

# Examination of Head Teachers' Strategies for Supervising Teaching and Learning of Adaptive Skills among Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Meru County, Kenya

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**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to examine head teachers' strategies for supervising teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-county, Kenya. The study used Effective School Theory advanced by Lezotte. A descriptive survey design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches was used. The target population was 227 respondents (207 learners, 5 head teachers and 15 teachers). Purposive sampling was used to select special schools and units. The sample size was 124 respondents (104 learners, 15 teachers and 5 Head teachers). Data was collected by use of interview guide for head teachers, observational checklist for learners and questionnaire for teachers. Piloting was conducted in Kathelwa Special Unit in Igembe Central Sub-county. Test-retest method was used to determine reliability of the tools and a coefficient level of 0.7 was found adequate to determine reliability of the data collected. Quantitative data was analysed using descriptive statistics and SPSS Version 23.0 while qualitative data was analysed thematically. Data was presented using tables and figures for quantitative data while qualitative data was presented using reported verbatims and narratives. Pertinent ethical considerations were observed in data collection and analysis. The study finding showed that the majority of the teachers agreed that their head teachers consult with them rewards them, and involves teachers and learners in school activities. The teachers also asserted that their head teachers regularly visits classrooms, conducts official checks and signs progress as part of the strategies that contribute to learner's acquisition of adaptive skills. The study concluded that the instructional supervision strategies adopted by the head teachers have a significant influence on the effectiveness of teaching and learning of adaptive skills among learners with intellectual disabilities. The study recommended that there is need for a policy which stipulates that the teachers in SNE units have the appropriate training to handle children with specific disabilities.

**Keywords:** Instructional Supervision Strategies, Acquisition, Adaptive Skills, Learners with Intellectual Disabilities

## I. INTRODUCTION

The global idea of positive change through education is not new. Acquisition of knowledge and skills by learners with Intellectual Disability was proved possible by Itard more than 200 years ago when he worked with a boy called Victor who was believed to have Intellectual Disability. Itard applied an 'intensive systematic approach' to Victor who responded positively (Heward, 2006). The United Nations General Assembly adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 increased the attention of educational privileges for persons with disabilities, those with ID included. Today, supervision involves dialogue between a supervisor and a supervisee with an intention of improving instruction (Zepeda, 2016). Bhatnagar & Aggarwal (2006) gave functions of supervision as: providing expert technical assistance, helping teachers prepare for teaching, updating them and providing professional democratic leadership. Teachers, specifically, those for learners with ID require such expert technical assistance to help learners acquire skills for self-reliance through learning of adaptive skills. According to Zepeda (2010), instructional supervision was a continuous monitoring of classroom teaching with the aim of promoting professional practices particularly in enhancing acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID. The head teacher should instil teachers' professional integrity and accountability in a collegial and collaborative manner. Ngunjiri (2012), in his study on head teachers supervisory strategies on pupils performance in KCPE, warns that the head teacher should be at least curriculum expert in order to be able to effectively plan and carry out the implementation of the classroom subjects as well as general school programs such as a facilitator, counsellor, coach, role model and significantly as an instructional supervisor.

Walingo (2010) assert that for instructional supervision to be effective, both the instructional supervisor and the class teacher should work together in a collaborative manner so that

they make decision involving learners together. She adds that instructional supervisor should also ensure that teachers are well motivated so that they implement curriculum effectively. These efforts include The World Education Forum held in Dakar in the year 2000. Additionally, the UN summit of 2015 established Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in which education was the key pillar (UN Summit, September, 2015). This included education of the learners with disabilities such as ID. The concept practices of supervision in Kwara State public primary schools in Nigeria, Onasanya (2015) posits that the role of supervisors was to guide, refresh, improve, encourage and oversee effective implementation of the curriculum. He further highlights the basic principles for effective supervision as staff orientation, healthy atmosphere, guidance and staff training, prompt acknowledgement of excellent work, intelligent debate, opportunities for enhancement, and motivation and encouragement. If these principles are implemented to the letter, possibly, effective supervision can take place and, perhaps improve learners' performance, particularly, those with ID.

