

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

# Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying).

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## Abstract:

The current study aimed to investigate the relationship between the coping strategies of students with academic learning difficulties (victims of bullying) towards bullying behavior and their academic adaptability. It also aimed to identify the strategies these students use to deal with bullying behavior, assess their level of academic adaptability, and achieve its objectives. The descriptive method was followed, utilizing the Desouki's scale for dealing with bullying behavior and the Longman's scale for academic adaptability. After applying the scales to a sample of 60 male and female students with academic learning difficulties (reading, writing, arithmetic), purposefully selected, and after collecting and statistically analyzing the data, it was found that students with academic learning difficulties who have experienced bullying behavior do not employ different strategies to deal with bullying behavior directed at them. Furthermore, their level of academic adaptability is moderate. The correlational relationship between coping strategies for school bullying behavior and academic adaptability is extremely weak and statistically insignificant.

**Keywords:** Coping strategies for bullying behavior, academic learning difficulties, bullying victims, academic adaptability.

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## 1-Research Problem:

Learning difficulties are among the most common educational issues in elementary educational institutions, affecting children in their early educational stages. These difficulties encompass various and extensive cases of disorders that hinder the attainment of expected academic performance. The U.S. Department of Education defines learning disabilities in Public Law 476-101 of 1990 as "a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

understanding or using spoken or written language, which may manifest itself in a difficulty to listen, think, speak, read, write, spell, or perform mathematical calculations. The term does not include children who have learning problems as a result of visual, hearing, or motor disabilities, intellectual disability, emotional disturbance, or environmental, cultural, or economic disadvantage." (Amira, 2020, p. 11). Consequently, learning difficulties encompass diverse categories, carrying various levels of severity and types of challenges.

Among the types of academic learning difficulties that appear as an inability to acquire certain academic skills, such as reading, writing, and arithmetic, Ziati (2008) defines them as difficulties in academic and scholastic performance. These difficulties involve issues related to reading, writing, spelling, written expression, and calculation. This unexpected academic performance coincides with the emergence of a range of emotional, behavioral, and social characteristics and problems for these students. This is a result of the frustration and repeated failures they experience. Therefore, addressing this category of students should not be limited to tackling academic difficulties alone, but it's crucial to focus on the social and emotional impacts arising from these challenges (Ziati, 1998, 202). In this context, Mr. (2000, 159) indicated that students with learning difficulties do not receive good acceptance from their regular peers. They are often considered less socially adjusted compared to their peers. Moreover, a study by Musa (2010) showed statistically significant lower levels of psychological adaptability among students with learning difficulties. These issues may lead to their failure in adapting to the school environment.

Academic adaptability signifies a child's ability to harmonize with the school environment, encompassing the establishment of relationships with teachers, alignment with academic subjects, and social integration within the school context. It involves conscious effort, adherence to teacher instructions, and an effective relationship with teachers and the school environment (Khaleque & Rohner, 2015: 207). Poor academic adaptability renders a student incapable of keeping up with their peers academically and comprehending their coursework. This can lead to disruptions in the learning process, evoking feelings of inadequacy and helplessness. Children might express these negative emotions through aggressive behavior, withdrawal, avoiding school, or annoying teachers (Burnam, Komarraju, & Nadler, 2015: 167).

A student's academic adaptability hinges on a range of psychological, social, and academic variables, such as academic achievement. Successful adaptability necessitates a combination of academic, social, emotional, and behavioral competencies, enhancing the acquisition of skills, motivational development, and cultivating a positive self-identity. Consequently, this contributes to an improvement in academic achievement (Perry and Weinstein, 1998). Given the diminished competencies among students with learning difficulties, it's important to address these aspects. Numerous studies concur on the decreased level of academic adaptability among students with learning difficulties. For instance, Sharma's study (2004) affirmed that students with learning difficulties experience delayed emotional and social adaptation compared to their typical peers. Likewise, Al-Qassas and Al-Jamiah (2013) found that students with learning difficulties encounter challenges in personal and social adaptation. The study by Al-Sawi (2015) revealed statistically

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

significant differences in the dimensions of social competence and school adaptability between regular students and students with learning difficulties, favoring the regular students.

