

Protective Factors in Students with Specific Learning Disorders: Exploring the Role of Parental Involvement, Sense of Belonging, Academic Self-Regulation and Academic Resilience

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the multifaceted dynamics of parental involvement, sense of belonging, academic self-regulation, and academic resilience among students diagnosed with specific learning disorders (SLD). Utilizing a non-probability purposive sampling technique, 352 adolescents (178 Boys and 174 Girls) aged between 10-17 years diagnosed with SLD in India were selected. This study utilizes a between-groups design with t-test to examine gender differences. Additionally, employing correlational design with simple and multiple linear regression analysis, it explores the interplay among key variables and dimensions, while also determining if demographic factors predict academic resilience. Results reveal significant gender differences in key variables among the students between adolescent boys and girls, with predictive links between parental involvement, sense of belonging, academic self-regulation, and academic resilience. The study's findings propel advancements in educational practices and policies, prioritizing the holistic well-being of students with learning disorders. It advocates for tailored interventions, resource allocation, buddy systems, and teacher training programs to foster resilience and success among this student population with diverse learning needs.

Keywords: *Specific Learning Disorders (SLD), Parental Involvement, Sense of Belonging, Academic Self-Regulation, Academic Resilience*

Schools strive to create a narrative that reflects the unique stories of each student, encompassing their personalities, family dynamics, abilities, strengths, and challenges. It is crucial to understand the role of these personal histories in the scholastic world (Grafwallner, 2017). While learning both as an ability and lifelong process, is of paramount significance, diversity in learning emphasizes that every student brings a distinct set of strengths, interests, and needs to the classroom, extending beyond the traditional academic dichotomy. The concept encompasses a spectrum of students with special needs, their unique learning styles, and abilities providing a pathway to understanding the multifaceted nature of intelligence and the ways in which knowledge can be acquired and expressed.

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As a matter of fact, a child's development is a complex, individualized process, with each child experiencing unique developmental trajectories and outcomes (Alderman et al., 2017). While it is essential to create optimal conditions for their development, developmental deficits in early childhood, such as neurodevelopmental delays (e.g., language, motor, attention, and social behavior) (Blumsack et al., 1997), can become noticeable in the academic sphere when children face difficulties with academic tasks.

Specific learning disorders (SLD) are a prominent group of neurodevelopmental disorders that typically emerge during formal schooling and are marked by persistent and impairing challenges in acquiring fundamental academic skills (Vidyadharan & Tharayil, 2019). They refer to ongoing problems in one of the three basic skills—reading, writing, and arithmetic—which are the essential requisites for the learning processes (Scaria et al., 2022). The prevalence of SLD, according to the American Psychiatric Association, is 5–15% among school-age children across different languages and cultures (Khodeir et al., 2020). In India, it is seen to vary from 2.16% to 30.77% with a gender distribution where male children showed a higher pooled prevalence of 13.60%, while female children exhibited a lower pooled prevalence, i.e., 8.40% (Joseph & Devu, 2023). Traditionally, treatment for SLD includes services like special education, remediation, speech therapy, occupational therapy, parent-child counseling, and behavior modification (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2018). However, given the significant emotional impact of learning disorders, it is increasingly important to integrate therapeutic approaches that address emotional well-being alongside cognitive development. In schools, creating a supportive learning environment for students with SLD requires understanding the child's ecosystem, including factors like culture, socio-economic status, educational methods, family literacy, and peer influences. These factors interact to shape development, making it essential to consider neurological, genetic, cognitive, and environmental influences when planning interventions (Grigorenko et al., 2020; Khodeir et al., 2020). An important area of exploration is how children with SLD progress as they enter adolescence and the psychosocial outcomes that emerge. Being a continually developing theoretical construct informed by physiological, psychological, temporal, and cultural perspectives, Nienstein et al. (2009) categorized early adolescence as 10-13 years, middle adolescence as 14-16 years, and late adolescence as 17-21 years. This developmental phase, marked by puberty and the onset of social independence, is pivotal for shaping identity and coping mechanisms (Steinberg, 2014).

The view that adolescence is a turbulent period, originating from G. Stanley Hall's (1904) work, suggests that this stage is naturally marked by "turbulence and tension." For adolescents with disabilities, this period is further complicated by the challenges of participating in social activities alongside their peers. These difficulties can lead to negative psychosocial outcomes, such as stress, loneliness, and limited social interactions (Taheri et al., 2016; Asher & Paquette, 2003; Locke et al., 2002). Adolescents with learning disabilities may also face internalizing issues (e.g., anxiety, depression) and externalizing problems (e.g., anger, delinquency), disrupting normal social and psychological development (Sorrenti et al., 2019). The struggle for identity formation is particularly challenging, as these adolescents often experience self-doubt and frustration from academic difficulties, which can lower self-esteem and discourage further effort (Caqueo-Urizar et al., 2021). To support this process, parents often involve and seek strategies to foster autonomy and provide assistance (Maxey & Beckert, 2016).

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Parental Involvement

Parental involvement in the context of student well-being refers to the active participation and engagement of parents in their child's academic, social, and emotional development journey. It is their interaction with schools and with their children to promote academic success (Hill et al., 2004).

Research highlights the significant impact of parental involvement in the education of children with SLD, extending learning beyond school and the academic calendar, thus increasing learning time (Guo & Keles, 2024). Studies show that parent-involved interventions notably improve academic performance, especially in reading and writing, with both immediate and long-term benefits (Doğanay Bilgi, 2020; Duvall et al., 1992; Gortmaker et al., 2007; Hindin & Paratore, 2007; Persampieri et al., 2006). Key elements of successful interventions include sustained practice, timely feedback, and data-informed strategies, which ensure children retain and apply learned skills across contexts. This underscores the need for fostering early success and encouraging consistent parental participation through adequate training and support (Evans, Valleley, & Allen, 2002; Gortmaker et al., 2007).

