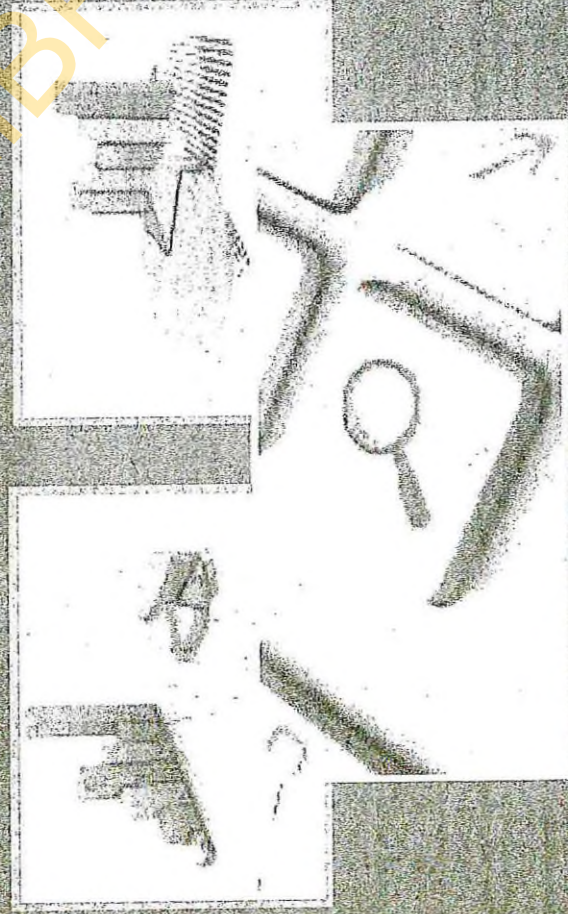


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of Education Faculties in West Africa

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Editorial

The Collaboration of Education Faculties in West Africa (CEFWA) came on stream to advance networking for world-class education among Faculties of Education in the West Africa sub-region. The Research Journal of the Collaboration of Education Faculties in West Africa which is the official Journal of CEFWA is a major tool for the actualization of this vision.

We strongly believe that given the commitment of our editorial board and response from education faculties across the sub-region, the Journal which is positioned to be a leading repository of knowledge will continue to provide our readers with outstanding research and thinking in Education.

We encourage our colleagues throughout the West Africa sub-region to send their manuscript to us to review. All manuscripts sent to us are processed through our rigorous and thorough peer review system. This edition of the Journal-Vol.3 No1 which is the fourth edition is featuring 12 incisive, well written articles covering different areas of Education.

We are delighted then to present to you Vol.3 No1 of the Research Journal of the Collaboration of Education Faculties in West Africa for your reading pleasure.

Thank you.

Prof. Alfred A. Adegoke
(*Editor-in-Chief*).

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BEHAVIOURAL AND SOCIAL PROBLEMS EXHIBITED BY
STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES IN IBADAN
NORTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA, OYO STATE

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Abstract

This paper investigated the perceived behavioural problems (emotional, conduct, hyperactivity/inattention), and social problems (peer relationship and pro-social difficulties) as presented by students with learning disabilities in Ibadan North Local Government Area, of Oyo State. Descriptive research design of ex-post facto type was adopted. An Adopted Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) ($r = 0.71$) was used to collect data for the study. A total of one hundred and four (104) Junior Secondary School Classes 1-3 students with learning disabilities comprising (males = 62, and females 42) with age range between 11-16 years were purposively selected using the Pupils Rating Scale ($r = 0.90$). Percentages were used to analyse demographic information while inferential statistics of Chi-Square was used to answer five research questions at 0.05 level of significance. The results showed that students with learning disabilities significantly perceived that emotional problems ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 26.96, \chi^2_{Crit.} = 18.307$ df 10, $P < 0.05$) conduct problems ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 62.481, \chi^2_{Crit.} = 18.307$ df 10, $P < 0.05$); hyperactivity/inattention problems ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 67.865, \chi^2_{Crit.} = 12.594$ df 6, $P < 0.05$); peer relationship problems ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 54.154, \chi^2_{Crit.} = 12.594$ df 6, $P < 0.05$); and pro-social difficulties ($\chi^2_{Cal} = 50.808, \chi^2_{Crit.} = 15.507$ df 8, $P < 0.05$), are behavioural and social problems exhibited by students with learning disabilities. It was recommended that teachers of students

