

**HEADTEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION AND TEACHING OF
ADAPTIVE SKILLS FOR LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES
IN SPECIAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS, MERU COUNTY**

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DECLARATION

This research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university/institution for certification. This thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged. Where text, data, graphics, pictures, or tables have been borrowed from other works, including the internet, the sources are specifically credited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations. Further, I declare that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for consideration.

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Supervisors' Declaration

We confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under our supervision as University Supervisors.

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DEDICATION

To my late father and mother, who had outstanding faith and belief in me, pushing me to be the best version of me from my childhood years. I also dedicate this work to my dear husband, who kept me company late into the night, from the proposal stages to the completion of this work. Finally, I dedicate this work to my dear children Nelly, Pam, Nelson, and Uniter, who participated in many ways, without whom this document would not be the way it is.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AAIDD	American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities
CBC	Competency based Curriculum
CBE	Competency based Education
DQAS	Directorate of Quality Assurance and Standards
DSM-5	Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 th Edition
FQA	Focus by Question Analysis
GoK	Government of Kenya
ID	Intellectual Disabilities
IDEA	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
IEP	Individualized Education Program
KESSP	Kenya Education Sector Support Programme
KISE	Kenya Institute of Special Education
KNBS	Kenya National bureau of Statistics
MoE	Ministry of Education
PISA	Program for International Student Assessment
PWD	Persons with Disability
QASO	Quality Assurance and Standards Officers
SNE	Special Needs Education
TIQET:	Totally Integrated Quality Education and training
TSC	Teachers Service Commission
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UK	United Kingdom

UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF United Nations Children's Fund
US United States

ABSTRACT

Effective teaching as well as adaptive skills development for students with intellectual disabilities (ID) is fundamental to empower their educational and socioeconomic development. Despite recognition among educators of the need to empower ID learners with adaptive skills, educational opportunities designed for the acquisition of these skills are limited in the Kenyan educational sector. The persistence of such challenges in the educational sector for ID learners has significant long-term impacts, exacerbating the significant disadvantage faced by individuals with disabilities in society. This study therefore sought to assess the ways in which instructional supervision of head teachers influence how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills in special primary schools and units in Meru County, Kenya. It took a qualitative approach, purposively sampling 20 participants, including 15 teachers and five (5) head teachers drawn from special primary schools and units in Igembe South Sub-County, in Meru County. The data collection process integrated the interview schedules for head teachers and questionnaire for teachers. The pilot study was done within Kathelwa Special Unit that is located within Central Igembe Sub-county. The qualitative data was analyzed thematically, identifying six themes from the data collected. The main themes that emerged were; the importance of teaching adaptive skills to ID learners; strategies used in teaching such skills; head teachers' professional qualification influences how ID learners are taught adaptive skills; strategies used to supervise teaching of adaptive skills; head teachers' supervisory experiences and their influence on the teaching of adaptive skills; and perception of teachers towards instructional supervision by the head teachers. The study findings show inadequate professional qualifications in SNE among the head teachers, with this impeding instructional supervision for effective adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID. Another finding was that the head teachers who lacked SNE training failed to use effective supervision strategies in their schools. It was also found that headteachers who lacked experience reported inconsistent supervision, minimal guidance and poor adaptive teaching skills. The teachers reported that headteachers who lacked training in ID displayed little interest in SNE class and concentrated more on the mainstream performance neglecting the learners with ID. Additionally, teachers across the five schools recognized the importance of having SNE/ID trained head teachers as important for instructional supervision to ensure effectiveness of how ID learners are taught adaptive skills. The study concludes that the instructional supervision by head teachers is not effective, negatively influencing the teaching of such skills. Therefore, it recommended that the Ministry of Education should implement policy guidelines on the professional qualification of head teachers by ensuring in-service training and support programs for school heads to ensure effective instructional supervision in specific areas exemplified by adaptive skills for learners with ID.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Chapter one introduces the study while providing key elements such as statement of the study problem and introducing the theoretical framework that was used to guide the research. It also outlines the significance of the study, the research purpose, and specific objectives, while also highlighting the questions. This is then followed by a discussion of the study's limitation and delimitation in addition to its underlying assumptions.

1.2 Introduction and Background to the Study

The effectiveness with which learners with ID are taught adaptive skills is essential for promoting their independence, inclusion, and quality of life (Carbajal et al., 2024; Yi & Ellis, 2023). In special needs education (SNE), adaptive skills such as personal hygiene, communication, self-management, social interaction, and daily living routines form the foundation for learners' functional development (Lee et al., 2023). Orio-Aparicio et al. (2025) emphasizes on the importance of these skills notes that these social, conceptual, and practical skills influence the quality of life.

Orio-Aparicio et al. (2025) note that adaptive functioning skills determine actual performance in daily activities. While there exists evidence on the importance of adaptive skills for ID learners, challenges accrue over the successful implementation of adaptive skills training in schools. The teaching of these skills in schools largely depends on the

quality of instructional supervision provided by head teachers. They are tasked with the responsibility of guiding, monitoring, and supporting teachers towards ensuring sound instructional practices and tailored to the unique requirements of learners with ID. This therefore creates a need to examine how the head teachers perform their instructional supervision roles over adaptive skills teaching for ID learners within special primary schools.

Every person living with any form of disability has guaranteed right to participation in every relevant development programs under the United Nations' Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. In 2009, the need to include disability issues in all Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) programs was passed through the UN General Assembly's resolution. Persons with disabilities struggle for the opportunity to receive an education and secure employment, with these struggles attributed to stigma, discrimination, and negative attitudes from typical peers, instructors, employers, and the society at large (Barbareschi et al., 2021; Bonaccio et al., 2019; Boutros & Fakh, 2023).

Focusing on employment and education access challenges for individuals with disabilities in Kenya, Barbareschi et al. (2021) note that discrimination in Kenya prevents persons with disability from accessing equality in rights and opportunities, including in education, employment, civic rights, healthcare, and socialization. For instance, evidence shows that globally, this population is less likely to be employed than those without a disability, with those who secure employment being more likely than their counterparts to report underemployment, poor pay, and poor working conditions (Bonaccio et al., 2019; Qiu et

al., 2023). Such exclusion in multiple domains of life due to stigma and prejudice about disability often leads to poverty (Bonaccio et al., 2019; Qiu et al., 2023; Shaw et al., 2022), specifically for individuals with ID.

The definition of ID is viewed in two dimensions. The definitions provided by the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders 5th (DSM-V) and the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD). The former outlines ID as significant cognitive deficits within a less than 70 IQ, two standards below the mean of 100 in the population, and also by significant deficits in functional adaptive skills (American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities, 2010; American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Therefore, AAIDD and DSM-V classify the severity of ID based on level of support that one needs.

According to the DSM-5, a diagnosis of ID is made if there are inadequacies in one's intellectual functioning which include in experiential learning, academic learning, judgment, abstract thinking, planning, problem solving and reasoning as confirmed via standardized individual IQ tests and clinical evaluations; adaptive functioning deficits impairing the ability to conform to developmental and social-cultural standards; and the onset of ID being during childhood years (American Psychiatric Association, 2022). Based on this criteria, it is evident that DSM-5 omits some diagnostic criterion for IQ scores, only indicating at least 2 standard deviations below the general population. Similarly, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) describes ID as a state of intellectual functioning that is significantly sub-average to the general population,

existing alongside limitations in adaptive behaviors that witnessed over the developmental stages, with adverse effects on educational performance of a child.

The categories of ID include: mild or educable; moderate or trainable; severe; and profound (Burt et al., 2022). The mild and the moderate are the ones mostly found in special schools and units. The teaching of adaptive skills was meant for the two categories, the mild and moderate. The two categories were considered for this study since individuals in these categories are capable of doing some functional skills, like adaptive skills, later being integrated into the society with some vocational activities (Kirkendall et al., 2017). Despite the fact that most individuals may appear to acquire these abilities naturally, those with ID find them to be more challenging and must be taught. Learners with ID frequently require assistance from their teachers, caretakers, and even parents to carry out routine daily tasks that the ‘normally’ developing children acquire naturally as they develop. If given early access to adaptive skills, learners with mild and moderate ID can make significant progress in developing the ability to operate independently (Osei, 2020).

The AAIDD (2010) and the DSM-V defined adaptive skills as conceptual, social, and practical skills that people have learned and perform in their everyday lives (AAIDD, 2010; APA, 2022; Dell’Armo & Tassé, 2020). According to AAIDD, for diagnosis of ID to be confirmed, there must be significant limitations in both intellectual functioning and adaptive behaviors. Adaptive behaviors include conceptual skills such as language, reading, writing, and money concepts; social skills, which include interpersonal skills,

social responsibility, and self-esteem; and practical skills, including personal care, occupational skills, and safety (Carbajal et al., 2024; Yi & Ellis, 2023). Additionally, Jadeja and Firdaus (2020) defined adaptive skills as those daily living skills that enable individuals with ID to function independently and participate effectively in social and educational environments.

Studies from a growing body of research emphasize that adaptive behavior is not limited to task performance but also encompasses adapting appropriately to the expectations of one's age, culture, and community setting (Carbajal et al., 2024; Jadeja & Firdaus, 2020; Yi & Ellis, 2023). The skills are measurable, teachable, and influenced by environmental and cultural factors, with a notable influence in the academic setting being the educator's qualifications and instructional supervision. Jennifer (2018) notes that while adaptive skills seem to develop naturally for most individuals with ID tend to face significant difficulty in developing these skills hence require assistance by educators or their caregivers. Consensus among researchers' underscore integrating adaptive skills in the teaching of ID learners, with teachers recognizing training as an evidence-based approach that is effective in equipping learners with adaptive skills (Dell'Armo & Tassé, 2021; Jacob et al., 2022; Jennifer, 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Lousky et al., 2024; Matthews et al., 2015; Rimingado, 2022; Tassé, 2021). Notably, evidence shows that teaching learners adaptive skills enhances their conceptual, social and practical skills in the long term (Kim et al., 2022; Rimingado, 2022). Example of approaches used in teaching adaptive skills include the use of Individualized Education Program (IEPs), interactive teaching,

prompting and modelling, task division, peer teaching, cooperative direct teaching, and group-based teaching (Rimingado, 2022; Osei, 2020).

The success of teaching adaptive skills to ID learners is significantly influenced by instructional supervision by head teachers. Instructional supervision refers to a set of leadership practices aimed at improving the teaching and learning process through observation, support, feedback, and professional development for teachers. Glickman, Gordon, & Ross-Gordon (2007) define instructional supervision as “a set of activities that are carried out with the purpose of improving the teaching-learning process”. It focuses on enhancing instructional practices to the diverse needs of the learners and promoting academic achievement. Instructional supervision, therefore, should not only ensure accountability but also serve as a supportive platform where teachers feel empowered to grow, reflect, and innovate. For SNE learners, particularly ID learners, effective supervision must be sensitive, inclusive, and tailored to promote meaningful learning outcomes for every child.

Instructional supervision is increasingly recognized as a critical tool for improving educational outcomes, especially for learners with ID (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Manduku et al., 2022; Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024). Recognized globally as critical to academic success, instructional supervision encompasses the process of assisting teachers to develop and improve the overall quality of the teaching and learning process and environment, with this ultimately aimed at improving learning outcomes (Darmawan et al., 2023; Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Manduku et al., 2022; Mwakajitu &

Lekule, 2022; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024). Instructional supervision is equally critical to learning outcomes in special education systems (Darmawan et al., 2023). In such systems, supervision has evolved from traditional inspection to collaborative, developmental, and learner-centered approaches that prioritize teacher support, continuous improvement, and individualized instruction.

Supervising the teaching of adaptive skills requires more than general training as a teacher, but rather, it demands specialized knowledge, empathetic leadership, and multidisciplinary collaboration. In the United States, under the IDEA, instructional supervision emphasizes Individualized Education Programs (IEPs), teacher coaching, and data-driven decision-making to monitor progress in functional and academic domains. Similarly, in Finland and other Nordic countries, supervision emphasizes teacher autonomy and collaborative reflection, with supervisors acting more as mentors than evaluators, thus supporting adaptive skill teaching through resource allocation, curriculum flexibility, and teacher training. In developing countries like Ghana and Tanzania, instructional supervision is gaining momentum through inclusive education policies and international partnerships, though challenges remain in resources, training, and policy implementation.

Head teachers in schools for learners with ID play a pivotal role in promoting inclusive, effective, and adaptive education. Darmawan et al. (2023) note that in addition to school heads being the supervisors, instructional supervision is primarily a responsibility of school heads. Their primary responsibility is to provide instructional leadership by

guiding curriculum planning and ensuring teaching approaches meet the diverse needs of learners with ID (Darmawan et al., 2023; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024). They supervise classroom instruction, support the implementation of individualized education programs (IEPs), and offer professional feedback to improve teaching quality (Darmawan et al., 2023; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024). Head teachers also work to build supportive and inclusive school cultures where learners feel respected and valued (UNESCO, 2020). In addition, they promote staff development by organizing continuous training in special needs education to build teachers' capacity, ensuring adequacy of teaching and learning resources, and monitoring and evaluating learner progress, thereby promoting individualized support and adjustment of instructional strategies (Darmawan et al., 2023; Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Manduku et al., 2022; Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024). Effective collaboration with all stakeholders remains vital as they enhance the learning environment and support holistic learner development. Finally, they implement national education policies and act as advocates for the rights and educational inclusion of learners with ID.

Head teachers' ability to fulfill their instructional supervision role is influenced by their qualification. For this to happen, head teachers therefore require high-level training in curriculum content, both for regular learners and also for learners with ID. An effective instructional supervisor or head teacher must be an officer willing to learn, to be a coach, and to be a leader of leaders and a teacher. Head teachers in schools for learners with ID require training over and above head teachers in regular institutions. They need to have

more knowledge and skills in all areas as a leader, mentor, and classroom teachers. However, limited experience among the head teacher can negatively affect the teachers.

In Kenya, the policy for instructional supervision was introduced by the Ministry of Education in April 2009, recommending that school heads perform the role of QASOs (MoE, 2009). The main tasks for instructional supervisors were to give advice and assist and support class teachers. Additionally, this encompassed the responsibility of ensuring that teachers develop professionally, especially those teaching learners with ID. The aim was to nurture the learners into empowered citizens with ability to lead independent lives. This is attributed to evidence indicating that inadequate supervision of pedagogical practices of teachers leads to poor performance and academic outcomes in various educational fields at almost all education levels (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Manduku et al., 2022; Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024; Yosief et al., 2022). Every instructional supervisor is therefore expected to establish an enabling environment for teaching to take place by encouraging healthy interpersonal relationships within the school and also induction of new teachers. As such, the National Education Sector Plan emphasized that all the education stakeholders including educational managers, trainers, teachers, support staff and technical staff dealing disability issues at all education levels should be well equipped to provide reliable education services for learners living with every form of disability (MOE, 2014). Hence, the government increased its efforts to improve instructional supervision in the country by establishing the Kenya Educational Management Institute. The government, through the MoE, aimed to have all educational

institutions managed and supervised by trained and professionally qualified personnel (MoEST, 2017).

In Kenya, the MoE created the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) with the aim of providing teacher training and instructional material for learners with disabilities, including those with ID (KISE, 2016). KISE produces 1800 trained teachers at the diploma level every two years and 240 teachers at the certificate level every three months. Despite these efforts, effective teaching for learners with ID remains underachieved, with this attributed to deficits in effective instructional supervision. Notably, these are fairly small numbers of trained teachers for learners with ID in the country, posing a major challenge towards ensuring all learners receive high-quality educational services. Additionally, it follows that it is difficult for all special public primary schools as well as those with special units to be led by head teachers trained with adequate trainings on special education; hence, school heads often lack professional qualification to offer effective instructional supervision to teachers of adaptive skills among learners with ID.

In Kenya, instructional supervision function of the head teachers in ensuring that learners with intellectual disabilities are effectively taught the necessary adaptive skills remains an under-researched field. Notably, lack of research in this area creates a significant research gap. This therefore created the need for this study, with the researcher seeking to establish if instructional supervision role of the head teachers could enhance the

proficiency with which learners with ID are taught adaptive skills in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Education for learners with ID is crucial to fostering self-reliance. Teaching adaptive skills to learners who have significant sub-average intellectual functioning requires the instructional supervisors and the teachers to have fine knowledge, skills, and other details of individual needs for learners with ID. However, many learners exit special public primary schools and units without the necessary adaptive skills to help them live independently. Research studies and other reports by MoE have shown that many learners with ID exit school with scanty adaptive skills, hence showing a lack of seriousness of the special needs institutions for learners with ID.

Instructional supervision by head teachers is central in ensuring quality teaching and learning for all students. Through supervision, head teachers offer guidance, mentorship, and monitoring of instructional practices, which is particularly crucial in the delivery of adaptive skills to SNE learners. The majority of the head teachers have been reported in various studies to have lacked training in effective instructional supervision of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills. Such a reality raises questions on whether the current situation in Igembe, where many families are struggling to provide for their children with ID even after undergoing formal education in various special needs institutions across the country, may be associated with instructional supervision. This is

even more compelling due to the evidence from literature showing poor supervision is associated with poor teaching and learning outcomes.

Despite national and global policies advocating for inclusive education, many schools face challenges in effectively supervising the teaching of adaptive skills. Head teachers often lack specialized training in SNE, which may hinder their ability to support teachers of learners with ID in delivering appropriate instruction. In Meru County, specifically Igembe South Sub-County, anecdotal evidence and preliminary observations suggest that many head teachers overseeing special units have limited exposure to instructional practices tailored for ID learners. This gap potentially affects the quality and consistency of adaptive skill instruction in schools. This study, therefore, sought to investigate how the instructional supervision function of the head teachers influences the effectiveness with which learners with ID are taught adaptive skills in Igembe South. The findings will inform policy and practice to enhance educational outcomes for this marginalized group.

1.4 Purpose of the Study

The study purposed to assess the effectiveness of head teachers' instructional supervision and teaching of adaptive skills for learners with intellectual disabilities in special primary schools and units in Igembe Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

The study sought to;

- i. Examine the professional qualification of head teachers for performing the role of instructional supervision of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County.
- ii. Establish strategies used by the head teacher in the supervision of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-County.
- iii. Establish the effect of head teachers' supervisory experience on the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID within Igembe South Sub-County.
- iv. Examine the perception of teachers on how effectively the head teachers are performing their instructional supervision function over the adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID within Igembe South Sub-County.

1.6 Research Questions

The research addresses the following questions:

- i. How does the head teachers' professional qualification influence adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID?
- ii. What strategies do head teachers use to supervise adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID?
- iii. How effective is the head teachers' supervisory experience on adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID?
- iv. How do the teachers perceive head teachers' performance of instructional supervisory duties over the adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID?

1.7 Significance of the Study

The study findings hold significant implications for special education in Kenya, particularly for the MoE, Teachers Service Commission, and the Quality and Assurance Standards Officers. First, these findings will provide insights that will guide the development and initiation of in-service training programs for instructional supervisors, focusing on the head teachers of special primary schools. Secondly, the insights from this study form the basis upon which sound policy decisions at the MoE on instructional supervision and training of teachers may be made to improve teaching outcomes of learners with ID across the country. Additionally, the findings will provide an important resource for knowledge on the strategies principals can use to improve instructional supervision.

1.8 Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

1.8.1 Limitations of the Study

The primary limitation of in this case was limited resources. Notably, the researcher faced challenges in utilizing the available budget to facilitate data collection and analysis. The second limitation is the use of a relatively small sample as the norm in qualitative research, drawn from one study setting, and the focus on special education for ID learners. The use of a small sample from one setting leads to limited generalizability of external findings, hence limiting the applicability to other settings and populations.

1.8.2 Delimitations of the Study

Head teachers in special primary schools and units for learners with ID were the main targets of this study. Therefore, the researcher maximized the available resources, working with the head teachers to conduct the interviews at their convenient time to reduce extra transport costs incurred through missed interviews. Secondly, the study was limited by its relatively small sample drawn from one region. To delimit this, the researcher ensured selection of participants in line with a clearly defined scope while also acknowledging the potential impact of the sample used, thereby providing suggestions for future large-scale research studies. This study excluded regular public primary schools in Igembe South Sub-county while exclusively focusing on their special counterparts plus those with special units.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

The respondents were assumed to have given accurate and honest information regarding their qualifications, expertise, and skills in free and willing manner. The second assumption was that all head teachers included in the study were professionally qualified to conduct instructional supervision on how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills. In line with the assumptions made, the study variables interplayed in the direction required.

1.10 Theoretical and Conceptual Frameworks

1.10.1 Theoretical Framework

Michael Fullan's Effective School Theory provided the theoretical foundation for this study as developed in 2013. It argues that schools' effectiveness is often determined on

the basis of students' academic achievement characterized by good and accessible education. The theorist proposed seven key determinants that are to be pursued for a school to realize its effectiveness. The determinants include "leadership in how instructions are delivered, quality of collaboration between teachers and parents/guardians, environment of assured success, close and frequent follow-up of learners' progress, organized and secure schools, well-defined mission of the school and equal learning opportunities for all learners" (Lezotte, 2010; Yaxing et al., 2024). According to this approach, an effective school is one in which these interconnected components work together to make the school a learning destination for all learners (Yaxing et al., 2024).

Lezotte (2010) asserts that effective instructional leaders should act proactively in seeking assistance for creating a supportive culture and team leadership that is supportive of learning and personal development. Yaxing et al. (2024) notes that the critical element that fosters the development of an effective school is the instructional supervision of the school head. It takes collaborative efforts among all the stakeholders and the school leadership to the most important goals for the schools and then collectively prioritize such goals in order to effectively define a specific focus. Additionally, the head teacher should serve as an advocate of the school and all learners, making every teacher and staff in the school have common goals, and understanding of the core values and organizational mission (Lozette, 2010; Yaxing et al., 2023).

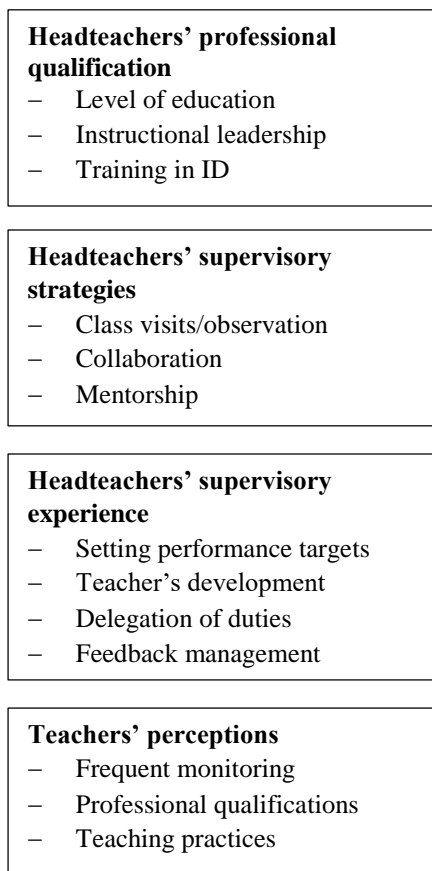
To frequently monitor learning and teaching, there is need to keep an eye on student outcomes and school procedures (Lezotte, 2010). In an effective school, Yaxing et al. (2024) notes that the head teacher should oversee frequent monitoring of student performance based on necessary goals, with this being key to the expansion of instructional programs and the improvement of individual student performance. Monitoring learning involves keeping track of a range of assessment outcomes, including test results, student-created items, performances, and other learning indicators. Teachers themselves keep track of their teaching through self-reflection, while supervisors keep track of programs and teachers for evaluation. The findings of assessments are utilized to design teaching for specific pupils as well as for overall school-wide planning and decision-making. Based on the results, classroom and institutional behaviors are changed. The relevance of this theory to the study relied on its splendid description of the importance of instructional supervision to teachers' and learners' performance.