Research highlights the various challenges faced by parents of children with SLD, including limited knowledge, difficulties in adapting, and hardships related to factors such as low socioeconomic status and restricted access to services. Additionally, barriers like inadequate communication with schools and parental stress often hinder effective involvement (Abed & Shackelford, 2023; Al-Dababneh, 2018). These challenges underscore the need to reduce parental strain and emphasize the importance of training programs that empower parents to improve their child's learning skills. On the other hand, key factors that support meaningful parental engagement include higher educational attainment, strong self-efficacy, and a supportive school environment (Yotyodying & Wild, 2016). It is also crucial to recognize the role of parents in the transition process for students with SLD, such as from elementary to middle school, as this involvement positively influences students' adjustment and academic success. As these young individuals enter adolescence, they begin to focus more on forming their identity and exploring the world outside the family. During this time, they are increasingly concerned with safety, school social life, and peer connections (Zaatari & Ibrahim, 2021), and they continue to rely on their family for support (Maxey & Beckert, 2016). Parental involvement that reflects academic socialization allows parents to maintain their engagement while also respecting adolescents' autonomy, independence, and advancing cognitive abilities. In this context, parents play a vital role in enhancing their children's sense of belonging by providing opportunities for positive schooling experiences.

Sense of Belonging

Sense of belonging is the feeling of security and support that comes from being accepted and valued as a member of a school community. The Wingspread Declaration (2004) describes belonging in school settings as students believing that adults within their school care about their learning, have an interest in them as individuals, and hold high academic expectations.

Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979) highlights that the family is the first environment to which children belong, followed by school and community, with each child being part of a larger network of groups and systems. According to Bronfenbrenner (1979), children are situated at the center of "layers" of their environment, each of which can significantly impact their development and psychosocial well-being (Allen & Bowles, 2012). According to this theory, adolescents develop a sense of belonging through both distal and

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proximal interactions. Distal interactions refer to connections across macro, exo, and meso systems, such as how educational policies affect parents' relationships with schools, which, in turn, influence practices within the school microsystem. Proximal interactions, on the other hand, include direct school activities and relationships between students, teachers, and school staff, as well as connections between parents and students at home, all of which shape adolescents' sense of belonging (Zaatari & Ibrahim, 2021). In this context, it is clear that the parental participation in school and home-based activities to support children's education is a shared responsibility between schools and parents (Gedfie & Negassa, 2018). The parent not only ensures that the child's well-being is considered at home but also at school which is like a second home where their child spends most of the time strengthening relationships.

Research reveals that students with SLD face greater challenges in forming social connections compared to their peers, often leading to bullying and peer victimization within the classroom (Baumeister et al., 2008). They are particularly vulnerable to stigmatization, which can negatively affect their psychological and academic well-being (Haft et al., 2023) and this stigma, reinforced by stereotypes, can lead to feelings of isolation and inadequacy, especially when the school environment lacks sufficient support and understanding of their needs (Daley et al., 2018). To address this, schools must strive to be effective, benevolent, and developmentally appropriate for all children fostering strong social relationships between students with disabilities and their peers. Achieving this requires preparing classmates to better understand and accommodate the needs of students with disabilities, ensuring a more inclusive and supportive learning environment.

Piaget's Theory of Cognitive Development (1985) also focused on the active involvement of peers. As peers interact with each other, they challenge the established norms, effectively creating a state of learner disequilibrium (Palincsar, 1998). According to Piaget (1985), the state of disequilibrium "forces the subject to go beyond his current state and strike out in new directions". In this context, study by Topping (1996) suggests that peer tutoring can be particularly beneficial for students with learning disabilities. When peers actively engage in supporting their classmates, it not only aids academic progress but also promotes a sense of belonging. This highlights the need for educational interventions in schools to foster empathy and inclusivity. Moreover, teachers may use many strategies to help the student achieve a sense of belonging to the class and school (National Association of Special Educators). Research suggests that some teachers may inadvertently hold implicit biases towards students with learning disabilities. Addressing these biases through professional development is crucial for creating an environment where all students feel valued and supported. In this context, Robertshaw (2024) writes "A strengths-based, inclusion-focused pedagogy whereby teachers fundamentally believe that all students, regardless of ability, can thrive when their needs are met can dramatically change learning outcomes for the better". In an environment where students not only attend classes but feel a profound connection, a sense of belonging, they naturally tend to learn to regulate themselves. They are more likely to adopt positive academic behaviours, such as engaging in class discussions, completing homework, and seeking help when needed (Eccles & Roeser, 2011). These kind of behaviours in students influence actions involving setting goals, monitoring progress and adapting strategies based on feedback demonstrating self-regulated learning processes.

Academic Self-Regulation

Academic self-regulation, defined as a self-regulated learning process, is characterized by metacognition, goal-setting, and perseverance (Zimmerman, 2002). It focuses on the

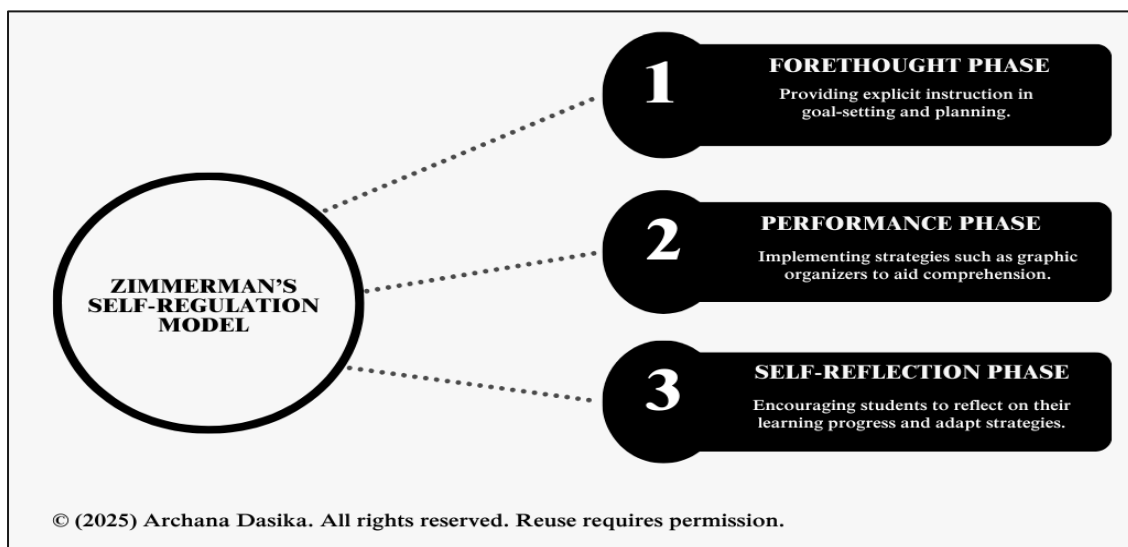
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motivational and behavioural processes that enable individuals to activate and sustain cognitions, behaviours, and emotions in a systematic manner to achieve their own learning goals (Schunk et al., 1994).

