriately to social situations. Psychological adjustment is the capacity to meet environmental demands and to maintain emotional and psychological functioning. For adolescents with learning disabilities, academic experiences, peer and teacher relationships, and self-perceptions can affect these forms of adjustment.

The psychosocial difficulties of students with learning disabilities have been well documented, and adjustment is an important area for investigation. For example, Polychroni et al. (2025) found differences in psychosocial adjustment between students with specific learning disorders and their peers and reported a positive association between teacher acceptance and psychosocial adjustment.

Self Concept and Peer influences

Peer influence refers to the ways peers may shape an adolescent's attitudes, behavior, social experiences, and adjustment. During adolescence, peer relationships become more important as young people place greater value on acceptance, belonging, and social interaction. Positive peer relations can offer support and opportunities for social participation, whereas rejection or negative peer experiences can lead to social difficulties and poor adjustment. Self-concept is an individual's perception and understanding of the self. Adolescents with learning disabilities may have diminished perceptions of competence and personal ability due to repeated academic difficulties. Positive self-concept may facilitate confidence and participation, whereas negative self-perceptions may be associated with withdrawal and adjustment problems. Thus, peer influence and self-concept are relevant to understanding adolescent adjustment but are conceptually distinct from teacher-student relationship variables.

RESEARCH METHOD

The descriptive cross-sectional survey design was adopted because it examined the relationships between teacher-related factors and the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities as they naturally occurred, without manipulation of the study variables. The cross-sectional design of the data collection allowed the study to determine the pattern and strength of associations among the variables. Therefore, the results are interpreted as relationships and associations, not causal effects.

The study was conducted in public secondary schools in the Ibadan North Central Local Government Area of Oyo State, Nigeria. The study population comprised adolescents with learning disabilities in selected public secondary schools in the study area. Learning disability was defined as a learning-specific condition distinct from general low academic achievement. The final sample was 607 adolescents with learning disabilities, selected using a multistage sampling technique.

A structured questionnaire developed by the researchers was used to collect data. The teacher variables measured by the instrument were classroom management, communication skills, social competence, and the teacher's emotional intelligence. It also included peer influence and self-concept as additional variables related to students' adjustment. Social and psychological adjustment were the dependent variables and were analyzed separately. The adolescents completed the questionnaire, so the measures of teacher-relatedness reflect participants' perceptions of their teachers, and the measures of adjustment are self-reported experiences of the participants. Classroom management was assessed by the skills teachers used to plan classroom activities, set expectations, and maintain order and a positive learning environment. The teacher communication skills addressed included straightforward communication, listening, explanation, feedback, and respectful interaction. The social competence of teachers is their ability to engage in effective interactions with students and to establish constructive interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence refers to the ability of teachers to be aware of, understand, and manage emotions in themselves and in their relationships with students. Peer influence and self-concept were separated from teacher-related factors because peer influence is a social contextual factor, while self-concept is an individual psychological factor.

Social adjustment was defined as the participants' ability to relate to others appropriately

and to function successfully in their social environment. Psychological adjustment was defined as the participants' psychological functioning and ability to cope with school and social demands. The questionnaire was evaluated by experts in Educational Psychology and Special Education for relevance, clarity, and appropriateness for the study population. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The purpose of the study was explained to the participants. Participation was voluntary, and the confidentiality of their responses was maintained. Appropriate consent and assent procedures were also followed because the participants were adolescents.

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation, and multiple regression analysis at the 0.05 level of significance. Pearson correlation was used to establish relationships between teacher-related variables and adjustment outcomes. Multiple regression was applied to assess the combined contribution and predictive relationship of classroom management, teacher communication skills, teacher social competence, emotional intelligence, peer influence, and self-concept to adjustment outcomes. The regression model was statistically significant and explained 41.1% of the variance in the adjustment outcome ($R^2 = .411$, $F = 69.641$, $p < .05$). Because the same adolescents provided information on the predictor and outcome variables and the study was cross-sectional in design, the findings should be interpreted as associations rather than evidence of causation. The findings also need to be interpreted with recognition that there may be common method bias and clustering of participants within schools and classrooms.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Question One

What is the relationship between teacher-related variables and social adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities?