with learning disabilities, both regular and special teachers should endeavour to understand and address behavioural and social problems of students with learning disabilities. Teachers should ensure that they do not exacerbate behavioural and social problems as these can contribute to lowered academic achievement. They should be proactive and ready to remediate these problems whenever necessary.

Key words: learning disabilities, behavioural and social problems, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, pro-social difficulties

Background to the Study

Students with learning disabilities are a heterogeneous group that experience problems arising from the brain's ability to receive, process, interpret and store information. Typically, they possess average intelligence but their brain processing system fail to accommodate the increased academic, behavioural, social and societal demands often placed on them in the general education classrooms and society at large. The United States Department of Education (2005b) as cited in Lazarus (2009) posited that learning disabilities is a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using language spoken or written, that may manifest itself in an imperfect ability to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell and do mathematical calculations, including such condition as perceptual disabilities, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia and developmental aphasia. The term does not include learning problems that are primarily the result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental, or cultural or economic disadvantages.

Students with learning disabilities exhibit many kinds of learning, behavioural and social characteristics. Some of these students have learning disabilities in academic areas (such as in reading, mathematics, oral and written language skills and the like), others display some emotional, anti-social and self-concept problems (Lerner & Kline, 2006). These unique traits are interrelated and have implications for the family, school and society. On average, Neil (2008) maintained that students whose achievement lagged behind in their intellectual potential present a serious problem to the parents, school, and society and finally to the nation; instead of being the contributing members they turn out to be a social problem.

Behavioural problems refer to inappropriate behaviours under normal circumstances that deviate in a significant manner from that expected for the situation. Such behaviours which break from age, social and cultural norms are

often consistently exhibited in at least two different settings, such as in the school and at home (Chaban, 2011). Emotional, conduct, and hyperactivity/inattention problems are typical behavioural difficulties commonly experienced by students with learning disabilities.

The National Institute of Mental Health (2010) described emotional problems as several distinct disabilities that share the core characteristic of irrational fear: generalized anxiety disorder (GAD), obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD), panic disorder, posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), social anxiety disorder (also called social phobia), and specific phobias. Lerner and Kline (2006) stated that the emotional scars of repeated failure and the inability to achieve and develop a sense of competence and self worth among students with learning disabilities are often indelible.

Conduct disorder is a pattern of behaviour which violates the basic rights of others as well as age-appropriate norms and rules and includes aggressive behaviour, deceitfulness, theft, truancy or damage to property such as fire setting or vandalism (American Psychiatric Association, 2000). More so, Belson (2003) indicated that adolescents misconduct include vandalism, malicious acts, mischief, truancy, drug and alcohol use, and various forms of violence, from school bullying to robbery, assault, and rape.

Hyperactive/inattention is an act that makes students to be easily distracted, have poor organization skills, and avoid participating in activities requiring prolonged mental engagement. Hyperactive/inattentive students often disrupt the classroom setting with constant fidgeting and moving around. They frequently interrupt and speak out of turn and have difficulty accepting delayed gratification (Gluck, 2012). According to Hallahan, Lloyd, Kauffman, Weiss and Martinez (2005), attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is characterized by attention problems, impulsivity and hyperactivity and these problems often occur in students with learning disabilities. Likewise, the American Psychiatric Association (2000) noted that ADHD is characterized by persistent over activity, impulsivity and difficulties in sustaining attention. In Australia within young people aged 13 to 17 years, the prevalence of ADHD is 10% in boys and 3.8% in girls, and conduct disorder is 3.8% in boys and 1.0% in girls (Sawyer, Arney, Baghurst, Clark, Graetz, & Kosky, 2001).