Zimmerman conceptualized self-regulation as comprising three phases: forethought, performance, and self-reflection. Research indicates that students with learning disabilities often exhibit difficulties across all three phases. A study by Schunk and DiBenedetto (2021) discusses the roles of self-regulation and self-efficacy in students with learning disabilities, highlighting that these students often do not adequately self-regulate their academic performances and hold a low sense of self-efficacy for learning and performing well in educational contexts. In the forethought phase, they may spend insufficient time organizing their goals and strategies, leading to low self-efficacy. During the performance phase, they often struggle to maintain focus on the task or monitor their progress toward their goals. In the self-reflection phase, they may underestimate their performance and form discouraging assumptions. For instance, if they struggle to complete a task, they might attribute their difficulty to a lack of ability rather than insufficient effort. This misattribution can result in feelings of hopelessness and dejection (Schunk & Benedetto, 2021).

Due to resulting lower levels of intrinsic motivation which often impede the development of self-regulation skills in academic settings, it is necessary that support from the parents as well as teachers and peers would be positive. This calls for another reason as to why intervention must be tailored to the student's specific situation and needs (Scruggs & Mastropieri, 2007). Discussing the importance of incorporating action to develop self-regulation skills with tailored strategies for these students, studies have found that explicit instruction in self-regulation strategies positively influenced the writing performance of students (Graham & Harris, 2000). Furthermore, the LD-Specific Model proposed by Swanson and Deshler (2003) addresses self-regulation challenges specific to students with learning disabilities, emphasizing the importance of metacognitive processes, including planning, monitoring, and evaluating, tailored to the needs of students with SLD, teaching them to monitor and regulate their own learning.

Figure 1 Targeted Interventions at each stage for students with Specific Learning Disorders (SLD) using the Zimmerman's model.



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Applying Zimmerman's (2002) model specifically for students with SLD, targeted interventions at each stage can involve:

- **Forethought Phase:** Providing explicit instruction in goal-setting and planning is essential for students with SLD. Explicit instruction can be separated into three stages: modeling, guided or directed practice, and independent practice. The modeling process helps students with SLD to comprehend the learning objectives, while guided practice allows them to practice the skill and solidify their understanding. Independent practice gives students the opportunity to develop and master the desired skill (LDA, 2018). To support their executive functioning in this process, interventions such as utilizing tools like checklists, reminders, and visual aids can enhance organization and planning skills.
- **Performance Phase:** Graphic organizers, such as mind maps and flow charts, help students with SLD to organize and understand information, improving reading comprehension. A meta-analysis shows that middle and high school students with disabilities who used graphic organizers to learn science content displayed increased vocabulary knowledge and comprehension (Dexter et al., 2011).
- **Self-Reflection Phase:** Encouraging students with SLD to reflect on their learning progress allows them to adapt strategies and improve performance. In an article titled “The Benefits of Reflection for Students with Disabilities”, Ruiz (2022) writes, “By reflecting on their past work, students with disabilities can see how far they’ve come and their potential for future success.”

Above all, it is crucial to understand that an individual's belief in their ability to execute actions plays a significant role in their success. Social Cognitive Theory, championed by Albert Bandura, asserts that self-efficacy is intricately linked with self-regulation (Bandura, 1986). While it is evident that a student's sense of belonging at school fosters their self-efficacy, it is also noteworthy that this sense of belonging acts as a catalyst, nurturing the belief in abilities required for effective self-regulation in academic endeavors (Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2022). A positive and inclusive school environment, where students feel a sense of belonging, provides opportunities for vicarious learning. This environment not only helps students feel included but also enables them to observe and regulate their learning by learning from others, especially as they grow older.

Within this context, one of the key investigations that has always driven researchers is understanding why certain students are more adept at effectively managing their learning challenges compared to others. An associated inquiry is whether other students can also develop these skills, given the right circumstances. To address these inquiries, scholars have explored the intricacies of children with learning disorders, understanding their unique experiences, cognitive preferences, study techniques, and their responses to various challenges. Consequently, resilience as a concept is increasingly receiving attention in the domain of special needs. For students with SLD, who may face continuous setbacks in their academic performance, it is vital to understand how resilience—as both a motivational capacity and an outcome—drives their perseverance. Zimmerman's Social Cognitive Model of Self-Regulation highlights the role metacognition, motivation, and behavioral strategies. Students who effectively set goals, monitor their progress, and adjust learning strategies based on feedback are better equipped to navigate academic setbacks (Mason & Reid, 2018). This self-regulatory process aligns with the concept of academic resilience, as it enables students to continue progressing and adapt to challenging academic situations.

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Academic Resilience

Academic resilience is defined as the ability to cope effectively with setbacks, stress, or pressure in the academic setting (Martin & Marsh 2006). Research highlights that fostering intrinsic motivation among high school students with mild to moderate disabilities is essential for sustaining their academic engagement and resilience. When students feel a sense of control and ownership over their academic pursuits, they are more likely to persist in the face of challenges (Deci & Ryan 2000).

