

# **LEARNING DISABILITIES AND ITS PSYCHOLOGICAL CONSEQUENCES ON SCHOOL CHILDREN'S ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE**

**PHILOMINA AWEH OTU**

*Department of Educational Psychology,  
School of Education,  
FCT College of Education,  
Zuba-Abuja*

**DR. E. ORJI**

*Department of Educational Psychology,  
School of Education,  
FCT College of Education,  
Zuba-Abuja*

**And**

**USMAN ABUBAKAR ZUBA**

*Department of Hausa,  
School of Language,  
FCT College Education,  
Zuba-Abuja.*

## **Abstract**

*The paper defined learning disability as a condition that gives rise to learning difficulties like: Difficulties in spoken and written language, listening skills and so on. Types of learning disabilities were listed according to stages of information processing as thus: Input: (Which is difficulties with visual memory) Output: (Difficulties with written language and motto skills) and so on. Consequences of learning disabilities on academic achievement were also discussed; for instance: academic difficulties, social problems, learning consequences, emotional problems and problems in adulthood. The paper made recommendations like the use of spell checkers for managing learning disabilities for better academic performance, allowing learners to work at their own level of mastery and pace, constant practice, development of fundamental skills before moving to the next level particularly with adult learners, use of direct instruction, classroom adjustment, use of special equipments for enhanced learning and so on. Conclusion was made too.*

**Key words:** learning disabilities, psychological consequences, school children and academic performance.

The school sector generally has kids with learning disabilities and teachers are faced with the herculean tasks of educating the learning disabled children and helping them adjust properly in the school system. Due to various consequences of learning disability on academic performance, teachers are sometimes overwhelmed with poor performance in the education sector. (Otu, 2001).

Learning disability is a condition that gives rise to learning difficulties, especially when not associated with physical disabilities. Learning disabilities is a classification that includes several areas of functioning in which a person has difficulty learning in a typical manner. This does not exclude the ability to learn in a different manner. Therefore, some people can be more accurately described as having a “learning Difference”, thus avoiding any misconception of being disabled with a lack of ability to learn and possible negative stereotyping. (Idua-c 2016).

While learning disability, learning disorder and learning difficulty are often used interchangeably they differ in many ways. Disorder refers to significant learning problems in an academic area. This problems, however are not enough to warrant an official diagnosis. Learning disability on the other hand, is an official clinical diagnosis, whereby the individual meets certain criteria, as determined by a professional (Psychologist, pediatrician, etc.) The difference is in degree, frequency, and intensity of reports symptoms and problems and thus the two should not be confused. When the term “learning disorder” is used, it describes a group of disorders characterized by inadequate development of specific academics, language, and speech skills, types of learning disorders include reading (dyslexia), mathematics (dyscalculia) and writing (dysgraphia).(Keller -M2016).

The unknown factor is the disorders that affect the brains ability to receive and process information. The disorder can make it problematic for a person to learn as quickly or in the same way as someone who is not affected by a learning disability. People with learning disorders ability have trouble performing specific types of skills or completing tasks if left to figure things out by themselves or if taught in conventional ways. Individuals with learning disabilities can face unique challenges that are often pervasive throughout the lifespan. Depending on the type and seventieth of the disability, interventions and current technologies may be used to help the individual learn strategies that will foster future success. Some interventions can be quite simplistic while others are intricate and complete current technologies may require student training to be effective classroom supports. Teachers, parents and schools can create plans together that tailor interruption and accommodations to aid the individuals in successfully becoming independent learners. School psychologists and other intervention and coordinate the execution of the interruption with teachers and parents

social support may improve the learning the learning for students with learning disabilities. Rodriquez.S.(2016).

### **Learning Disability**

National Joint Committee on learning disabilities (NJCLD) (2016) defined learning disabilities as a heterogeneous group or disorders manifested by significant difficulties in the acquisition and use of listening, speaking, reading, writing, reasoning or mathematical abilities .

These disorders are intrinsic to the individual and presumed to be due to central nervous system dysfunction. Even though a learning disability may occur concomitantly with other handicapping conditions (e.g. sensory impairment, influence) or environmental influence/inappropriate instruction, psychogenic factors) it is not the direct result of these conditions or influences.