Similarly, according to Kendall (2007), a social problem is a social condition or a pattern of behaviour that negatively affect some individuals or all people in a society and that a sufficient number of people believe warrants public concern and collective action to bring about change. Mercer and Pullen (2005) discussed concerns related to isolation, depression, loneliness and suicide in relation to students with learning disabilities. Moreover, students with learning disabilities display problems with peer relationship and pro-social behaviours. Boivin (2005) stated that peer relationship offers unique opportunities for getting

acquainted with the social norms and processes involved in interpersonal relationships, and for learning new social skills. Unfortunately, peer relationships are not always beneficial to some children between 5% and 10% as they experience chronic peer relationship difficulties, such as peer rejection and peer harassment. **Pro-social behaviours** are actions that benefit other people or society as a whole (Twenge, Ciarocco, Baumeister, & Bartels, 2007). They are characterized by help that does not benefit the helpers.

Furthermore, Terras, Thompson and Minnis (2009) found that the rates of pro-social difficulties were significantly higher in population with learning disabilities than in the general population. Though pro-social behaviours are voluntary behaviours made with the intention of benefiting others (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1998), individual differences in pro-sociality are linked to sociability, low-shyness, extroversion, and agreeableness. The specific pro-social behaviour may require a combination of additional traits, such as perceived self-efficacy in the case of helping (Penner, Dovidio, Piliavin & Schroeder, 2005). Agreeable individuals were more likely to help an out-group member than low agreeableness individuals (Graziano, 2007).

Besides, Sorour, Mohamed, and Abd El-Maksoud (2014) carried out a study on the **emotional and behavioural problems of primary school children with and without learning disabilities**. The results of total difficulties indicated that almost all children with learning disabilities rated abnormal, compared to more than three quarters of the normal children. In a similar study, Poblete, Clark, Marina and Becky (2007) found that more than half of the children with learning disabilities have abnormal behavioural and emotional difficulties. After reviewing 152 different studies, Giuliani and Bacon (2010) concluded that 75% of students with learning disabilities exhibit deficits in social skills. Based on the foregoing, educators and other related professionals should not only give urgent attention to the in-depth understanding of academic, behavioural and social problems of students with learning disabilities but also seek to remediate the problems and help students with learning disabilities to succeed in life.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the efforts of past researchers as shown in existing literature, when compared with their peers without learning disabilities, more students with learning disabilities tend to exhibit behavioural (emotional, conduct or hyperactive/inattention problems) and social problems (such as poor peer relationships and pro-social behaviours). There also appears to be a difference in the manner and severity in which the problems present themselves. Moreover, behavioural and social problems of students with learning disabilities have serious consequences on students' academic achievement and personality development. For instance, behaviour and social disabilities may result in school failure which

may lead to negative self-image, which in turn leads to school suspension, delinquency and school dropout. Hence, a study of this kind becomes imperative.

Research Questions

The following five research questions were raised and answered at 0.05 level of significance.

1. Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit emotional related behavioural problems?
2. Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit conduct related behavioural problems?
3. Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit hyperactivity/inattention related behavioural problems?
4. Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit peer relationship related social problems?
5. Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit pro-social difficulties?

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated emotional, conduct, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship and pro-social difficulties (behavioural and social problems) as exhibited by students with learning disabilities in Ibadan North Local Government Area, Oyo state.

Methodology

Research Design

Descriptive research design of *ex-post facto* type was adopted in the study because no variable was manipulated in the study.

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Random sampling technique was employed in selecting four schools in Ibadan North Local Government Area of Oyo State. Next, a total of one hundred and four (104) Junior Secondary School Classes 1-3 students with learning disabilities, comprising (males = 62, and females = 42) with age range between 11-16 years were purposively selected from the four schools.