Understanding academic resilience as an outcome, it can be seen that the capacity to accomplish goals is influenced by the accuracy of one's self-knowledge and perceptions. In light of this, scholars contend that the primary concern lies not with the disability itself, but rather with the individual's ability to confront and surmount the many obstacles encountered while coping with it (Gerber & Ginsberg, 1990). Moreover, individuals who possess a heightened awareness of their challenges are more inclined to effectively adapt to life by actively seeking assistance when necessary and identifying vocational and academic prospects that leverage their personal strengths. This self-awareness contributes to better adaptation and resilience (Morrison & Cosden, 1997). Therefore, in this context it is crucial to acknowledge that students with learning disabilities require both skill remediation and reassurance of their capability to learn and do well.

Transition planning is of utmost importance for students who are about to undergo significant changes, such as transitioning from primary to middle school, from middle school to high school, high school to college, or entering a workforce. Longitudinal studies consistently demonstrate academic resilience positive impact, showcasing its role as a strength. It was found that resilient individuals, including those with learning disabilities, demonstrated positive adaptation over time. Moreover, it was highlighted that there is potential for academic resilience to be a protective factor (Masten & Coatsworth, 1998; Rutter, 1979). For this reason, it is essential that they set realistic goals, have social support and maintain intrinsic motivation which can help to contribute to sustained academic success (Test et al., 2009). Signifying the role of supportive relationships in fostering academic resilience for these students, it is vital to note that positive connections with teachers, peers, and family members contribute to a resilient mindset (Pietsch, 2023; Piers, 2015; Werner 1995; Roeser et al., 1996). More specifically in classrooms, student-teacher relationships characterized by greater warmth and reduced conflict can enhance resilience in students with learning disabilities and symptoms of attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) (Iznardo & Ryan, 2023).

Thus, it can be understood that the call for intervention programs to include aspects like self-concept, self-regulated learning strategies and resilience as key aspects is much louder today. While early identification methods, individualized instruction and support play a tremendous role in improving outcomes of students with SLD (Al Otaiba & Fuchs, 2002), they are not enough. Research has indicated that lower levels of achievement motivation in students with learning disabilities imply that depending solely on an Individualized Educational Plan will not fix their challenge. The relationships between learning progress and numerous other factors like intrinsic and environmental offer an increasingly complex explanation for their low academic performance. Hence, the need for researchers and practitioners to identify students for interventions based on their documented need, rather than assuming a need based on the students' identification as students with SLD is rising. It remains for future researchers, working with appropriately selected groups of students with SLD, to identify the components

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or qualities of interventions that may have the greatest positive impact on students who have the greatest need (Elbaum et al., 2003).

As part of schools, the positive impact of resilience programs reinforces the idea that academic resilience can be cultivated as an outcome through intentional interventions (Durlak et al., 2011). This perspective emphasizes that resilience is not merely about overcoming difficulties but also about harnessing strengths and resources to thrive in the face of challenges. Authors like Bernard (2004) advocate for a strength-based approach to resilience, which focuses on empowering individuals to leverage their inherent abilities and external supports.

Building on this, it can be understood that interactions between students and their parents, teachers, and peers at the microsystem level are crucial to studying resilience as a pathway. By exploring the multifaceted relationship between parental involvement, sense of belonging, academic self-regulation and academic resilience in students with SLD, this study aims to address the research gap in understanding the influence of both intrinsic and environmental factors (Mawila, 2023; Panicker et al., 2016) from the students' perspectives and provide insights into fostering resilience in this student population. The present study's objectives are outlined below:

Research Objectives

1. To observe if there are any gender differences in parental involvement, sense of belonging factors, academic self-regulation styles and academic resilience among the students between adolescent boys and girls with SLD.
2. To observe if parental involvement along with its dimensions will predict the sense of belonging factors, in students with SLD.
3. To observe if parental involvement along with its dimensions, sense of belonging factors, will predict academic self-regulation styles in students with SLD.
4. To observe if parental involvement, sense of belonging factors, and academic self-regulation styles will predict academic resilience in students with SLD.
5. To observe if Blended Teaching Methodologies (Use of Sensorimotor, Kinesthetic modes along with traditional methods), a demographic variable will be predicting Academic Resilience in students with SLD.
6. To observe if Having Favorite Subject, a demographic variable will be predicting Academic Resilience in students with SLD.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The present study employs a quantitative, between-groups design to explore gender differences in parental involvement and its dimensions, sense of belonging factors, academic self-regulation styles, and academic resilience within the sample. Furthermore, using a correlational design, the study explores whether the key variables impact each other. Moreover, considering certain demographic variables, specifically, it examines whether teaching methodologies—such as blended methods (sensory and kinesthetic approaches alongside traditional methods)—predict academic resilience, and whether having a favorite subject influences academic resilience in the current sample.

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Sample

In the present study, non-probability purposive sampling method was used for recruitment of the sample from various public and private schools with inclusive classrooms, special schools serving students with special needs and organizations providing intervention support to students. All the selected participants belonging to adolescence age group between 10-17 years (Mean age = 13.5 years), with diagnosis of Specific Learning Disorders are residing in India. Out of the total sample (n=352), 178 were boys and 174 of them were girls.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Students diagnosed with Specific Learning Disorders, within the age group of 10 to 17 years, studying in schools, and residing with their parents in India.

Exclusion Criteria

1. Students who are diagnosed with Autism and Intellectual Disability in addition to Specific Learning Disorders as comorbid conditions.
2. Students diagnosed with other psychological disorders, such as mood disorders like depression or anxiety disorders, as well as any other physical health conditions.

To ensure accurate responses meeting the study's purpose, students with comorbid conditions like autism spectrum disorders (ASD) and intellectual disability (ID) were excluded. Even high-functioning students with ASD in mainstream classrooms struggle to engage in questioning and feedback dialogue commonly used by teachers (Tay et al., 2019). Evidence suggests that students with learning disorders and comorbid ASD or ID require targeted instruction for answering various types of text-based questions (Tárraga-Mínguez et al., 2020; Sierra, 2012).

