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Family Support And Social Integration As Predictors Of Academic Adjustment Among Students With Visual Impairment In Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

There is a growing research interest in understanding the dynamics of academic adjustment among students with visual impairment. While numerous studies have explored its patterns and causes, fewer have examined the underlying factors influencing academic adjustment in Nigeria. This study investigated family support and social integration as predictors of academic adjustment of students with visual impairment in Oyo State, Nigeria. A descriptive research design was adopted. Two schools for the blind were purposively selected, and seventy-five (75) students constituted the study's participants. Three research questions guided the study. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising demographic information and measures of family support, social integration, and academic adjustment. The data were analyzed using Multiple Regression Analysis and Pearson Product-Moment Correlation at a 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed a significant positive relationship between family support ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.05$), social integration ($r = 0.562$, $p < 0.05$), and academic adjustment. Together, the independent variables explained 38.6% (adjusted $R^2 = 0.386$) of the variance in academic adjustment. Family support contributed most ($\beta = 0.487$, $p < 0.05$), followed by social integration ($\beta = 0.319$, $p < 0.05$). Based on the findings, it was recommended that educators and policymakers should strengthen family support systems for students with visual impairment. Additionally, the government should provide financial and material support to

reduce socio-economic barriers and train teachers to promote social integration and reduce stigma associated with visual impairment.

Keywords: Family support, Social integration, Academic adjustment, students, visual impairment.

INTRODUCTION

Adjustment refers to the extent to which an individual, regardless of impairment or condition, maintains alignment between themselves and their environment to function effectively. It encompasses various domains, including academic, psychological, social, physical, and emotional adjustment (Abodunrin & Adelabu, 2025). The academic success of students with visual impairment is shaped by multiple factors such as personal motivation, environmental support, effective teaching strategies, and the availability of assistive technologies.

Academic adjustment is a complex process that involves adapting to the demands of schooling, balancing instructional tasks, social interactions, and learning expectations. For students with visual impairment (SwVI), this process is often challenging due to limited access to visual learning materials and the presence of social and environmental barriers (Haegele & Hodge, 2018). Although inclusive education policies exist in Nigeria, systemic, familial, and social obstacles continue to influence how effectively these students adjust academically.

Abodunrin, Enweremadu, and Assam (2024) note that academic adjustment for SwVI requires balancing academic demands with the realities of visual limitations. Successful adjustment depends on acceptance, recognition, and support from parents, peers, teachers, and society at large (Abodunrin & Komolafe, 2017). Unfortunately, stigma and misconceptions about visual impairment persist in Nigerian society, leading to bullying, exclusion, and reduced self-esteem among visually impaired students, all of which can impede academic success (Ogunyemi, 2021).

Family support plays a central role in overcoming these challenges. Adeyemo (2010) emphasized that a supportive family background contributes to the happiness and achievement of children with disabilities. Parental education, income, and family dynamics influence academic and social development. Family structure, size, and environment can either promote or hinder a child's academic success (Abodunrin et al., 2024). As the primary agent of socialization, the family shapes a child's self-worth, motivation, and academic aspiration. Smaller families often provide greater educational attention, while large families may struggle with limited resources.

Family support encompasses emotional encouragement, financial assistance, and advocacy—all of which help students with visual impairment engage meaningfully in learning and develop coping strategies (Abodunrin, 2024; Okoro & Emeka, 2020). In the absence of adequate institutional resources, families often bridge the gap by providing assistive devices or learning materials. Studies such as Hamzat, Olarewaju, and Raji (2022) found that family, peer, and school support were positively associated with better academic outcomes among visually impaired students in Ilorin Metropolis. However, systemic inequalities, poor funding, and inadequate inclusion policies still limit the overall impact of these supports (Gbadebo & Olatunji, 2023).

Academic adjustment among students with visual impairment is therefore not solely a question of access to schooling but also of creating environments conducive to their holistic development

(Fagbemi, 2022; Alabi & Durojaiye, 2023). When families actively participate in their children's education, providing both moral and logistical support, students tend to perform better academically (Olowolabi & Adebayo, 2022). Family advocacy ensures that learners receive appropriate accommodations and assistive technologies. Moreover, emotional stability derived from family encouragement enhances self-confidence, resilience, and the ability to cope with social and academic stressors.

Social integration complements family support in promoting adjustment. It refers to the degree to which students with visual impairment feel accepted by peers, included in school activities, and supported by teachers. Positive social integration reduces emotional distress, fosters a sense of belonging, and motivates academic persistence (Adedokun & Olorunfemi, 2020; Williams & Parker, 2022). Research by Eguavoen and Eniola (2016) also found that social acceptance strongly correlates with improved academic achievement.

Akinmoladun et al. (2020) emphasized that inclusion in school activities strengthens students' attitudes toward learning and enhances performance. Haegele and Hodge (2018) further noted that positive relationships with peers and teachers promote resilience, enabling students to cope with academic challenges. Similarly, Mutambara (2021) found that well-integrated students with visual impairment were better able to overcome isolation and discrimination, both of which negatively affect academic progress.