Instrumentation

Two standardized instruments were utilized for the study namely, the Pupil Rating Scale (Revised): Screening for Learning Disabilities by Myklebust (1981) and the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ). The Pupils Rating Scale was adapted by the researchers to screen respondents for learning disabilities.

Adekanmi (2011) adapted this scale to screen children for learning disabilities and found it suitable. She got an inter item correlation coefficient alpha of 0.90 on different samples in Nigeria. A Gutmann Split half showed a reliability coefficient of 0.89.

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) is a brief behavioural screening questionnaire for youth ages 3 to 16, which has five sub-divisions that elicit questions on emotional, conduct, hyperactivity/inattention, peer relationship and pro-social difficulties of respondents. This adapted questionnaire has 25 items on a three point scale with options as follows: "Certainly True", "Somewhat True" and "Not True". The SDQ has been shown to correlate in a theoretically meaningful way with the Rutter's questionnaire, Achenbach questionnaires and measures of anxiety and ADHD (Muris, Meesters, & van den Berg, 2003). The researchers obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.71 for the SDQ using the Cronbach's Alpha technique after conducting a pilot study.

Method of Data Analysis

Percentages were used to analyse demographic information while inferential statistics of Chi-Square was used to answer the research questions in order to find the perception of the respondents on behavioural and social problems of students with learning disabilities.

Results

Research Question 1: Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit emotional related behavioural problems?

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis of Emotional Related Behaviour Problems Exhibited by Students with Learning Disabilities

Items	Certainly true	Somewhat true	Not true	χ^2 Cal.	χ^2 Crit.	Df	Sig
I am restless; I cannot stay still for long	58 55.8%	29 27.9%	17 16.3%				
I get a lot of headaches, stomachs or sickness	69 66.3%	24 23.1%	11 10.6%				
I get very angry and often lose my temper	56 53.8%	29 27.9%	19 18.3%	26.96	18.31	10	0.00*
I worry a lot	48 46.2%	32 30.8%	24 23.1%				
I am often unhappy, depressed or tearful	65 62.5%	28 26.9%	11 10.6%				
I have many fears, I am easily scared	43 41.3%	28 26.9%	33 31.7%				

*Significance = (χ^2 Cal=26.96, χ^2 Crit. = 18.31 df 10, P<0.05).

Table 1 revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit emotional related behavioural problems. While 58 respondents (55.8%) rated certainly true to Item 1 (being restless), 29 respondents (27.9%) agreed to it to some extent. On item 2 (being sick) 69 respondents (66.3%) agreed to it while 24 respondents (23.1%) rated somewhat true. Other emotional related behaviour problems with favourable responses are being angry (53.8%), worried (46.2%), unhappy (62.5%) and fearful (41.3%). Thus, this table has revealed that more than half of the respondents significantly exhibited emotional related behavioural problems such as being sick, unhappy, depressed or tearful, angry and restless.

Research Question 2: Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit conduct related behavioural problems?

Table 2: Descriptive Analysis of Conduct Problems Exhibited by Students with Learning Disabilities

Items	Certainly true	Somewhat true	Not true	χ^2 Cal.	χ^2 Crit.	Df	Sig
I usually do as I am told.	24 23.1%	28 26.9%	52 50.0%				
I fight a lot. I can make other people do what I want.	66 63.5%	21 20.2%	17 16.3%				
I am often accused of lying or cheating	71 68.3%	17 16.3%	16 15.4%	62.48	18.31	10	0.00*
Other children or young people pick on me or bully me	55 52.9%	30 28.8%	19 18.3%				
I think before I do things.	28 26.9%	32 30.8%	44 42.36%				
I take things that are not mine from home, school or elsewhere.	65 62.5%	19 18.3%	20 19.2%				

*Significance = (χ^2 Cal=62.48, χ^2 Crit. = 18.31 df 10, P<0.05).