Globally and locally, the need for strong school leadership in SNE settings is increasing being recognized. This trend is visible in Kenya where policy frameworks like the Sector Policy for Learners and Trainees with Disabilities (2018) as well as the Basic Education Act (2013) emphasize the need for inclusive education and quality instructional supervision. Despite these policy efforts, challenges still persist in how the adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID in the special school and units is being supervised. This study sought to explore how instructional supervision practices by the head teachers influence adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID.

1.10.2 Conceptual Framework

The framework illustrates how the factors that influence teachers' professional qualifications, their supervisory strategies, supervisory experience, and teachers' perceptions of effective instructional supervision and teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners as in figure 1.1 below;

Independent Variables



Dependent Variables

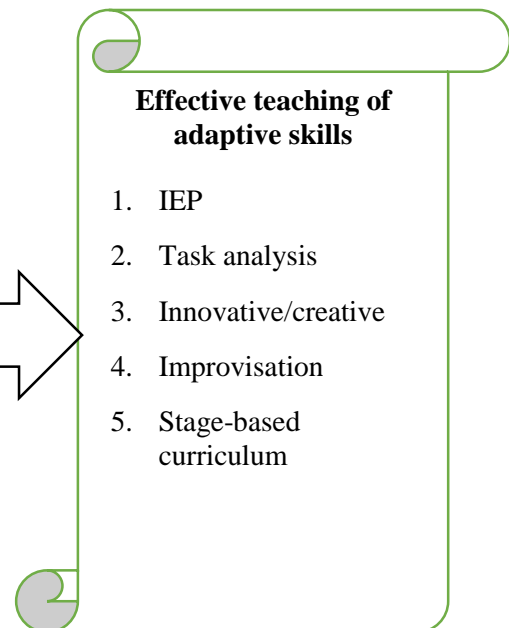


Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework above was influenced by a theory developed by Lezotte (2010) on the effective school. Lezotte asserted that effective schools must observe the following correlates: instructional leadership, high expectation for success, a well-defined

school mission, a safe and orderly environment, positive school-home collaboration, opportunity to learn and time on task, and frequent monitoring.

The interaction of independent variables in the presence of correlates would lead to effective teaching of adaptive skills, which involves IEP in teaching adaptive skills, employing the task analysis approach, utilizing a stage-based curriculum in teaching, innovative/creative facilitation in teaching learners with ID, and improvisation of teaching materials. Head teachers' supervisory experience involves activities like helping teachers set targets and goals, organizing in-service courses for teachers, delegating duties, and ensuring timely feedback to teachers. These functions enhance teachers' performance by being proactive in their teaching activities, thus improving learner performance. From the conceptual framework, it is apparent that effectiveness of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills depends on head teachers' effective instructional supervision and is enhanced by effective school characteristics.

1.11 Operational Definition of Terms

Key terms as used in the study are contextually defined as follows;

Adaptive Behavior: used to refer to different learned practical, social and conceptual skills for supporting people's daily functioning (Carbajal et al., 2024).

Adaptive Skills: used to refer to practical capabilities of individuals enabling them to cope with daily challenges of average human living (Carbajal et al., 2024). In the current study adaptive skills refer to self-care, social skills, communication, functional skills, leisure, health and safety, home and school living, self-direction, use of community facilities, and functional academics.

Head Teacher: The senior educator and leader of a school responsible for overall management, leadership, and day-to-day operations of a school, responsible for creating and enabling a learning environment, managing staff, and ensuring educational outcomes. In this study, the terms "head teacher" and "principal" will be used interchangeably.

Principal: The chief administrator of a school who provides instructional leadership and manages the school staff, students, and finances. They also ensure that the school meets curriculum standards and policy expectations. "Head teacher" is a term that is more popular in the United States and international schools, while "head teacher" is a more traditional term often used in the United Kingdom. For the purposes of this research, the terms "head teacher" and "principal" will be used interchangeably.

Instructional Supervision: head teachers' role of overseeing the teaching and learning processes within the schools to ensure continuous improvement in the delivery of quality

education by the respective teachers (Maisyaroh et al., 2021; Manduku et al., 2022; Mwakajitu & Lekule, 2022; Tarimo & Lekule, 2024).

Intellectual Disability: a state of substantial limitations in learners' intellectual functioning and adaptive behavior, evidenced in the inadequacy of their social, conceptual and practical adaptive skills (AAIDD [AAMR], 2002, p. 1).

Professional Development; refers to the ability of teachers to effectively manage the teaching and learning process.

Pedagogical/Teaching Practices: refer to those actions done by teachers to facilitate effective learning (Hatch & Clark, 2021).

Quality Education: this term is used to refer to education that meets basic learning needs and enriches the lives of learners.

Supervision: in the study context it's used to refer to a link (glue) between individual teacher needs, and the goals of the organization, ensuring that the vision of the school is accomplished.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Chapter two captures a review of existing literature, which integrates a literature review and synthesis of original and credible sources on the phenomenon of interest. The chapter begins with an exploration of existing literature on the concept of ID, focusing on the learning needs and challenges faced by this population, globally and locally in Kenya. The chapter also places emphasis on instructional supervision as a determinant of adaptive skills teaching, focusing on the influence of head teachers' qualifications, strategies used in supervision, experience, and the teachers' perception of head teachers' effectiveness on instructional supervision.

2.2 Intellectual Disability: Definition, Types, and Causes

According to the Kenyan Constitution, disability refers to any physical, psychological, mental or sensory impairments, illness or condition with long-term substantial impacts on a person's ability to undertake livelihood routines (Moyi, 2017). ID is a form of disability that has been shown to affect about 1-2% of the global population (Gachie et al., 2022; Oranga et al., 2020). ID is a condition that is characterized by a significant impairment in intellectual function in an individual, with this associated with impairments in adaptive behavior (Karam et al., 2016; Patel et al., 2020; Tomac et al., 2017). Literature shows that ID has an onset before the age of 18 years; hence, its characterization as a developmental

disorder and not as a cognitive disorder (Karam et al., 2016; Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2020; Tomac et al., 2017).

Intellectual disability is explored and defined in literature and disability research based on a medical model and a social model. The medical model of ID considers that an individual has ID based on a disease or health condition, with ID viewed as being caused by physiological impairment (Moyi, 2017; Patel et al., 2020). In this model, disability necessitates an intervention to help the individual to adapt to the society; hence, the emphasis on the use of interventions that can help one to function properly in the society (Moyi, 2017). Patel et al. (2020) further note that in the medical model of disability, there is minimal consideration of the potential involvement of environmental or societal factors; hence, the belief that if the individual's condition is cured, remediating the disability occurs. Contrary to this model, the social model of disability as integrated in disability research acknowledges the potential impact of societal and environmental factors in disability, hence considering disability as a functional impairment brought about by sociocultural expectations and the built environment (Moyi, 2017; Patel et al., 2020).

According to the AAIDD, an individual is considered to be intellectually disabled or impaired if they have an intelligence quotient of less than 70 to 75, with the severity of ID varying from mild to profound (Oranga et al., 2020). IDs are typically classified into four categories, including mild, moderate, severe, and profound ID (M'birithu et al., 2024). The severity of ID and level of functionality are illustrated in Table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1: Level of Severity of ID

IQ Score	Level	Characteristics
50-70	Mild ID	Mild ID affects about 85% of all individuals with ID (Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Individuals with mild ID face difficulty in acquisition and comprehension of complex language as well as academic skills, with additional difficulties existing in arithmetic and writing skills (Patel et al., 2020). Moyi (2017) notes that persons with mild ID can learn reading, writing and mathematics with help, and may eventually have jobs and live independently, requiring assistance with scheduling and shopping. Research indicates that most persons this form of ID function at mental age of 9–11 years as adults (Moyi, 2017; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020).
35-55	Moderate ID	Affects about 10% of persons with ID (Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Persons with moderate ID have been shown to function at

		<p>mental age of about 6-8 years as adults (Patel et al., 2018). Research shows that individuals with moderate ID are likely to be diagnosed with an ID by 3-5 years, with this population characterized by an intellectual and adaptive functioning that is three to four points standard deviations below the mean (Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Persons with this form of ID show significant limitations in multiple domains, including reading, writing, mathematics, and other skills which involve understanding of basic concepts (Patel et al., 2020). Moyi (2017) reports that while this population may be able to learn some basic and reading, they require constant help, with this including regular supervision in the home and school setting.</p>
20-40	Severe ID	<p>This form of ID affects 10% of individuals with ID (Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Individuals with severe ID may not be able to</p>

		<p>read and write independently. Patel (2018) notes that individuals in this category require regular, consistent and lifetime support in multiple areas, including, school, home and work. Further, persons with severe ID have been shown to function at mental age of 3-5 years as adults (Patel et al., 2020).</p>
Below 25-20	Profound ID	<p>Profound ID affects approximately 1% of ID population (Oranga et al., 2020; Patel et al., 2018; Patel et al., 2020; Shree & Shukla, 2016). Individuals with profound ID function at about 3 years of mental age, hence requiring high intensity, pervasive support and assistance across all areas of life (Patel et al., 2020). Moyi (2017) reports that such persons may communicate through verbal or modified means, and require educational support and accommodations, including adapted schoolwork, feeding, toileting assistance and speech therapy.</p>

The etiology of ID has been extensively studied in disability research. The cause of ID is reported as heterogeneous, with ID attributed to genetic, environmental, or multifactorial causes (Olivera et al., 2020). Evidence shows that about 70% of persons with severe ID and 50% of individuals with mild ID have a biological or organic cause of the disorder (Shree & Shukla, 2016). In a Brazilian study, Olivera et al. (2020) found that about 50% of the ID cases were sporadic, as indicated by a family history of ID in three generations, with 44.2% of the cases having an ID-related condition in one of the extended family members. In a similar study conducted in China, 27.42% of ID cases were attributed to perinatal factors, including premature birth, ischemic hypoxic encephalopathy, and asphyxia, with severe cerebral palsy causing 22.29% of the cases and psychosocial factors accounting for 17.16% (Li & Tong, 2020). The evidence from these studies shows that ID is attributed to a range of factors, which are summarized in Table 2.2 below.

Table 2.2: Etiology of ID Based on Type

Type of Cause	Example of Causes	Considerations and Characteristics
Post Natal Contribution		
Chromosomal abnormalities	Down Syndrome	Most common chromosomal abnormality implicated in ID and causes mild to moderate ID.

	Fragile X Syndrome	A leading cause of inherited cases of ID which predominantly affects males.
Metabolic disorders	Phenylketonuria	Caused by a recessive trait, the use of dietary interventions shortly after birth has been shown to prevent the development of ID.
Maternal infections	Rubella	Causes ID due to maternal exposure in the first trimester of pregnancy.
Environmental conditions	Fetal alcohol syndrome	Shown to be a leading cause of mild to moderate ID.
Postnatal Contribution		
Gestational contributions	Low birth/weight and prematurity	
Neonatal complications	Birth trauma, breach presentation, prolonged delivery and anoxia.	

Infectious and intoxicants	Meningitis	
	Lead poisoning	Infants and toddlers living in impoverished areas are at a greater risk of ingesting lead-based paint chips.
Environmental factors	Malnutrition, environmental deprivation, and child abuse, as well as child neglect.	These factors have been shown to be interacting psychosocial risk factors that contribute to the development of ID, especially mild ID.

Source: Table adapted from Shree and Shukla (2016).

2.3 Intellectual Disability Learners in Kenya

Intellectual disability affects a significant proportion of the global and national population. The World Bank and the World Health Organization report that 15% of the global population lives with a disability, with a majority of these having some form of ID (Lid et al., 2024). As of 2012, the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) estimated that about 200 million people globally had ID, accounting for 1-3% of the global population (Gachie et al., 2022; Karam et al., 2016; Nair et al., 2022; Oranga et al., 2020). Recent estimates provided by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Global Burden of Disease estimate that 28.9 million children aged 0-4 years have ID

and 207.4 million children aged 5-17 years, making the total number of children with ID 236.4 million, accounting for 10.1% of children aged 0-17 years (Olusanya et al., 2022). Despite the high burden of ID globally, low-income countries have been shown to be disproportionately affected by ID. Evidence provided by the UNDP shows that approximately 80% of individuals with ID globally are found in low-income countries (Gachie et al., 2022).

The disproportionate burden of ID in low-income countries is evidenced by the prevalence of ID in African countries. In a 2025 study, Liu et al. (2025) found that the greatest burden of ID was found in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. Additionally, the few studies conducted in Africa highlight the prevalence of ID across the population, particularly among children. Data shows that 1.5% of children aged below 15 years are affected by ID in Egypt, while 21.9% of the children in Uganda suffer from ID (Gachie et al., 2022).

Focusing on Kenya, Gachie et al. (2022) reported that ID accounts for 2.5% of the cases. Based on the 2019 National Population and Housing Census, 210,000 people live with ID in Kenya (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019). The burden of ID in the Kenyan population is lower, with this attributed to underreporting of ID cases due to failure to disclose by families as a result of the stigma associated with ID in the country (Njoroge & Murenga, 2023). The high number of ID cases in Kenya holds a significant position in discussions on education. Notably, several researchers report the significant strides made

by the government through the Kenya Institute of Special Education (KISE) in supporting the education of ID individuals across the country (Gachie et al., 2022).

2.4 Education of ID Learners in Kenya

In Kenya, the Constitution as enacted in 2010 guarantees that every child in the nation has a right to free and compulsory education, with this mandate under the Constitution entrusting the government with the responsibility of addressing possible disparities through implementation of affirmative action policies, including those related to disability (Moyi, 2017; Waititu et al., 2023). The emphasis on the right to education for everyone regardless of disability resonates with UNICEF's stipulation that every child, regardless of their disability status, is entitled to quality education (Waititu et al., 2023). Following the enactment of the constitution in 2010, the Kenyan Constitution stipulates that minority and all other marginalized groups in the country are constitutionally entitled to benefit from all opportunities for SNE (Waititu et al., 2023).

Besides the passing of the constitution, the policy framework for National Special Needs Education was launched by the government in 2010. The framework aimed at creating and facilitating equal access to relevant and quality training and education to all learners through a comprehensive framework of strategies and principles as the guiding pillars (Moyi, 2017). The core goal of this framework focused on addressing persistent barriers to children living with different forms of disabilities within the country. The approach prioritized early identification, assessment and intervention as well as placement for

capacity development through increasing public awareness, fostering research, and promoting inclusion.

Waititu et al. (2023) note that despite the 100% transition policy in Kenya and the adoption of the “leave no one behind” approach to education, research in the country shows that children with ID are significantly disadvantaged in the Kenyan educational system. Despite the opportunities presented for this population in Kenyan schools, Gachie et al. (2022) report that these learners continue to face challenges in education, which contribute to a high dropout rate among ID learners. Agreeing with this, M’birithu et al. (2024) note that in Kenya, there exist limited educational opportunities supporting the learning of ID students, with this contributing to their exclusion and reducing academic achievement.

Highlighting the challenges faced by ID learners in Kenya, Chesaro (2020) notes that these children have greater demands in the educational setting, with this encompassing challenges in terms of curriculum adaptation, availability of teaching and learning resources, and teaching methods. Recognizing multiple challenges faced by learners with disabilities in Kenya, researchers across the country acknowledge the multiple barriers to inclusive education, recommending deeper reflection focused on operationalization of inclusive policies and frameworks to provide an equal learning opportunity for this population (Chesaro, 2020; Ileri et al., 2020; Moyi, 2017; Ohba & Malenya, 2020).

2.5 Challenges Encountered by ID Individuals in the Society

The discourse on ID suggests significant challenges across multiple domains of life. ID presents unique challenges for this population. In the academic setting, a growing body of evidence suggests multiple challenges that increase the likelihood of poor academic outcomes (Akşit et al., 2023; Azatyan & Alaverdyan, 2021). Azatyan and Alaverdyan (2021) note that learners with ID have poor academic outcomes attributed to a range of learning challenges, which include memorization challenges, challenging behavior, speech impairment, insufficient flexibility of thinking processes, and challenges in activity planning. Concurring with this, Lee et al. (2023) found that the lack of support for ID learners, combined with the gap between perception and practice in healthcare and education, significantly disadvantaged this population.

Additional problems encountered by ID learners in the academic setting include limited opportunities in extracurricular activities, which in turn influence their long-term outcomes. Akşit et al. (2023) found that ID learners faced significant challenges in sports education, leading to a disadvantage as compared to their peers in the mainstream classroom setting. The main themes that emerged highlighted that problems in the physical environment, such as limited social activity opportunities, deficits in architectural structure support, limited equipment and transportation facilities, and social challenges, such as communication problems, parental fear of social rejection, and social deficits, limited ID learners' participation in sports education (Akşit et al., 2023).

The academic challenges faced by ID learners are reflected in evidence of a significant academic achievement gap between ID learners and their peers (Adjei et al., 2024; Brekke et al., 2023; Daniel, 2024; Daniel, 2025; Gilmour et al., 2019). In low- and middle-income countries, Adjei et al. (2024) found that children with disabilities, including ID, performed poorly academically as compared to their non-disabled peers, with the poor academic performance attributed to infrastructural and institutional challenges that disproportionately burden learners with a disability. Reporting similar findings, Gilmour et al. (2019) found that learners with disabilities “performed 1.17 standard deviations” below their typically developing peers, with this highlighting reading gaps and curriculum access challenges that exacerbate academic inequalities for learners with a disability. In a 2025 study, Daniel examined the extent and persistence of academic achievement gaps for special education learners utilizing data from the National Pupil Database in England. Analyzing data on achievements in reading, mathematics, and writing, Daniel (2025) found that students with ID had substantial and persistent gaps in these subjects, with data showing widening gaps over the examination period. Concluding on this, Daniel (2025) highlighted the significant academic implications of the academic achievement gap, hence the need to reevaluate the widening achievement gap and the potential long-term impact for ID learners.

Besides academic challenges, ID students face a greater burden of behavioral problems as compared to their peers in the academic settings (Ahmad et al., 2022; Hoffman & Muller, 2022; Schoop-Kasteler et al., 2022). In their study, Schoop-Kasteler et al. (2022) found that learners with ID had more individual problem behavior, with this linked to social

exclusion and peer rejection for learners with ID. Reporting similar findings, learners with ID face the long-term challenge of transitioning to employment (Makumi et al., 2021; Njoroge & Murenga, 2023). Focusing on a population of ID learners from Kiambu County in Kenya, Makumi et al. (2021) reported that transition for this population is challenging in Kenya, attributing this to a lack of employment opportunities among individuals with ID, given a lack of adaptive skills that are deemed by employers as critical to effectively conducting daily living activities.

2.6 Importance of Adaptive Skills for ID Learners

Adaptive skills are increasingly recognized as fundamental to fostering independence and enhancing the quality of life among individuals with ID. Tassé et al. (2021) define adaptive skills as an important form of behavior that is learned and performed on a daily basis to meet every day's demands in the society or community. The American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities and the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders define adaptive behavior as the collection of conceptual, practical, and social skills that are learned by individuals and performed to support everyday life (Dell'Armo & Tassé, 2019).

A historical analysis shows that the term "adaptive behavior" has evolved over time but still captures the initial aspects included in the concept over 50 years ago. Tassé (2021) reports that Herber (1959) first proposed introducing the concept of adaptive behavior in the diagnostic criteria of intellectual disability, defining the concept as an individual having deficits in at least maturation, learning, and social adjustments. Following

significant revisions over the year and development of diagnostic definitions by the AAIDD and DSM-5, adaptive behavior is now universally recognized and operationalized as having deficits in one or more of the following domains, including conceptual (learning), social (social adjustment), and/or practical skills (maturation) (Tassé, 2021).

The three domains of adaptive skills capture important aspects of everyday functioning. The conceptual part of adaptive behavior encompasses the communication and academic domains, as well as self-direction (Carbajal et al., 2024; Muller et al., 2021). Tassé (2021) further notes that conceptual skills include the language abilities, number, time and money concepts, reading, and writing. The second domain of adaptive behavior that is important for everyday functioning is social skills. Social skills are made up of interpersonal skills, self-esteem, the ability to follow rules, and overall social responsibility (Muller et al., 2021). According to Tassé (2021), social skills also include an individual's ability for effective social problem-solving, forming healthy friendships, and the ability to take part in social activities. Practical skills, according to Carbajal et al. (2024), encompass the independent and everyday skills. Skills captured under this domain include self-care and hygiene skills, activities performed to support daily living, the ability to use transportation and other services, domestic skills, and maintaining individual health and safety (Carbajal et al., 2024; Muller et al., 2021; Tassé, 2021). The domains of adaptive behavior are illustrated in table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3: The Three Domains of Adaptive Behavior

Domain	Characteristics
Conceptual	Communication and education- language, memory, reading, writing, number, time and money concepts (Carbajal et al., 2024; Muller et al., 2021; Patel et al., 2020; Tassé, 2021).
Social	Awareness of the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of others, interpersonal communication skills, self-esteem, ability for developing friendships, social responsibility, social judgment and participation in social events (Carbajal et al., 2024; Muller et al., 2021; Patel et al., 2020; Tassé, 2021).
Practical	Activities of daily living, self-care, domestic skills, hygiene, money management, job responsibilities, participation in recreational activities, maintaining individual health and safety,

	and ability to use transportation and similar services (Carbajal et al., 2024; Muller et al., 2021; Patel et al., 2020; Tassé, 2021).
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Consensus among researchers emphasizes the need to create inclusive and enabling environments in which individuals with ID can be as independent as possible, with emphasis placed on adaptive skills as critical to fostering independence for this population (Jacob et al., 2022; Jadeja & Firdaus, 2020; Tassé & Kim, 2023; Yi & Ellis, 2023). Tassé & Kim (2023) note that an individual's adaptive behavior is indicative of how well one functions every day, with this being highly predictive of positive life outcomes. As highlighted in multiple studies, adaptive behaviors encompass practical, conceptual, and social skills critical to everyday functioning (Jacob et al., 2022; Jadeja & Firdaus, 2020; Tassé & Kim, 2023; Yi & Ellis, 2023). Additionally, Carbajal et al. (2024) note that adaptive skills are not only critical for everyday functioning but also play an important role in assuming individual responsibilities within social contexts, as well as facilitating the transition into adulthood.

Among individuals with disabilities, a growing body of evidence highlights the importance of adaptive skills in enhancing everyday executive functioning and fostering the development of daily adaptive skills that enhance functioning in adulthood (Kim et al., 2021; Lousky et al., 2024; Mathews et al., 2015). For instance, in their study, Mathews et al. (2015) examined adaptive functioning during transition into adulthood

among 16-58-year-olds with autism spectrum disorder. The researchers found that the high presence of these skills in adulthood enhanced overall functioning and the ability to live full, independent adult lives, with adolescents having lower levels of adaptive skills, hence lower functionality and independence. In another study, Lousky et al. (2024) found that the development of adaptive skills among autistic individuals improved emotional empathy and social communication. This highlights the essence of adaptive skills in supporting individuals with disabilities in everyday life and in leading independent lives in their adult life.