The relationship between the selected teacher-related variables and social adjustment was examined using Pearson product-moment correlation. The results are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Relationship between Teacher-Related Variables and Social Adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Classroom Management and Social Adjustment	607	54.99	8.51	.315	< .001	Significant
Teacher Communication Skills and Social Adjustment	607	62.30	9.15	.194	< .001	Significant
Teacher Social Competence and Social Adjustment	607	48.13	7.38	-.025	.531	Not Significant

Results reveal a statistically significant positive link between classroom management and social adjustment, $r = .315$, $p < .001$. Thus, adolescents reporting better classroom management were also more likely to report better social adjustment. The magnitude of the correlation is moderate, not strong.

Social adjustment was also positively related to teacher communication skills, $r = .194$, $p < .001$. The correlation is statistically significant but relatively small. Thus, statistical significance should not be taken as evidence of a strong relationship or as evidence that improved teacher communication causes better social adjustment. Conversely, teacher social competence was not significantly related to social adjustment, $r = -.025$, $p = .531$. The correlation is very close to zero, suggesting little evidence of a linear bivariate relationship between teacher social competence and social adjustment in this sample.

Research Question Two

What is the relationship between teacher-related variables and psychological adjustment?

The relationship between the selected teacher-related variables and psychological adjustment was examined using Pearson product-moment correlation. The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Relationship between Teacher-Related Variables and Psychological Adjustment

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r	p-value	Decision
Teacher Communication Skills and Psychological Adjustment	607	68.76	10.67	.359	< .001	Significant
Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Adjustment	607	42.20	11.26	.031	.442	Not Significant

The findings indicate a statistically significant positive relationship between teachers' communication skills and psychological adjustment, $r = .359$, $p < .001$. The association is moderate. Thus, adolescents who reported more positive communication with teachers tended to report better psychological adjustment.

However, emotional intelligence was not significantly related to psychological adjustment, $r = .031$, $p = .442$. The correlation is very small, near zero, providing little evidence of a bivariate relationship between the two variables.

Research Question Three

What is the combined relationship between the selected predictor variables and adjustment outcomes?

Multiple regression analysis was used to examine the combined effect of six predictor variables (peer influence, classroom management, teacher social competence, emotional intelligence, teacher communication skills, and self-concept) on the adjustment outcome.

Table 3. Multiple Regression Model of the Combined Predictor Variables and Adjustment Outcome

R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	F	df	p
.641	.411	.405	69.641	6, 600	< .001

The multiple regression model included six predictors: peer influence, classroom management, teacher social competence, emotional intelligence, teacher communication skills, and self-concept. The model was statistically significant, $F(6, 600) = 69.641$, $p < .001$, with an R of .641 and an R² of .411. This indicated that the six predictors together accounted for 41.1% of the variance in the reported adjustment outcome, while the adjusted R² of .405 indicated that 40.5% of the variance remained explained after adjusting for the number of predictors. However, because the study used a cross-sectional survey design, these findings indicate statistical association and prediction rather than causation. The manuscript should also describe how the combined adjustment measure is constructed and its reliability.

Research Question Four

What is the relative contribution of the predictor variables to adjustment outcomes?

The relative contributions of the six predictors were assessed using multiple regression analysis. The corrected results are presented below.

Table 4. Relative Contribution of Predictor Variables to Adjustment Outcomes

Predictor	β	t	p	Decision
Peer Influence	.514	15.275	< .001	Significant
Classroom Management	.388	8.691	< .001	Significant
Teacher Social Competence	-.158	-3.821	< .001	Significant
Emotional Intelligence	.011	.322	.748	Not Significant
Teacher Communication Skills	-.025	-.533	.594	Not Significant
Self-Concept	-.020	-.533*	.577	Not Significant

The reported t statistic for self-concept is identical to that reported for teacher communication skills. The results showed that peer influence made the largest positive contribution to adjustment, $\beta = .514$, $t = 15.275$, $p < .001$, followed by classroom management, $\beta = .388$, $t = 8.691$, $p < .001$. Teacher social competence made a significant negative contribution, $\beta = -.158$, $t = -3.821$, $p < .001$, although this should be interpreted cautiously because its bivariate relationship with social adjustment was not significant ($r = -.025$, $p = .531$). Emotional intelligence ($\beta = .011$, $p = .748$), teacher communication skills ($\beta = -.025$, $p = .594$), and self-concept ($\beta = -.020$, $p = .577$) did not make significant unique contributions.