LD experts during a meeting in (2002) opined that learning disability has strong converging evidence supports the validity of the concept of specific learning disabilities (SLD). This evidence is particularly impressive because it converges across different indicators and methodologies. The central concepts of SLD are specific in the sense that these disorders each significantly affect a relatively narrow range of academic and performance outcomes. SLD may occur in combination with other disabling conditions, but they are not due primarily to other conditions, such as intellectual disability, behavioral disturbance, lack of opportunities to learn, or primary sensory deficits.

Another school of thought do not believe the term “learning disabilities” is limited to a particular diagnosis such as reading, Mathematics and written expression. Rather, it is a single diagnosis criteria describing draw backs in general academic skills and includes detailed specifics for the areas of reading, Mathematics and written expression. (Frisby,2013).

### **Types of Learning Disability**

Learning disability can be categorized by either the type of information processing affected by the disability or by the specific difficulties coursed by a processing deficit. (Esmaili 2016).

### **By stage of Information Processing**

Learning disabilities fall into broad categories based on the four stages of information processing used in learning: input integration, storage, and output. Many learning disabilities are a compilation of a few types of abnormalities occurring at the same time, as well as with social difficulties and emotional or behavioural disorders.

**Input**

This is the information perceived through the senses, such as visual and auditory perception.

Difficulties with visual perception can cause problems with recognizing the shape, position, or size of items seen. There can be problems with sequencing, which can revote to deficits with processing time intervals or temporal perception.

Difficulties with auditory perception can make it difficult to screen out competing sounds in order to focus on one of them such as the sound of the teacher's voice in or classroom setting. Some children appear to be unable to process tactile input for example; they may seem insensitive to pain or dislike being touched.

**Integration**

This is the stage during which perceived input is interpreted, categorized, placed in sequence, or related to previous learning. Students with problems in these areas may be unable to tell a story in the correct sequence, unable to memorize sequences of information such as the days of the weeks, able to understand a new concept but are unable to generalize it to other areas of learning, or able to put the facts together to see the big picture: A poor vocabulary may contribute to problems with comprehension.

**Storage**

Problems with memory can occur with short -term or working memory or with long-term memory, which can make it difficult to learn new material without more repetitions than usual. Difficulties with visual memory can impede learning to spell.

**Output**

Information comes out of the brain either through words, that is language output, or through muscle activity, such as gesturing, writing or drawing. Difficulties with language output can create problems with spoken language. Such difficulties include answering a question on demand, in which one must retrieve information from storage, organize our thoughts, and put the thoughts into words before we speak. It can also cause trouble with written language for the same reasons. Difficulties with motor abilities can cause problem with gross and fine motor skills. People with gross motor difficulties maybe clumsy, that is they may be prone to stumbling, falling or bumping into things. They may also have trouble in running, climbing or learning to ride a bicycle people with fine motor difficulties may have trouble with handwriting, buttoning shirts, or trying shoelaces.

**By Function Impaired**

Deficits in any area of information processing can manifest in a variety of specific learning disabilities. It is possible for an individual to have more than one of

these difficulties. This is referred to as co morbidity or co-occurrence of learning disabilities.

### **Reading disorder**

Reading disorder is the most common learning disability. Amongst students with specific learning disabilities, 70-80% has deficits in reading. The term "Developmental Dyslexia" is often used as a synonym for reading disabilities. However, many researchers assert that they are many or different type of reading disabilities, of which dyslexia is one. A reading disability can affect any part of the reading process, including difficult with accurate or fluent word recognition, or both, word decoding, reading rate, prosody (Oral reading with expression) and reading comprehension. The term "dyslexia" came to prominences this learning disability used to be known as "word blindness". Common indicators of reading disability include difficulty with phonemic awareness. The ability to break upwards into their component sounds, and difficulty with matching letter combinations to specific sounds (Sound-symbol correspondence). Reading disorders could be helped and there are lots of ways to help a student suffering from dyslexia. Teachers need to focus on giving students extra time to read silently in class and never to force them to do it out loud in front of the whole class.

This can discourage the student from wanting to read. Silent reading time is good for all students, however, it will give the students suffering from dyslexia more time to practice on their own, and if they need help they can always ask their teacher. Another aspect to pay attention to is to create a quiet area of the classroom. Doing so will give the student space to concentrate and not be bothered by the noise of the other students.