Adaptive skills for ID learners are crucial to support transition into society, particularly in the employment context. One long-term impact for ID learners that is attributed to academic challenges in the educational setting is disadvantage in seeking employment opportunities (Avellone, 2021; Bialik & Mhiri, 2022; Ebuenyi et al., 2019; Traina et al., 2021). Employment studies for youth with ID indicate high levels of underemployment and unemployment, which is attributed to the challenges faced by this population as they transition from the education system to employment (Traina et al., 2021). In Kenya, the employment rate for people with disabilities has been reported to be 1%, which is relatively low when compared to the 73.8% for the general population (Ebuenyi et al., 2019). In high-income countries, the employment rate for people with ID is relatively higher, with Ireland having an employment rate of 7.1%, Scotland 4.2%, and Canada 25% (Bialik & Mhiri, 2022).

Evidence from research shows that one of the main factors limiting employment opportunities for persons with ID is the lack of adaptive skills. In a Kenyan study, Makumi et al. (2021) examined the factors impacting employment transition for 600 adult graduates with ID in the country. The researchers identified a lack of development of adaptive skills necessary for daily living as one main reason for lack of employment and challenges when transitioning from the educational system to employment. Consistent with these findings, Jacob et al. (2022) conducted a systematic review that emphasized the need for salient skills, including skills needed for daily living, to help individuals with ID succeed when given employment opportunities. Agreeing with this, Carbajal et al. (2024) and Muller (2021) note that the conceptual, social, and practical domains of adaptive behavior represent important areas that significantly facilitate support and instruction in SNE and are hence critical for learners with special needs. Based on the evidence provided, adaptive skills are paramount to support independent living for ID learners, with these skills being critical in the long term to achieve independence needed in adult life and empower them in the acquisition and maintenance of employment opportunities.

2.7 Importance of Teaching Adaptive Skills

Emerging evidence emphasizes training as one of the most effective evidence-based interventions that is used to improve all three domains of adaptive behavior, including conceptual, social, and practical domains (Jacob et al., 2022; Jennifer, 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Lousky et al., 2024; Matthews et al., 2015; Rimingado, 2022). Among individuals with ID, evidence from a systematic review by Jacob et al. (2022) shows that these skills

can be fostered through classroom-based interventions, with this being fundamental in improving adaptive functioning in this population. Reporting similar findings, Lousky et al. (2024) found that training young autistic people was associated with significant improvements in conceptual, practical, and social domains of adaptive behavior, with participants' self-reported improvements in adaptive behavior attributed to an improvement in individual sense of self-efficacy. Using a behavioral intervention, Kim et al. (2021) investigated the impact of an educational activity on enhancing adaptive functioning. The researchers found that the 10-week sessions led to significant improvements in adaptive skills, including time management, self-restraint, emotional regulation, daily living skills, and organization (Kim et al., 2021).

While existing evidence underscores teaching of adaptive skills to persons with disability, there is an overt lack of research focused on teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID. However, Jennifer (2018) investigated the perception of teachers on adaptive skills training for ID learners in the early childhood classroom setting. Using a quantitative study of 254 teachers, the researcher found that teaching adaptive skills among ID learners is critical, with teachers emphasizing the need to teach these skills on a daily basis (Jennifer, 2018). Highlighting the need for teaching adaptive skills, the findings by Jennifer (2018) revealed that age-appropriate instruction played an important role in equipping ID learners with the needed adaptive skills.

There are different approaches that teachers use in empowering special education learners with adaptive skills. The goal of teaching adaptive skills to ID learners is to empower

them with effective personal and independent skills, hence the need for integration of effective teaching strategies (Osei, 2020). Methods suggested by researchers as crucial to teaching ID learners adaptive skills include interactive teaching, peer teaching, cooperative direct teaching, and group teaching (Rimingado, 2022; Osei, 2020). In a study conducted in Ghana, Osei (2020) found that teachers utilized a comprehensive adaptive skills curriculum in Ghana's Unit Special Schools, with the main strategies used including cooperative teaching, interactive procedures, and direct instruction. Rimingado (2022) highlighted instructional strategies used by educators to teach adaptive skills to ID learners. The main strategies identified included task analysis, prompting, applied behavior analysis, modeling, structured teaching, discrete-trial training, individualized educational programs (IEP), interactive teaching, peer tutoring, team teaching, cooperative teaching, and direct instruction.

2.8 Instructional Supervision and Impact on Teaching Practices and Performance

Head teacher instructional supervision determined the effectiveness of teaching practices by teachers in a school setting, with instructional supervision being key to strengthening and building the performance of learners (Landawe et al., 2024; Nsengimana et al., 2024; Rizada, 2024; Theodimir & Claire, 2022). In Philippines, Landawe et al. (2024) established that head teachers' supervisory competence, including instructional supervision, significantly improved the performance of teachers. Supporting the need for teacher training on instructional supervision in Rwanda, Theodimir and Claire (2022) found that providing instructional supervision to teachers led to high performance of teachers, with instructional supervision shown to influence teachers' classroom

performance at 84.1%. Using a sample of 15 school heads and 124 teachers, Rizada (2024) found that instructional supervision practices by head teachers played an important role in influencing teaching practices and ensuring overall teaching quality.

Research conducted in Ghana supports the impact of instructional supervision on teacher performance. Using a descriptive survey design and a sample of 130 teachers and 65 head teachers, Osei (2020) found that head teachers' instructional supervision practices had a significant influence on teacher performance and overall learning outcomes. Agreeing with this, Theodomir and Claire (2022) established the lack of comprehensive head teacher's instructional supervision significantly impeded teachers from planning lessons effectively, effectively organizing assessment activities, and preparing adequate and relevant teaching materials, thereby affecting teachers' competencies in the long term. This in turn negatively affects learning outcomes and overall academic performance among learners.

2.9 Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision Strategies

Multiple studies have acknowledged instructional supervision as the cornerstone of educational leadership, shaping teaching quality and learner outcomes (Akpalu et al., 2025; Kusi et al., 2019; Landawe et al., 2024; Rizada, 2024; Okeyo et al., 2024; Osei, 2020). While this study utilizes a review of existing literature, the researchers provided important findings on instructional supervision practices that are associated with effective teaching. Notably, Akpalu et al. (2025) reported that effective instructional supervision practices that are linked with effective teaching and better learner outcomes include

provision of real-time feedback, peer mentoring, and collaborative lesson planning practices. In a similar study from Ghana, Osei (2020) revealed that the commonly utilized instructional supervision practices by head teachers included checking the professional records of teachers, facilitating their professional development, classroom observation, providing instructional resources, fostering interpersonal relationships, maintaining discipline and regularity, and utilizing teaching and management skills.

In a similar study, Rizada (2024) found the most popular and effective instructional supervision practices were giving feedback, conducting casual classroom inspections, facilitating training for new teachers, and ensuring that head teachers are accessible for guidance and teaching assistance. Instructional supervision practices that were found to be least popular included praising teachers, directing them to instructional materials, and observing teaching (Rizada, 2024). In their study, Okeyo et al. (2024) found that the main supervisory roles performed by head teachers included controlling planned curriculum activities, providing feedback and support for teachers, regularly checking the professional records of all teachers, making informal classroom visits, and regularly meeting with teachers for support discussion. In Ghana, Kusi et al. (2019) found that the main supervisory strategies used by head teachers included checking teachers' records of work, facilitating in-service training, monitoring regularity and punctuality, staff orientation (especially for new teachers), and lesson observation. The implementation of these strategies was not only found to improve teacher productivity and performance but also has a slight impact on promoting the retention of the teaching staff in the schools found within the circuit.

2.10 Head Teachers' Professional Qualification in Instructional Supervision

There are several factors that influence instructional supervision practices by head teachers, which in turn determine the effectiveness of teaching and overall quality of teaching (Anwar et al., 2022; Jane & Odeh, 2023; M'birithu et al., 2024). In a Kenyan study conducted in Meru County, M'birithu et al. (2024) found that the educational experiences of learners with ID were significantly shaped by the academic qualifications, experience, supervision, and differentiated instruction skills of educators in schools within Meru County. Head teachers' professional qualification in instructional supervision is a significant factor that influences the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. Evidence suggests that head teachers with appropriate qualifications are better equipped to offer effective instructional supervision, supporting teachers in teaching adaptive skills to meet the needs of learners, especially those with ID (Anwar et al., 2022; Okeyo et al., 2024; Theodimir & Claire, 2022). Reporting similar findings from a Kenyan population, Okeyo et al. (2021) found that head teacher qualification impacted instructional supervision, with head teacher training on the curriculum empowering them with skills to encourage its integration in the school setting.

The findings provided by Anwar et al. (2022) align with those reported by Okeyo et al. (2024). In their study, Anwar et al. (2022) found that high qualifications of head teachers were associated with greater effectiveness in administering instruction, which in turn led to better school performance and outcomes. The findings by Anwar et al. (2022) show that head teachers with postgraduate education had greater school performance as compared to those with graduate education, indicating that higher levels of qualification

increased knowledge and facilitated the development of attitude and competence, which in turn influenced the effectiveness of teaching and school performance.

Focusing on training and qualification, Nsengimana et al. (2024) examined the influence on head teachers' instructional supervision. In a mixed-method study that utilized a descriptive research design and a sample of 1769 teachers, the researchers found that inadequate training of head teachers limited their effectiveness in instructional supervision, with the researchers recommending the need for up-to-date training of all head teachers to maximize the benefits associated with instructional supervision (Nsengimana et al., 2024).

In a Kenyan study, Okeyo et al. (2024) examined the impact of instructional supervision training on the implementation of competency-based curriculum (CBC) in Kisii Central Sub-County. The researchers found that instructional supervision training is critical for effective curriculum implementation, with teachers reporting challenges in areas such as interpretation of designs, preparation of schemes of work, lesson delivery, and learner assessment (Okeyo et al., 2024). Based on this, the researchers concluded that training was crucial to facilitate effective instructional supervision. Jane and Odeh (2023) examined the link between head teacher qualification and supervisory practices. The researchers established that in a sample of Nigerian educators, head teachers who had a master's and bachelor's degree were inherently better at supervising, with the higher level of education indicating better preparation and being equipped with the appropriate

supervisory practices. These findings highlight that the qualifications of head teachers determine the quality and effectiveness of instructional supervision for ID learners.

2.11 Head Teacher's Supervisory Experience in Teaching

Head teachers' supervisory experience has a significant influence on the quality of teaching for ID learners, including in the context of teaching adaptive skills. Theodomir and Claire (2022) note that the level of experience of head teachers influences their supervision of instruction as it develops the performance of teachers. This implies that little experience contributes to deficiency in instructional supervision, contributing to poor teaching and learning outcomes, especially for ID learners. Additionally, Landawe et al. (2024) opine that instructional supervision is one of the core supervisory competencies of head teachers, which encourages teachers, leading to improved productivity through the school heads' direction and motivation to work effectively. While this is so, there is an overt lack of research that specifically focuses on the years of experience and the impact on their supervisory roles. However, evidence suggests a strong link between head teachers' years of experience and the impact on teacher productivity and school performance, with the longer the years of experience, the stronger the positive impact (Ahmad et al., 2020; Jane & Odeh, 2023; Podolsky et al., 2019).

Focusing on supervisory practices, Jane and Odeh (2023) found that the years of experience among Nigerian head teachers influenced the supervisory practices adopted by the teachers, with head teachers who have worked for more than 21 years having a

higher level of supervisory practices as compared to those with 11-20 years, with those who have worked 1-10 years having the least adoption of supervisory practices. The findings from these studies therefore suggest that experienced head teachers have a greater understanding of the concept of instructional supervision and strategies used, hence effectively engage in the planning, organization, and implementation of teaching instruction, and dialogue and collaborate with teachers to improve productivity and overall academic performance. On the contrary, having little experience is tantamount to a lack of understanding of instructional supervision, which in turn affects the productivity of teachers and learners' performance in multiple domains.

2.12 Teachers' Perceptions on Head Teachers' Instructional Supervision

Seraphine et al. (2022) and Sibomana (2020) note that since instructional supervision plays an important role in the development of education, it becomes important to determine how teachers perceive it. Several studies have been conducted examining the teacher's perception of head teachers' instructional supervision. In Rwanda, Sibomana (2020) found that all teachers displayed higher awareness of the significance and importance of instructional supervision, hence emphasizing its essence in improving learning conditions while also promoting professional growth.

In Tanzania, Seraphine et al. (2022) conducted a mixed-methods study to investigate perceptions of primary teachers towards the instructional supervision of head teachers. Using a sample of 130 teachers, the researchers found that teachers had a positive perception of head teachers' instructional supervision (Seraphine et al., 2022). Notably,

92.9%, 80.7%, and 72.8% of the teachers agreed that head teachers' instructional supervision was helpful in empowering teachers to prepare professional documents, lesson notes, schemes of work, and lesson plans, respectively (Seraphine et al., 2022).

Conducting a similar study, Matter et al. (2015) found that teachers believed in the importance of all pre-observation and post-observation conferences and also believed that head teacher instructional supervision was effective in improving teacher instruction. Similarly, Anyagre (2016) found that teachers perceived internal supervision positively, attributing this to improved relationships and increased collaboration between head teachers and teachers, with the majority of the teachers viewing instructional supervision positively in impacting their productivity. Evidence from these studies therefore establishes that teachers perceive instructional supervision by head teachers positively, citing instructional supervision as a critical factor that influences productivity and academic outcomes (Anyagre et al., 2016; Seraphine et al., 2022; Sibomana, 2020).

2.13 Summary of the Literature Review

Evidence from multiple studies shows that individuals with ID face multiple challenges in different domains of life, which impact academic, social, and employment outcomes for this population. Empowering ID learners with adaptive skills is therefore critical to equipping them with the skills needed to foster independence while also improving academic and social outcomes, as well as performance in activities of daily living. In line with this, the present study sought to explore the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners.

The first objective for this study sought to establish the professional qualification of head teachers for undertaking instructional supervision over adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID within Igembe South Sub-County. Evidence included in this review shows that head teachers' professional qualifications facilitate effective instructional supervision to promote quality teaching for learners (Anwar et al., 2022; Okeyo et al., 2024; Theodomir & Claire, 2022). While this is so, there is a lack of research that is focused on the teaching of adaptive skills specifically for ID learners, hence the need for the present study.

Secondly, this study sought to establish the head teachers' supervisory strategies to enhance the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-county, Kenya. Empirical evidence shows that supervision strategies such as class observation, orientation, motivation, rewards, recognition, and immediate feedback are commonly used by head teachers. However, there is a need for the present study, given the lack of specific research investigating the instructional supervision strategies used by head teachers in special schools. Factors that have a positive influence on instructional supervision of head teachers include their qualification and years of experience. Notably, evidence suggests a strong link between head teachers' years of experience and their supervisory practices, leading to a positive impact on teacher performance (Ahmad et al., 2020; Jane & Odeh, 2023; Podolsky et al., 2019). However, no study focused on this objective with regard to how ID learners are taught adaptive skills.

The fourth objective purposed to examine how teachers perceive the performance of instructional supervision by head teachers on adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID. Three studies established a positive perception by teachers, highlighting the importance of instructional supervision as reported by teachers (Anyagre et al., 2016; Seraphine et al., 2022). However, most of these findings were not localized and did not focus on teaching adaptive skills for ID learners; hence, the need to establish teachers' perception of head teachers' instructional supervision over how learners with intellectual disabilities are taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-county.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter involves an in-depth discussion of the research methodology that was used in answering the research questions. The first part of the chapter begins with an explanation of the interpretivist philosophy guiding the qualitative research design. This is then followed by a detailed explanation of the population of interest, sampling technique, and sample size, outlining the inclusion criteria aligning with the scope of the study. The chapter also outlines the use of an interview guide and questionnaire in the data collection. The next part is an explanation of the 5-step thematic analysis approach that was used for data analysis. This chapter concludes with the ethical considerations upheld in the process of this study, highlighting the protection of research participants' rights.

3.2 Research Design

The study utilized an interpretivist research approach, integrating qualitative research methods. The interpretivist paradigm is aimed at how research sees the world from a subjective point of view and interpreting meanings from data collected, with the researcher interpreting how respondents have experienced or experience a particular social phenomenon (Mwita, 2022). The interpretivist approach as applied in research explores the subjective meanings of participants in the social world. Integrating an interpretivist paradigm in this study was aimed at examining the similarities and

differences in the experiences of teachers with regard to instructional supervision in the context of teaching adaptive skills.

Qualitative research methods are widely used in special education, with this aimed at exploring the lived experiences of research participants to obtain meaningful insights on a phenomenon of interest (Alnaim, 2018; Leko et al., 2021). Alnaim (2018) notes that the use of qualitative research methods in special education research provides researchers with a flexible, open-ended method with the capacity to investigate intricate realities of a matter, thereby exploring a phenomenon in depth and understanding why it occurs. Using a qualitative approach in this study therefore provided an opportunity to examine the lived experiences of head teachers and teachers working in special education schools and units.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in the Igembe South sub county, which is part of the greater Meru County. In line with the scope of research, the study only involved special primary schools and units for learners with ID in Meru County. According to the 2019 population and housing census, Igembe South Sub-County has a population of 206,506 people, including 103,338 men, 103,162 women, and 6 intersex people (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The sub county is also home to a significant percentage of the special needs population. According to the National Government Constituencies Development Fund, the sub-

county has five special needs schools, serving this population. While this is so, much research on the special needs population has been done in the Kenyan urban setting, with there being a paucity of research targeting this population in rural settings such as Igembe South in Meru County. The selection of this location as the study setting is also informed by the researcher having worked for several years in the sub-county, hence being conversant with special primary schools and units in the study locale.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study is from Igembe South, which is a sub-county in Meru County. The county is divided into two zones, Akachiu and Maua, where the five special institutions for learners with ID are located (Maua Education Office, July, 2019). The study targeted all five special public primary schools in the sub-county. In total, the target population is five special public primary schools, including one special school and four special units. In these schools, the total number of teaching staff includes five (5) head teachers and fifteen (15) teachers, leading to a working population of 20 respondents as shown in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Target Population: Head teachers, Teachers and Learners

Institution	H/Teachers	Teachers	Total
SC1 Special School	1	7	8
SC2 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC3 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC4 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC5 Special Unit	1	2	3
TOTAL	5	15	20

Source: Special Institutions July 2019

3.5 Sampling Technique and Sample Size

3.5.1 Sampling Technique

The study integrated a purposive sampling approach. This is a non-probability sampling technique that is commonly used in qualitative studies across a range of disciplines (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025). This approach is widely used, as it offers a sampling technique that ensures the location of a quality sample without bias, thereby increasing the reliability and trustworthiness of research findings. In purposive sampling, the researcher selects the respondents that have the greatest likelihood of yielding appropriate and useful information for the qualitative study, hence facilitating effective use of limited resources (Ahmad & Wilkins, 2025; Campbell et al., 2020). In this study, the purposive sampling technique was therefore used to select all five special schools and units in Igembe South sub-county.

One main assumption of purposive sampling is that a specific portion of a target population holds unique and important ideas about the phenomenon of interest and hence must be included in the study for reliable conclusions on the eventual findings (Campbell et al., 2020). In this case, teachers and head teachers working in the five special needs schools and units were considered as a special population holding unique and important views on instructional supervision and its influence on adaptive skills teaching for ID learners. As a result, all five head teachers (n=5) and 15 teachers (n=15) across the five special schools and units in the sub-county were included in this study.

3.5.2 Sample Size

The selection of an appropriate sample size was pertinent in ensuring that the findings were to be valid and adequately reliable to inform making of sound decisions. In qualitative studies, researchers traditionally use small, purposefully selected samples with the goal of representing a specific population, facilitating the provision of a rich and naturalistic description of a phenomenon (Leko et al., 2021). Being different from quantitative research, which used measurement of variables and statistical analysis to answer research questions, qualitative research seeks to understand the why and how of human behavior, thereby using a relatively small sample to explore the lived experience of the target population (Ahmed, 2025; Bekele & Ago, 2022; Leko et al., 2021).

Qualitative research methodologies across multiple disciplines, including in education research, acknowledge the overt lack of consensus and standards for sample size. While this is so, traditional qualitative research methodologies suggest that samples that range

from 5 to 30 participants are adequate enough to facilitate data saturation, ensuring the collection of in-depth data (Ahmed, 2025; Bekele & Ago, 2022). In line with this, this study utilized a sample of all 20 respondents from the five special needs schools and units in Igembe South sub-county, including the five head teachers and 15 teachers. The distribution of the sample is shown in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Sample Size for Head teachers, and Teachers

Institution	Head teachers	Teachers	Total
SC1 Special School	1	7	8
SC2 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC3 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC4 Special Unit	1	2	3
SC5 Special Unit	1	2	3
Total	5	15	20

3.6 Research Instruments

The study utilized two research instruments, an interview guide and a questionnaire.

3.6.1 Questionnaires for Teachers of Learners with ID

Questionnaires are commonly used for data collection in qualitative research. A questionnaire is a form that captures a set of study questions and is given to respondents from a specific population to provide rich data on the phenomenon of study (Taherdoost, 2021). Like any other qualitative data collection method, questionnaires facilitate the

collection of large amounts of data, hence a suitable data collection approach (Mwita, 2022). The questionnaire was designed to obtain data from the teachers across the five schools within the sampled sub-county.

The questionnaire used for the teachers was comprised of three parts and five sections. Section A was designed to capture demographic information, including the years of experience in teaching adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities, area of specialization, highest academic and professional qualification. Sections B, C, D, and E were composed of open ended questions on the influence of instructional supervision of how ID learners are taught adaptive skills as shown in Appendix IV.

3.6.2 Interview Guide for Head Teachers

In-depth interviews often involve the use of predetermined questions contained in an interview guide. Mwita (2022) notes that interview guides act as a guide for the researcher on what to ask during an interview, thereby capturing rich data in line with the scope of the study. Roberts (2020) further emphasizes the use of interview guides in qualitative research, noting that these provide both structure and focus for the interview while also providing the researcher with prompts to facilitate in-depth discussions of the phenomena of interest. The use of an interview guide in this study was therefore aimed at ensuring adequate data collection, focusing on the scope of this study.

The head teachers' interview schedule was formulated into five sections, with section A designed to obtain demographic data. This included information on head teachers' years

of experience as head teachers, areas of specialization, academic and professional qualifications. Sections B, C, D, and E covered the interview questions, focusing on instructional supervision as influenced by their demographic characteristics, as shown in Appendix III.

3.7 Pilot Study

Pilot studies play a fundamental role in qualitative research. Shakir and Rahman (2022) note that pilot studies ensure methodological rigor, resulting in high-quality research. Pilot studies are conducted prior to the main large-scale study with the aim of helping the researcher identify deficits in research instruments and refining the final road map for a large-scale study (Shakir & Rahman, 2022). In line with this, a pilot test was done to provide insights for the final road map for the large-scale study across the five schools within the selected sub-county.

The pilot test for this study was done in a unit within Igembe Central Sub-County. It mainly aimed at determining the research instruments' validity and reliability, providing insights that were used to improving the data collection tools for actual study. The sample for the pilot study was comprised of two teachers and one head teacher in the unit, with the results ascertaining the effectiveness of the research instruments in the collection of relevant data.

3.8 Data Collection

3.8.1 Data Collection Method

The data collection process integrated a qualitative approach using in-depth interviews and questionnaires. The questionnaire method is one of the most commonly used approaches for data collection in qualitative research, allowing collection of data by giving participants a set of questions to answer (Taherdoost, 2021). This approach was specifically targeted for the teachers, providing them with a set of questions in line with the objectives of the study. The interview approach is a fundamental data collection approach used in qualitative research that encompasses asking research questions during social interactions with the participants (Mwita, 2022; Taherdoost, 2021). Mwita (2022) notes that interviews involve a conversation between the researcher, who acts as the interviewer, and the respondents, who are the interviewees, with such sessions conducted via face-to-face meetings or through technological means.