Table 2 showed that students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit conduct related behaviour problems. The result on table 2 revealed that 50% of students with learning disabilities in this study significantly rated "not true" for item describing disobedient behaviour. Other findings indicated perceived conduct related behaviour problems of students with learning disabilities in the following rankings: fighting (63.5%), lying and cheating (68.3%), being bullied (52.9%), being impulsive (42.3%) and stealing (62.5%). Thus, majority of students with learning disabilities agreed that the most prevalent conduct related behaviour problem exhibited by them are lying and cheating and fighting.

Research Question 3: Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit hyperactivity/inattention related behavioural problems?

Table 3: Descriptive Analysis of Hyperactivity/ Inattention Problems Exhibited by Students with Learning Disabilities

Items	Certainly true	Somewhat true	Not true	χ^2 Cal.	χ^2 Crit.	Df	Sig
I am constantly fidgeting or squirming	42 40.4%	39 37.5%	23 22.1%				
I am easily distracted; I find it difficult to concentrate	51 49.0%	29 27.9%	24 23.1%	67.87	12.59	6	0.00*
I am nervous in newsituations. I easily lose confidence	55 52.9%	35 33.7%	14 13.5%				
I finished the work I'm doing. My attention is good	7 6.7%	13 12.5%	84 80.8%				

*Significance = (χ^2 Cal=67.87, χ^2 Crit. =12.59df 6, P<0.05).

Table 3 revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit hyperactivity/inattention related behaviour problems. Further considerations revealed perceived hyperactivity/inattention problems as fidgeting (40.4%), easily distracted (49.0%), nervousness (52.9%), and inattention (80.8%).

Research Question 4: Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit peer relationship related social problems?

Table 4: Descriptive Analysis of Peer Relationship (Social) Problems of Students with learning Disabilities

Items	Certainly true	Somewhat true	Not true	χ^2 Cal.	χ^2 Crit.	Df	Sig
I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings	7 6.7%	13 12.5%	84 80.8%				
I would rather be alone than with people of my age	58 55.8%	18 17.3%	28 26.9%				
Other people of my age generally like me	20 19.2%	29 27.9%	55 52.9%	54.15	12.59	6	0.00*
I get along better with adults than with people of my own age	45 43.3%	36 34.6%	23 22.1%				

*Significance = (χ^2 Cal=54.15, χ^2 Crit. =12.59df 6, P<0.05).

Table 4 revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit peer relationship related social problems. Item stating that students with learning disabilities try to be nice or caring was rated “not true” with 84 respondents (80.8%) rating. Others are loneliness (55.8%), student not liked by others (52.9%); get along easily with adults than people of their own age (43.3%).

Research Question 5: Do students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit pro-social difficulties?

Table 5: Descriptive Analysis of Pro-social Difficulties Exhibited by Students with Learning Disabilities

Items	Certainly true	Somewhat true	Not true	χ^2 Cal.	χ^2 Crit.	Df	Sig
I usually share with others, for example CD's, games, food	11 10.6%	33 31.7%	60 57.7%				
I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill	11 10.6%	28 26.9%	65 62.5%				
I have one good friend or more	23 22.1%	28 26.9%	53 51.0%	50.81	15.51	8	0.00*
I often offer help to others (parents, teachers, children)	26 25.0%	33 31.7%	45 43.3%				
I am kind to younger children	23 22.1%	24 23.1%	57 54.8%				

*Significance = (χ^2 Cal = 50.81 χ^2 Crit. = 15.51 df 8, $P < 0.05$).

Table 5 revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly exhibit pro-social problems. In this table, 60 respondents (57.7%) agreed to the question on inability to share items with others. Next, inability to lend helping hands when someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill had 62.5%, and lacking friends had a rating of (51.0%), not helpful to others had (43.3%) and being unkind had 54.8%.