Although teacher communication skills were positively associated with social adjustment ($r = .194$, $p < .001$) and psychological adjustment ($r = .359$, $p < .001$), they were not significant in the full regression model, suggesting overlap with other predictors. Similarly, the negative coefficient for teacher social competence may reflect suppression or multicollinearity rather than a true negative effect. Therefore, the original regression output should be reviewed before final submission, particularly for VIF, tolerance, predictor correlations, residual diagnostics, unstandardized coefficients, standard errors, and confidence intervals.

Discussion of Findings

Classroom Management and Social Adjustment

A significant positive correlation was found between classroom management and social adjustment among adolescents with learning disabilities, $r = .315$, $p < .001$. The relationship was moderate, indicating that students with a more positive perception of classroom management tended to report better social adjustment. Effective classroom management can provide structure, clear expectations, and appropriate behavioral boundaries to support student participation and social interaction. However, the finding provides evidence of association rather than causation, and the moderate correlation should not be interpreted as implying a strong relationship.

Teacher Communication Skills and Social Adjustment

Teacher communication skills were positively and significantly associated with social adjustment, $r = .194$, $p < .001$. However, the association was weak. The finding suggests that adolescents who perceived their teachers as communicating more effectively tended to report somewhat better social adjustment.

Effective communication may help students understand classroom expectations, seek assistance, express difficulties, and interact more confidently with teachers and peers. For adolescents with learning disabilities, clear explanations and respectful communication may be especially helpful because communication difficulties can compound the challenges associated with learning disabilities.

Nevertheless, the relatively small correlation means that teacher communication should not be presented as a strong determinant of social adjustment. More importantly, teacher communication was not a significant unique predictor in the full regression model. This suggests that its bivariate relationship with social adjustment may overlap with other variables in the model,

particularly classroom management and other teacher-related and individual factors.

Teacher Social Competence and Social Adjustment

Teacher social competence was not significantly related to social adjustment, $r = -.025$, $p = .531$. However, it was a significant negative predictor in the regression model, $\beta = -.158$, $t = -3.821$, $p < .001$. Although this discrepancy should not be taken as evidence that teacher social competence negatively affects adjustment, it may reflect suppression, multicollinearity, or shared variance among predictors. Thus, additional regression diagnostics, such as VIF, tolerance, predictor correlations, and confidence intervals, should be examined before drawing substantive conclusions.

Teacher Communication Skills and Psychological Adjustment

Teacher communication skills were positively related to psychological adjustment, $r = .359$, $p < .001$. This relationship was statistically significant. This was one of the larger associations among the bivariate relationships reported in the study.

This finding suggests that adolescents who perceived better teacher communication also tended to report better psychological adjustment. Clear, supportive communication provides adolescents with information, reassurance, feedback, and opportunities to express academic and emotional concerns. Such interactions may be especially relevant for students with persistent learning difficulties.

However, the result should not be interpreted as support for the hypothesis that communication skills facilitate psychological adjustment. The cross-sectional design does not allow for inference about temporal or causal direction. The better psychological adjustment of adolescents is equally likely to be associated with a better perception of their teachers or with better communication with them. Teacher communication skills also did not provide a significant unique contribution in the multiple regression model. This means that its bivariate association with psychological or overall adjustment may be confounded with other variables in the regression equation.

Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Adjustment

There was no significant correlation between emotional intelligence and psychological adjustment, $r = .031$, $p = .442$. The correlation was near zero and negligible. This finding indicates that, for the current sample, adolescents' perceptions of teacher emotional intelligence were not significantly related, in a bivariate sense, to adolescents' reported psychological adjustment. The result cautions against the assumption that all positive teacher characteristics will necessarily show a statistically significant relationship with adjustment.

The lack of a significant association may be linked to how emotional intelligence was measured, students' ability to assess this teacher characteristic, the influence of other variables, or the nature of the school environment. Additional research using multiple informants and validated observational measures may provide a stronger test of this relationship.

Combined Predictors and Adjustment Outcomes

The multivariate regression model, including peer influence, classroom management, teacher social competence, emotional intelligence, teacher communication skills, and self-concept, was statistically significant, $F(6, 600) = 69.641$, $p < .001$. The model produced $R = .641$, $R^2 = .411$, and adjusted $R^2 = .405$.