In this study, face-to-face interviews were used as the method of choice for data collection. This is because face-to-face interviews help the research to obtain rich data by asking detailed questions and facilitating an opportunity to clarify questions while also ensuring a high response rate, as compared to telephone- or online-based interviews (Taherdoost, 2021). The selection of interviews for data collection in this study was aimed at facilitating a data collection approach that would allow the researcher to gain insights on the lived experiences of the participants, thus exploring their opinions, experiences, and motivations in teaching adaptive skills to ID learners.

One of the main issues that arises in qualitative research interviews is striking a balance between one's objectivity and participants' experiences. Notably, Mwita (2022) emphasizes the need for the researcher to utilize effective skills in obtaining the information required. Alase (2017) notes that this involves the researcher bracketing themselves from the lived experiences of the participants, removing their own experiences to reduce bias. Given that the researcher has experience working in the sub-county, bracketing was pertinent to reduce the potential for bias.

The first step taken was the recruitment of three research assistants based on their specialization prior to starting the data collection process. This included students in graduate programs who were familiar with Meru County, with a focus on students enrolled for a master's in special education due to their familiarity with special needs education. All three assistants were trained on the overview of the project, the data collection process, and the instruments.

An initial visit was done to every sampled school, interacting with the informants and school administrators and introducing the intention of the study. The visit also included appointments and logistical arrangements for the interview day. During the day scheduled for the interviews, the first step involved administration of questionnaires to all teachers, with the final step being conducting the interviews. The interviews offered a chance for the interviewee to interact with the teachers, using the interview guide to obtain rich data from the head teachers and probing questions to obtain in-depth information.

3.9 Data Analysis

Thematic approach was adopted in analyzing the qualitative data that was collected in the interviews and questionnaires. The approach is usually applied for qualitative data analysis, facilitating the systematic organization and analysis of data into relevant themes (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Nowell et al., 2017). Dawadi (2020) notes that thematic analysis involves carefully reading and rereading the data transcribed from the data-collection process, providing insightful and trustworthy findings regarding a particular phenomenon.

Xu et al. (2020) notes that thematic analysis involves the researcher finding repeated insights from data sets, hence facilitating the interpretation of the phenomenon of interest. Core to the thematic analysis process is identification and description of the major themes in line with the study objectives. Contextually, a theme is defined as a specific pattern observed from the data, capturing information about the data collected as it relates to the study objectives and questions, hence featuring patterned meanings in a data set (Xu et al., 2020; Nowell et al., 2017; Braun & Clarke, 2022; Kushnir, 2025; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017; Kiger & Varpio, 2020).

In this study, the thematic analysis provided a flexible method of data analysis, thereby providing rich and detailed information on the instructional supervision function of the head teachers. In education research, Kushnir (2025) notes that the widespread use of thematic analysis is informed by this data analysis approach, offering a flexible approach in data analysis that helps the researcher to make meaning of a rich data set. Highlighting

the lack of a structured approach in conducting thematic analysis tied to education research, Kushnir (2025) supports the use of six thematic analysis phases in the process of data analysis, narrowing this down to four key phases for application in education research. Baum and Clarke's steps of thematic analysis include these phases: identification of key words or phrases and generating specific codes; a search for probable themes; review and establishment of themes; and the establishment of the hierarchy of themes (Kushnir, 2025).

Thematic analysis in this borrows from the steps outlined by Baum and Clarke (2022) and Kushnir (2025). These steps are discussed in detail as below:

Step 1: Data Familiarization

The first step involved data familiarization, with this aimed at making one conversant with data collected, hence facilitating profound comprehension of all data collected (Dawadi, 2020). This involved the researcher's prolonged engagement with the data by going through the interview transcripts and documenting initial thoughts on potential themes and codes. This step was pertinent in facilitating a comprehensive comprehension of the study item, focusing on its objectives and corresponding questions.

Step 2: Development of Codes

This step was followed by the development of codes. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) emphasized the critical need for this process, noting that codes help simplify textual data from the transcribed verbatim to a theoretical form that helps in the development of

themes. In this step, the researcher integrated methodological coding while going through the transcribed verbatim. This process involved the use of key words from the collected data to develop an initial code that enhanced the identification of themes. The researcher examined the distinct ideas, experiences, and opinions of the participants, systematically classifying the codes into comprehensive groups based on the similarity of ideas discussed. This is shown in Appendix L.

Step 3: Categorization of Codes

Once the initial codes comprised of distinct ideas and experiences were developed, the next step involved categorizing the findings into themes. Maguire and Delahunt (2017) note that during this phase, the researcher examines the codes to determine which codes fit together to form a theme. During this step, the researcher identified the overarching themes, drawing a thematic diagram with the goal of making sense of the connection between themes and subthemes.

Step 4: Classification of Themes

The next step is the classification of themes from the participants' perception of the study items. This involves conceptualization of identified themes, facilitating the naming and defining of themes. In this context, the themes were classified and named based on their connection to how ID learners are taught adaptive skills, with a focus on instructional qualification and supervisory experience as the key factors influencing the effectiveness of teaching.

Step 5: Reporting Themes

The final step was the production of the final report of the themes, highlighting how each theme answered the study questions. The researcher then produced a final report of the themes, linking this with verbatim from the participants and connecting the findings with existing evidence.

3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

Permission for conducting this study was obtained and approved from the Kenyatta University Graduate School Institutional Review Board and National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). This study also took into consideration the ethical guidelines mandated by the institution's IRB. The first step involved obtaining informed consent (Appendix A) for all participants and distributing them, outlining the nature of the study, its benefits, participant's role, and voluntary nature of participation. Nosenzo and Tufano (2017) note that providing participants with this information allows them to decide on whether to participate, with this process being a core principle of ethical research practice. Additionally, ensuring voluntary participation fosters the integrity of the approaches used in collecting data (Kılınc & Firat, 2017). The signed informed consent forms were collected from all 20 participants.

Secondly, confidentiality and privacy of the participants were assured in the study. According to McKibbin et al. (2021), researchers have a moral obligation to respect every participant's right to confidentiality as mandated by the Helsinki Declaration. To

achieve this, the collected data was anonymized and assigned pseudocodes for easier identification.

One other important aspect of ethical consideration is ensuring appropriate data storage. This includes restricting access to data collected, and ensuring that all persons with access to the data maintain confidentiality. In this case, all data that was collected was saved in a personal computer with password protection. To further maintain the confidentiality, the researcher upheld this obligation not to communicate or share the data with unauthorized persons, with this including a presentation of the study findings in a manner that did not disclose the identity of the participants or schools included in the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS, INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Introduction

The chapter provides findings of the study, including the demographic findings and emerging themes based on the qualitative data collected. The research was primarily focused on examining the instructional supervision function of head teachers in relation to its effects on the effectiveness with which learners with intellectual disabilities are taught adaptive skills among special primary schools and units within Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya.

The specific objectives for the study included examining the head teachers' professional qualification in instructional supervision of how learners with intellectual disabilities are taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-County; establishing instructional supervision strategies of the head teachers in ensuring that learners with intellectual disabilities are effectively taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-County; establishing the effect of head teachers' supervisory experience on the effectiveness with which learners with intellectual disabilities are taught adaptive skills within Igembe South Sub-County; and examining the perception of teachers on performance of head teachers in supervising how learners with intellectual disabilities are taught adaptive skills within the sampled Sub-County.

4.2 Response Rate

All the 20 questionnaires which were distributed to the participants were duly answered and returned, achieving a 100% response rate presented in table 4.1. Borrowing from Sataloff and Vontela, (2021), a 55% rate of response would have been acceptable for a qualitative research. In the case, the 100% rate of response was therefore considered excellent, ensuring sample representativeness and reliability of the findings of this research.

Table 4.1: Response Rate

Categories of Respondents	No. of questionnaires given out	No. of questionnaires filled and returned	% of questionnaires returned
Head teachers	5	5	100
Teachers	15	15	100

4.3 Demographic Data

The study sample comprised of 20 participants drawn from the five special primary schools and units in Igembe South Sub-county, Meru County. For the head teachers, the demographic data obtained focused on their level of academic qualification. As shown in table 4.2, only one head teacher (20%) had a bachelor's degree in special needs education, majoring in intellectual disability, with one other (20%) having a master's degree in special needs education majoring in emotional and behavioral disorders. Two

head teachers had diplomas as their highest level of qualification, with one (20%) having a diploma in ECDE and the other (20%) having a diploma in inclusive education.

Table 4.2: Academic Qualification and Area of Specialization for Head Teachers in Igembe South Sub-county, Meru County

SNE Institutions	Academic qualification	Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
SC1 Special School	Bachelors' Degree	Intellectual Disability (ID)	1	20
SC2 Special Unit	Diploma	ECDE	1	20
SC3 Special Unit	A Level	Mathematics	1	20
SC4 Special Unit	M.ED	EBD	1	20
SC5 Special Unit	Diploma	Inclusive	1	20
Total			5	100

The findings of the study show that a majority of the head teachers (80%) did not have specialized training in the area of intellectual disabilities, with only one head teacher (20%) having a bachelor's degree in special needs education focused in intellectual disabilities. The lack of training and qualifications in intellectual disabilities among head teachers remains a serious issue of concern. Multiple researchers report a positive correlation between head teacher responsibilities and support roles and success in fostering quality education for learners with disabilities (Andai & Mwatela, 2017;

Balyaino et al., 2023; Bastida & Gonzales, 2024). Supporting the role of school heads in ensuring quality education for learners with disabilities, Andai and Mwatela (2017) emphasize the need for higher training for all head teachers. Given the study findings, the overt lack of specialized training for head teachers in Igembe South highlights significant limitations in school heads' capacity to foster achievement of high-quality education for ID learners through the supervision of teachers on adaptive skills instruction.

The research also explored the qualifications of the 15 teachers, which was deemed crucial in influencing the teaching of adaptive skills. As shown in Figure 4.1, most of the teachers (53.3%) had a bachelor's degree, 33.3% had a diploma, and 13.3% had a master's degree.

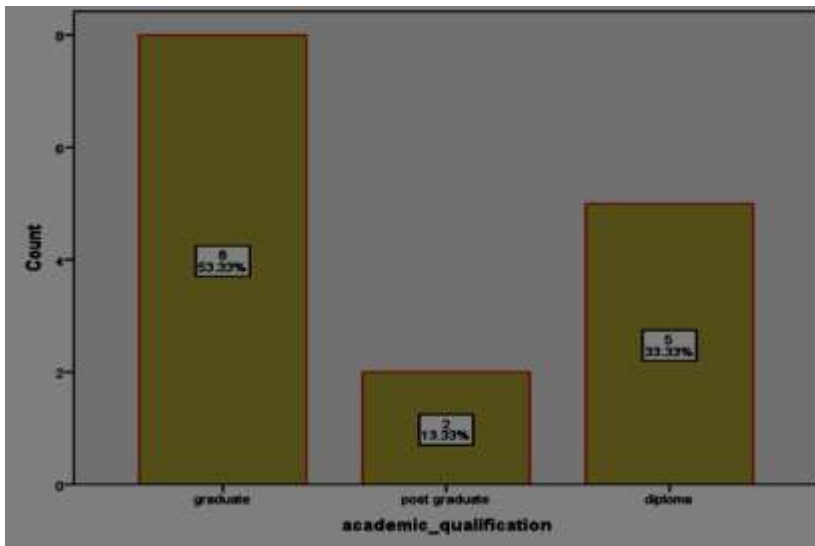


Figure 4.1: Teachers' Academic Qualification

The academic qualification of teachers is a crucial factor that informs their ability to provide high-quality education for ID learners, including the teaching of adaptive skills.

4.4 Themes

Thematic data analysis was done on the collected data, leading to the emergence of four themes, aligning with the four research questions that this study sought to answer. For the first research question regarding head teachers' professional qualification and the influence on teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID, the main finding was that head teacher qualification is an important factor that determines their supervision in the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. The second research question focused on the supervision strategies used by head teachers. The main theme that emerged was on the multiple strategies used in the supervision of teaching, with the main sub-themes being the variation in strategies and the need for data-informed practices. Thirdly, supervisory experience was deemed to be important in influencing teaching effectiveness. Under this theme, the main aspects highlighted included supervisory experience influence on teaching performance and the need for specialized experience focusing on ID learners. The final theme was on teacher perception that instructional supervision is crucial. Teachers perceived support and mentorship as important and noted their satisfaction with supervisory practices. The themes and sub-themes are summarized in table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Themes and Sub-themes based on the Research Questions

No.	Research Question	Theme	Sub-themes
RQ 1	How does the head teachers' professional qualification influence the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID?	<p>Theme 1: Importance of Teaching Adaptive Skills</p> <p>Theme 2: Strategies Used in Teaching Adaptive Skills for ID learners</p> <p>Theme 3: Professional qualification influences teaching of adaptive skills.</p>	<p>☐ Importance of teaching adaptive skills to ID learners.</p> <p>☐ Strategies and approaches used in the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners.</p> <p>☐ Relevance of professional qualification.</p> <p>☐ A need for continued professional development and training.</p>
RQ 2	What strategies do head teachers use	Strategies used to supervise teaching of	☐ Diverse strategies used.

	to supervise the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID?	adaptive skills	☒ A need for data-informed practices.
RQ 3	How effective is the head teachers' supervisory experience on the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID?	Supervisory experiences influence teaching experiences.	☒ Years of supervisory experience influence teaching performance ☒ Specialized experience is important
RQ 4	How was the teachers' perception of head teachers' instructional supervisory roles on the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID?	Perception of teachers.	☒ Confidence in head teachers' qualification and training. ☒ Mixed views on teaching adaptive skills for ID learners.

4.4.1 Theme 1: The Importance of Teaching Adaptive Skills to ID learners

Teaching adaptive skills for ID learners is important for both short- and long-term positive outcomes. Teachers in the five schools reported on their head teachers' understanding of adaptive skills. This study established that head teachers who had some form of SNE or ID training had a better understanding of adaptive skills and the importance of teaching this to learners with ID. When asked whether their head teacher understands what adaptive skills are, one teacher replied, "He has an understanding of adaptive skills," with this understanding reflected in the head teacher's leadership skills, which indicate "a clear awareness of how to support and develop these skills in the school environment" (TR 1 SC 1). Agreeing with this, another teacher from the same school reported that their head teacher played an important role in providing teachers with materials and guidance on teaching adaptive skills, including doing demonstrations for learners on basic skills such as sweeping, doing laundry, and cleaning. Noting that their head teacher is trained in SNE and ID, one other teacher acknowledged that their head teacher understands adaptive skills, adding that "He organizes teachers to collaboratively identify and source for teaching resources for adaptive skills" (TR 5 SC 1). Further reporting on this, other teachers in this school note that

"He gives materials and guides on how to teach adaptive skills. The head teacher participates in demonstrating how to conduct washing utensils, sweeping, and others" (TR 2 SC 1).

"Our head teacher appears to recognize the impotence of teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID. He always emphasizes practical, hands-on learning

approaches and supports the integration of adaptive skills across subjects.” (TR 3 SC 1).

“He gives materials and guides on how to teach adaptive skills. The head teacher participates in demonstrating how to conduct washing utensils, sweeping, and others” (TR 4 SC 1).

“The head teacher understands adaptive skills because he is a professionally trained person. The head teacher involves teachers in collaborative planning meetings, sharing duties in the school” (TR 6 SC 1).

“He understands adaptive skills well. The head teacher participates in demonstrating how to conduct washing utensils, self-care, and sweeping, among others (TR 7 SC 1).

In schools where the head teacher lacked professional training in SNE and/or ID, teachers reported a lack of understanding of adaptive skills or their importance for ID learners, with this in turn impacting head teachers’ support for the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. Based on these findings, the teachers in school two reported a lack of training in SNE for their school heads, with this leading to very poor understanding of the needs of ID learners, including the need to empower learners with adaptive skills. Participant one from this school reported, “Our head teacher seems not to understand adaptive skills and special education in general. He seems to be a head teacher for regular learners only” (TR 1 SC2), with the second teacher from this school indicating that “I doubt if he really knows what adaptive skills are. I think he has minimal qualifications for these roles, as he seems to be a head teacher for the normal primary school only” (TR 2 SC 2). Similar to the observation in this school, the lack of training in ID among head teachers was

associated with a lack of understanding of the importance of adaptive skills, as well as a lack of effort and support in the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners, with the teachers reporting that:

“Our head teacher is not aware of adaptive skills and special education in general. He was transferred to this school from a regular school. Having not done special education, he also appears to be new to learners with ID” (TR 2 SC 3).

“According to me, my head teacher does not understand what adaptive skills are” (TR 1 SC 4).

“Our head teacher has some clue about adaptive skills necessary for learners. However, our head teacher has the appropriate academic background and qualifications for the position of a head teacher, but not special needs education” (TR 2 SC 4).

“Our head teacher seems not to understand adaptive skills and special education in general. He seems to be a head teacher for regular learners only.” (TR 1 SC 5).

“He doesn’t seem to understand adaptive skills. I think he has academic qualifications that enabled him to be a head teacher. He must have trained as a teacher and probably has attended a management course to qualify for a head teacher position” (TR 2 SC 5).

A growing body of evidence underscores the importance of teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID (Jacob et al., 2022; Jennifer, 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Lousky et al., 2024; Matthews et al., 2015; Rimingado, 2022). This resonates with the importance of teaching adaptive skills demonstrated by head teachers with ID training in this study. In a similar

study, Jennifer (2018) used a sample of 254 teachers to examine the perception of teachers on adaptive skills training for ID learners in the early childhood classroom setting. The findings of the study showed that teachers considered teaching adaptive skills among ID learners as critical, emphasizing on the need to teach these skills on a daily basis (Jennifer, 2018).

Focusing on young adults with ID, Dell'Armo and Tassé (2019) investigated the role of adaptive behaviors in predicting outcomes for this population. The researchers found that adaptive behavior was a more important factor in predicting post-school outcomes for young adults with ID as compared to parents' expectations (Dell'Armo & Tassé, 2019). Supporting the need for empowering special needs learners with adaptive skills, Jacob et al. (2022), Lousky et al. (2024), and Kim et al. (2024) found that adaptive skills were important for all learners, with these skills leading to improvements in the conceptual, practical, and social aspects of behavior, while also enhancing overall adaptive functioning, including improvements in individual time management, self-restraint, daily living, and overall emotional regulation.

4.4.2 Theme 2: Strategies Used in Teaching Adaptive Skills to ID Learners

This study explored the strategies used by teachers in the five special primary schools and units to teach adaptive skills to ID learners. The main finding of this study is that educators across the study setting used diverse methods and approaches in teaching adaptive skills. The main strategies that were identified included task division into small tasks, structural teaching beginning with assessment, teaching and feedback, prompting,

modelling, and stage-based teaching. The teachers emphasized on stage-based teaching and task division into small tasks as critical to effective teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. When asked about the step-by-step teaching of adaptive skills, one teacher reported that they used “stage-based teaching that is tailoring instruction to the individual needs rather than age level, with this involving identifying a vital skill and then breaking it into small teachable sub-skills” (TR 6 SC 1). One other teacher added that “We take a task and subdivide it into small teachable tasks so that we teach one at a time, and finally we end up teaching the whole task” (TR SC 4). Additionally, other teachers highlighted the multiple strategies used in teaching adaptive skills as shown below.

“It is tailoring instruction to individual needs rather than age level. Identify a vital skill and then break it into small teachable sub-skills. Once a sub-skill has been acquired, the teacher introduces the next until all sub-skills are learned” (TR 1 SC 2).

“This is where whatever is being taught to the learner depends on the needs of the learner. You teach a skill; when the child is able to perform that skill, you move to the next step” (TR 2 SC 4).

“Choose a skill that has not been taught, then get baseline data at the start of the training. Being an organized method of teaching starts with the assessment stage for baseline information, the teaching stage, the feedback and reward stage, and finally the continued monitoring stage. Once the skill has been acquired and can be generalized, then another skill can be introduced” (TR 1 SC 5).

An issue that emerged from this study is the lack of specialized training among some teachers, which in turn impacted their approaches in teaching adaptive skills to ID learners. Notably, the lack of training among teachers in this case led to a disadvantage for the ID learners in affected schools, denying them an opportunity for the acquisition of adaptive skills. When asked about the use of stage-based or step-by-step methods in teaching, one teacher reported that “Firstly, I am not trained in special education; I do not know the stage-based method of teaching” (TR1 SC3), with a second teacher from the school indicating that

“I do not use it because I know nothing about the stage-based method. As the class teacher for learners with ID, I just teach them like any other child in primary school because I have not done any training in special needs education” (TR 2 SC3).

The main emphasis from these reports by the participants included in this study is on the need for tailored and individualized teaching approaches, based on the learning needs and capabilities of ID learners, hence a widespread adoption and use of IEPs by the teachers across the study setting. The finding of this study differs from the finding by Jennifer (2018). In their study, Jennifer (2018) found that age-appropriate instruction played a fundamental role in ensuring effective teaching of adaptive skills for learners, emphasizing on the need for teachers to tailor teaching activities to the age of their learners. Contrary to these findings, teachers across the five schools underscored the need to tailor the teaching of adaptive skills to the individual needs, rather than the learning level or age, of the learners.

The use of IEPs in the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners was also echoed by head teachers across the five schools. When asked whether teachers in their schools used IEPs, a majority of the head teachers responded positively, indicating the essence of integrating IEPs into teaching to facilitate the tailoring of teaching to the needs of the ID learners.

Similar to the study findings, a growing body of evidence supports the use of IEPs in teaching special needs learners, with teachers encouraged to assess the learning needs and capabilities of the individual learner and tailor the teaching process based on these findings (Jimenez & Barron, 2019; Kurth et al., 2022; McKenna et al., 2023; Nellah et al., 2022; Olewe-Nyunya et al., 2020).

The use of IEPs in learners with special needs, including those with ID is deemed important, since this approach involves a learner-directed plan and continuous monitoring, thereby customizing the teaching process based on the specifications of the learners' progress towards specific educational goals (Nellah et al., 2022; Olewa-Nyunya et al., 2020). Evidence shows that IEPs are effective in attaining educational outcomes for ID learners, since the written reports highlight the learner's disability, level of educational performance, measurable goals, and learner's progress in specific learning areas (Jimenez & Barron, 2019; Kurth et al., 2022; McKenna et al., 2023; Nellah et al., 2022; Olewe-Nyunya et al., 2020). As specified by the teachers included in this study, the use of IEPs when teaching adaptive skills to ID learners allows the teacher to access important information on the history and cause of disability, level of performance on specific skills, and learner's progress in learning these skills, which therefore allows

tailoring of the teaching process to meet the needs and capabilities of the individual learner.

The study findings on the variation of teaching strategies align with existing evidence on the multiple approaches that educators use in teaching adaptive skills for different learner populations. Notably, educators in the five schools included in this study highlighted the use of task and skills division into smaller tasks or sub-skills, as well as the use of stage-based teaching, teaching one skill and moving to the next only when the learner fully understands and acquires the skills under focus. Marder and Fraser (2012), Rimingado (2022), and Osei (2020) indicate that educators use a variety of approaches in teaching ID learners' adaptive skills, including peer teaching, cooperative teaching, direct teaching, and group teaching (Marder & Fraser, 2012; Rimingado, 2022; Osei, 2020).