Several studies also suggest that the problems of academic adaptability for students with learning difficulties within the school environment, along with other emotional, behavioral, and social problems, make them susceptible to various forms of school bullying. School bullying refers to a deliberate negative behavior characterized by persistence on the part of the bully to harm another individual (victim or target), and can manifest as verbal, physical, psychological, or social actions aiming to hurt, annoy, isolate, or exclude the victim from group activities. The occurrence of bullying behavior is contingent on an imbalance of power between the bully and the victim (Desouki, 2016: 14).

Numerous studies have indicated a correlation between bullying behavior and behavioral issues. For example, Hillsberge & Spake (2006) noted that victims of bullying often experience feelings of isolation, poor psychological and social adjustment, low self-esteem, social withdrawal, school avoidance, and academic underachievement. Similarly, the study by Hsi & Ji (2011) revealed a negative association between school bullying and peer acceptance as well as academic adaptability. Farhan's study (2018) confirmed a statistically significant relationship between school bullying and academic adaptability.

In this context, Taha Hussein and Salama Hussein (2007) explained that the characteristics of a victim of bullying make them an easy target for the bully. The bully's actions can prompt other peers to engage in bullying behavior repeatedly (as cited in Desouki, 2017: 25). Consequently, students with learning difficulties are at risk of experiencing bullying in their relationships with typical peers due to behavioral, emotional, social, and educational challenges they face. Mustafawi and Qurat's study (2019) found a high prevalence of school bullying among students with learning difficulties and a positive correlation between school bullying and their learning difficulties.

The negative impact of being victims of bullying on the psychological well-being of these children is well-established. Houbre et al. (2010) found that bullying victims tend to have a weaker self-concept compared to their non-victimized peers. They also employ avoidance strategies to cope with bullying. Alsaker & Olweus (2012) and Machmutow; Perren & Sticca (2012) pointed out that there are variations in the strategies used to confront bullying, influenced by factors like age, gender, and participation in bullying. Adolescents who experience bullying are inclined to use a wide range of strategies, including supportive, technical, avoidance, active, and problem-focused strategies.

Based on the above, this study is concerned with understanding the nature of the relationship between coping strategies for bullying behavior and academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties who are victims of bullying. The study aims to answer the following questions:

- What coping strategies do students with academic learning difficulties employ to deal with bullying behavior?

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

- What is the level of academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties who are victims of school bullying?
- What is the nature of the relationship between coping strategies for bullying behavior and academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties?

## **2-The study hypotheses are as follows:**

- Students with academic learning difficulties use various methods to cope with bullying behavior directed against them.
- The level of academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties who are victims of school bullying is low.
- There is a statistically significant relationship between coping strategies for bullying behavior and academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties.

## **3-The study objectives are as follows:**

To highlight the relationship between coping strategies for bullying behavior and academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties. This will be achieved by:

- Identifying the strategies employed by students with academic learning difficulties to cope with school bullying behavior.
- Showcasing the level of academic adaptability among students with academic learning difficulties who are victims of school bullying.

## **4-The importance of the study:**

The significance of the study stems from the importance of the variables under investigation: school bullying, academic adaptability, and learning difficulties. School bullying is a serious issue that threatens the educational environment, with widespread prevalence in school settings. Understanding its psychological, social, and academic repercussions on students, whether as bullies or victims, is essential. Academic adaptability, on the other hand, contributes to students' self-confidence and success within the educational environment. Poor academic adaptability can lead to various problems and disturbances, potentially resulting in school dropout.

The study's importance also lies in its focus on these variables within the context of students with learning difficulties. This group encompasses diverse challenges that extend beyond academic performance to impact their psychological and social well-being. Therefore, understanding the issues faced by these students is crucial for developing psychological and educational intervention programs.

This study aims to:

- Highlight the significance of academic adaptability among students with learning difficulties, drawing the attention of educators and stakeholders.
- Serve as a starting point for researchers to develop counseling and therapeutic programs for the psychological and behavioral issues faced by students with learning difficulties.

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

- Shed light on the psychological and social challenges experienced by students with learning difficulties within the school environment.
- Provide insights into the relationship between coping strategies for bullying and academic adaptability among students with learning difficulties, offering guidance for addressing bullying behavior.
- Contribute to the psychological and educational research landscape, enriching Algerian literature with a new study in this area, given the limited number of studies that have investigated these variables among students with learning difficulties.