Thus, more students with learning disabilities indicate that the highest pro-social difficulty they exhibit is inability to lend helping hands when someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill.

Discussion of Findings

The findings of this study in Tables 1, 2 and 3 have revealed that students with learning disabilities significantly perceived that they exhibit behaviour problems of emotional, conduct and hyperactivity/inattention nature. The findings

showed that the specific behaviour problems manifested by the respondents include: being sick, unhappy, depressed or tearful, angry and restless. Others are: lying, cheating, engaging in fighting and stealing, being easily distracted and nervous. These revelations corroborate the assertions of Mercer and Pullen (2005) that isolation, depression, loneliness and suicide are common traits of students with learning disabilities. These findings also support the findings of Poblete, Clark, Marina and Becky (2007) that more than half of the children with learning disabilities have abnormal behavioural and emotional difficulties. The present findings also support the view of Belson (2003) that adolescents' misdeeds include vandalism, malicious acts, mischief, truancy, drug and alcohol use, and various forms of violence, from school bullying to robbery, assault, and rape. Again, the finding aligns with the opinion of Hallahan, Lloyd, Kauffman, Weiss, & Martinez (2005) that attention problems, impulsivity and hyperactivity occur often in students with learning disabilities. Therefore, it has been confirmed that students with learning disabilities exhibit several behavioural problems which could have negative consequences on their learning and overall wellbeing.

Table 4 and 5 also showed that students with learning disabilities significantly perceived peer relationship and pro-social problems as social problems exhibited by them. The finding is in consonance with Giuliani and Bacon's (2010) submission that 75% of students with learning disabilities exhibit deficits in social skills. It was also in line with, Terras, Thompson and Minnis (2009) who found that the rates of pro-social difficulties were significantly higher in population with learning disabilities than in the general population. It can therefore, be stated that students with learning disabilities perceived that they exhibit more social problems in aspects such as being nice/caring. Therefore, majority of these students are uncaring, and are unable to lend helping hands when someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill. Thus, it has been re-affirmed that students with learning disabilities perceive that they manifest emotional, conduct, hyperactivity/inattention (behavioural) problems as well as peer relationship and pro-social (social) difficulties. The implication to special and regular teachers is that they should ensure that students' behavioural and social problems are assessed and well managed because they often lead to frustrations and school failure if not curbed.

Conclusion

Based on the findings in this study some conclusions were drawn, indicating that students with learning disabilities in Ibadan North Local Government Area significantly perceived that they exhibit emotional, conduct, hyperactivity /inattention, peer relationship and pro-social difficulties. Students with learning disabilities in Ibadan North Local Government Area perceived that problems of restlessness, being angry, worried, unhappy, depressed, nervous,

easily distracted, inattentive, lonely, and uncaring among others are common behavioural and social characteristics exhibited by them. Thus, regular and special teachers should endeavour to recognize and address behavioural and social problems of students with learning disabilities. Teachers should ensure that they do not exacerbate behavioural and social problems as these can contribute to lowered academic performance. They should be proactive and ready to remediate these problems whenever necessary.

Recommendations

In view of the implications of the findings in this study, the researchers offer the following recommendations:

1. Regular and special educators must make instructional and assessment modifications in the classroom to ensure behavioural adjustment for students with learning disabilities.
2. There is need to enlighten all professionals and stakeholders in the education of students with learning disabilities through workshops, seminars, Parent Teachers Meetings, home visits and other public enlightenment programmes on the manifestations of behaviour and social problems among students with learning disabilities. This approach will lead to search for measures to manage the behaviour and social problems of students with learning disabilities.
3. School administrators, regular and special educators, and guidance counsellors should pay attention to classroom management strategies that can be used to manage behaviour and social problems of students with learning disabilities such as reinforcement, time-out, shaping, modeling, response cost, ignoring, punishment, contingency contracting and cueing.
4. Regular and special educators should help students with learning disabilities to foster acceptable behavioural and social skills by emphasizing their strengths.

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