In one study, Rimingado (2022) found that educators utilized task analysis, prompting, modelling, discrete-trial training, use of IEPs, peer teaching, interactive teaching, applied behavior analysis, and cooperative teaching. In a similar study conducted in Ghana's special schools, Osei (2020) found that teachers used a comprehensive adaptive skills curriculum in Ghana's Unit Special Schools, with the main teaching methods being the use of direct instruction, cooperative teaching, and interactive teaching procedures. In another study, Muller et al. (2022) emphasized on the use of peer-based approaches in teaching adaptive skills for students with ID. Using a sample of 1125 students with ID, the researchers found that a classroom peer context in the teaching of adaptive skills in

this population led to a significant increase in individual conceptual skills, with this attributed to greater conceptual skills in peers.

4.4.3 Theme 3: Head Teachers' Professional Qualification Influences Teaching of Adaptive Skills for ID Learners

According to the findings of the study, head teacher qualification in instructional supervision was found to be an important factor influencing the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. Out of the five head teachers, only one head teacher with a bachelor's degree reported having been trained in SNE, with the other four head teachers denying having any SNE training or specialized education. Teachers across the five schools were asked whether their head teacher was trained on SNE and whether this was linked with awareness of the importance of adaptive skills for ID learners. Notably, teachers in the 5 schools reported mixed experiences with head teachers based on their qualification level, with head teachers who were specially trained being reported to be aware of adaptive skills, their importance for ID learners, and the strategies used to facilitate effective instruction. One teacher observed that "Yes. I believe my head teacher has appropriate qualifications. He has a bachelor's degree in special needs education (ID education) (TR 3 SC1).

Supporting the importance of this qualification in influencing instructional supervision for teaching ID, the same participant said, "Yes, he is trained in the area of ID. He is supportive, ensuring that everyone is equipped to teach adaptive skills effectively" (TR 3

SCI). Concurring with the importance of professional qualification and training, another participant acknowledged the importance of training in special education, indicating “The head teacher has a degree in special education and intellectual disability. So, yes. His functions in the institution manifest his special skills. He conducts regular instructional supervision, he gives feedback, and he ensures post-observation reflection.” (TR 6 SCI).

Highlighting the need for professional qualification, the lack of head teacher training in this area emerged as an issue of concern, with several participants reporting a lack of professional qualification by their head teachers. The lack of professional qualification was associated with a lack of knowledge on SNE, which in turn negatively influenced head teachers’ approaches to inclusive teaching. Focusing on the lack of qualification, two teachers reported that

“No, he cannot have training in SNE because he seems not to have any knowledge on the same. The lack of training in SNE makes our head teacher have no interest in the activities that take place in the special unit.” (TR 1 SC 2).

“I doubt if he really knows what adaptive skills are. I think he has minimal qualifications for these roles. He seems to be a head teacher for the normal primary school only. One lacks the fine or basic information to assist class teachers who are not trained in SNE.” (TR 2 SC 2).

The findings are consistent with existing evidence on the importance of professional qualification in instructional supervision among head teachers and its influence on

teaching effectiveness (Anwar et al., 2022; Jane & Odeh, 2023; M'birithu et al., 2024; Nsengimana et al., 2024). While Anwar et al. (2022) did not focus on the teaching of adaptive skills, the researchers found that high qualifications of head teachers led to greater effectiveness in administering instruction, with head teachers with postgraduate education having greater school performance as compared to those with graduate education. Reporting similar findings in a Kenyan population, M'birithu et al. (2024) established that the educational experiences of learners with ID were significantly shaped by the academic qualifications of educators in schools within Meru County. Examining the different academic levels, Jane and Odeh (2023) found that Nigerian head teachers who had a master's and bachelor's degree had better supervisory practices, indicating that the higher the level of education, the better equipped and prepared the head teacher is.

The influence of head teachers' professional qualifications on effective teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners was also examined from the perspective of the head teachers. When asked whether they interacted with ID learners and whether they were aware of adaptive skills for ID learners, this study established that head teachers who had no formal SNE training and limited or poor interactions with ID learners had limited understanding and awareness of adaptive skills. Only the head teacher with SNE training reported interacting with ID learners in multiple ways, indicating that "I visit their classes, I visit them during games, and I encourage them to have one-on-ones in my office" (HT1 SC 1).

Deficits in interaction with ID learners among head teachers were observed in four schools. One head teacher reported that “I occasionally interact with them, especially during morning assemblies through greetings and casual talk” (HT 2 SC 2). In another school where the head teacher had no SNE training, when asked about interacting with ID learners, the head teacher reported, “I only see them during assembly” (HT 3 SC 3). Similar findings were reported by two other head teachers who indicated that “I only interact with them during morning assembly. I do not allow them to visit other classes” (HT 4 SC 4), with the other noting that “I occasionally interact with them during assemblies through greetings and casual talk, as some are very outspoken” (HT 5 SC 5). This suggests that head teachers with no formal SNE training concentrated more on the students in the mainstream classes, having little interaction with ID learners, with this interaction limited only to outside the classroom setting. This was evidenced by head teachers reporting that they only interacted with ID learners during the assemblies.

Evidence from a growing body of research highlights the need for interactions between head teachers and SNE learners as an approach to fostering inclusivity in schools (Balyaino et al., 2023; Baraily, 2021; Khaleel et al., 2021; Lüddeckens et al., 2021; Makewa & Mutie, 2019; Neves et al., 2023; Portfelt, 2023; Shiwani, 2021). Consistent with this, the study highlights the important role that head teachers’ interaction with ID learners plays in fostering a culture of inclusion across the schools in Igembe South sub-county. In a study conducted in Sweden, Portfelt (2022) found that the potential to influence the teaching of SNE learners in mainstream school was influenced by the practices within the practice ecology, with this including behaviors and actions by the

head teachers. These findings align with those of a similar study conducted in Makueni County in Kenya. In this study, Makewa and Mutie (2019) found that learner engagement as a management function was rated averagely, indicating a failure by management to fully comply with the engagement of learners with special needs. Reporting on the role of school heads in fostering the development of inclusive schools, Khaleel et al. (2021) found that the attitude and behaviors of head teachers influenced inclusive practices, with this affecting the school's perception of special needs learners and supporting the development of a well-structured and inclusive school.

The findings highlight the need for specialized training for head teachers to equip them with the skills needed for high-quality special needs education. As reported by a majority of the participants, the lack of training among the head teachers led to an overt lack of knowledge on SNE, as well as a lack of interest in SNE activities, including the teaching of adaptive skills. Notably, when asked about the qualification of their school's head teacher, one teacher reported that "No, though he seems to have slight interest in adaptive skills" (TR 2 SC 4). Agreeing with the role of training and influence on competence and interest in SNE and the teaching of adaptive skills, another teacher added

"No, he cannot have training in SNE because he seems not to have any knowledge on the same. The lack of training in SNE makes our head teacher have no interest in the activities that take place in the special unit." (TR 1 SC 3).

Similarly, head teachers themselves reported having limited knowledge of adaptive skills and the teaching of these skills for ID learners. Only two head teachers had awareness of

adaptive skills, with one of them being the head teacher who reported having SNE training. With regard to awareness of adaptive skills, the head teacher agreed with being aware of these skills, indicating that adaptive skills include “self-care, table manners, grooming, etiquette, and socialization” (HT1 SC 1), while the other indicated that adaptive skills include “self-care, table manners, and socialization” (HT 4 SC 4). All other head teachers from the three remaining schools demonstrated little or no knowledge of adaptive skills. In the context of being aware of adaptive skills, one participant reported, “I am not sure. I think they are things like cleaning oneself, table manners, socialization, and dressing” (HT 5 SC 5). One head teacher indicated a complete lack of awareness, saying, “I do not know” (HT 3 SC 3), with the other reported being unsure by saying

“Not aware, but I guess they are things they need most. Things like dressing, cleaning the mouth for those who drool, and manners when feeding and speaking. I think the adaptive skill is maybe something like socialization.” (HT 2 SC 2).

These findings highlight a lack of awareness by head teachers of the specific adaptive skills that are needed to empower ID learners. As reflected by both the head teachers and teachers, the head teachers who have no formal SNE training have an overt lack of awareness of adaptive skills, with this further reflected in the limited interaction between the head teachers and the ID learners in these schools. This leads to a need for formal training for head teachers to be equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to support holistic learning for ID learners. The need for head teacher training is consistent with existing evidence on the importance of head teacher training for effective instructional

supervision (Anwar et al., 2022; Okeyo et al., 2024). Okeyo et al. (2024) underscore the need for head teacher training to empower them with the skills needed for effective instructional supervision. In their study, Okeyo et al. (2024) found that instructional supervision training for head teachers was critical in influencing their implementation of the curriculum, hence concluding on the need for continuous training to foster effective instructional supervision.

The need for SNE training is further emphasized on by Mwanzia and Kalai (2022). One particular study conducted by Mwanzia and Kalai (2022) focused on instructional supervision in the context of SNE. Focusing on public schools in Mbooni East and West sub-counties in Kenya, the researcher found that head teachers who had been trained in SNE were more likely to provide instructional supervision, while the untrained head teachers were reported to be less likely to supervise SNE activities, hence impairing efforts in the county aimed at enhancing inclusion for SNE learners. Therefore, the findings, concurrent with existing evidence, indicate that higher levels of qualification are crucial to increase knowledge and facilitate the development of attitude and competence, shaping head teachers' instructional supervision in teaching adaptive skills for ID learners.

4.4.4 Theme 4: Strategies Used to Supervise Teaching of Adaptive Skills

This study also sought to explore the supervisory strategies used by head teachers in Igembe South's special education primary schools and units for the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. Through the data collected, it was observed that the head teachers

utilized different supervisory strategies. The main strategies that were reported included classroom observation, mentorship, providing resources, checking of professional records, collaboration, and inclusion of teachers during meetings.

In schools where the teacher had some form of SNE training, the head teachers were reported to engage in more supervisory strategies as compared to schools where teachers reported a lack of SNE training in their head teacher. For instance, participants in the first school reported that the main strategies used by their head teacher included capacity building, training on scaffolding and task analysis, mentorship, prompts and modeling, providing regular feedback, and in-service training. Supporting this, one teacher reported that the head teacher achieves instructional supervision through

“mentorship and in-service training He also supports workshops where differentiated approaches are presented. He explains new teaching methods to the class teacher if he finds out that the method in question is new to the teacher. He orients new teachers before they start teaching.” (TR 6 SC 1).

The study also investigated the supervisory practices of head teachers across the five schools. From the data provided, it was observed that there was a variation in the frequency of supervision of teachers as they teach ID learners adaptive skills. This study established that the head teacher’s frequency of supervision and supervisory practices were determined by head teacher training in SNE. Notably, the head teacher who had SNE training at a bachelor’s degree level reported that

“I provide teachers with teaching and learning materials, as well as facilitate mentorship programs for teachers, ensuring that teachers are trained and able to use stage-based curriculum for the ID learners.” (HT 1 SC 1).

Contrary to this head teacher, the other head teachers who lacked SNE training reported poor supervisory practices, with a majority indicating that they left the choice of teaching practices for adaptive skills to the SNE teachers. When asked about the strategies used to effectively supervise the teaching and learning of adaptive skills for ID learners, one head teacher replied, “They know better than I do, so I do not interfere with their work” (HT 2 SC 2), with another head teacher indicating that “I don’t have anything to offer to the special learners; I therefore don’t show up to them regularly” (HT 3 SC 3). This indicated that the head teachers acknowledged that they lacked training on how to effectively guide the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. Consistent with this, two other head teachers expressed trust in the SNE teachers, indicating they rarely supervised the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners, with one head teacher noting that “I believe they do the right thing because they have been with the learners for some time and most of them are trained” (HT 4 SC 4), while the other indicated that “Special class teachers are trained in the area and therefore are more informed than I am. I think they know about adaptive skills and therefore teach relevant skills” (HT 5 SC 5).

In the schools where the head teacher lacked SNE training, the teachers reported challenges in the strategies used to supervise the teaching of adaptive skills. In one such school, one teacher reported challenges in instructional supervision, indicating that

“He explained roughly about task analysis as a new method of teaching children with special needs generally. When he tells us about the task analysis, at least we are able to break the tasks into smaller, doable tasks. Though he doesn’t understand other methods like scaffolding used in teaching learners with ID” (TR 1 SC 4).

Reporting similar challenges, another teacher in another school indicated that “There is no support that I get from the head teacher. He doesn’t seem to know much about special education, and specifically, ID. Our head teacher does not guide us on anything to do with teaching adaptive skills to our learners with ID” (TR 1 SC 3). Highlighting that their head teacher does not support the SNE unit in any way, one teacher reported an assumption that their head teacher had no specialized training, indicating that the head teacher had never guided them on how to improve instructional supervision, not only for teaching adaptive skills but in all domains. Supervisory strategies used were also examined from the perspective of the head teachers.

Head teachers were also asked about the level of support and type of resources that they provided for SNE teachers to facilitate the teaching of adaptive skills. Similar to reports by the teachers, only the head teacher with SNE training effectively managed and supported the teachers, providing them with the needed resources. When asked about managing and supporting teachers, this head teacher responded that “Yes, I am directly involved in managing teachers’ affairs and operations and provision of their needs” (HT 1 SC 1). However, those with no SNE training reported challenges in the implementation

of supervisory practices. One teacher reported that “Yes, I do with regular school teachers but not with those in special class because I don’t understand the needs of their learners” (HT 2 SC 2), with another adding that “Yes, I am directly involved in managing teachers’ affairs and operations and provision of their needs. The issues of learners with ID are left entirely to their teachers” (HT 4 SC 4). This shows that while instructional supervision is primarily the responsibility of the head teacher, head teachers with no formal SNE training faced challenges in supervising SNE teachers as they teach adaptive skills to ID learners, with an exception seen in the head teacher trained in SNE.

Head teachers were also asked about the supervisory strategies that they used in guiding teachers on effective teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. This yielded mixed findings on the strategies used in supervisory practices. The main supervisory strategies reported by the head teachers included signing schemes of work and lesson plans, classroom observation, mentorship and collaboration, and teamwork with teachers. Only two teachers reported utilizing these strategies, with one being the head teacher with formal training (HT1 SC 1) and the other being one head teacher with no formal training (HT 4 SC 4).

The head teacher who had SNE training had greater supervisory experience, hence utilizing a wide range of supervisory techniques. When asked about setting performance targets and teacher training, this head teacher reported that “I set performance targets because when you set targets you are more likely to achieve your expectations than when you don’t,” adding that he facilitates teacher training to promote effective understanding

of teaching roles, with this aimed at “sharpening their skills through seminars and workshops and internal trainings, inviting external speakers, which have so far been effective in improving output.” (HT 1 SC 1). This head teacher reported being in charge of assigning tasks to all teachers in the school, as well as managing teachers and ensuring availability of all resources to meet their teaching needs. Head teachers were also asked about the use of feedback as a supervisory strategy. The head teacher with SNE training reported using feedback in their supervision, which was effective in improving teacher productivity, indicating that

“We revisit teachers’ performance and objectively discuss weaknesses and strengths, and then decide the way forward. We also use social media; we have internal meetings with teachers. The approach is effective because the teachers give their opinions, and they raise any issues through the forums. Teachers are motivated and willing to perfect their work.” (HT 1 SC 1).

The other head teachers who had no formal training in SNE acknowledged that they did not implement any supervisory strategies to monitor the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners and had limited to no integration of teacher training, setting performance targets, or providing feedback to SNE teachers. When asked about the use of supervisory practices, these teachers indicated that “I hardly visit special class because I don’t know what they teach, and again, I am usually a very busy person” (HT 2 SC 2), with another head teacher reporting that “I don’t have anything to offer to the special learners; I therefore don’t show up to them regularly. I do not have any skill that I can use with ID learners. They are very delicate” (HT 3 SC 3). In the fourth school, the head teacher, who

had no SNE training, reported that “I am not aware of the strategies to use to supervise teaching of adaptive skills” (HT 4 SC 4).

The lack of SNE training among head teachers is evidenced by the deficits in their use of supervisory strategies, including setting performance targets, facilitating teacher training, and offering regular feedback for teachers teaching adaptive skills to ID learners. For instance, the head teachers in two schools noted that the teachers in the special classes set their own targets, as they had a better understanding of the teaching and learning in these classes. With regard to teacher training, this head teacher noted that “We provide training for both regular and special teachers together” (HT 5 SC 5). One other head teacher said that “I don’t even see the reason to waste time with the learners with ID because they don’t seem to understand a thing” (HT 3 SC 3), with another head teacher citing lack of understanding of the needs of ID learners, saying, “Yes, I do with regular school teachers but not with those in special class because I don’t understand the needs of their learners” (HT 2 SC 2). A concerning issue that arose from this section was the confessions by head teachers on their overt lack of understanding of the needs of ID learners, as well as an overt lack of interest in helping ID learners, with one teacher indicating that “I have no time for learners with ID” (HT 2 S C 2).

There was also a lack of regularity in providing feedback for the SNE teachers in their teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. All head teachers who did not provide SNE teachers with feedback attributed this to a lack of knowledge and competency in supervising SNE teachers. One such head teacher indicated, “No, I do not have a

feedback approach with special education teachers since I lack knowledge on ID learners and their needs” (HT 2 SC 2), with another head teacher categorically stating that “No. I do not work with them” (HT 3 SC 3), while another added, “No, I don’t have any feedback to give to SNE teachers because I have no idea on how to deal with those learners” (HT 4 SC 4). Based on these findings, head teacher training on SNE is important to empower them with the knowledge and skills needed for supervision to facilitate effective teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. While this is so, a majority of the head teachers in Igembe South sub-county lacked the knowledge and skills needed to effectively supervise the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners, leading to limited or complete lack of efforts to facilitate teacher training, set performance targets for SNE teachers, manage teachers and provide resources, and provide feedback to the teachers.

The supervision strategies highlighted in this research align with strategies reported by multiple researchers. Evidence from a large body of evidence shows that the main supervisory strategies used by school heads include the provision of real-time feedback, classroom observation, peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, checking professional records, facilitating professional development, providing instructional resources, and training of new teachers (Akpalu et al., 2025; Kusi et al., 2019; Landawe et al., 2024; Rizada, 2024; Okeyo et al., 2024; Osei, 2020).

Despite the reports on strategies used, several issues were reported, with the key being infrequency in supervision and provision of real-time feedback. Notably, one participant’s reply indicated neglect, with the teacher noting that “He rarely visits the

special class, such that sometimes I don't even tell whether he is aware that this class exists in this school." (TR 1 SC 5). This was supported by another teacher who reported that "He occasionally moves around; it's probably his method of supervision. He does not supervise our class. He does not give us any feedback" (TR 2 SC 4). Osei (2020) found that providing real-time feedback was an effective supervision strategy that enhanced teacher performance.

With regard to the supervisory strategies used, one core area of interest that emerged was on the provision of resources, with a focus on the type of resources that the head teachers provided for the teachers to teach adaptive skills for the ID learners. While head teachers in some schools provided some resources, a majority of the respondents reported having limited access to such resources, attributing this to a lack of understanding of SNE needs and adaptive skills, as well as a lack of commitment on the part of the head teacher. In the school where these resources were provided, the teachers reported being given appropriate teaching materials for adaptive skills, as well as being empowered through in-service training and workshops to improvise materials needed to empower ID learners with adaptive skills. Where the teachers reported a lack of resources, they indicated that the head teachers either provided teaching resources for the mainstream classes or completely did not provide anything. One teacher reported that "He hardly provides teaching/learning materials to help teach adaptive skills. No impact since no materials. I struggle to improvise" (TR 2 SC 5), with another teacher who shared similar thoughts on the lack of resource and overall head teacher support noting that

“The head teacher allowed us to attend a workshop which was organized by the education office, though it was about improving performance in KCPE—so it was about regular teachers” (TR 1 SC 4).

The lack of resources for teaching ID learners reflected in this study is reported in similar studies across Kenya. In a study of Kenyan public schools, Long’ore et al. (2023) found that the main challenges faced by special needs learners in public schools in Kenya included a lack of physical facilities and a lack of instructional materials for learning and teaching, with learners with special needs in the schools having to do with the resources provided for the mainstream classes. In a similar study, Osman et al. (2020) found that the lack of instructional materials had a significant impact on the education of learners with special needs in Garissa County. Citing a decline in the number of special needs learners in the schools in the county, the researchers conducted a qualitative study with the goal of assessing the status of the implementation of inclusive education in Garissa County (Osman et al., 2020). The researchers established a significant lack of teaching materials, including visual and hearing aids, with county education officers and teachers reporting that they did not see a need for teaching and learning resources tailored for special needs learners (Osman et al., 2020). The impact of this was reflected in the poor academic performance of special needs learners in these schools, as well as a significant decline in retention rates for this population (Osman et al., 2020).

In a similar study conducted in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Khaleel et al. (2021) found that head teacher provision of teaching and learning materials was perceived by

teachers as a key aspect of promoting inclusive education, enhancing the effectiveness of teaching for SNE learners. Teachers in the UAE highlighted the need for head teachers to ensure adequacy of the teaching staff, including SNE teachers, as well as allocate a budget that would ensure adequacy of teaching and learning resources for SNE learners (Khaleel et al., 2021). As the study findings suggest, head teachers' provision of resources was reported by teachers in Uganda as crucial to facilitating quality infrastructure for teaching SNE learners (Balyaino et al., 2023).

In this study, teachers in Mulago, Uganda, note that the provision of resources, including supervision and teaching aids, enhanced the quality of education for SNE learners (Balyaino et al., 2023). Therefore, the evidence from this study, which correlates with existing evidence, highlights the lack of instructional materials as a major challenge impacting the teaching and learning of ID learners. In the context of teaching adaptive skills, the lack of tailored resources for special needs learners poses a significant disadvantage to ID learners, denying them an opportunity to thrive through accessing inclusive, high-quality education.

4.4.5 Theme 5: Head Teachers' Supervisory Experiences and Their Influence on the Teaching of Adaptive Skills

This research also sought to explore how the supervisory experiences of the head teachers in the five special schools and units influenced the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID. The findings of this research show that teachers whose head teacher had some form of training on SNE were reported to engage in more supervisory strategies, provided

real-time feedback regularly and constructively, and were able to provide the needed resources. For instance, one teacher who reported that their head teacher was trained in SNE indicated that “He does supervision fairly regularly and gives back feedback. Yes, the feedback given is discussed constructively” (TR 7 SC 1). When asked about resources, training, feedback, and collaboration, the teacher indicated that

“He does supervision fairly regularly and gives back feedback. Yes, the feedback given is discussed constructively. He also provides a variety of materials and other devices to be used by the teacher and learners as well, enabling me to improve in teaching. Yes, He involves me, especially after class observation, as we reflect on the feedback. He engages all teachers in planning for teaching/learning materials, among other issues” (TR 7 SC 1).

When asked about tracking and reviewing learner progress in learning adaptive skills, the teacher reported that the same head teacher utilized progress records, IEP objectives, and classroom observation assessments, as well as regularly checking and signing teacher records. However, for the head teachers with no specialized SNE training, the teachers reported a lack of regular feedback, collaboration, and resource provision, noting that these head teachers rarely tracked and reviewed the progress of the ID learners in learning adaptive skills. One particular teacher reported that there was completely no support from the head teacher, citing that the head teacher rarely visited the SNE class in the school. It was also reported that

“The head teacher provides textbooks, which are meant for regular classes. These are wrong resources for learners with ID. As class teachers for these learners, we

improvise teaching and learning materials where possible. He also rarely collaborates with us and only involves us during the general staff meeting” (TR 1 SC 2).