In Kenya, the Ministry of Education (MoE) introduced instructional supervision in schools through a legal Notice which recommended that school principals/head teachers to perform internal instructional supervision (MoE Circular No. 2009 QSA/2/1A/VIL.11/86). They would use supervisor-teacher-friendly approaches rather than the conventional power and dictatorship methods (Wenzare, 2012). The outdated methods of inspection instilled fear to teachers and lowered their self-esteem and confidence (Republic of Kenya, 2009). As a result, principals should serve as sources of motivation for both teachers and students. The Head teacher/principal, or any other person assigned this role would then play his/her instructional supervision effectively to achieve quality education.

Wanjiku (2012) noted that it is the duty of head teachers to produce instructional materials for the teachers' use in class, improve instructional effectiveness through instructional leadership, both for regular and learners with special needs particularly learners with ID. Manaseh (2016) outlined the duties of a school instructional coordinator (head teacher) as follows: visit class rooms on a regular basis to monitor teachers, organize conferences with teachers collectively and individually to address ways to improve instructions for effective learning, teach demonstration lessons, organize induction courses for newly posted and recruited instructors, and ensure that the school is secure. Head teachers were expected to play these roles to enhance implementation of curriculum (Mudavanhu, 2015). If this can be done as expected, learners would acquire necessary skills for independent living.

Wanzare (2002), asserts that the reasons for instructional supervision in Kenya was to supervise the implementation of school curriculum including that of learners with ID. In Special Needs Education, supervision is deemed vital as it offers teachers adequate skills to help learners fit in the

society as well as lead independent lives (MoE, 2009). Learners with ID spend a long time in special schools and units where they are expected to acquire adaptive skills for independent living. Head teachers both in regular and special schools are mandated to ensure effective instructional supervision take place in teaching and learning. In 2003, the Kenyan Government declared Free Primary Education for All Kenyans. For learners with disabilities, supervisors should ensure effective teaching and learning of adaptive skills in schools. Despite the presence of The Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 which sets out clear policy guidelines for special needs education as the governments commitments to ensuring that learners with special needs and disabilities have equal access to quality and relevant education; and head teachers, classroom teachers, policies, reports, Acts of the parliament and other statutes which support teaching and learning of adequate adaptive skills for independent living, learners with ID graduate from special institutions with minimal adaptive skills. In Kenya, many researches have been conducted on instructional supervision. However, there has been limited research into the effectiveness of instructional supervision on teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID. This study was conducted to explore the head teachers' effectiveness of instructional supervision on teaching/learning of adaptive skill by learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-County, Kenya.

### *1.1 General Objective*

The general objective of this study was to examine the effectiveness of Head teachers' instructional supervision in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe South Sub-County, Kenya.

### *1.3 Specific Objective of the Study*

Specifically the study sought to examine head teachers' strategies for supervising teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-county.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### *2.1 Theoretical Review*

This study was guided by Effective School Theory formulated by Lezotte in 2001. The theory states that effective school is measured in terms of student achievement and is characterized by good education that is accessible. Lezotte formulated seven correlates to be observed by schools in order to be effective. These correlates are: leadership in delivery of instructions, a well-defined mission, secure and organised schools, and an environment where success is assured, frequent and close follow-up of learners' progress, school-home collaboration and a chance to learn. Lezotte (2001), feels that for this to happen, school administration and stakeholders should work together to target a few goals and agree on them. In institution for learners with ID, the focus is the goal of acquiring adaptive skills. He defines a safe and orderly school as that which is characterized by reasonable expectations in performance, behaviour, responsive relationship among adults

and learners, warm and inviting classrooms and with purposeful learning activities. Lezotte (2001) posits that a conducive environment can enable all learners to benefit from education. This tenet enabled the study to collect appropriate data on study variable on head teachers supervision strategies such as being a role model that led by example, Collaborative, domineering or promoting total competency among other attributes.

Lezotte argues that regular evaluation of both teaching and learning is necessary in order to pay attention to students' learning outcomes as well as the efficacy of school and classroom activities. Through self-reflection, teachers monitor their own teaching, and by the head teacher for program and teacher evaluation. According to Lezotte's Theory of Effective School, family and community involvement describes many avenues that bring about collaboration among all stake holders to aid acquisition of knowledge and skills. The support from the community, frequent evaluation as well as a chance to learn and the time the learner takes on a task implies that students appear to learn the content, they embark on most. That is, the more the time a learner takes on a task, the higher the understanding. Pupils of all abilities have equal chances to learn as this creates conducive environment for teaching and learning.