### **Disorder of Written Expression**

The criterion for a Disorder of written Expression is writing skills (As measured by standardized test or functional assessment) that fall substantially below those expected based on the individuals chronological age, measured intelligences, and age appropriate education, (Criterion A). This difficulty must also cause significant impairment to academic achievement and task that require composition of written text (Criterion B), and if sensory defect is present, the difficulties with writing skills must exceed those typically associated with sensory deficits, (Criterion C).

Individuals with diagnosis of a disorder of written Expression typically have a combination of difficulties in their abilities with written combination expression as evidenced by grammatical and punctuation errors within sentences, poor paragraph organization, multiple spellings errors, and excessively poor penmanship. A disorder in spelling or handwriting without other difficulties of written expression do not generally qualify for this diagnosis. If poor handwriting is due to an impairment in the individuals' motor coordination, a diagnosis of developmental coordination disorder

should be considered by or number of organizations, the term "dysgraphia" has been used as an overarching term for all disorders of written expression. (Geva.2015).

### **Math's disability**

Sometimes called dyscalculia, a math disability involves difficulties such as learning math concepts (Such as quantity, place value, and time), difficulty memorizing math facts. Difficulty organizing numbers, and understanding how problems are organized on the page. Dyscalculics are often referred to as having poor "number sense".

### **Nonverbal learning disability**

Nonverbal learning disabilities often manifest in motor clumsiness, poor visual-spatial skills, problematic social relationships, difficulty with mathematics, and poor organizational skills. These individuals often have specific strengths in the verbal domains including early reading and spelling skills. Excellent rote-memory and auditory retention and eloquent self-expression.

### **Disorders of speaking and listening**

Difficulties that often Co-occur with learning disabilities include difficulty with memory, social skills and executive functions (such as organizational skills and time management). (Geva,2015).

### **Consequences of learning disabilities on academic achievement:**

Students with specific -learning disabilities have average to above average intelligence but may have difficulties acquiring and/or demonstrating knowledge and understanding content. This results in lower achievement for age and ability level, resulting in a significant discrepancy between achievement and intellectual ability.

Generally speaking, people with learning disabilities who like stated above are of average intelligence or above average. There often appears to be a gap between the individual's potentials and actual achievement. This is why learning disability is referred to as hidden disabilities." The person looks perfectly "normal" and seems to be a very bright and intelligent person, yet may be unable to demonstrate the skill level expected from someone of a similar age.

A learning disability cannot be cured or fixed, it is a lifelong challenge. However, with appropriate support and intervention, people with learning disabilities can achieve success in school, at work, in relationships, and in the community. (A feeder law, under the individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 2016).

### **Academic difficulties**

Learning Disabilities come in variety of forms and affect people in different ways. Children and adults with a learning disability may struggle in all areas of school. For example Language processing disabilities can make reading and writing slow and challenging, and memory issues can resurrect in a student having to reread a piece of text or listen to spoken instructions many times. These students also may need more time to process information before answering questions or replying when spoken to, which can result in difficulties contributing to classroom or group discussions. Someone with attention deficit disorder may also find it difficult to maintain focus and paying attention is critical to learning. Organization and planning can also be impaired resulting in difficulty keeping track of assignment supplies and submitting works on times. (Bryun,2010).

### **Social Effects**

Individuals with learning disability or ADD may have difficulty maintaining friendships and relationships or employment, associations even in school as they may find organization, impulse control, planning and reading social cues to be challenge. It's important for each individual to understand their areas of strength and weaknesses so they can better explain their needs to others in order to ensure personal and social success.

### **Learning problems**

Many children and their parents, are unaware of learning problems until they begin their formal education. The academic and social skills required for successful school achievement may disclose previously undetected problems of attention, memory, language, organization. They early hypothesis of learning disabilities supposed that difference within a child brain or perceptual processes caused learning problems. This theory is still viable as the search for a more definite cause continuous.