Thus, the six predictors together accounted for 41.1% of the variance in the reported adjustment outcome. This is a substantial share of the explained variance in the statistical model. However, the result should not be interpreted as causal. The cross-sectional design precludes

conclusions about the influence of the predictor variables on adjustment, the influence of adjustment on students' perceptions of the predictor variables, or the existence of reciprocal relationships.

The regression results also suggest that the contributions of individual predictors vary significantly. Peer influence had the highest standardized coefficient ($\beta = .514$), followed by classroom management ($\beta = .388$). The teacher's social competence was negatively associated ($\beta = -.158$). Emotional intelligence, teacher communication skills, and self-concept were not statistically significant unique predictors.

Of particular interest is the largest coefficient for peer influence, indicating that adolescents' adjustment may be associated not only with teacher-related characteristics but also with the peer environment. This supports treating peer influence as a predictor in its own right, rather than as part of the teacher-student relationship.

The regression results showed a complex pattern in which some bivariate relations disappeared into non-significance after controlling for other predictors that could share variance or lead to multicollinearity.

Statistical significance does not imply practical importance. Even small correlations can be statistically significant with a sample size of 607.

Therefore, the results should be interpreted in terms of direction and magnitude of associations rather than causality, and further regression diagnostics are recommended.

Hypothesis Testing

Report decisions about hypotheses using standard statistical terminology. The manuscript should state that a null hypothesis was rejected when the result was statistically significant and not rejected when it was not statistically significant, rather than using terms such as "denied," "declined," or "not approved."

The reported correlations between classroom management and social adjustment ($r = .315$, $p < .001$) and between teacher communication skills and social adjustment ($r = .194$, $p < .001$) were statistically significant under the first hypothesis. Thus, we rejected the null hypothesis for these relationships.

For the second hypothesis, teacher communication skills were significantly correlated with psychological adjustment ($r = .359$, $p < .001$), whereas emotional intelligence was not ($r = .031$, $p = .442$). The hypothesis should therefore be framed in terms of the specific variables tested rather than in broad terms of "mental health." The overall regression model for the third hypothesis was statistically significant, $F(6, 600) = 69.641$, $p < .001$. We therefore rejected the null hypothesis that the set of predictor variables had no statistically significant combined association with the adjustment outcome.

For the fourth hypothesis, interpret the individual regression coefficients separately. In the reported model, peer influence, classroom management, and teacher social competence were significant predictors, whereas emotional intelligence, teacher communication skills, and self-concept were not significant unique predictors. Thus, the null hypothesis should NOT be interpreted as an all-or-none statement about all predictors.

CONCLUSIONS

The study concluded that selected teacher-related and contextual factors are associated with the social and psychological adjustment of adolescents with learning disabilities in public secondary schools in Ibadan North Central. Classroom management was positively correlated with social adjustment, and teacher communication skills were positively correlated with both social and psychological adjustment. The combined predictors also explained a significant amount of

variance in reported adjustment outcomes. However, interpret the results as associations rather than causal effects, as the study used a cross-sectional survey design.

Implication

The results indicate that teachers should emphasize effective classroom management and clear communication when working with adolescents with learning disabilities. Schools must offer practical training that equips teachers with these skills and helps build positive classroom environments. In addition, schools should recognize the importance of peer relationships in students' adjustment and encourage positive peer interactions and a supportive school environment. At the policy level, attention is needed to strengthen support for inclusive education through teacher development and appropriate school-based support services.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

The study measures were based on students' self-reports. This may have introduced common method bias, as both the predictor and outcome variables were collected from the same respondents at the same time. Also, the cross-sectional design does not allow conclusions about cause and effect. The study did not examine other factors, such as family support, socioeconomic status, severity of learning disability, bullying, school climate, academic achievement, and the availability of specialist services. These factors may also be related to students' adjustment.

Future research should draw on multiple data sources, including students, teachers, school records, and classroom observations. In addition, longitudinal studies are recommended to examine the reciprocal relationships between teacher-related factors and students' adjustment over time. Future research should also employ multilevel analysis, since students are typically nested within classrooms and schools. Research should use well-documented, validated procedures for identifying learning disabilities and investigate other factors, such as family support, socioeconomic background, bullying, school climate, academic achievement, and access to specialist services.

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