## **5-Procedural Definition of Fundamental Concepts in the Study:**

### **5-1 Concept of Strategies for Dealing with School Bullying:**

Strategies for dealing with school bullying refer to a set of processes and tactics employed by academically struggling learners in the fourth and fifth grades of primary school to confront bullying behavior directed at them by their peers. This is expressed through their overall score obtained based on their responses to the items of the bullying coping scale, developed by Paris et al. (2011) and adapted by Al-Desouki in 2016, within its four dimensions: seeking support, ignoring, self-defense, and self-blame.

### **5-2 Concept of Academic Learning Difficulties:**

This encompasses male and female students in the fourth and fifth grades of primary schools within the educational institutions in the Tizi Ouzou province during the academic year 2022-2023. The students' intelligence levels ranged between average and above average according to the Raven's intelligence scale. They scored below average in the Arabic language test during the first semester and scored one or more points above 20 in the diagnostic assessment criteria for difficulties in reading, writing, and arithmetic by Fathi Al-Ziyat.

### **5-2 Concept of Academic Adjustment:**

In this study, academic adjustment is represented by the overall score obtained by academically struggling learners on the Youngman Academic Adjustment Scale, developed in 1979 and adapted by Hussein Abdulaziz Aldraini in 1985. This scale aligns with its correction key and comprises three dimensions: diligence and effort, submission, and teacher relationship.

### **5-3 Victims of Bullying:**

This term refers to academically struggling learners in the fourth and fifth grades of primary school who have been subjected to some form of school bullying by their peers.

## **6. Field Study Procedures:**

**6-1 Survey Study:** A survey study was conducted on a sample of (30) male and female students from the fifth grade of primary education in five primary educational institutions in the Tizi Ouzou province. The purpose of the survey study was to:

- Gather a substantial amount of field data regarding the phenomenon of school bullying and the issue of academic difficulties to aid in formulating the study hypotheses.

### Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

- Identify a research sample that meets the conditions and criteria set in the study.
- Calculate the psychometric properties of the study tools (diagnostic scales and study instruments).
- Verify the suitability of the study tools for students in terms of language, time, clarity of instructions, item clarity, and ease of comprehension.

The results obtained from the survey study are as follows:

- Successfully defining the study variables and formulating hypotheses.
- Demonstrating the validity of the applied tools; the scale items were clear and easily comprehensible to the students.
- Confirming the availability of the research sample through teacher referrals, reviewing student files, assessing their academic performance in Arabic, and applying diagnostic tools to the students.
- Excluding students with low intelligence scores and academic difficulties from the research.
- Ensuring the validity of the diagnostic scales and the methods of dealing with bullying and academic adjustment through internal consistency calculations using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, which indicates high statistical reliability and stability of these measures.

#### 6-2 Study Methodology:

The choice of a particular methodology for the study depends on the nature of the topic and the research questions. Accordingly, the current study employed a descriptive-analytical methodology, involving the collection, categorization, processing, and analysis of facts and data. This approach aims to arrive at reliable results that can be generalized to the study population. The study collected field data on the methods academically struggling learners use to deal with school bullying and their academic adjustment levels. These data were then classified and processed using descriptive and inferential statistics to explore the relationship between the variables.

#### 6-3 Study Sample:

The study sample consisted of (60) male and female students from the fourth and fifth grades of primary education. The sample was intentionally selected based on teacher referrals and then applying the exclusion criteria. The selection process took into account the academic performance gap in Arabic and mathematics, as well as the score obtained on Raven's Progressive Matrices (intelligence). The exclusion criteria included intellectual and sensory disabilities, chronic illnesses, and social problems. Additionally, criteria from Fathi Mustafa Al-Zayat's diagnostic assessment battery for learning difficulties were considered for reading, writing, and arithmetic skills.