Instruments

1. **Student-Rated Parental School Involvement Questionnaire (SR-PSIQ):** The SR-PSIQ developed by Goulet et al. (2023), is a 20-item measure that assesses four dimensions: Parental Expectations, Parent-Child Communication, Homework Support, and School-Based Involvement using a four-point response scale. The items in the Parental Expectations Dimension are scaled from 1=Totally False to 4= Totally True. The scale for Parent-Child Communication Dimension, Homework Support Dimension, and School-Based Involvement Dimension, ranges from 1=Never to 4=Often. The total score is a sum of all items, and higher scores indicate higher involvement. The measure has good discriminant validity and invariance across time and sociodemographic characteristics, and adequate predictive validity as most scales are related to later school engagement. Reliability coefficients for the dimensions include School-based involvement ($\omega = .661$), Parental Expectation ($\omega = .878$), Parent-Child Communication ($\omega = .810$), and Homework Support ($\omega = .749$) (Goulet et al., 2023).
2. **Sense of Belonging Scale- Revised:** The revised version of Hoffman et al.'s scale, developed in 2003, comprises 26 items with four subscales: Perceived Peer Support, Perceived Classroom Comfort, Perceived Isolation, and Perceived Faculty Support. The scale is scored by adding all scores for each factor, with higher scores indicating higher levels of Sense of Belonging. The internal consistency of the subscales is as follows: Perceived Peer Support ($\alpha = .89$), Perceived Classroom Comfort ($\alpha = .92$), Perceived Isolation ($\alpha = .85$), and Perceived Faculty Support ($\alpha = .89$) (Morrow et al., 2002).

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- 3. Academic Self-regulation Questionnaire- Learning Disabilities Version (SRQ-A-LD):** This 17-item adaptation of a scale developed by Ryan and Connell (1989) assesses students' style of self-regulation in the academic domain. The scale includes four subscales: External Regulation (activities to avoid external consequences or to obey rules), Introjected Regulation (activities done to avoid guilt or anxiety or because the child thinks adults would approve), Identified Regulation (behavior done to achieve a self-valued goal), and Intrinsic Motivation (behavior done for inherent enjoyment). A study of students with LD found that the standard format was too difficult, so every item was formulated as a separate question. The present study employed the LD version of the questionnaire to meet the objectives. Scoring involves calculating the four subscales for each by averaging the items that make up that subscale. The scoring of items on each subscale is as follows: Always is scored 4, Most of the Time is scored 3, Sometimes is scored 2, and Never is scored 1. A higher score indicates a higher level of endorsement of that regulatory style. Alpha coefficients reported by Ryan and Connell (1989), for the four subscales ranged from .66 to .82, indicating adequate reliability (Deci et al., 1992).
- 4. Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-6):** Academic Resilience Scale developed by Martin and Marsh (2006) is a brief 6-item instrument that measures students' overall academic resilience level. It is a unidimensional measure and the responses are indicated using a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). On the scale of 1 to 7, for all six items scores should be added. No items are reverse scored. The possible range of scores is from 6 (lowest possible) to 42 (highest possible). A higher score reflects a higher degree of overall academic resilience. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.89 (Cui et al., 2022).

Procedure

After selecting appropriate standardized measures for the variables, along with a detailed demographic information form, the final questionnaire was developed by integrating all the instruments. The researcher then reviewed the entire questionnaire to ensure clarity in both instructions and content. Participants were recruited by reaching out to various special schools for students with special needs, public and private schools with inclusive classrooms, as well as organizations and institutes serving students with special needs. Students with specific learning disorders were identified with the assistance of the relevant authorities. This study adhered to ethical guidelines ensuring the rights, dignity, and well-being of all participants. Informed consent was strictly obtained from parents or legal guardians, and assent was sought from children in an age-appropriate manner, post a brief explanation of the purpose of this study, significance of their participation, risks and confidentiality. An additional informed consent form was also prepared and given to the schools/organizations specifically that briefed them about the study and their role in assisting the researcher to obtain specific information related to student's diagnosis and other important details regarding parents' education, employment status and health status in demographics that were needed for the study. Confidentiality and anonymity of information were strictly maintained, with all personal data securely stored and used solely for research purposes. The study followed principles of non-discrimination and inclusion, ensuring accessibility for children with learning disabilities. Additionally, steps were taken to safeguard participants' psychological and emotional well-being, with the right to withdraw from the study as participation is voluntary being clearly communicated.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained data for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 20.0. Independent Sample T-test was used to examine gender differences within the sample, meeting the first objective of the study. The findings of the study indicate that parental expectations, perceived isolation, and perceived faculty support were higher for girls, whereas school-based parental involvement, perceived peer support, external regulation, introjected regulation, and academic resilience were higher for boys.

➤ Parental Expectations and School-Based Involvement

- Girls with SLDs reported perceiving higher parental expectations. This finding is supported by the ESRI (2017) study, which found that among children with disabilities, parents of girls were more likely to expect their child to attain higher educational qualifications than parents of boys. Although limited research explains why parental expectations by the gender of children with learning disabilities differ, existing research suggests that societal gender norms shape parental expectations, influencing how boys and girls in general are perceived and guided in their development. Endendijk et al. (2016) found that while parental control behaviors show minimal differences between genders, underlying gender-role stereotypes subtly shape parenting approaches. Moreover, Ruble, Martin, and Berenbaum (2006) highlight how societal norms influence parental expectations, affecting children's self-perception and shaping their academic and behavioral development. Based on the demographic data collected in this study, it is observed that academic assistance in form of tuition support is more prevalent for girls than boys. Furthermore, a greater number of girls than boys are enrolled in special schools. These observations can suggest that specific parental efforts for girls may be contributing to larger expectations for them.
- Moving on, school-based parental involvement is perceived to be higher for boys in the present study. This finding can be explained due to potential differences in the behavior. Some children with learning disabilities exhibit both externalizing and internalizing behavioral problems, with boys more likely to show hyperactivity and conduct problems, while girls exhibit anxiety and depression (Cristofani et al., 2023). In this context, some studies note that teachers may also report externalizing behaviors more frequently in boys (Larsson & Drugli, 2011), leading parents of boys to engage more actively in school-based advocacy and involvement.