The above findings regarding frequency of supervision and the provision of resources, as well as collaboration, highlight the main challenges that teachers face in teaching ID learners’ adaptive skills. Emphasizing the need for instructional supervision, Rizada (2024) investigated the supervisory practices of head teachers in Puerto Rico. The researcher found that the head teachers frequently provided instructional supervision to teachers in the school, with this being critical in giving all teachers helpful and precise feedback for improved performance. In a similar study, Mwanzia and Kalai (2022) investigated the instructional supervision of head teachers in Kenya, focusing on special needs within primary schools in the study setting. Similarly, Mwanzia and Kalai (2022) found deficits in the frequency of instructional supervision, concluding that the failure to regularly supervise schools in Mbooni East and West sub-counties contributed to the poor implementation of inclusion programs for special needs learners in the area. The participants in this study reported that the failure to regularly supervise SNE teachers was due to competing responsibilities for the head teachers and a lack of commitment towards the implementation of inclusive educational practices for SNE learners (Mwanzia & Kalai, 2022).

The study also shows a lack of head teacher involvement in the professional development of teachers. When asked about efforts by their head teachers to foster teacher professional

growth, a majority of the respondents cite a lack of effort at fostering professional growth and leading by example, with some reporting efforts by their head teachers and actual involvement in teaching ID learners adaptive skills. In the schools and units led by a head teacher with training in SNE, the teachers reported head teacher support for professional growth, as well as leading by example to show the teachers the right strategies to use to empower learners with adaptive skills. The main strategies used by these head teachers for fostering professional growth included instructional supervision, mentorship and coaching, collaboration, staff recognition and motivation, reviewing IEPs, regular feedback, in-service training, and facilitating peer observation. One teacher reported that the head teacher promotes their professional growth “through pre- and post-supervision reflection, collaboration and teamwork, encouraging peer observations and mentorship, especially for inexperienced teachers” (TR 3 SC 1).

When asked for an example of how their teacher leads by example in teaching adaptive techniques and fostering inclusive practice, educators from the schools with head teachers having some form of training in SNE reported that their head teachers provided them with the needed teaching and learning resources and organized in-service training and demonstration sessions, with one participant saying, “He once led teachers in teaching ‘crossing road safely’ and ‘feeding rabbits’” (TR 2 SC 1). However, this was not the case across all schools or units.

Teachers from schools where the heads were not trained in SNE reported little or no efforts by the school heads in promoting the professional growth of SNE teachers, as well

as failure to lead by example in teaching adaptive skills to SNE learners. Notably, one teacher replies, “He doesn’t support special education teachers’ professional development” (TR 1 SC 5), with another reporting that “though he seems to have some interest, he is so attached to the regular schools that he has no time for mentorship and to assist in understanding the areas we lack” (TR 2 SC 4).

Agreeing with the need for regular supervision to foster inclusion in education, Balyaino et al. (2023) established that regular supervision, in-service training, planning, support, motivation, and feedback are critical to promoting high-quality education for special needs learners. Similarly, Mwanzia and Kalai (2022) highlighted the need for the involvement and participation of head teachers in teaching SNE learners, emphasizing leadership and providing opportunities for professional growth and development for SNE teachers. In line with the foregoing findings, head teachers have an important role to play in promoting the professional development of SNE teachers, ensuring adequate preparation and training to promote high-quality teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners.

4.4.6 Theme 6: Perception of Teachers towards Head Teachers’ Instructional Supervision

The study examined the perception of teachers in Igembe South sub-county towards the instructional supervision of head teachers in five special schools and units in teaching adaptive skills for ID learners. The main finding of this study was mixed feelings and attitudes among teachers towards this, with the nature of perception influenced by the

level of specialized training for the head teacher. Among participants with a positive attitude, the key finding was that teachers had a positive perception of head teachers who had qualifications and training in SNE. Notably, teachers reported being confident with school heads who had been trained on SNE, noting that these head teachers had a greater understanding of the learning needs of ID learners. One such teacher noted that they believed their head teacher had SNE training and qualification, as his skills positively impacted classroom teaching by encouraging and raising the confidence of teachers in teaching adaptive skills. Similarly, for head teachers with training and qualifications in SNE, one other participant reported that the head teacher demonstrated this through regular instructional supervision, providing feedback and organizing reflection, with this being crucial to supporting teachers in teaching adaptive skills to ID learners. Agreeing with this, another teacher indicated that

“Yes, He conducts classroom observation, gives feedback, and holds post-observation reflection. He also organizes in-service training to strengthen teachers’ confidence and approach to more tasks. The head teacher makes the environment conducive for learning through providing teaching and learning resources and involving teachers in identifying relevant materials for their learners” (TR 3 SC 1).

Teachers who had a negative perception of the instructional supervision approaches and experiences by their head teachers attributed this to a lack of qualification and training in SNE on the part of the head teacher. When asked whether the head teacher had the necessary training and qualification, one teacher replied that “No, he doesn’t seem to

have the necessary qualifications and training in special education,” arguing that the head teacher did not seem to be “aware of the teaching of adaptive skills negatively as they do not add value to the teaching of adaptive skills” (TR 2 SC 2). Pointing out the lack of qualification and training, one other teacher from a different school mentioned that their head teacher did not seem to have any training, with this reflected in the head teacher’s lack of skills, which “negatively impact the teaching of adaptive skills as they do not add value to the teaching of adaptive skills” (TR 1 SC 3).

The teachers also highlighted their descriptions of their head teacher’s beliefs on teaching and whether these beliefs influenced school policies, practices, and cultures. All teachers agreed that their head teachers’ beliefs determined the school policies, practices, and cultures. For teachers whose head teachers believed that all teachers were important in teaching and changing the lives of ID learners, the head teachers’ beliefs were reported to positively influence school policies, practices, and culture. One such teacher noted that “His beliefs are valid because they manifest his faith that learners can actually achieve if taught well. Also that anybody can learn” (TR 7 SC 1), with another indicating that

“The head teacher seems to believe that teachers can teach and change lives of learners with ID. He believes that teachers for learners with ID know everything about their learners” (TR 2 SC 2).

However, some teachers reported negative beliefs among their head teachers towards ID learners, with this resulting in school policies, practices, and a culture ignoring the needs of ID learners. Focusing on this, one teacher reported, “As far as learners with ID are

concerned, his beliefs have not impacted much” (TR 2 SC 4), with another noting that “The head teacher believes in supporting the regular class. So his beliefs do not affect special class positively (TR 2 SC 3). The lack of positive beliefs on ID learners was also reported by a teacher in another school who said that their head teacher “doesn’t believe in ID learners and the effort needed to make them useful members of society. His beliefs may have influenced school policies, practices, and culture negatively” (TR 2 SC 5).

The study also investigated teachers’ perception of the effectiveness of head teachers’ instructional supervision from the view of the head teachers. When they were asked what teachers thought of their supervision, head teachers indicated their knowledge that teachers faulted their supervisory approaches. Notably, one head teacher reported, “They say they are not supervised and don’t get help from the head teacher. That I only look for faults” (HT 5 SC 5), with another adding that “No, but they feel that I do not support their professional development. I haven’t had any information on any teacher who has said that I oppress them” (HT 4 SC 4). Two head teachers indicated that they had not received any reports from teachers on any form of oppression or fault, saying, “I haven’t had any information on any teacher who has said that I oppress them” (HT 2 SC 2) and “I have not received any information on any teacher claiming that I oppress them” (HT 3 SC 3).

With regard to complaints raised by teachers, head teachers reported that the main complaint by most of the teachers in their schools was a complaint of their lack of knowledge on adaptive skills. Additionally, head teachers were aware that teachers in

their schools complained about a range of other issues, including poor supervisory practices, ineffective leadership, lack of knowledge on SNE and the needs of ID learners, and lack of support, with one head teacher reporting that “most teachers complain that I do not help them” (HT 4 SC 4). One head teacher indicated that “most complaints are about my knowledge about adaptive skills for learners with ID and supervision of the same” (HT 5 SC 5).

Highlighting concerns by teachers over the lack of knowledge of SNE learners, one head teacher reported that “they say that I do not associate with special learners, that I have no knowledge about supervision of adaptive skills, and that I am incompetent in supervision” (HT 2 SC 2). Similar to this head teacher, another head teacher reported concerns by teachers over his/her skills and competencies, noting that “they complain that I am not effective in supervising their teaching” (HT 3 SC 3).

A key highlight that emerges from this is that all these head teachers lacked SNE training, with the faults and complaints aligning with the teachers’ concerns over head teachers’ supervisory practices, ineffective leadership, lack of understanding of adaptive skills, and lack of knowledge on the needs of ID learners. Similar to what the teachers reported, only the head teacher with SNE training had positive reports, as supported by the teachers from the schools. When asked what a majority of the teachers and learners think of the supervisory practices, the head teacher reported that “they appreciate my supervision,” adding that “sometimes teachers ask me questions freely and treat me as a colleague” (HT 1 SC 1). With regard to complaints from the teachers, this head teacher indicated

that “most complaints are about the slow learning nature of the learners and non-supportive parents” (HT 1 SC 1). These findings were similar to what the teacher in the first school said, including effective leadership and supervisory practices, head teacher support, and head teacher interaction with ID learners.

The results of this study with regard to teacher perception resonate with existing evidence on teachers’ perception of head teachers’ instructional supervision. In this case, both teachers and head teachers reported consistent findings with regard to head teacher support, supervision, and overall leadership, with head teacher qualification playing an important role in influencing these aspects. Examining the perception of teachers towards the instructional supervision of their head teachers, Sibomana (2020) found that all teachers displayed higher awareness of the significance and importance of instructional supervision. These teachers reported that instructional supervision was critical to improve learning conditions for all learners (Sibomana, 2020).

Reporting similar findings, Seraphine et al. (2022) found that teachers had a positive perception of head teachers’ instructional supervision, with a majority of the teachers agreeing that head teachers’ instructional supervision played an important role in empowering teachers to prepare professional documents, lesson notes, schemes of work, and lesson plans, respectively. Mette et al. (2015) found that teachers believed that head teacher instructional supervision was effective in improving teacher instruction, with Anyagre (2016) establishing that teachers perceived internal supervision positively in impacting their productivity.

Khaleel et al. (2021) also investigated the role of school principals in promoting inclusive schools from a teachers' perspective. Using a qualitative study of 10 special needs and general education teachers in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Khaleel et al. (2021) found that school principals had an important role in influencing the development of an inclusive school. According to teachers in the UAE, they achieved this through their attitudes and behaviors, with the principal's willingness to promote inclusivity measured through the provision of teaching and learning resources, facilitating regular professional development and training, encouraging peer coaching, allocating an appropriate budget for SNE needs, and rewarding best practices among teachers (Khaleel et al., 2021).

In conformity to the findings reported by this study, Chow et al. (2021) reported similar findings with Anyagre (2016), Balyaino et al. (2023), Khaleel et al. (2021), Seraphine et al. (2021), and Sibomana (2021). Using a systematic literature review methodology, Chow et al. (2021) found that teachers perceived head teacher support as crucial to fostering the attainment of high-quality inclusive education. Notably, teachers acknowledged that in-service training was crucial to increasing their SNE knowledge, boosting their confidence, and developing positive attitudes towards working with SNE learners. Additionally, evidence in this review showed that teachers valued the provision of additional teaching materials and resources as imperative to successful implementation of inclusive education (Chow et al., 2021).

As supported by evidence, teachers included in this study concur with teachers across the world on the important role that school heads play in supporting the attainment of high-

quality inclusive education. Beyond the administrative role, head teachers in schools in Igembe South sub-county have been shown to play an important role in ensuring teacher support, leading by example, mentorship, facilitating continued professional development for SNE teachers, supervising, and providing adequate teaching and learning resources. Therefore, head teachers who are believed to support the learning of ID learners lead to schools developing positive policies, practices, and cultures that foster inclusive education, enabling ID learners to benefit from high-quality education.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the findings of the study. The study included 20 participants, with this including five head teachers and 15 teachers across five schools in Igembe South sub-county. In total, questionnaires were administered to the sample selected in the study setting, with all 20 duly answered and returned, hence the achievement of a 100% response rate. Out of the five head teachers included in the study, only one had a bachelor's degree in special needs education, majoring in intellectual disability; one other had a master's degree in special needs education, majoring in emotional and behavioral disorders; two head teachers had diplomas as their highest level of qualification; and one had the A levels as the highest level of academic qualification. Among the teachers, 53% had a bachelor's degree, 33.3% had a diploma, and 13.3% had a master's degree.

The findings of the study were reported in themes, focusing on instructional supervision among head teachers and the impact on effective teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners. In theme one, the findings of the study showed that teachers in Igembe South

sub-county recognized the importance of teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID. Additionally, head teachers across the schools integrated a range of strategies to facilitate effectiveness of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills. With regard to the teaching of ID learners, it was established that head teachers with training and qualifications in SNE performed better in instructional supervision, thereby facilitating effective teaching of adaptive skills. Such head teachers utilized a set of strategies such as classroom observation, continued professional development, facilitating in-service training, mentorship, providing resources, checking of professional records, collaboration, and a participatory approach to foster collaboration with SNE teachers.

The study also found that supervisory experience of head teachers influenced the instruction of adaptive skills, with head teachers with formal SNE training demonstrating better supervisory practices. On the contrary, head teachers with no training were reported to demonstrate deficiencies in supervisory practice, leading to inconsistent supervision, minimal guidance, and poor adaptive teaching skills. Overall, supervision was more highly rated by teachers in schools where head teachers were trained in SNE and in ID, with teachers across the five schools highlighting faults, complaints, and concerns towards the supervisory practices of their head teachers with regard to teaching adaptive skills to ID learners.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of the study findings, highlighting the influence of head teachers' instructional supervision on the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID. This is followed by a conclusion of the study and recommendations based on the study's implication for education policy and practice. The final part is recommendations given for future research work.

5.2 Summary of the Findings

Objective 1: Examine the head teachers' professional qualification in instructional supervision of teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County

The research study examined the role of the head teacher's instructional supervision in the effective delivery of adaptive skills by teachers to learners with ID, focusing on the influence of the head teacher's qualification and supervisory experience on the instructional supervision practices. First, this study established that teachers in Igembe South sub-county recognized the importance of teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID. Consistent with this, a growing body of evidence underscores the importance of teaching adaptive skills to learners with ID, noting that these skills not only assist with day-to-day functioning but are also critical for attainment of independence in adulthood and transition to employment in later years (Jacob et al., 2022; Jennifer, 2018; Kim et al., 2021; Lousky et al., 2024; Matthews et al., 2015; Rimingado, 2022). Despite this,

teachers in the schools included in the study acknowledge a lack of awareness among head teachers on the concept of adaptive skills, which in turn influences the effective teaching of these skills to ID learners across the five schools.

Effectiveness in how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills necessitates the use of appropriate teaching practices, as well as the utilization of adequate resources, tailored to the needs of these learners. This study established that teachers in Igembe South sub-county used diverse methods and approaches in teaching adaptive skills, including task division into small tasks, structural teaching beginning with assessment, teaching and feedback, prompting, modeling, and stage-based teaching. A key aspect of these strategies that emerged was the emphasis by teachers on stage-based teaching, as well as the use of IEPs to facilitate tailored teaching to meet the needs of each ID learner. and task division into small tasks as critical to effective teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID.

Existing research emphasizes tailored teaching, encouraging the use of IEPs to assess the learning needs and capabilities of the individual learner, which in turn facilitates the tailoring of the teaching process based on these findings (Jimenez & Barron, 2019; Kurth et al., 2022; McKenna et al., 2023; Nellah et al., 2022; Olewe-Nyunya et al., 2020). Notably, the use of IEPs for ID learners has been encouraged among researchers, as this approach highlights the learner's disability, outlining their level of educational performance, as well as measurable goals and the learner's progress in specific learning areas, hence facilitating effective attainment of learning goals (Jimenez & Barron, 2019;

Kurth et al., 2022; McKenna et al., 2023; Nellah et al., 2022; Olewe-Nyunya et al., 2020). While this is so, teachers who had no formal SNE training reported challenges in the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. The untrained teachers reported challenges in the use of stage-based teaching, which in turn disadvantaged ID learners in acquiring adaptive skills.

Based on the first objective, it was established that head teachers' training and qualification in SNE influenced instructional supervision. Head teachers who had formal training in SNE and ID were better in instructional supervision, empowering teachers with the skills and resources needed to teach adaptive skills. On the contrary, head teachers who did not have relevant training had significant challenges in this, with some teachers reporting an overt lack of commitment to the learners with ID. This finding is consistent with previous research findings highlighting the importance of professional qualification and training as key factors in the development of effective supervision (Anwar et al., 2022; Jane & Odeh, 2023; M'birithu et al., 2024; Nsengimana et al., 2024).

Objective 2: Establish strategies used by the head teacher in the supervision of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills

Successful head teachers utilized a set of strategies, including classroom observation, mentorship, providing resources, checking of professional records, collaboration, and inclusion of teachers during meetings. Notably, in schools where the head teacher had some form of SNE training, they were reported to engage in more supervisory strategies and were more likely to use a wide range of supervisory strategies. On the contrary, in the

schools where the head teacher lacked SNE training, the teachers reported challenges or failure to use supervision strategies. These findings resonate with existing evidence, which shows that school heads utilize a range of techniques for instructional supervision, including facilitating ongoing professional development, giving real-time feedback, classroom observation, peer mentoring, collaborative lesson planning, checking professional records, providing instructional resources, and training new teachers (Akpalu et al., 2025; Kusi et al., 2019; Landawe et al., 2024; Rizada, 2024; Okeyo et al., 2024; Osei, 2020).

Objective 3: Establish the effect of head teachers’ supervisory experience on the teaching of adaptive skills for learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-County

Supervisory experience of head teachers was shown to influence the instruction of adaptive skills. Schools with more experienced supervisors demonstrated clearer goal/target setting, improved task delegation to teacher strengths, more frequent class observation, and feedback that was actionable—all of which helped teachers adapt to adaptive learner-centered practices. Skilled head teachers also maintained professional growth and organized resource mapping and inventory checks in order to address SNE needs. In cases where the supervisory experience was deficient, teachers reported inconsistent supervision, minimal guidance, and poor adaptive teaching skills.

Objective 4: Examine the perception of teachers on how effectively the head teachers are performing their instructional supervision function over the adaptive skills teaching for learners with ID within Igembe South Sub-County.

With regard to the perception of teachers, supervision was more highly rated by teachers where head teachers were trained in SNE and in ID. Classroom teaching was observed regularly, they promoted open communication, and they provided a supportive working environment. Negative or neutral attitudes developed when head teachers were not trained in ID, where they displayed little interest in SNE class and concentrated on the mainstream performance, neglecting the learners with ID. This study also established awareness among head teachers of how poorly or highly the teachers in their schools rated them. Head teachers who lacked training in ID reported being aware of the faults, complaints, and concerns raised by teachers within their schools. Despite this, there was no evidence of efforts aimed at addressing the concerns raised, which indicates complacency among head teachers without training in ID fostering the development of inclusive schools in Kenya.

5.3 Conclusion

There are several conclusions that were drawn from the study findings. First, the study highlight the importance of instructional supervision over how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills to. Secondly, the instructional supervision strategies used by head teachers are important determinants of the nature and quality of adaptive skills teaching. Head teachers should leverage the diverse strategies evidenced to be effective, including provision of real-time feedback, classroom observation, peer mentoring, collaborative

lesson planning, checking professional records, facilitating professional development, providing instructional resources, and training of new teachers.

While this is so, head teachers should do more than just utilize these strategies, with there being a need for regular supervision, integration of collaborative practice, leading by example, and facilitating ongoing professional development for SNE teachers. Finally, head teachers' professional qualification and training influence the integration and use of instructional supervision strategies to ensure effectiveness of how learners with ID are taught adaptive skills. In light of this, there is a need for head teacher training to empower them with the knowledge, skills, and competence needed for instructional supervision to ensure effective teaching of adaptive skills among learners with ID.

The findings also highlight a need for teacher training, focusing on the needs of SNE learners and the teaching of adaptive skills to this population. While teachers included in this study acknowledged the need for adaptive skills for this population, a subsection reported challenges in the adoption of effective strategies for this population. To mitigate this, this study highlights a need for teacher training across primary schools in Kenya, with this being necessary to develop a competent workforce that can foster inclusive education for all learners.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Policy Recommendations

Based on the study findings on teachers and head teachers in Igembe South sub-county in Meru County, the researcher made the following recommendations:

Policy Recommendation 1

The Ministry of Education should formulate comprehensive policy guidelines outlining instructional supervision for teaching adaptive skills for ID learners across the different learning levels in the country. Evidence from this study shows that while educators trained in SNE are aware of instructional supervision for effective teaching of adaptive skills, those without face significant challenges in effectively supervising the teaching of these skills. This is further exacerbated by an overt lack of understanding and awareness of the concept of adaptive skills relevant for ID learners, hence disadvantaging this population. The development of a national instructional supervision framework is therefore pertinent to mitigating this problem. Such frameworks should focus on defining and outlining adaptive skills in the context of SNE and outlining the integration of collaboration, adaptive pedagogy, and accountability in the teaching of learners with ID.

Policy Recommendation 2

The MoE should mandate specialized training for head teachers, focusing on special needs leadership. As highlighted by teachers in this study and based on individual reports by head teachers, there is a widespread lack of SNE training among head teachers in Igembe South sub-county. This not only reflects existing challenges in Meru County but

across the entire country. To mitigate this, the MoE should collaborate with teacher training institutions to develop a standardized training program for head teachers on SNE. This should be done to empower head teachers with effective leadership and supervisory skills needed to foster the attainment of high-quality inclusive education in the country. Additionally, this should involve the development of a policy mandating that every head teacher undergoes certified training for instructional leadership in SNE, with this including training on the teaching of adaptive skills.

Besides head teacher training, there is a need for all teachers in Kenya to be trained in SNE. Integrating SNE as a unit across all teacher training colleges is important to ensure that all teachers, regardless of their teaching specialty, are conversant with SNE and ID learners. Notably, this study established challenges among teachers in mainstream schools with ID learners, with these teachers reporting challenges in the integration of effective teaching strategies for adaptive skills to ID learners. To address this, a national policy on mandatory basic SNE education for all teachers in Kenya is critical. The inclusion of this aspect in a national policy is important to empower all teachers with the knowledge and skills to foster inclusivity in the classroom setting.

Policy Recommendation 3

There is a need for national policies aimed at fostering inclusive education for ID learners, with emphasis placed on the development of adaptive skills. In a country where individuals with special needs face significant disparities in education, such a policy could help mitigate the existing gaps by empowering ID learners towards independence.

This policy should not only be limited to the primary school setting but cut across all levels of learning in Kenya. Such policies should emphasize the need for ID learners to develop adaptive skills as a core learning outcome and aspect for future employment preparation.

Policy Recommendation 4

Both national and county governments should ensure adequate funding and support for SNE learning centers. A core issue that was identified in this study is a lack of resources tailored to the teaching and learning of SNE learners. In a country championing education for all, efforts should be put in place to ensure that all learners, including those with special needs, have access to timely and high-quality education. This should encompass the establishment of budgets to support instructional supervision in special needs education, including in the teaching of adaptive skills.

5.4.2 Recommendations for Practice

Practice Recommendation 1

Head teachers across all Kenyan schools should adopt a participatory model of supervision by actively involving SNE teachers in decision-making, designing of instructional materials, planning of lessons, and assessment of learners. As highlighted by this study, there is an overt lack of partnership between head teachers and SNE teachers, putting SNE learners at a disadvantage. Notably, head teachers, despite their leadership and management responsibility, have placed the responsibility of teaching ID learners on

teachers, having minimal or no involvement in this. Adopting a collaborative model is necessary to foster ownership, empowering teachers with instructional relevance.