-Sample Characteristics:

**Table No. (01): Represents the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the academic performance scores of students with academic learning difficulties on the diagnostic scales.**

the scales	Mean	Standard Deviation
Raven's Progressive Matrices	51.41	11.14
Diagnostic Scale for Reading Difficulties:	48.95	16.64

Diagnostic Scale for Writing Difficulties	53.91	15.22
Diagnostic Scale for Mathematical	55.03	12.14
Achievement in Arabic Language	5.94	2.11
Achievement in Mathematics	5.50	2.01

From this table, it's evident that the mean scores of students with academic learning difficulties on the Colored Progressive Matrices test by Raven were found to be 51.41, categorizing them within the average intelligence range according to the Raven's scale. The mean scores for students on the Diagnostic Assessment Scale for Reading Difficulties were 48.95, for Writing Difficulties were 53.91, and for Arithmetic Difficulties were 55.03, placing them in the category of students facing academic learning difficulties (in reading, writing, and arithmetic). Their achievement in the Arabic language had a mean score of 4.94, while their average achievement in Mathematics was 4.50, indicating that their achievement is below average.

#### 6-4 Study Scope:

- Subject Area: The study focused on the strategies used by students with academic learning difficulties to deal with school bullying, as well as their academic adjustment. This was expressed through the scores they obtained on the measurement tools used in this study.

- Human Scope: The study was limited to the human boundaries represented by the study sample, which consisted of fourth and fifth-grade students in primary education. The diagnostic tools used in the study indicated that these students faced academic learning difficulties.

-Spatial Scope: The study sample was selected from primary schools located in the Tizi Ouzou province.

- Temporal Scope: The study was conducted during the academic year 2022-2023.

#### 6-5 Study Instruments:

Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM):

The Coloured Progressive Matrices (CPM) test was developed by J. C. Raven in 1947 based on Spearman's theory of intelligence. It aims to measure the intelligence of children aged 5 to 11 years. This test is considered a culturally fair assessment suitable for application in various environments and cultures. It consists of 36 matrices distributed into three sets: A, AB, and B. Each set contains 12 matrices, and each matrix has six small matrices at the bottom. The examinee selects one small matrix to complete the larger matrix above it.

The CPM test is used with children aged 5 to 11 years. Set A relies on the child's ability to complete missing parts, set AB assesses the child's perception of relationships between the matrix and the six answer alternatives, and set B assesses the child's development of abstract thinking. The test can be administered individually or in a group. Answer sheets are corrected using a provided key. Each

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

correct answer is scored 1, and incorrect answers or questions left unanswered are scored 0. The total score is calculated by summing the correct scores.

The raw score obtained by the examinee is converted into percentile ranks using an age-equivalent or below-12-and-a-half-years intelligence distribution table. A score at or above the 95th percentile indicates giftedness, 75-95 indicates above-average intelligence, 52-75 indicates average intelligence, and below 52 indicates below-average intelligence. A score at or below the 5th percentile is considered intellectually deficient.

To ensure the suitability of the CPM test for the current study sample, a preliminary application was conducted on a sample of fifth-grade students. The calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.82, indicating high reliability and suitability for the study sample.

\*Fathi El-Zyat's Assessment Scales for Learning Difficulties:\*

The assessment scales for learning difficulties by Fathi El-Zyat are part of a battery of 16 independent scales. These scales are divided into five scales that address cognitive processing disorders, three scales for academic learning difficulties, and the ninth scale includes eight sub-scales that focus on emotional and social behavioral difficulties. Each scale consists of 20 items describing behavior related to learning difficulties in the specific area under assessment.

During assessment, the person conducting the evaluation reads each item and selects the alternative that best describes the extent to which the behavior described in the item applies to the individual being evaluated. The alternatives for assessment range from "Always," "Often," "Sometimes," "Rarely," to "Doesn't Apply."

To calculate the diagnostic assessment scores for learning difficulties, check marks (√) are placed within the assessment boxes. The total score for each scale is calculated by adding the values of the check marks (√) in the assessment boxes, multiplied by their relative weights as follows: (×4 for "Always"), (×3 for "Often"), (×2 for "Sometimes"), (×1 for "Rarely"), and (×0 for "Doesn't Apply").

To ensure the reliability of the scale, the Cronbach's alpha coefficient method was employed.

The results obtained are shown in Table (02), illustrating the stability of the measures used to assess reading, writing, and arithmetic difficulties.

The scale	Sample size	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Reading Difficulties	30	0.92
Writing Difficulties	30	0.91
Arithmetic Difficulties	30	0.89

It is evident from the table that the measures for reading, writing, and arithmetic difficulties exhibit a high level of reliability, rendering them suitable for application on the study sample.