➤ Perceived Peer and Faculty Support

- The current study found that girls perceive higher levels of faculty support, possibly reflecting teachers' responsiveness to their educational needs. Previous research has suggested that gender may influence students' experience of teacher support (Li and Lerner, 2011; Lam et al., 2012; Liu et al., 2016; Wentzel et al., 2017). A study on gender differences in teacher-student interactions during an adapted robotics program for children with disabilities found that girls are more active and engaged in their interactions with teachers compared to boys. They spoke more without being prompted, asked more questions, and provided high-level responses that indicated understanding. These interaction styles suggest that girls' proactive engagement could lead to more frequent and supportive interactions with teachers, thereby perceiving higher levels of support (Kolne, K., & Lindsay, S. 2019). That being said, further research is necessary to gain a deeper understanding of these nuances, particularly regarding students with SLD in India and their perceptions of teacher support in relation to gender.

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- The present study found that boys with SLD report higher perceived peer support than girls. From a theoretical perspective, social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) explains that children develop behaviors through observation, reinforcement, and societal modeling. Bussey and Bandura (1999) further argue that gender differentiation arises through these processes, with boys often encouraged to be more independent and action-oriented, while girls are socialized toward emotional expressiveness and interpersonal sensitivity. In this context, studies suggest that boys generally form larger, activity-based peer groups, which provide more frequent opportunities for perceived social support (Wentzel, 2005). In contrast, girls tend to prioritize emotionally supportive relationships (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). These differences in peer relationship styles may contribute to variations in how boys and girls in general experience and perceive peer support.
- **Perceived Isolation**
- In the present study, girls with SLD reported perceiving higher levels of isolation than boys. Prior research suggests that poor academic performance can negatively impact girls' social relationships, as academic competence plays a significant role in peer acceptance among girls (Giordano, 2003). Additionally, girls with learning disabilities may experience a greater conflict between gender role expectations and learning difficulties, leading to reduced social belonging and increased risk of depressive symptoms in adulthood (Rim et al., 2024).
 - Comparing the two findings on gender differences in perceived peer support and perceived faculty support among students with SLDs it becomes apparent that there are distinct variations in perception of support between boys and girls in this sample. Specifically, boys with SLD tend to perceive more support from their peers than from the faculty, whereas girls with SLD perceive greater support from the faculty than from their peers within classroom settings. This observation underscores the importance of considering gender dynamics in understanding how students with SLD perceive and experience support within educational environments in India. Further research could delve deeper into the factors contributing to these gender differences in perceived support, such as social dynamics, teacher-student interactions, and peer relationships. Understanding these nuances can inform efforts to better support students with SLD and promote a more inclusive and supportive educational environment for all students.
- **Academic Self-Regulation Styles: External regulation and Introjected regulation**
- The present study found that boys with SLD reported higher levels of external regulation and introjected regulation compared to girls. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) explains that motivation exists on a continuum, with external regulation referring to behavior driven by external rewards and punishments, while introjected regulation involves internal pressures such as guilt or obligation. Building upon the foundational work of Ryan and Connell (1989) on self-regulation, subsequent research has explored how gendered socialization patterns contribute to differences in motivation and self-regulation among students. Notably, studies have found that girls more than boys often exhibit higher levels of self-discipline (Duckworth & Seligman, 2006). It is essential to note that in the context of students with SLD, motivation levels can vary depending on task difficulty, individual interests, and the type of support provided. Deci and Ryan (1985) emphasize that fostering autonomous motivation—where students engage in learning out of personal interest and value rather than external control—leads to better academic outcomes and psychological well-being. Understanding these motivational differences is essential for designing

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personalized educational strategies that cater to the diverse needs of students with SLD, ensuring that both boys and girls receive the necessary support to develop self-regulated learning skills.

➤ **Academic Resilience**

- Furthermore, in the present study boys with SLD were found to perceive higher levels of academic resilience compared to girls. This finding may be understood through explanations from studies such as Nyambura Mwangi & Ireri (2017), which highlight how in general societal expectations shape resilience and coping strategies. Boys may often receive encouragement to be resilient and persevere in the face of challenges, traits that are valued in masculine gender roles. Conversely, girls may face societal expectations that emphasize emotional expression and seeking help, which could impact their perceived resilience. As a result, they may employ different coping strategies.
- To explain this finding in the context of students with learning disorders, an interesting observation made from the data collected in this study is important to be noted, which is that boys reported studying for more hours than girls, indicating higher task persistence. Research by Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1990) found that boys tend to exhibit higher levels of task persistence and effort, which are key components of academic resilience.
- These explanations possibly account for the findings, although individual differences must always be considered. Further exploration into understanding this topic, with a focus on coping strategies, is crucial. These findings can help pave the way for understanding students' academic outcomes through a more gender-specific lens.

➤ **Predictive links between the variables**

Multiple Regression analysis was performed to study the impact of parental involvement along with its dimensions on sense of belonging factors in the current sample, meeting the second objective of the study.

Predictors of sense of belonging factors

- The study's findings indicate that for students with SLD, perceived peer support is positively influenced by both parent-child communication and school-based parental involvement. This suggests that effective communication between parents and children, along with active parental participation in school activities, enhances students' perceptions of peer support. Additionally, the study reveals that school-based parental involvement predicts perceived classroom comfort. This implies that when parents engage in school-related activities, their children feel more at ease in the classroom environment. Moreover, parent-child communication is found to negatively predict perceived isolation and positively predict perceived faculty support. This could indicate that open communication between parents and children reduces feelings of isolation and increases students' perceptions of support from faculty members.
- These findings align with existing research emphasizing the importance of parental involvement and communication in supporting students with learning difficulties. For instance, a study highlighted that parental engagement plays a crucial role in enhancing both academic achievement and social well-being of children with special educational needs (Guo & Serap Keles 2024). Furthermore, research on family interactions specifically among children with learning and intellectual disabilities suggests that families that engage in open problem-solving discussions help children develop better social behaviors, which, in turn, enhance their ability to form and maintain peer relationships. For these children, greater involvement, more facilitative behaviors, and less negativity with their families

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were associated with greater acceptance from their peers, supporting family-peer linkages for children at risk for peer rejection (Floyd & Olsen 2017).