Practice Recommendation 2

All schools across Kenya should recognize adaptive skills as a core part of SNE. This should include a recognition of what adaptive skills entail and the impact of these skills on ID learners in the short and long term. Recognizing the importance of adaptive skills for ID learners, schools ought to introduce the use of Individualized Instructional Support Plans aimed at guiding teachers to tailor the teaching of adaptive skills to the needs and capability of the individual ID learners.

Practice Recommendation 3

Head teachers should recognize the important role they play in providing teaching materials. Besides relying on national and local government support, head teachers should recognize their administrative role at the school level, providing access to relevant teaching and learning resources. This should also extend to leveraging data-driven supervision, maximizing classroom observation results, learner progress data, and performance assessment to guide instructional supervision with regard to adaptive skills teaching.

Practice Recommendation 4

School heads should conduct and facilitate regular in-service training to ensure ongoing professional development among teachers. Teachers in Igembe South sub-county

highlighted the lack of professional development support by school heads. In lieu of this, head teachers in Igembe South sub-county acknowledge the important role that such training programs play in teacher development, hence facilitating continuous professional development for all teachers. This should involve collaboration with administration to leverage workshops and seminars aimed at achieving effective pedagogies and interventions enhancing the teaching of adaptive skills to ID learners. Additionally, teacher training programs should not be a one-time event, but rather integrated into a school's culture, thereby fostering a commitment to lifelong learning to improve their competence in teaching ID learners.

Practice Recommendation 5

Head teachers should serve as role models and mentors for SNE teachers. Based on the study findings, head teachers with SNE and ID training are effective team leaders and mentors, leading teachers in their schools to adopt effective teaching practices for the academic and holistic development of ID learners. This implies that head teachers in such schools serve as mentors, fostering the development of a workplace culture that champions the empowerment of ID learners. Head teachers should also foster a culture of mentorship, peer observation, and co-reflection to support continuous improvement in the teaching of adaptive skills.

5.4.3 Future Research

The study not only present important policy and practice implications but also serve as a framework and guide for future research. Notably, the present study sought to address an

important research gap, focusing on the teaching of adaptive skills among learners with ID. Despite having contributed to the filling of this research gap, there is still a need for future research work to explore this area further. As such, the researcher provides the following recommendations for future research.

Research Recommendation 1

The present study is only limited to five schools in Igembe South sub-county, Meru County. This poses a major limitation in the use of a single study setting, leading to the lack of a diverse sample that would allow the generalization of the study findings to other educational settings and/or context. This creates the need for future research work replicating this study in different settings to determine the impact of socio-cultural and geographic variations.

Research Recommendation 2

One main limitation for this study has been the use of a qualitative research design. As predominant in qualitative research, sample sizes in such studies are relatively small, with this study only using a sample of 20, including five head teachers and fifteen teachers. The impact of this is a relatively small sample that is not representative enough of the target population. Conducting a longitudinal study using a larger sample could help assess and determine whether a significant relationship exists between instructional supervision and the teaching of adaptive skills for ID learners.

Research Recommendation 3

Future research work should also explore the impact of sustained instructional supervision by head teachers. This should include a focus on the effect that this has on the acquisition of adaptive skills for ID learners in the long-term. Additionally, such studies should explore the long-term impact that this has on multiple domains of their lives, including in getting and sustaining employment and achieving independence in later adult life among learners with ID.

Research Recommendation 4

Future research ought to investigate the effectiveness of specific training programs for head teachers in SNE in improving supervisory practices. A major finding of this study is on the need for head teacher training in SNE, with the lack of qualification and experience in SNE among head teachers posing a major challenge to the effective teaching of ID learners. As highlighting in this research, head teachers' knowledge of SNE plays an important role in their attitudes and actions towards fostering inclusivity in schools that they lead. Studies investigating the effectiveness of training programs should also determine the impact that such training programs have on academic achievements of ID learners, as well as acquisition of adaptive skills.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Appointment Letter for Research

Rosallin K. Ruteere

Kenyatta University

4/7/2019

THE HEADTEACHER,

..... PRIMARY SCH,

IGEMBE SOUTH SUB-COUNTY, MERU COUNTY,

Dear Sir,

Re: A Visit to Your School to Plan for Research

I am a PhD student from Kenyatta University carrying a study on 'Head teachers' Instructional Supervision and Teaching of adaptive skills for Learners with Intellectual Disabilities. I request that I visit your school on Tuesday morning to book an appointment to collect data. I have been granted permission by university graduate school, NACOSTI, Meru County Commissioner and Meru County Director of Education. In your school, I will sample the respondents and collect data from them.

Thanks,

Yours Faithfully,



Rosallin Ruteere

Appendix II: Informed Consent

Introduction

My name is Rosallin Kananu Ruteere. I am a PhD student from Kenyatta University. I am conducting a study on “Head teacher’s instructional supervision and teaching of adaptive skills for learners with intellectual disabilities in Meru County, Kenya”. The information will be used by ministry of education, Directorate of Special Education; school managers (head teachers) to improve teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities to enable them live independently in their community.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

Participation in this study is voluntary. As the head of institution, the study will require that I ask you some questions and I will write down the answers you give.

For the classroom teacher, I will request him/her to fill the questionnaire individually with relevant responses. I will remind teachers that the exercise is voluntary.

I will provide learners with intellectual disabilities with materials to and will ask them to perform various adaptive skills, each activity at a time, according to ability and interest of an individual. A learner may refuse or be unable to do a given activity or even to respond to any question without any consequences.

DISCOMFORT AND RISKS

Some of the demographic questions may be intimate. In such instances where you may feel uncomfortable, you may refuse to answer these questions without any consequences.

BENEFITS

If you participate in this study you will help the teaching fraternity improve the services rendered to the learners with intellectual disabilities, who in turn may acquire adaptive skills and live independently.

REWARDS

If you agree to participate in this study, lunch will be provided and transport expenses will be reimbursed.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The study will be conducted in public institutions. However, the information gathered will be used only with this study. Names of the participants will not be recorded on the questionnaire. Everything will be kept private.

CONTACT INFORMATION

If you have any concerns or in need of clarafications| you may contact Dr on 0720 970 158 or Dron 0721 943 828 or Kenyatta University Ethical Review Committee Secretariat on chairman.kuerc@ku.ac.ke, secretary kuerc@ku.ac.ke.
Ercku2008@gmail.com

PARTICIPANT'S STATEMENT

The above information regarding my participants in the study is clear to me. I have been given a chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand that I will still get the same service whether I decide to leave the study or not. My decision will not change the service I will receive from teachers or any other service from anybody else.

Code of participant..... signature or thumb-print.....

INVESTIGATOR'S STATEMENT

I, the undersigned, have explained to the volunteer in a language she/he understands the procedures to be followed in the study and the risks and benefits involved.

Name of interviewer.....

Interviewer signature Date

Appendix III: Interview Guide for Head Teachers

My name is Rosallin Ruteere, a Ph.D. student from Kenyatta University, conducting a Research on: Head teachers' instructional supervision and teaching of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe|South Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya'. The information you will provide will be for this research purposes only and it will be treated with utmost confidentiality. My contacts are:

Email: rosaruteere1@gmail.com

Phone: 0720706940.

SECTION A: Demographic Information

1. Your highest academic qualification_____

Section B: Teaching of Adaptive skills

2. Do teachers in your school use IEP? Why or why not? If not do you think IEP could be adopted?
3. What do your teachers do when they lack resources needed to facilitate teaching?
(probe)

Section C: Head teachers' qualification as an instructional supervisor

4. Are you trained in SNE? (Probe)
5. Have you interacted with learners with ID as a head teacher? (Probe)
6. Are you aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID? (Probe)

Section D: Strategies Employed by Head teachers

7. How do you ensure that teachers teach correct adaptive skills to learners with ID?
8. What strategies do you use to effectively supervise (monitor) teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with ID? (Probe).

Section E: Head Teachers' Supervisory Experience

9. Do you set goals and performance targets for your teachers?
10. Do you facilitate teachers' training to promote their effective undertaking of teaching roles? Why and how do you do it? Has it been effective?
11. Are you the one in charge of assigning tasks in the school? (Probe)
12. Do you have a feedback approach you use with your teachers?

Which strategy is it?

And do you think it is effective?

Why or why not?

Section F: Teachers' perceptions on effectiveness of head teachers' instructional supervision

13. What do the majority of the teachers and learners think of your supervision. Do they think you are kind of oppressing them?
14. What are the major complaints presented by teachers in regard to your supervision of teaching of adaptive skills?

End of questions

Thank you for answering our questions

Appendix IV: Questionnaire for Teachers

My name is Rosallin Ruteere, a Ph.D student from Kenyatta University, conducting a Research on; ‘Head teachers’ instructional supervision and teaching of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County, Kenya’

The information you will provide will be for this research purposes only and it will be treated with utmost confidentiality. My contacts are:

Email: rosaruteere1@gmail.com

Head teachers’ qualification in instructional supervision

1. In your view, how well does your head teacher understand adaptive skills?

Could you give an example of how they have demonstrated this in practice?

2. Do you believe your head teacher has the appropriate academic background and qualifications for this role? Please describe any qualifications you are aware of.
3. Can you say your head teacher has any formal training in Special Needs Education (SNE)? how have you seen this training influence their approach to inclusive teaching. Do you feel your head teacher’s experience is sufficient for the challenges they face in supervising teaching of adaptive skills. Can you share an example that reflects their experience—positive or otherwise.

Head teachers’ instructional supervision strategies

4. How has the head teacher supported you to use techniques like task analysis or scaffolding when teaching adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities?

Can you describe a situation where their guidance helped improve your instructional approach?

5. How has the head teacher supported you to use techniques like task analysis or scaffolding when teaching adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities? Can you describe a situation where their guidance helped improve your instructional approach?

6. How frequently do the head teacher observes your lessons focused on adaptive skills and what type of feedback they usually give?

Do you feel this feedback helps you to improve your methods?

7. Describe the resources (e.g., teaching materials, visuals, assistive tech) or training the head teacher has provided to help you effectively teach adaptive skills. In what ways have these supports changed your practice?

8. Does the head teacher engage you in collaborative planning or reflective discussions about teaching adaptive skills—such as through team planning meetings or post lesson reflection? Please share an example.

9. How does the head teacher track and review learners' progress in adaptive skills? Have they regularly checked and signed your records (e.g., IEP goals, checklists)? How effective do you find this monitoring?

10. In what ways has the head teacher supported your professional growth in teaching adaptive skills? For example, have they recommended strategies, provided mentoring, or facilitated peer observations?

11. Can you provide an example of how the head teacher ‘leads by example’—such as by modeling adaptive teaching techniques or inclusive practice—in your classroom or school community?

Head Teachers’ experience on the effectiveness of teaching AD

12. How does the head teacher involve teachers in setting performance targets and goals? Can you give an example where shared goal-setting helped improve teaching or learner outcomes?

13. In what ways does the head teacher support your professional development—such as through mentoring, workshops, or peer observations? Could you describe a recent training opportunity they provided?

14. How does the head teacher delegate tasks among staff—like lesson leadership, administrative duties, or project roles?

Have these assignments matched your strengths and professional growth?

15. When the head teacher visits your classroom or reviews your work, what kind of feedback do they provide?

Do you find this feedback actionable and helpful?

Can you give a recent example?

16. On a scale of 1–5, how clear and motivating are the performance targets set by the head teacher?

17. Rate the usefulness of the feedback received after classroom visits: 1 (Not useful) to 5 (Very useful)

Teachers' perceptions on head teachers' instructional supervision role

18. From your perspective, does the head teacher have the necessary qualifications and training to conduct effective instructional supervision?

Can you share an example of how their skills positively impacted classroom teaching?

19. In what ways does the head teacher create a positive environment by expressing high expectations?

20. Describe how the head teacher engages teachers in identifying, sourcing, and utilizing teaching and learning materials?

How has this collaboration influenced your instructional practice?

21. How would you describe the head teacher's core beliefs about teaching and learning?

Have these beliefs visibly influenced school policies, practices, or culture?

22. On a scale of 1–5, how well does the head teacher demonstrate instructional supervision?

Teaching of Adaptive Skills

23. Can you describe how you use stage-based or step-by-step teaching in your classroom? What are the stages you follow, and how do you decide when a learner is ready to move to the next stage?

24. What innovative methods have you introduced in your lessons recently (e.g., group activities, flipped classroom, gamification, realia)? Can you share an example of one and its impact?

25. When teaching materials are limited, how do you adapt using local or real-life items as teaching aids? Can you provide an example of a lesson where this approach enhanced learning?

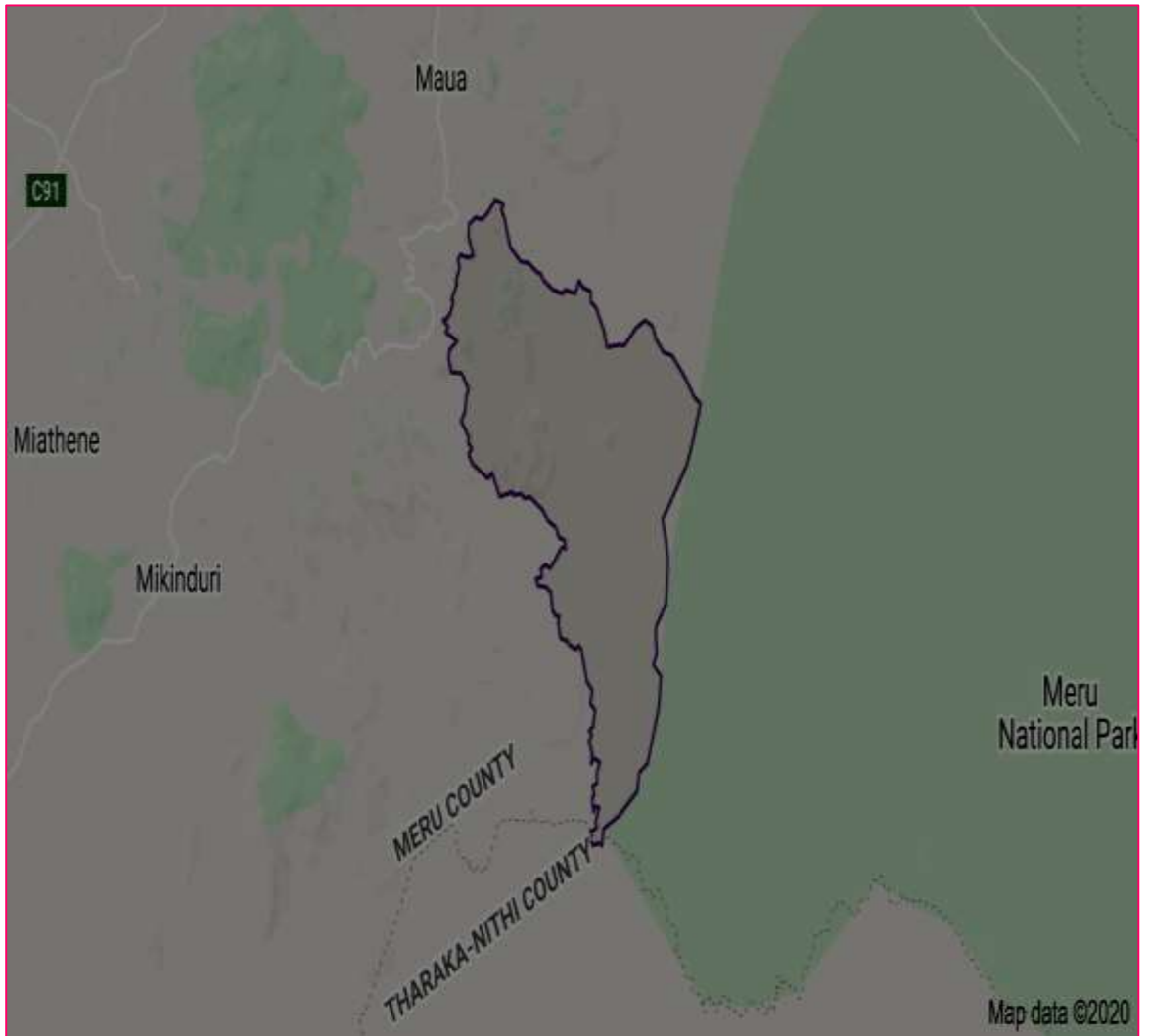
26. How do you tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of learners in your class? What assessment or data do you use to guide this differentiation?

27. How do you apply task analysis when teaching skills to your learners, especially those with intellectual disabilities? Could you walk us through an example, including chaining methods, prompts, and data tracking?

Appendix V: A List of Key Informants in Pseudo Names in the Study

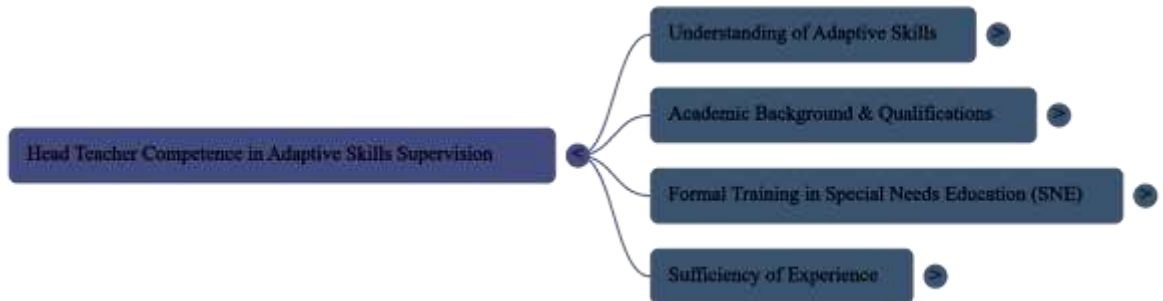
Institution for learners with ID	Head teachers	Teachers
SC1 Sp. Sch	HT1	TR 1-7
SC2 Sp. Unit	HT2	TR 1-2
SC3 Sp. Unit	HT3	TR 1-2
SC4 Sp. Unit	HT4	TR 1-2
SC5 Sp. Unit	HT5	TR 1-2