## 2.2 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps

It is globally acknowledged that education is a very essential agent in nation building. Giving quality education is a desire and priority of every nation in the world. Supervision therefore, is an essential tool to ensure this quality, specifically at school level by head teachers. Donkoh and Baffoe (2018) asserted that improvement in the teaching and learning process is a network of cooperative activities and democratic relationship of persons concerned with teaching and learning. In addition, Amina (2015) argues that head teachers who involve their staff in decision-making have the advantage of improved performance. Hence, the current study sought to establish whether head teachers in special institutions in Igembe south involved teachers in their instructional supervision activities to enhance teaching and learning outcomes in their institutions.

Ndyali (2013) asserted that learner involvement in school activities improves their self-esteem and confidence that they are able. Moreover, UNESCO (2014) insists that head teachers need to ensure that some of school activities are delegated to learners. Such tasks include: class monitors,

compound prefects, school captains and time keepers. By involving learners and staff, instructional supervision becomes an all-round school activity. This study focused on involving learners in general school activities. The current study sought whether instructional supervisors involved learners with ID in adaptive skills to prepare them for independent living.

Danish and Usman (2010) in their study on impact of reward and recognition on motivation and job satisfaction and the work output in teacher profession have shown that teacher output can be increased significantly as a result of motivation and recognition by their instructional supervisors. Poor performance can be worked out if the superiors motivate their juniors with proper recognition and appreciation, even using minor things like asking about their family problems. Reward and recognition make the teacher develop confidence and become more enthusiastic towards working with their learners. Rewards and appreciation improve teachers' morale towards work.

Another study by Tyagi (2010) on the role of school head teacher in enhancing students' academic performance in community secondary schools in Mbeya Urban was investigated. It was evident from the findings; strategies differed depending on the type of learners. In this case, learners with disabilities required more refined supervision in terms of teaching and learning since they have special challenges in acquiring adaptive skills. In this case, learners with disabilities required more refined supervision in terms of teaching and learning since they have special challenges in acquiring adaptive skills. This implies that learners with ID require instructional supervisors to use special strategies such as clinical supervision that would consider their individual needs.

Locally, Ngunjiri (2012) studied the effects of head teachers' instructional supervision approaches on pupils' achievement in Kenya certificate of primary education in public primary schools in Rumuruti Division, Laikipia West District and findings revealed that head teacher's supervision strategies such as class visitation, affected acquisition of skills besides their academic performance. This impacted differently depending on the type of learners, where those with disabilities responded differently to different supervision strategies. This was reflected in the study by Mutembei (2014), who indicated that supervision strategies influence the execution of inclusive education in public primary schools in Magumoni Division, Tharaka Nithi County.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