- In summary, these findings highlight the critical role of a triadic support system involving parents, schools, and peers in fostering a positive social environment for students with Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD). Strong parent-child communication and school-based parental involvement not only enhance perception of peer and faculty support, classroom comfort but also serve as protective factors against social isolation and emotional distress. When parents actively engage in their child's education and schools create opportunities for meaningful parental involvement, students are more likely to develop social confidence, experience greater peer support, and strengthen their sense of belonging in school.

Predictors of academic self-regulation styles

Using multiple regression analysis, the impact of parental involvement along with its dimensions, sense of belonging factors on the academic self-regulation styles was studied in the current sample, meeting the third objective of the study.

- The study's findings reveal several predictive relationships between parental involvement, classroom dynamics, and students' self-regulation within the sample. It was found that parental expectations, perceived classroom comfort, and perceived faculty support are impacting external regulation. When it comes to parental expectations impact on external regulation as a self-regulation style in students, it is important to understand how the motivation is being driven by external pressures to meet the parental standards. Research indicates that perceived parental academic expectations are positively associated with students' self-regulated learning abilities, mediated by mastery goal orientation (Xu, Ma & Duan, 2022).
- Moreover, a supportive classroom environment and faculty encouragement are crucial for fostering students' self-regulation. Studies have shown that teacher autonomy support is positively related to students' executive function and regulation (Sosic-Vasic, et al. 2015).
- Moving on, the present study found that perceived peer support negatively predicts introjected regulation. Strong peer support networks can reduce introjected regulation, where students are motivated by internal pressures such as guilt or anxiety. Supportive peer relationships enhance students' sense of belonging and self-worth, leading to more autonomous forms of motivation. Research suggests that students with robust peer support are more likely to exhibit self-determined motivation and less likely to rely on introjected regulation (Guay, F. 2022).
- Furthermore, parent-child communication positively predicts identified academic self-regulation and intrinsic motivation. When parents engage in open and supportive communication, students are more likely to internalize the value of academic tasks, fostering a sense of ownership and engagement in learning (Liu et al., 2024). Parental involvement also enhances children's sense of security and autonomous motivation, which, in turn, positively influences their well-being and self-regulated learning.
- Additionally, intrinsic motivation is strengthened through parental autonomy support, which satisfies students' fundamental psychological needs for autonomy and relatedness. Research has shown that when parents encourage independence and acknowledge their child's perspective, students demonstrate higher intrinsic motivation and greater academic engagement (Feng et al., 2019).
- In summary, these findings highlight the critical role of parental involvement, classroom environment, and positive peer and faculty interactions in shaping self-regulation and

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motivation in students with SLD. A strong support system among parents, educators, and peers fosters adaptive self-regulation and intrinsic motivation, ultimately enhancing both academic experience and emotional well-being.

Predictors of academic resilience

Finally, the impact of parent involvement and its dimensions, sense of belonging factors and academic self-regulation styles on academic resilience was studied within the current sample meeting the fourth objective of the study.

- When it comes to understanding resilience, it is important to note that although both boys and girls with learning disabilities can encounter social difficulties, gender can play a role in the response of children to failure (Settle & Milich, 1999) and the protective factors that they develop in this process. The current study observes that academic resilience is predicted by various factors among both boys and girls with SLD.
- The findings suggest that parent-child communication is a key factor in promoting academic resilience among the students with SLD. This finding can be explained by several studies based on self-determination theory (SDT), which emphasizes the importance of parental support in developing children's autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Furthermore, positive parent-child communication that includes validation and support helps students develop a sense of autonomy and emotional security, both of which are essential for developing resilience in the face of academic challenges (Zhang, Y. 2020). For these students, parental support and encouragement can mitigate the negative impact of SLD on their social-emotional functioning and academic outcomes (Panicker and Chelliah, 2016), if they communicate in a way that meets the child's basic psychological needs, thereby strengthening the parent-child bond and providing the emotional resources required for the child to cope with setbacks. This finding emphasizes the importance of assisting parents in developing effective communication strategies to help their children with SLD navigate academic challenges and thrive.
- Next, the finding that perceived classroom comfort positively predicts academic resilience for students with SLD can be understood through various educational and psychological insights. A supportive and comfortable classroom environment enhances the resilience of students with by providing emotional security and fostering a sense of competence. The meaningful relationships with peers can help in resilience enabling and assist them in combating difficulties with self-confidence (Mawila D. 2023). Moreover, educational strategies like scaffolding, where teachers use in classes guide students just beyond their current capabilities, can help them develop the skills and confidence needed to tackle academic challenges. Additionally, encouraging personal responsibility and developing effective coping strategies further bolster resilience, allowing students to handle setbacks constructively (Graybill. J, 2020). Therefore, the presence of strong social support systems, including supportive relationships with teachers, peers play a critical role in this process, providing the emotional and academic backing students need to navigate their educational journeys successfully (Churchill Center & School). These elements collectively can help to create a nurturing environment that promotes the resilience required for students with learning disabilities to overcome their challenges.
- Moving on, the next finding is that perceived faculty support positively predicts academic resilience in students with SLD. This finding emphasizes the importance of faculty support in creating an inclusive learning environment. "Committed" faculty, who are knowledgeable about LD and put in the effort to support these students, contribute most effectively to their resilience (McCarron, 2020).