As for the Bullying Behavior Coping Scale, the study relied on the scale developed by Magdy Mohamed El Desouky (2016), which was adapted for the Arab context in Cairo. This scale consists of 30 items that assess coping with bullying behavior across four dimensions:



Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

- **Seeking Support:** Includes items 21, 17, 13, 12, 9, 7, 4, 2, 27, 25, 23, 22, 1.

- **Ignoring:** Includes items 6, 8, 15, 18, 20, 28, 29.

- **Self-Defense:** Includes items 11, 14, 16, 19, 3.

- **Self-Blame:** Includes items 5, 10, 24, 26, 30.

The correction method for the scale involves responding to each statement in the scale using four alternatives: Never - Sometimes - Often - Always, with corresponding weights of (.1, .2, .3, .4).

The total score for each dimension is the sum of the statements within that dimension. The overall score on the scale is the sum of the statements obtained by the respondent across all dimensions.

A high score on the scale indicates that an individual employs various strategies to deal with bullying behavior, and vice versa (El Desouky, 2016, p. 36).

To ensure the appropriateness of the Bullying Behavior Coping Scale for the current study sample, it was applied to the exploratory study sample consisting of 30 fifth-grade students from primary schools. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated and yielded a high score of 0.91, indicating that the scale is suitable for application on the study sample.

The Academic Compatibility Scale: This scale was developed by Youngman in 1979 and was adapted to the Arab environment by Hussein Abdulaziz Aldarini in 1985 in Qatar. It consists of (34) questions distributed across (3) dimensions as follows:

1. Diligence and Effort: This dimension includes 12 questions: 1-5-7-11-13-19-20-22-25-29-31-34.

2. Compliance with the Teacher: This dimension includes 15 questions: 10-14-15-16-17-18-23-24-26-28-32-2-3-8-9.

3. Relationship with the Teacher: This dimension includes 7 questions: 4-6-12-21-27-30-33.

The responses to the scale questions involve choosing one of two alternatives (Yes) or (No). A score of (2) is given for a "Yes" response, and a score of (1) is given for a "No" response. The scale scores range from (34-68), and a high score indicates a high level of academic compatibility, and vice versa (Bukhari, 2019).

To assess the reliability of the scale, it was administered to a survey sample consisting of 30 students. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated using the statistical software SPSS version 23, and the result was 0.79. This confirms the stability of the scale's scores, making it suitable for application on the study sample.

## 6\_6\_Statistical Analysis

Methods:

- The Alpha Cronbach equation was used to extract the internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) value for the applied scales in the study.

- The arithmetic mean and standard deviation were used to calculate the average scores of the participants on the bullying coping and academic adaptation scales.

- The Pearson correlation coefficient was used to extract the relationship between bullying coping and academic adaptation.

**7-Presentation and Discussion of Results:****7-1Hypothesis 1:**

The hypothesis states that students with academic learning difficulties use different strategies in dealing with bullying behavior. To test this hypothesis, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of their performance on each dimension of the bullying coping scale were calculated. Then, a t-test for a single sample was conducted to determine the differences between the hypothesized means and the calculated means. The results are presented in the following table:

**Table 2: Arithmetic Means, Standard Deviations, and t-test Results for Participants' Scores on the Dimensions of the Bullying Coping Scale.**

Scale Dimensions	Mean (Arithmetic Mean)	Hypothetical Mean	Standard deviation	T -test score	Significance Level (Sig)	Level of Significance
Seeking Support	32.6	32.5	4.21	1.18	0.85	0.05
Ignoring	14.25	17.5	2.34	10.72	0.00	0.05
Self-defense	9.18	12.5	1.94	13.21	0.00	0.05
Blame	15.06	12.5	2.30	8.62	0.00	0.05
Total score	71.10	75	6.61	4.56	0.00	0.05

Based on the table above, it becomes evident that the arithmetic mean of individuals' scores on the "Dealing with Bullying Behavior" scale was 71.10, while the hypothetical mean of the scale was 75. Upon comparing the arithmetic mean with the hypothetical mean using a one-sample t-test, it becomes clear that the significance value (Sig) is 0.00, which is lower than the adopted significance level of 0.05. Thus, we accept the alternative hypothesis indicating that the arithmetic mean differs from the hypothetical mean of the scale. As a result, we reject the null hypothesis, indicating the existence of statistically significant differences between individuals' arithmetic means and the hypothetical mean of the scale. Therefore, students with academic learning difficulties who have been exposed to bullying employ different strategies in dealing with it.