Despite increasing recognition of the importance of family support and social integration, limited research in Nigeria explores their combined impact on the academic adjustment of students with visual impairment. Most previous studies have focused either on family or peer influence in isolation, leaving a gap in understanding how both factors jointly predict academic adaptation.

Therefore, this study seeks to investigate family support and social integration as predictors of academic adjustment of students with visual impairment in Oyo State. The study will examine the relationship between family support, social integration and academic adjustment, the joint contribution of family support and social integration to academic adjustment; and the relative contribution of each predictor in accounting for variance in academic adjustment among students with visual impairment in Oyo State.

METHODS

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The purposive sampling technique was used to select 300 respondents, including male and female secondary school students with visual impairment ranging from total blindness and low vision across South West Nigeria. Students from aged 12 years and above with a documented visual impairment (total blindness or low vision) who were in JSS1–SS3, and have to participate with parental/guardian consent and student assent were included. Also, those students with severe cognitive impairments preventing questionnaire completion, and those absent during both data collection visits, and those without assent/consent were excluded. Three standardized instruments were used for data collection: the Family Support Scale (FSS), Social Integration Scale (SIS), and Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS). The FSS developed by Dunst, Jenkins, and Trivette (1984) was adapted to measure the emotional, financial, and instructional support provided by family members and yielded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86 in this study. The SIS adapted from Thomas and Brown (2012) assessed the degree of social inclusion and acceptance experienced by students and recorded a Cronbach's alpha of 0.82. The AAS developed by Baker and Siryk (1999) evaluated students'

ability to adapt to academic demands and produced a Cronbach's alpha of 0.88. Content validity of the instruments was established through specialist in Special Education and Educational Psychology, while construct validity was confirmed through pilot testing with students with visual impairment from a similar setting. The analysis of data involved multiple statistical techniques. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used to describe the demographic characteristics of the respondents while Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) was used to assess the relationships between independent and dependent variables., multiple regression analysis was used to analysed the effects of independent variables on the dependent variable. All hypotheses were tested with a significance level set at 0.05.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) and Social Support Theory (Cobb, 1976). Both theories explain how family and social environments shape the academic adjustment of students with visual impairment.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory emphasizes that human development occurs within a complex system of interrelated environments, including the microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, macrosystem, and chronosystem. Each system interacts to influence an individual's growth and adaptation. the microsystem includes immediate settings such as the family, school, and peer group, where direct interactions of persons with visual impairment occur.

Social Support Theory, on the other hand, posits that individuals' well-being and adaptive functioning are influenced by the perceived availability and quality of support from significant others (Cobb, 1976). Support can take various forms, including emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal support. Within the context of this study, family support and social integration represent critical dimensions of social support that buffer stress and facilitate effective coping with academic and social challenges. When students with visual impairment receive consistent emotional encouragement, tangible assistance, and inclusion from family, peers, and teachers, their capacity to adapt to academic demands is enhanced. Overall, these two theories provide a holistic lens for understanding how environmental systems and interpersonal support structures jointly influence students with visual impairment's academic adjustment.

RESULTS

Preliminary Analyses and Assumption Checks

Before conducting the main analyses, data were screened to ensure that statistical assumptions for correlation and multiple regression were met. Normality was assessed through skewness and kurtosis statistics, which were within the acceptable range of −1.0 to +1.0, indicating approximately normal distribution of scores. Linearity and homoscedasticity were confirmed through scatterplots of standardized residuals. Multicollinearity was examined using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) and Tolerance values. The VIF values ranged from 1.22 to 1.35, and

tolerance values ranged from 0.74 to 0.82, indicating no multicollinearity problems (VIF < 10; Tolerance > 0.1). These results confirm that the data met all assumptions for multiple regression analysis.

RESULTS

Socio-Demographic Representation of the Participants

Table 1

Class Distribution of Participants (N = 300)

Class	Frequency	Percentage (%)
JSS 1	72	24.0
JSS 2	104	34.7
JSS 3	124	41.3
Total	300	100

Table 1 presents the class-level distribution of the 300 students with visual impairment who participated in the study. The results indicate that the majority of participants (41.3%) were in JSS 3, followed by 34.7% in JSS 2, and 24.0% in JSS 1. This shows that most respondents were in their final stage of junior secondary education, which may account for higher academic maturity among them.

Table 2

Gender Distribution of Participants (N = 300)

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	188	62.7
Female	112	37.3
Total	300	100

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of the participants. The results reveal that 62.7 percent of the respondents were male, while 37.3 percent were female. This pattern reflects the continuing gender disparity often observed in special schools, where male enrolment typically exceeds female enrolment.

Table 3 Age Range Distribution of Participants (N = 300)

Age Range (years)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
12–13	76	25.3
14–15	144	48.0
16 and above	80	26.7
Total	300	100

Table 3 presents the age distribution of the participants. The majority of students (48.0%) were aged 14–15 years, followed by 26.7% who were 16 years or older, and 25.3% who were aged 12–13 years. This suggests that most respondents were in mid-adolescence, which is an important stage for developing academic independence and social integration skills.