Appendix VI: A Map of Meru County

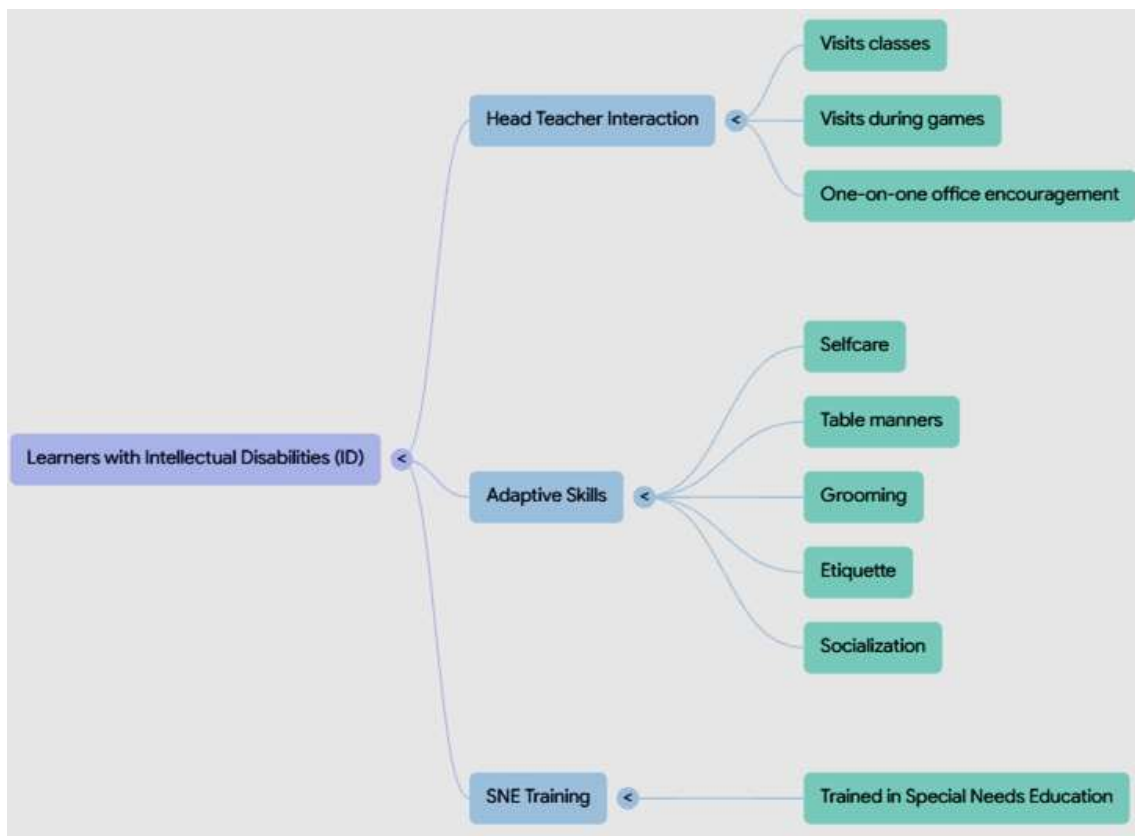


Appendix VII: Research Codes and Themes

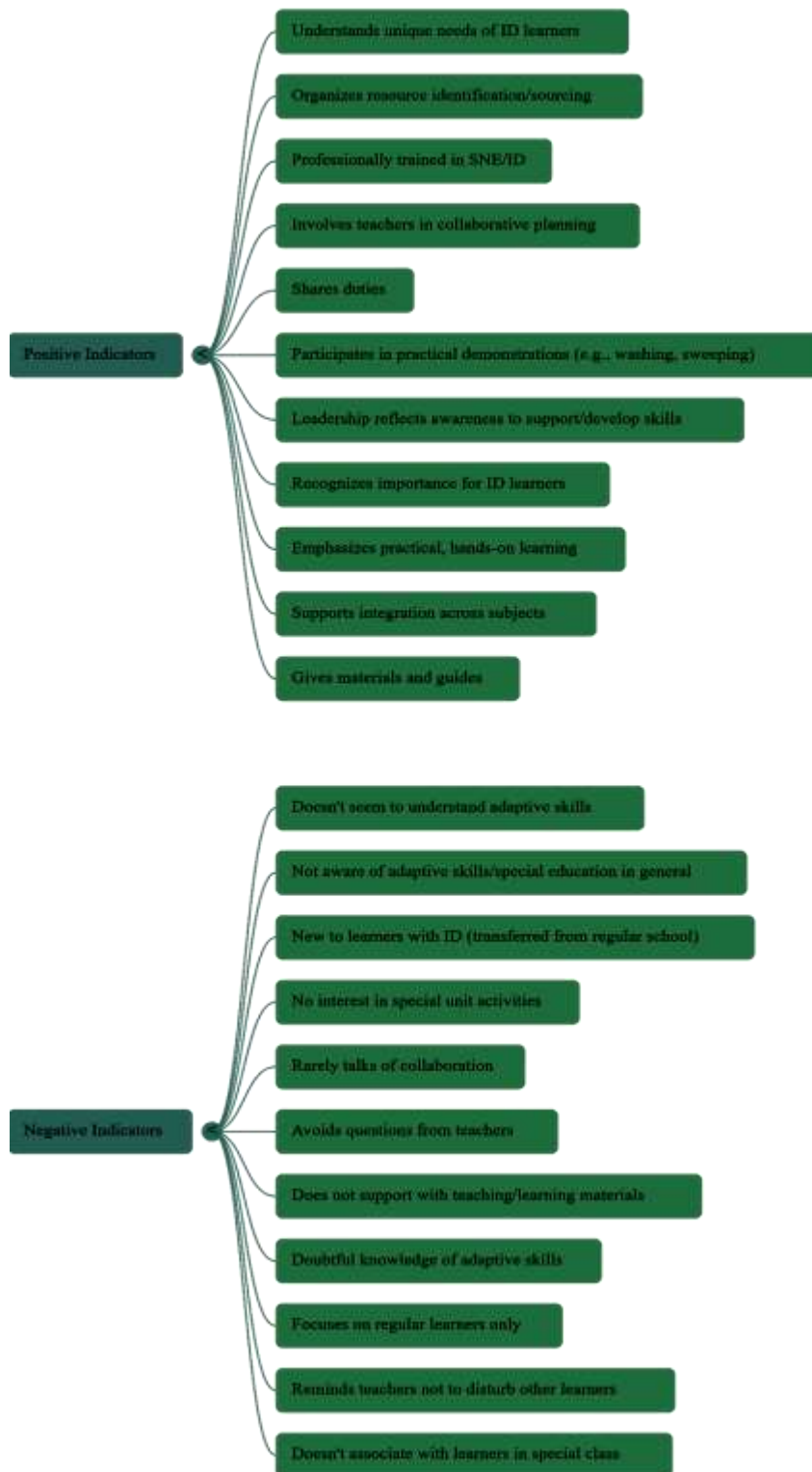
Part 1: Head Teacher Qualification



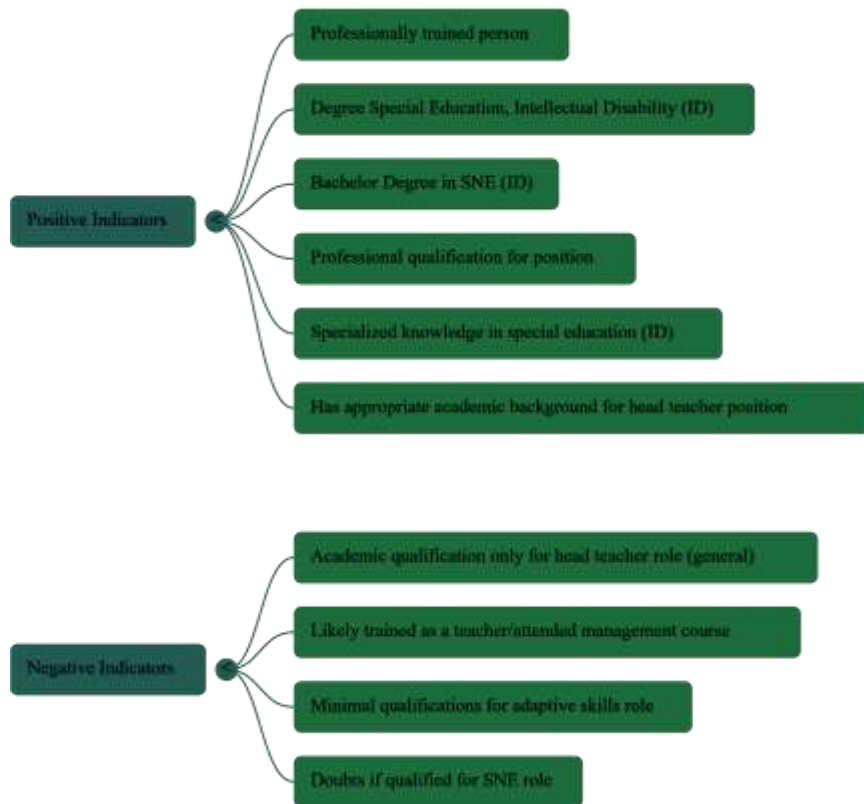
Part 2: Learners with ID



Part 3: Head Teacher Understanding of Adaptive Skills



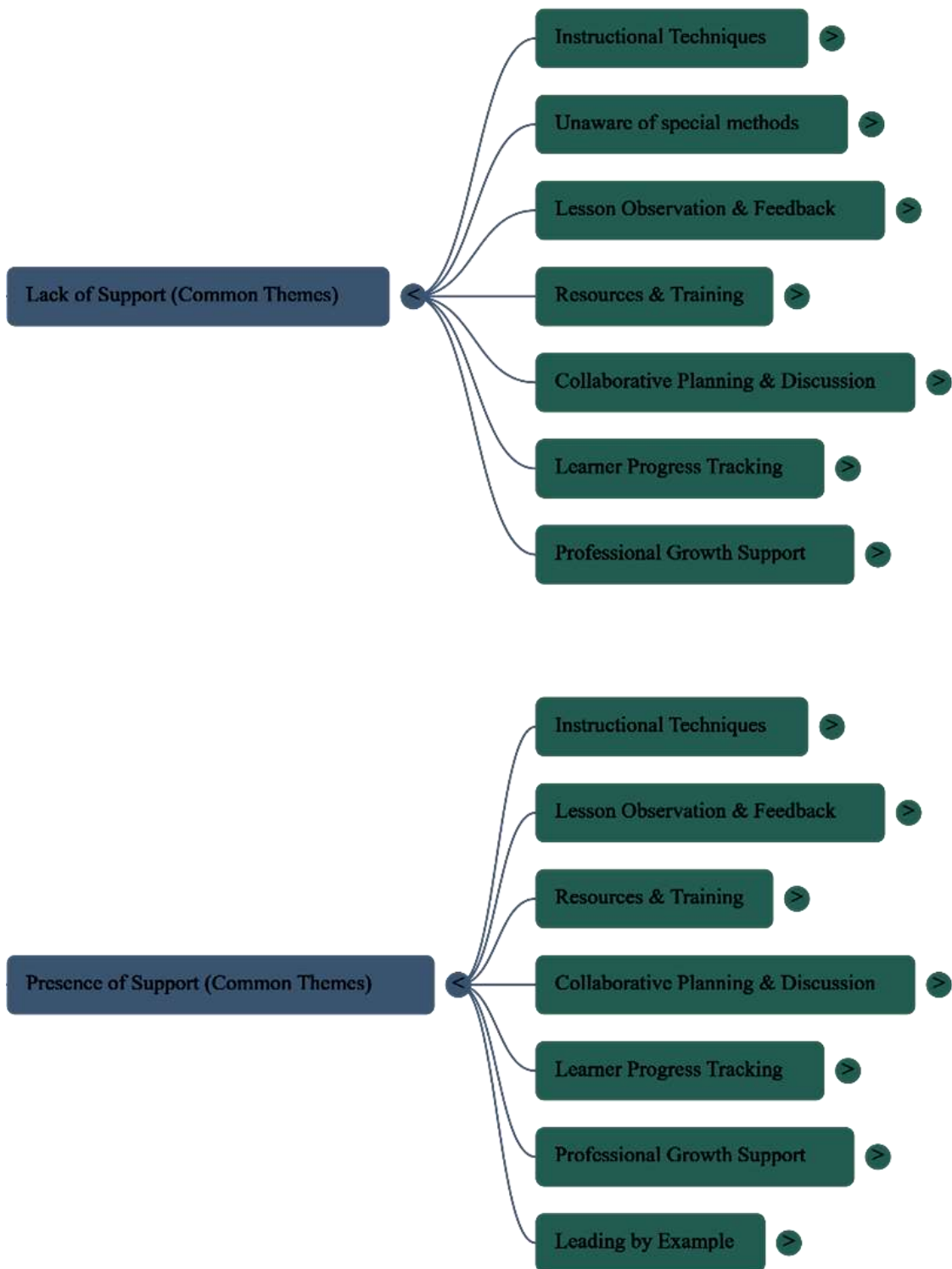
Part 4: Academic Background and Qualification



Part 5: Supervisory Experience



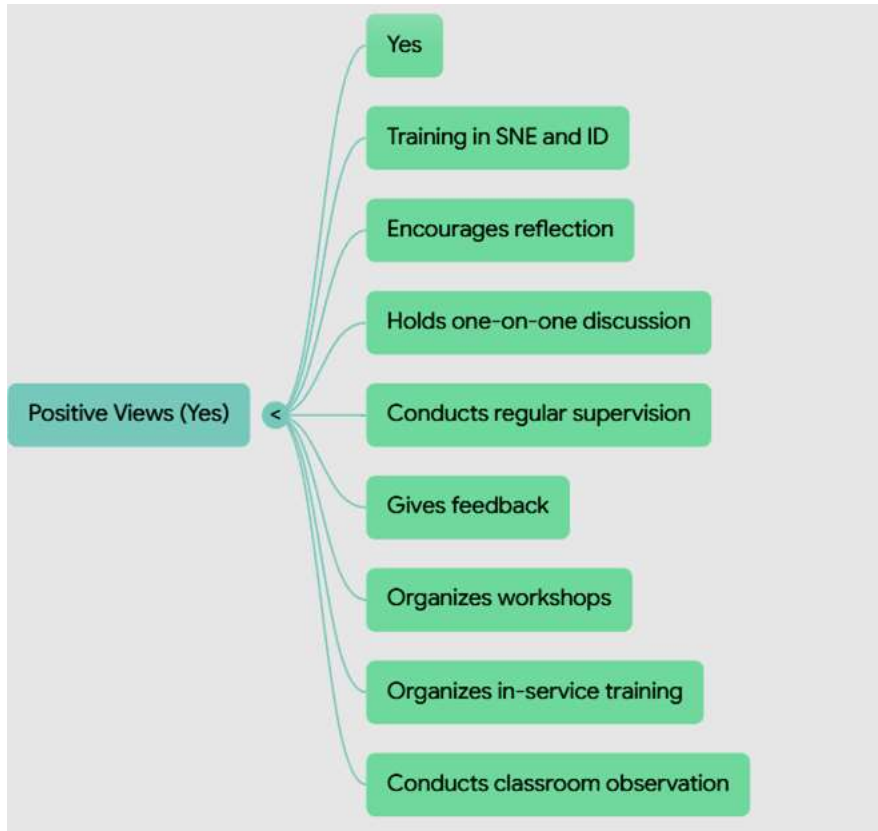
Part 6: Head Teacher Instructional Supervision and Support

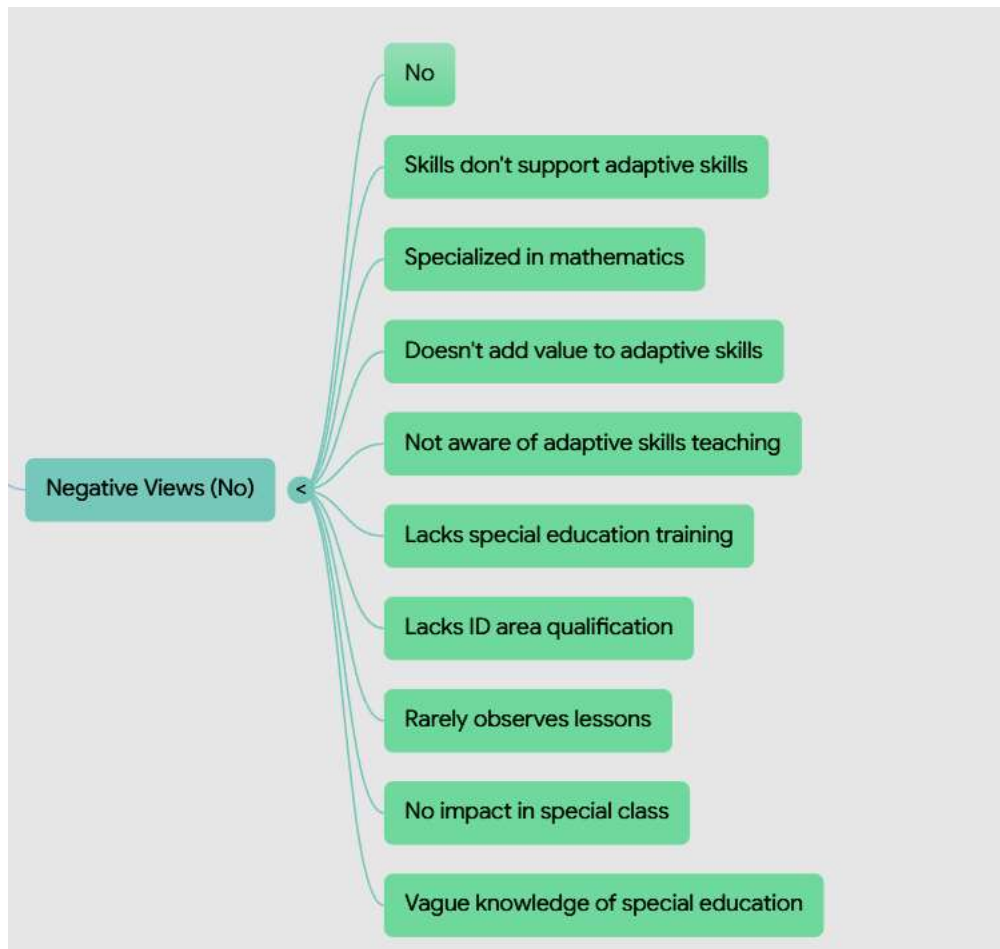


Part 7: Instructional Supervision Techniques

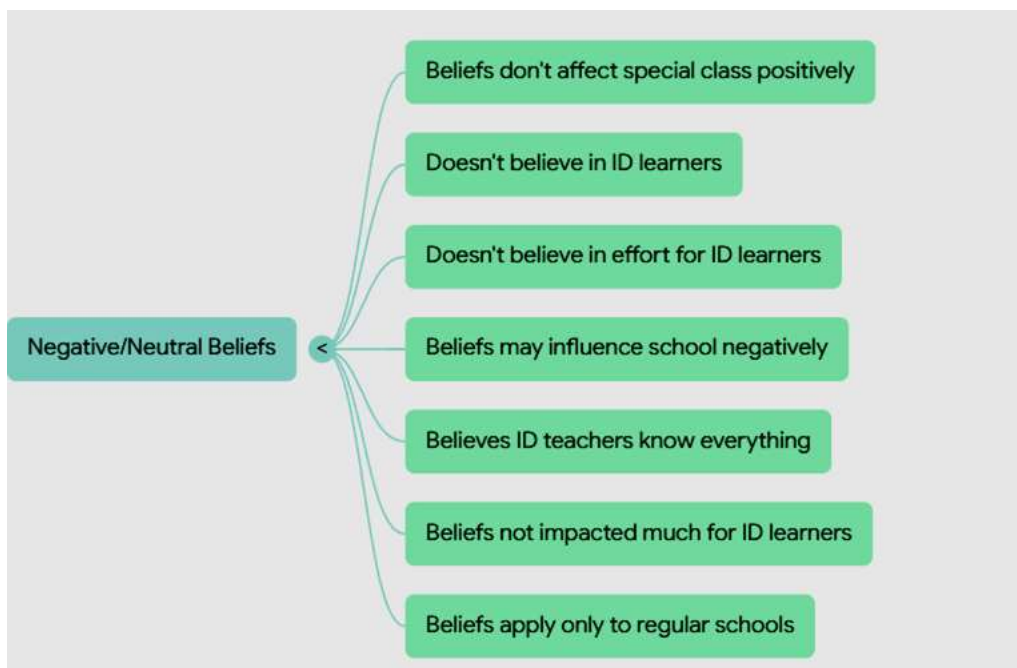


Part 8: Perception






Part 9: Head Teacher Beliefs



Appendix VIII: Letter of Authorization from Kenyatta University Graduate School


**KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL**

E-mail: kulps@yulsoo.com F.O. Box 43844, 00100
dean-graduate@ku.ac.ke NAIROBI, KENYA
Website: www.ku.ac.ke Tel. 810901 Ext. 57330

Internal Memo

FROM: Dean, Graduate School **DATE:** 1st April, 2019, 2019

TO: Ms. Rosalin K. Ruteere **REF:** ERS/27795/13
C/o Department of Early Childhood Studies
& Special Needs Educ.
Kenyatta University

SUBJECT: APPROVAL OF RESEARCH PROPOSAL

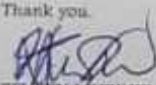
We acknowledge the receipt of your revised Research Proposal entitled "Effectiveness of Headteachers' Instructional Supervision in Teaching and Learning of Adaptive Skills to Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Meru County, Kenya" as per recommendations raised by the Graduate School Board of 0th March, 2019.

You may now proceed with your Data collection, subject to clearance with the Director General, National Commission for Science, Technology & Innovation.

As you embark on your data collection, please note that you will be required to submit to Graduate School completed supervision Tracking Forms per semester. The form has been developed to replace the progress Report Forms. The Supervision Tracking Forms are available at the University's Website under Graduate School webpage/downloads

By copy of this letter, the Registrar (Academic) is hereby requested to grant you substantive registration for your Ph.D. studies.

Thank you.


REUBEN MURIUKI
FOR: DEAN, GRADUATE SCHOOL

c.c. Registrar (Academic) Att; Ms. Lucy Njenga
Dept. Of Chairman, Department of Early Childhood Studies & Special Needs Educ.

Supervisor

1. Prof. Geoffrey Karigu
C/o Dept. of Early Childhood & Special Needs Educ.
Kenyatta University
2. Dr. Mary Riano
C/o Dept. of Early Childhood & Special Needs Educ.
Kenyatta University

Committed to Creativity, Excellence & Self-Reliance

Appendix IX: Authorization from Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee



KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Fax: 8711242/8711575
Email: chairman.kuerc@ku.ac.ke

P. O. Box 43844,
Nairobi, 00100
Tel: 8710901/12

Website: www.ku.ac.ke

Our Ref: KU/ERC/ APPROVAL/YOL.I (254)

Date: 24th May, 2019

Rosallin Kananu Ruteere
P.O Box 43844-00100
Nairobi

Dear Mr Kananu,

APPLICATION NUMBER PKU/1015/11065: EFFECTIVENESS OF HEADTEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL SUPERVISION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING OF ADAPTIVE SKILLS TO LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL DISABILITIES IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA

1. IDENTIFICATION OF PROTOCOL

The application before the committee is with a research topic "Effectiveness of Headteachers' Instructional Supervision in Teaching and Learning of Adaptive Skills to Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Meru County, Kenya". Received on 18th April, 2019 and discussed on 14th May, 2019

2. APPLICANT

Rosallin Kananu Ruteere

3. SITE

Meru County, Kenya

4. DECISION

The committee has considered the research protocol in accordance with the Kenyatta University Research Policy (section 7.2.1.3) and the Kenyatta University Ethics Review Committee Guidelines and **APPROVED** that the research may proceed for a period of **ONE year from 14th March, 2019.**

Appendix X: Research Authorization from NACOSTI



NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Telephone: +254-20-2213471,
2241349, 3310571, 2219420
Fax: +254-20-318245, 318249
Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke
Website: www.nacosti.go.ke
When replying please quote

NACOSTI, Upper Kabete
Off Waiyaki Way
P.O. Box 30623-00100
NAIROBI-KENYA

Ref No: **NACOSTI/P/19/78146/30889**

Date: **26th June, 2019.**

Rosallin Kananu Ruteere
Kenyatta University
P.O. Box 43844-00100
NAIROBI.

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION

Following your application for authority to carry out research on "*Effectiveness of Head teachers' instructional supervision in teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Meru County, Kenya.*" I am pleased to inform you that you have been authorized to undertake research in **Meru County** for the period ending **24th June, 2020.**

You are advised to report to **the County Commissioner, and the County Director of Education, Meru County** before embarking on the research project.

Kindly note that, as an applicant who has been licensed under the Science, Technology and Innovation Act, 2013 to conduct research in Kenya, you shall deposit **a copy** of the final research report to the Commission within **one year** of completion. The soft copy of the same should be submitted through the Online Research Information System.


DR. ROY B. MUGIIRA, PhD.
FOR: DIRECTOR-GENERAL/CEO

Copy to:

The County Commissioner
Meru County.

The County Director of Education
Meru County.

Appendix XI: Letter from Meru County Government



**THE PRESIDENCY
MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AND COORDINATION OF NATIONAL
GOVERNMENT**

Telegrams:
Telephone:
Email: ccmeru@yahoo.com
Fax:
When replying please quote
And Date

COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY
P.O. BOX 703-60200
MERU.

REF: ED. 12/3 VOL. IV/4

2ND JULY 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION - ROSALLIN KANANU RUTEERE

This is to inform you that Rosallin Kananu Ruteere of Kenyatta University, Nairobi has reported to this office as directed by the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation and will be carrying out Research on **"Effectiveness of Head teachers' instructional supervision in teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Meru County, Kenya"**.

Since authority has been granted by the said Commission, and the above named applicant has reported to this office, she can embark on her research project for a period ending **24th June 2020**.

Kindly accord her necessary assistance she may require.

W K KATONON
FOR: COUNTY COMMISSIONER
MERU COUNTY



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education

Telegrams: "ELIMU" Meru
EMAIL: cdemerucounty@gmail.com
When Replying please quote

County Director Of Education
Meru County
P.O. Box 61
MERU

Ref: MRU/C/EDU/11/1/232

3rd July, 2019

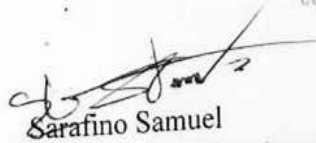
TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

RE: RESEARCH AUTHORIZATION – ROSALLIN KANANU RUTEERE

Reference is made to letter Ref: NACOSTI/P/19/78146/30889 dated
26th June, 2019.

Authority is hereby granted to **Rosallin Kananu Ruteere** to carry out research on
*"Effectiveness of Head teachers' instructional supervision in teaching and
learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Meru
County, Kenya"*, for the period ending 24th June, 2020.

Kindly accord her the necessary assistance.


Sarafino Samuel

For: County Director of Education
MERU

COUNTY DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION
MERU COUNTY
P. O. Box 61-60200
TEL: 084-22272 MERU

Appendix XII: Research Permit from NACOSTI

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT:
MS. ROSALLIN KANANU RUTEERE
of KENYATTA UNIVERSITY, 0-232
RUIRU, has been permitted to conduct
research in Meru County

Permit No : NACOSTI/P/19/78146/30889
 Date Of Issue : 26th June, 2019
 Fee Received (Ksh 2000)

on the topic: EFFECTIVENESS OF
HEADTEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONAL
SUPERVISION IN TEACHING AND
LEARNING OF ADAPTIVE SKILLS TO
LEARNERS WITH INTELLECTUAL
DISABILITIES IN MERU COUNTY, KENYA.

for the period ending:
24th June, 2020



Applicant's
Signature



Director General
National Commission for Science,
Technology & Innovation




THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND
INNOVATION ACT, 2013


The Grant of Research Licenses is guided by the Science,
 Technology and Innovation (Research Licensing) Regulations, 2014.

CONDITIONS

1. The License is valid for the proposed research, location and specified period.
2. The License and any rights thereunder are non-transferable.
3. The Licensee shall inform the County Governor before commencement of the research.
4. Excavation, filming and collection of specimens are subject to further necessary clearance from relevant Government Agencies.
5. The License does not give authority to transfer research materials.
6. NACOSTI may monitor and evaluate the licensed research project.
7. The Licensee shall submit one hard copy and upload a soft copy of their final report within one year of completion of the research.
8. NACOSTI reserves the right to modify the conditions of the License including cancellation without prior notice.

National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation
 P.O. Box 30623 - 00100, Nairobi, Kenya
 TEL: 020 400 7000, 0713 788787, 0735 404245
 Email: dg@nacosti.go.ke, registry@nacosti.go.ke
 Website: www.nacosti.go.ke


REPUBLIC OF KENYA


National Commission for Science,
Technology and Innovation

RESEARCH LICENSE

Serial No.A 25515

CONDITIONS: see back page