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- From the present study, interestingly it was found that external regulation style and homework support from parents negatively predicts academic resilience in boys with SLD. According to Ryan and Deci (2000), Self-Determination Theory (SDT) emphasizes the importance of autonomy in fostering intrinsic motivation and resilience. External regulation, where students are guided by external motivators or pressures, reduces opportunities for autonomy, thus undermining their capacity for independent problem-solving and persistence in academic tasks. Moreover, while parental involvement in academic activities is generally beneficial, over-involvement or directive support can create dependency in children, thereby limiting their ability to develop academic resilience (Pomerantz and Eaton 2001). In this context, boys with SLDs who rely heavily on external regulation and receive excessive homework support may struggle to develop the autonomy necessary for independent problem-solving skills and overcoming academic challenges. These dynamics can explain why greater external regulation and high levels of homework support might negatively affect academic resilience. Therefore, while providing some external structure and support is important, focusing on fostering intrinsic motivation, encouraging self-directed learning, and celebrating effort over outcomes can empower them to build greater academic resilience.
- Conversely, among girls, the findings from the current study suggest that perceived isolation can negatively impact academic resilience. According to Vygotsky's sociocultural learning model, children's development of mental processes is shaped by their interactions within a supportive social environment (Kozulin A. et al., 2003). When this support is lacking, their ability to develop problem-solving skills and academic persistence may be compromised. Perceived isolation can significantly impact academic resilience, particularly among students with learning disabilities (LDs). Research indicates that children with neurodevelopmental disabilities, including LDs, often face exclusion and experience more loneliness than their typically developing peers, negatively impacting their mental health and academic outcomes (Kwan, et al., 2020). As observed in the present study, girls with SLD who perceive isolation in their learning environments, may face challenges, further hindering their perception to effectively navigate academic demands.
- To address these challenges, it's essential for parents and educators to create a supportive environment. This involves setting realistic expectations that acknowledge and respect the learning challenges faced by the students, which can boost their confidence and motivation. Moreover, fostering autonomy in learning by encouraging them to be active participants in their learning process, offering choices and opportunities for self-directed learning is crucial. Additionally, building social connections and facilitating opportunities to connect with supportive peers and mentors can provide essential social support and a sense of belonging, which are crucial for academic resilience. By addressing these factors comprehensively, parents and educators can empower the students to thrive academically and cultivate a strong foundation for resilience.

Demographic variables impact on academic resilience

- Using simple regression analysis, the study looked at certain demographic factors and its impact on the academic resilience in the current sample of this study.
- Employment of blended teaching methodologies by schools positively predicted academic resilience in students with SLD. Undoubtedly, traditional classroom instruction forms a crucial foundation in developing core academic skills and knowledge. Activities like lectures, discussions, and readings play a significant role in imparting fundamental understanding across various subjects. However, for students with SLD, alternative

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learning approaches that engage their senses and involve movement are often beneficial (Obaid, 2012). Sensorimotor and kinaesthetic learning activities provide students with opportunities to engage actively with material. Sensorimotor learning integrates touch, sight, hearing, and movement, such as manipulating objects for math comprehension or constructing models for scientific exploration. Kinaesthetic learning emphasizes physical movement, examples including role-playing historical events or incorporating movement breaks during lessons, etc. These approaches make learning dynamic and interactive, enhancing engagement, focus, and motivation. By encouraging active participation, they foster deeper comprehension and retention compared to passive methods, ultimately boosting students' confidence and competence. This hands-on approach not only strengthens academic resilience but also nurtures a more positive attitude toward learning.

- Another finding from the present study is related to students having a favourite subject. From the demographic data collected from the study, students reported to have a favourite subject and this demographic variable was shown to positively predict academic resilience among the students. This finding emphasises the importance of favourite subject in fostering intrinsic motivation, self-efficacy, transferable skills, and emotional well-being. Engaging in a preferred subject increases motivation and persistence, counteracting academic challenges that often diminish engagement in students with SLD (Dev, 1998). Success in a favorite subject also strengthens self-efficacy, reinforcing students' belief in their ability to overcome difficulties, which is crucial for academic resilience (Klassen, 2008). Additionally, mastering skills in one subject fosters transferable learning strategies that improve performance across academic domains (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). These implications highlight the importance for educators and parents to identify and nurture students' individual interests and passions, creating differentiated learning opportunities and providing encouragement and support to foster a lifelong love of learning.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the findings from the study emphasizes that supporting students with SLD necessitates a multifaceted approach that acknowledges the diverse needs and challenges they face. By addressing these factors comprehensively and tailoring interventions to meet individual needs, educators, mental health professionals and parents can effectively promote academic resilience in this student population. This approach not only empowers them to succeed academically but also fosters efficacy in their abilities, laying the groundwork for lifelong learning and development.

Implications and Applicative value

The present study holds immense relevance for students with SLD, offering valuable insights that can be applied in various contexts of their academic experiences. The focus on integrating psychosocial elements, which have not been extensively studied in this sample, especially in the Indian context, sets this study apart. By exploring both the challenges faced by students with SLDs and the protective factors that potentially impact their experiences, this study provides a holistic understanding of their academic journey. The significant implication of this study is its emphasis on student-teacher interactions and buddy systems, highlighting the importance of supportive relationships at schools in fostering academic resilience. It also advocates for parent and teacher training programs to enhance their knowledge of these elements. Understanding the progress of these interactions as students advance with their studies can inform educators and institutions on how to tailor support strategies effectively. Therefore, the insights gleaned from this study can inform future interventions at familial, peer, and institutional levels, guiding the development of informed support strategies. Moreover, it

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can contribute to policy-making efforts, such as the National Education Policy (NEP), advocating for a holistic approach that goes beyond academic achievement to address the role of psychosocial elements in supporting students. Furthermore, the study's relevance extends to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) development in schools, providing valuable insights for tailoring educational plans to meet students' needs.

Limitations and Future Recommendations

This study poses certain limitations like the difficulty to obtain data regarding the participants' age at which the diagnosis was done. This information could have helped to gain deeper insights into their on-going experiences, progress and any potential challenges that could play a role. A future recommendation therefore, stemming from the limitation regarding the difficulty in obtaining data on participants' age of diagnosis is to conduct longitudinal research specifically focused on tracking the academic experiences and progress of students with SLD from the time of diagnosis onward. By collecting data at multiple time points throughout their educational journey, researchers can gain a more comprehensive understanding of how factors such as progress, interventions received, and developmental changes influence academic resilience and other outcomes.

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