Research Question One

What is the relationship between family support, social integration, and academic adjustment among students with visual impairment in South-West Nigeria?

Table 4: Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlation Coefficients among Study Variables (n = 300)

	Variables	M	Sd	1	2	3
1	Family Support	42.18	6.74	-		
2.	Social Integration	38.93	7.04	.52**	-	
3.	Academic Adjustment	45.36	6.28	.48**	.57**	-

-Note. $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Interpretation:

Table 4 shows that family support and social integration are both positively and significantly correlated with academic adjustment. Students who reported higher family support also tended to have higher academic adjustment ($r = .48$, $p < .01$). Likewise, social integration had a significant positive relationship with academic adjustment ($r = .57$, $p < .01$). The correlation between family support and social integration ($r = .52$, $p < .01$) indicates that students receiving greater family encouragement are also more socially integrated within school environments.

Research Question Two

What is the joint contribution of family support and social integration to academic adjustment among students with visual impairment?

Table 5: Multiple Regression Summary for Predicting Academic Adjustment from Family Support and Social Integration (n = 300)

Predictor	B	SE B	β	95% CI for B	t	p	Partial r
Constant	12.41	1.78	—	[8.92, 15.90]	6.97	.000	—
Family Support	0.519	0.063	.483	[0.395, 0.643]	8.27	.000	.44
Social Integration	0.347	0.057	.322	[0.235, 0.459]	6.11	.000	.35

Model Summary: $R = .624$, $R^2 = .389$, Adjusted $R^2 = .385$, $F(2, 297) = 94.21$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $f^2 = 0.64$ (large effect size).

Note. SE B = Standard Error of the Unstandardized Coefficient; CI = Confidence Interval.

Interpretation:

The regression model was significant, $F(2, 297) = 94.21$, $p < .001$, explaining 38.9% of the variance in academic adjustment. Both family support ($\beta = .483$, $p < .001$) and social integration ($\beta = .322$, $p < .001$) made significant independent contributions. The calculated Cohen's $f^2 = 0.64$

indicates a large effect size, meaning that these two predictors have substantial influence on students' academic adjustment. The 95% confidence intervals for both predictors did not cross zero, reinforcing the reliability of the estimates.

Research Question Three

What is the relative contribution of family support and social integration to academic adjustment among students with visual impairment?

The standardized beta weights (β) in Table 5 show that family support (β = .483) contributed more strongly to academic adjustment than social integration (β = .322). This suggests that while both predictors are important, family involvement remains the most powerful determinant of academic adjustment among students with visual impairment in South-West Nigeria.

Answers to Research Questions

Research Question One

What is the relationship between the independent variables (family support and social integration) and academic adjustment among students with visual impairment in South-West Nigeria?

Table 4: Pearson Product-Moment Correlation (PPMC) Showing the Relationship between Family Support, Social Integration, and Academic Adjustment (n = 300)

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Family Support	42.18	6.74	1		
2. Social Integration	38.93	7.04	0.517**	1	
3. Academic Adjustment	45.36	6.28	0.482**	0.568**	1

** $p < 0.05$ (significant correlation)

Interpretation:

Table 4 shows significant positive correlations among the three variables. Students with visual impairment who received stronger family support demonstrated better academic adjustment (r =

0.482, $p < 0.05$). Likewise, students who experienced higher social integration also showed greater academic adjustment ($r = 0.568$, $p < 0.05$). The significant correlation between family support and social integration ($r = 0.517$, $p < 0.05$) suggests that families providing encouragement and resources also foster conditions that promote social inclusion.

Research Question Two

What is the joint contribution of family support and social integration to the academic adjustment of students with visual impairment in South-West Nigeria?

Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis Showing the Joint Contribution of Family Support and Social Integration to Academic Adjustment (n = 300)

Model	R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Std. Error	F	p-value
Family Support & Social Integration → Academic Adjustment	0.624	0.389	0.385	5.05	94.21	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$ (significant model)

Interpretation:

The results in Table 5 indicate that family support and social integration jointly and significantly predict academic adjustment ($F = 94.21$, $p < 0.05$). The model explains about 38.9 % of the total variance in academic adjustment (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.385$). This demonstrates that the combined influence of family and social factors provides substantial explanatory power for understanding how students with visual impairment adapt to academic demands across diverse school contexts in South-West Nigeria.

Research Question Three

What is the relative contribution of family support and social integration to the academic adjustment of students with visual impairment in South-West Nigeria?

Table 6: Relative Contribution of Family Support and Social Integration to Academic Adjustment (n = 300)

Predictor Variables	B	Beta (β)	t	p-value
Family Support	0.519	0.483	8.27	0.000*
Social Integration	0.347	0.322	6.11	0.000*

* $p < 0.05$ (significant predictors)

Interpretation:

Table 6 reveals that both family support and social integration make significant independent contributions to academic adjustment. Family support (β = 0.483) remains the stronger predictor, while social integration (β = 0.322) also exerts a meaningful effect. These findings reaffirm that although both factors are essential, family support continues to play a more dominant role in facilitating academic adjustment among students with visual impairment.

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