By examining the arithmetic means of the scale dimensions, we notice that the significance value (Sig) for the dimensions (Ignoring, Self-Defense, Blaming) is 0.00, which is less than the adopted significance level of 0.05. Thus, there are statistically significant differences between individuals' arithmetic means in these dimensions and the hypothetical means for each dimension of the scale. However, for the first dimension, "Seeking Support," the significance value (Sig) is 0.85, which is greater than 0.00, indicating no statistically significant differences.

Moreover, as observed from the table, differences between the arithmetic means and hypothetical means of the scale as a whole and its dimensions (except the first dimension) favored the hypothetical means, meaning that they are lower than the arithmetic means. This suggests that

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

there is no variation in the strategies used by students with academic learning difficulties who have experienced bullying when dealing with bullying behavior.

This result can be explained by behavioral and psychological characteristics, in addition to a lack of social skills, which makes individuals more susceptible to accepting bullying behavior directed towards them. Owlweuse (1993) pointed out that victims' lack of security and feelings of insecurity contribute to their continued exposure to bullying due to fear and intimidation (Abu Aldiyar, 2012, 48). They often experience anxiety, low self-esteem, sadness, a sense of lack of support from others, isolation, and social withdrawal, along with deficiencies in social skills (Ali, Al-Hadibi, 2015, 208). This was further confirmed by the findings of the study conducted by Boulton & Fox (2005), which indicated that bullying victims tend to have more behavioral problems compared to non-victims (as cited in: Marzaklal, Ali Sharif, 2022). They generally suffer from low self-respect, view themselves negatively, consider themselves failures, perceive themselves as unintelligent, and experience shame and lack of attractiveness. Consequently, they believe that they deserve to be bullied (Abu Aldiyar, 2012, 49).

As a result, they are unwilling to share their suffering with others. Mischma & Alaggia (2005) emphasized that obstacles to the disclosure of bullying victimization stem from various reasons such as secrecy, weakness, self-blame, and the victim's expectations related to the effectiveness of adult intervention. They fear that reporting bullying may lead to minimizing or neglecting the situation (Abu Aldiyar, 2012, 49). Additionally, Taha Hussein and Salama Hussein (2007) added that the behaviors and characteristics of bullying victims make them more susceptible to bullying. Some of their peers engage in bullying behavior towards them without exerting any effort to change this pattern (Desouki, 2016, 25).

Based on this, the weak utilization of coping strategies against bullying behavior by students with learning difficulties can be explained by psychological, behavioral, and social factors resulting from their learning difficulties on one hand, and the negative effects of experiencing bullying behavior on the other hand. In this context, the study by Nabuzoka & Smith (1993) indicated that most individuals with learning difficulties reject bullying behavior, and that the group most exposed to bullying are shy individuals with learning difficulties, who tend to seek help from others (Abu Aldiyar, 2012).

## **7-2 Presentation and Discussion of the Results of Hypothesis Two:**

The second hypothesis posits that the academic adjustment level among students with academic learning difficulties who have experienced school bullying is low. To test this hypothesis, we conducted descriptive analysis and categorized the scores of the academic adjustment scale into levels, as illustrated in Table 3:

**Table 3: Displays the range of scores of the sample individuals according to levels of academic adjustment.**

Range	34-45	46-57	58-68,
Level	Low	Moderate	High

The mean scores and standard deviations for academic adjustment on the scale of academic adjustment were calculated to determine the level of academic adjustment for the participants. The results are presented in the following table:

**Table (4): Mean Scores and Standard Deviations on the Academic Adjustment Scale**

Variable	Sample	Minimum score	Maximum score	Mean score	Standard deviaton
Academic Adjustment	60	42	66	56.46	5.82

Based on the table, it is evident that the mean score of the participants' grades is 56.46, with a standard deviation of 5.82. This falls within the range of (46-57), indicating that the level of academic adjustment for students with learning difficulties who have experienced bullying is average. Therefore, the second hypothesis was not confirmed.