Problems with visual and auditory processing, memory and attention are associated with academic achievement problems, difficulties in listening, speaking reading comprehension, word recognition, spelling and writing, all comprise the more general category of language disorders. Written language involves proficiency in other skills. Confusion over sound-letter association may cause problems in spelling. Problem with fluency and sentence structure, as well as the mechanical aspects of writing, also affect written composition. Difficulties with grammar and semantics impide oral language (Bryuan and Bryuan, 1986). Mann Corwing and Schoenhreinmen, 1989). reading problems has been linked to deficits in languages skills. Phonological problems, or in the way letters combine in sounds, making words (foorman & Liberman, 1989). Dyslexia is a subcategory found within a specific population of individuals with learning disabilities. It is believed to be caused by neurological differences within the brain (Kirk, Gallagher & Anastasious , 2000),. Disorders in math can occur without

deficits in other areas. Computation and other problem solving can be difficult for students with math learning disabilities (Cawley & Parmar, 1992, mercer and miller, 1992; Montague, 1999).

### **Emotional consequences**

The continued presence of academic problems can have adverse effects on individuals with learning disabilities. Poor self-concepts and self-esteem can result from years of frustration and failure. Individuals with learning disabilities may develop lack of confidence in their ability to learn (silver, 1998). Some children and young adults with LD become passive learners and develop an attitude of learned helplessness (Deshler, Ellis, & Lenz, 1996).

Having little belief in their own abilities they give up quickly if a task is difficult and may feel that outcomes are their result of external factors such as luck or teacher behavior (Hatzes, 1996; Kistner, Osborne and Liverier, 1988). It is difficult to motivate many students with learning disabilities for academic task because their history of repeated failure has established negative feelings and self-doubts.

### **Effect in adulthood**

Until recently, the study of characteristics and remediation of learning disabilities continued to focus on children. It is now recognized that having a learning disability is life-long condition that continues to manifest in both academic and social areas. Many adults with LD continue to have weaknesses in spellings, writing and math organization, time management, skills motivation, and self esteem (Gregg, Hoy, kings-, Moreland & Jagota , 1992; Houck, Engelhard & Geller, 1989; Vogel, 1987).

The continuing presence of academic deficits and hardships for many adults with LD are unemployed according to their potential (Halpern, 1990; Sitington & Frank, 1990) are not living independently (Spekman, Goldman and Herman 1992) with their jobs and life situations (Reiff et-al 1997). This awareness of the persisting problems associated with the learning disabilities diagnosis has increased interest in determining the interplay of factors behind adult outcomes.

The difference in adult outcomes appears to result from a combination of personal characteristics and environmental influences. Early and continued support personal characteristics of persistence and hard work, and effective educational interventions seem to increase the probability of satisfactory adult adjustment for this population.

Adverse environmental and educational experiences, inadequate social support, and more severe disability put an individual at risk for possible negative outcomes. Spekman et-al (1992). Measured the outcomes of 50 young adults according to accomplishments that were both socially accepted and expected for a certain developmental period (b) individuals self-perception of life satisfactions, and (c) the match between an individual's accomplishments and his/her aspirations. Based on these



defining factors, they found 29 individuals from their sample parent ratings, current testing, in -depth interviews, and case records. Pronounced differences in personal characteristics were found between the groups, although intelligence and background factors were similar.

The young adult they categorized as successful accepted and understood their learning disabilities. They were able to recognize their strength and compensate for their limitations. They set goals for themselves and had a high level of perseverance even in difficult situations.

These individuals had developed support systems of parents, teachers, mentors, or friends who consistently supported and encouraged them. In contrast, the young adults who were not as successful were more likely to deny the presence of their disability. They either did not have educational or employment goals or had goals that were unrealistic. They avoided assistance and were critical of people who tried to help them.

### **Recommendations:**

Haven highlighted various consequences of learning disabilities on academic performance of school children the following recommendations will help the learner overcome those challenges.

1. Spell checkers are one inevitable tool that must be used for managing learning disabilities to improve academic performance generally especially area of spellings.
2. Mastery model should be used: Learners work at their own level of mastery.
3. Constant practice (practice makes perfect).
4. They should gain fundamental skills before moving into the next level. However, this is best applicable to adult learners or outside the mainstream school system.
5. Direct Instruction: emphasizes carefully unplanned lessons for small learning increments and also rapid-paced interaction between teacher and students.
  - Correcting mistakes immediately
  - Achievement based grouping
  - Frequent progress assessments.
6. Classroom adjustments:
  - Alternative or modified assignments
  - modify testing procedures
  - quiet environment
7. Special Equipments:
  - Word processor with spell checkers and dictionaries.

## Conclusion

The paper concluded that with individualized teaching, using mastery model, classroom adjustment and special equipments, the learning disabled could be helped out of their specific learning problems.

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