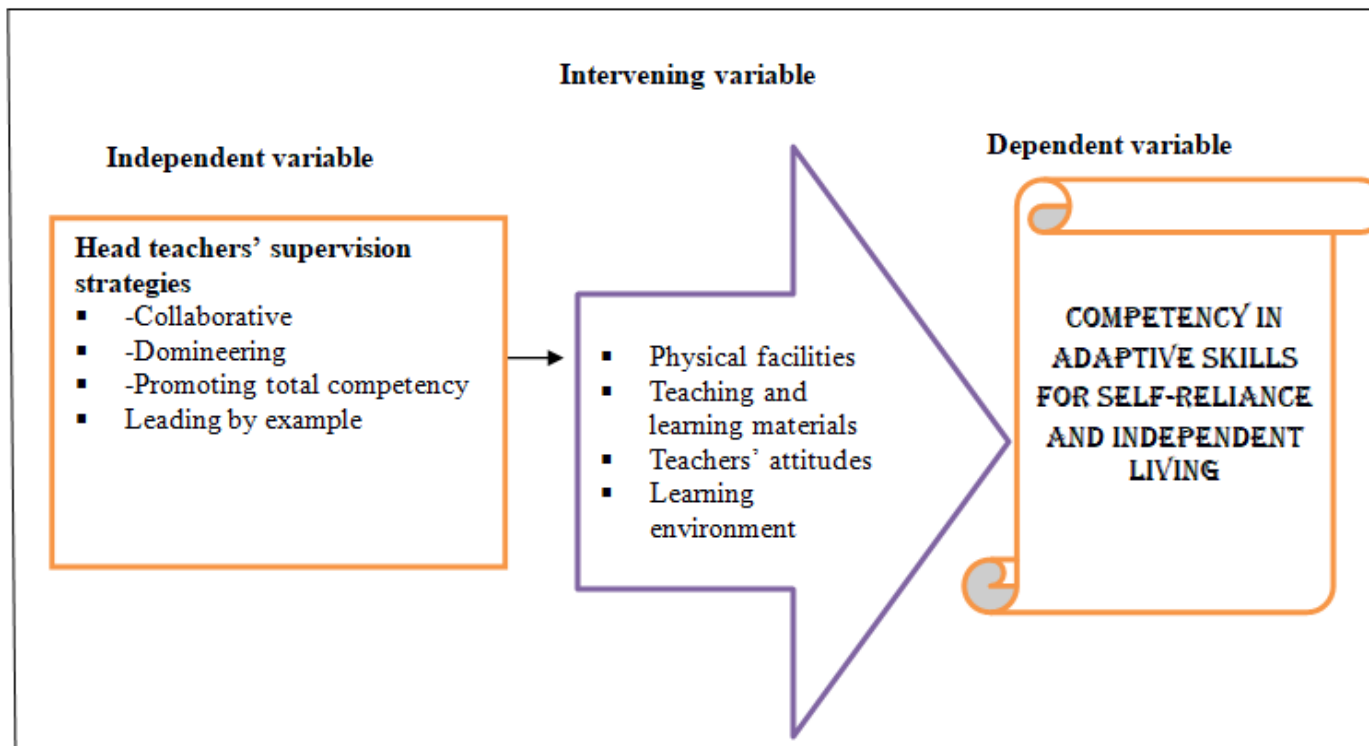


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design and Target Population

The study adopted a descriptive survey design. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive design describes trends, determine individual opinions, helped to identify important beliefs and attitudes of individuals and also provide other useful information to evaluate programs in schools. The approach was suitable for this study in that the researcher was able to explain the impact of head teachers' qualification and acquisition of adaptive skills. This study targeted a total of two hundred and seven (207) learners, five (5) head teachers and fifteen (15) teachers in five (5) public special institutions. That is, one (1) special school and four special units translating to a total sample of two hundred and twenty-seven (227) respondents.

3.2 Sampling techniques and Sample Size

Stratified sampling was used to group head teachers, teachers and learners who participated in the actual study. Stratified sampling was used to group head teachers, teachers, and learners of this study. In stratified sampling, the researcher divided the entire population into different sub-groups such as head teachers, teachers and learners. Purposive sampling was used to select special schools and units for learners with ID. It was also used to select learners who could follow simple verbal instructions. The sample consisted of five head

teachers, fifteen teachers and 104 learners, making a total of one hundred and twenty-four (124) respondents.

3.3 Research Instruments

The researcher used

Questionnaires for teachers of learners with ID, interview schedule for head teachers of school with learners with ID and observational checklist for learners with ID

3.4 Pilot Study

Piloting was done in Kathelwa Special Unit in Igembe Central sub-County. The Unit was selected for piloting the tools because it had ideal conditions similar to the one in the schools where the study was to be carried. The piloting findings enabled the researcher to adjust tools to include more stems to be more exhaustive; edited questions for better and accurate understanding by informants and effective timing of time taken to complete each tool which improved efficiency in final data collection process in final study. Further, the study enhanced qualitative validity through repeated observation in data collection point and prolonged observation to ascertain variable maturation and not any variations. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the research instruments. Spearman's Rank Order Correlation Coefficient was used and a coefficient of 0.72 was obtained.

### 3.5 Data collection Procedures, Analysis and Presentation

Before data collection, the researcher did a reconnaissance visit to each of selected schools for the study. She informed the school administration of its selection for the study, purpose of the study and ethical clauses of the study. During field work, data collection procedure first involved administration of questionnaires, followed by checklist and observation schedules and interviews were done final. Teachers were given questionnaires to fill out, and they were collected as soon as they were completed. Observation checklists were filled by the researcher as she observed and interacted with learners as they carried out the activities. Interview guide was used to get information from the head teachers while proving questions were asked to get in-depth information. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze the collected data. The data was sorted, classified, and categorized using this method as per the study's themes. To conduct statistical tests on the quantitative data, the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS version 23.0) was used. Qualitative data was analyzed through Focus by Question Analysis (FQA), where responses given are sorted to establish similarities and frequencies use direct verbatim as used by respondents for emphatic purposes. Qualitative data was presented using narrative passages while tables, frequencies, and percentages were used to display the quantitative data.

## IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### 4.1 Bio-Data of the Respondents

There were 20 boys and 16 girls adding up to 36 pupils. The findings implied that most of the learners in upper primary in Thika East were boys. The higher proportion of those in class seven was informed by the fact that they would provide more reliable information compared to their juniors. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1: Gender and the class of the pupils

Class	Boys		Girls		Total	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Five	4	20	3	18.75	7	29
Six	6	30	5	31.25	11	31
Seven	10	50	8	50	18	50
Total	20	55.56	16	44.44	36	100

Findings in Table 2 showed that most of the respondents spread across all the categories of professional qualification with majority (50%) holding Diploma in SNE. This assisted the researcher in receiving adequate information on the impact of provision of support services on academic performance of learners with physical disabilities.

Table 2 Teachers' professional qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage
P1	38	31.3

Diploma in SNE	60	50
Bachelor	20	17
Masters	2	1.7
Total	120	100

### 4.2 Head teachers' Strategies of Supervising and learning of adaptive skills for learners with intellectual disabilities

To meet this objective, teachers were provided with a range of statements on a Likert scale where (1-strongly disagree [SD], 2-disagree [D], 3-agree [A], 4-Strongly agree [SA]) and asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements on head teachers' instructional supervision strategies. The findings are presented in Table 3.

Table 3: Head teacher's Instructional Supervision Strategies

Statement	N=15	1 [SD]	2 [D]	3 [A]	4 [SA]
Our head teacher consults teachers and learners whenever new things are being introduced in school	F	12	2	1	0
	%	80.0	13.3	6.7	0
Our head teacher visits our class observes learners' activities.	F	5	7	2	1
	%	33.3	46.7	13.3	6.7
Our head teacher checks and signs our official school records regularly.	F	1	6	7	1
	%	6.7	40	50	3.3
Our head teacher rewards both teachers and learners for the skills taught and acquired.	F	7	2	1	5
	%	46.7	13.3	6.7	33.3
Our head teacher involves learners with ID in school activities.	F	8	6	0	1
	%	53.3	40.0	0	6.7

Findings in Table 3 show, the majority of teachers 12(80%) strongly disagree that their head teachers consult them and the learners when introducing new things in schools. 2 (13.3%) more teachers disagree that head teachers consult them. This makes a total of 14(93.3%) of teachers who claim that head teachers rarely consult them on issues concerning learners with ID. These findings suggest that head teachers in special units do not consult and share with teachers on issues regarding ID which is quite strange since both head teacher and teachers need to work as a team that promotes dialogue to be able to teach and offer quality services to learners with ID. These findings concur with Wanzare (2013) and Tshabalala (2013) who cited poor, inadequate and sometimes lack of communication between teachers and instructional supervisors as a major inhibitor to instructional supervision.

Teachers for learners with ID would expect head teachers to consult whenever they want to introduce new things in school since learners with ID require a wide variety of teaching and learning materials which would support teachers impart adaptive skills to learners with ID. The findings showed clearly that teachers for learners with ID were never consulted or even interacted with the head teacher. It appears that teachers were not assisted in any way to get teaching/learning materials as well as any guidance on how to teach learners with ID. Nevertheless, 1(6.7%) of the teachers agreed that

their head teachers consult with teachers and learners when introducing new things in school such as making desks and buying teaching and learning materials. This was a negligible number and may not affect the outcome of the study.

Another question was whether the head teacher regularly visited class for learners with ID to make lesson observations and learners performance of activities. This strategy would confirm the effectiveness of instructional supervision. Teachers' responses were that 5(33.3%) strongly disagreed while 7(46.7%) disagreed. Therefore, a total of 12 (80%) respondents went against the statement that head teacher as the instructional supervisor visits class for learners with ID to make lesson observations and learners activities. On the other hand, 2(13.3%) and 1(6.7%) agreed that head teachers visited their classes for lesson observations as well as to check learners' activities. This was a total of 3(20%). This was a negligible number to affect the outcome of the study. The findings show that most head teachers do not do instructional supervision since they do not visit classes to observe teaching and learning process of teachers and learners with ID and offer valuable advice to improve learning outcomes. These findings contradicted and went against the new supervision strategies considered by Samoei (Sr) (2014) which were: consultation with teachers, head supervision, self-assessment, and mentorship programme in schools, orientation programme and motivation strategies can be effective to improve teaching and learning process. Further, these findings indicate head teachers did not utilize the strategy of class observations to support effective instructional supervision. Indeed, Donkoh and Baffoe (2018) asserted that improvement in the teaching and learning process is a network of cooperative activities and democratic relationship of persons concerned with teaching and learning process in education. In addition, Enaigbe (2009) asserted that such instructional supervision strategies like direct supervision, collaborative and non-directive methods of supervision can succeed in their supervision.