These study results align with the findings of Alqassas and Aljamaiah (2013), which indicated that the total score on factors affecting school adaptation for both students with learning difficulties and regular students was average. Similarly, studies by Alotaibi and Alakram (2020) and Alshujairi et al. (2018) found that students with learning difficulties exhibit a moderate level of academic adjustment. This can be explained by the fact that students with academic learning difficulties often struggle academically, leading to a sense of failure in academic tasks and difficulty overcoming obstacles. This repetitive experience of failure diminishes their motivation for learning, perseverance, and leads to avoidance of school tasks. Consequently, their academic self-confidence diminishes, and their willingness to study decreases, resulting in an imbalance in their psychological well-being and academic adjustment. Furthermore, being repeatedly subjected to bullying by their peers intensifies their feelings of shame, embarrassment, fear of facing others, and a lack of security and comfort within the school environment.

### 7-2 Presentation and Discussion of Results for Hypothesis 3:

Hypothesis 3 posits that there is a statistically significant relationship between strategies for dealing with school bullying and academic adjustment among academically challenged students who have been exposed to bullying. To verify the validity of this hypothesis, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the scores of the participants on the two scales. The obtained results are presented in Table 5:

**Table 5: Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Strategies for Dealing with School Bullying and Academic Adjustment**

Variables	Sample	Pearson Correlation Coefficient (R)	Significance Value	Level of Significance
Dealing with School Bullying and Academic Adjustment	60	0.09	0.49	0.05

Through the table, it's evident that the Pearson correlation coefficient (R) between dealing with school bullying and academic adjustment is 0.09. The significance value is 0.49, which is greater than the accepted level of significance of 0.05. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis and reject the alternative hypothesis. Thus, the relationship between the variables is very weak and statistically insignificant. Consequently, academic adjustment among students with learning difficulties who experience bullying is not associated with the strategies they use to deal with bullying behavior, but rather with other factors. This result contradicts previous studies that examined the relationship between school bullying and various psychological aspects of students. For example, Ali (2016) found a significant negative relationship between the total score on the bullying victimization scale and the quality of life scale among bullying victims. Al-Saadi and Khazaeli (2017) indicated a negative correlation between school bullying and psychological adaptation among students with learning difficulties. On the other hand, Farhan (2018) discovered a statistically significant positive relationship between school bullying and academic adjustment. Similarly, Shaie (2018) identified a positive and statistically significant relationship between school bullying and mental health. Additionally, Mustafawi and Korat (2019) established a positive correlation between school bullying and learning difficulties among students with learning disabilities.

The obtained results can be interpreted through the current study in terms of the social skills deficits among students with learning difficulties, their lack of self-confidence, and their sense of inferiority, which might lead them to accept bullying behavior directed at them as normal and not make any effort to address it or seek assistance from others to deal with it. Therefore, their academic adjustment is related to the behavioral, educational, and social problems they experience, such as attention deficits, hyperactivity, impulsivity, aggression, withdrawal, anger, stealing, lying, shyness, poor academic achievement, comprehension and retention difficulties, memory issues, weak communication skills, and lack of interaction with peers and teachers.

### Conclusion:

based on the theoretical framework, the presentation and discussion of the results, it can be inferred that most studies conducted on students with learning difficulties confirm that they experience behavioral, psychological, cognitive, and social problems. These issues impact their

Aziza Aïcha et al.

Coping Strategies for Bullying Behavior and Its Relationship to Academic Adaptability Among Students with Academic Learning Difficulties (Victims of Bullying)

adaptation in both educational and social settings, making them susceptible to various forms of bullying by their peers. The study also reveals their lack of social skills, strategies, and methods to deal with bullying behavior, thus facing challenges in seeking support, ignoring such behavior, defending themselves, or attributing blame to themselves for being targets of bullying. The study further highlights that their academic adjustment is average. However, the correlation between the strategies for dealing with bullying behavior and academic adjustment is very weak and statistically insignificant. Hence, it can be concluded that addressing bullying against students with learning difficulties is an important concern, and this study aimed to contribute to this field. However, more contributions are needed to enrich the topic and find solutions to this problem. The study suggests the following:

- Conduct experimental studies to design guidance and training programs that enhance coping skills with bullying behavior among students at various educational levels.
- Conduct similar studies with larger sample sizes and across different stages of special education.
- Enhance school health services in elementary education to detect various educational, psychological, and behavioral problems that students might face.
- Activate the role of school psychologists in providing psychological support for students with learning difficulties.
- Train teachers to equip them with proper techniques for handling the challenges faced by students in school..

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