In order for the improvement in the teaching and learning to take place, the head teacher must ensure there is a network of cooperative activities such as making regular visits to classes for learners with ID and interact with them. Through such interactions, observations of teaching and learning of adaptive skills can be done effectively and cordially. This shows that instructional supervision is inbuilt in human relations and respect for teachers as professionals who together with the head teacher explore the best methods that work for their learners. However, this was not the case in Igembe south special institutions where one head teacher said that:

I don't get time to interact with learners or even observe their work because I am usually in class most of the time. When I don't have a lesson, I am busy in my office attending parents; visitors like you and have to attend to other office work (Ntomwea Ht, Athi Special School, July, 2019.)

The preceding observations by Ntomwea and Mpaku suggested that many head teachers may find it a challenge to supervise teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County, hence the need of the current study. Despite a larger percentage of teachers agreeing that their respective head teachers check and sign their official school documents regularly, this has not been reflected in the performance and progress of the learners in as far as acquisition of adaptive skills is concerned. This implies that the head teacher only signs the records to fulfil his official duty without having conducted proper scrutiny of what actually goes on inside the classroom. It could also mean that the head teachers do not understand how the teaching and learning of adaptive skills is done, which disables them from carrying out effective instructional supervision. This may be due to lack of training in instructional supervision.

In regard to rewarding teachers and learners for skills taught and acquired, 1(6.7%) agreed that head teacher rewards teachers and learners for the skills taught and acquired. From the table also 5(33.3%) strongly agreed that the head teacher rewards both learners and teachers. This makes a total of 6(40%) of teachers who agreed that the head teacher rewarded them. 6(40%) is a small number compared to 9(60%) of teachers who disagreed with the statement that the head teacher rewards teachers and learners for the skills taught and acquired. This could be the reason why most learners with ID have not acquired adaptive skills for independent living. In deed Samoei (Sr) (2014) asserted that motivation is one of the effective strategies that if applied to teachers and learners, more learning can take place.

As far as involving learners with ID in school activities is concerned, 8(53.3%) of teachers strongly disagree that head teachers involve them in school activities. 6(40%) disagree with the statement that head teachers involve learners with ID in school activities. A total of 14(93.3%) of teachers are of the opinion that head teachers did not involve learners with ID in school activities. It is only 1(6.7%) who supported the statement that the head teacher involved learners with ID in school activities. However, researchers have indeed proven that what impedes the involvement of learners with ID in school activities not their inability to participate but instead lack of mentorship, management and supervision of the people tasked to educate them. These findings offer semblance to a study by Dong, Fang and Hao (2012) who stated that learners with moderate or severe mental disabilities can adapt themselves to certain professional positions after a guided learning and training. As supported by Dong, Fang and Hao, learners with ID can perform myriad of activities if they are involved and mentored by the school administration. Samoei (2015) went ahead to highlight the head teachers' role in ensuring that this actually happens. She asserts that school principals' and head teachers' role is to motivate, encourage and give appraisal to teachers to facilitate students learning. This is supported by head teacher Athi Special School in one of the schools involved in the research who commented that;

## V. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings it can be concluded that the instructional supervision strategies adopted by the head teachers have a significant influence on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and learning of adaptive skills among learners with intellectual disabilities.

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There is need for a policy which stipulates that the teachers in SNE units have the appropriate training to handle children with specific disabilities i.e teachers in ID units should have training in ID.
2. There should be a policy that parents be more involved in supporting teachers and head teachers by providing financial and emotional support to the learners in SNE units.
3. Head teachers can initiate school level policy that parents be more involved in supporting teachers and head teachers by providing financial and emotional support to the learners in SNE units.

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