

An Evaluation of Head-Teachers' Instructional Supervision Experience on Teaching/Learning of Adaptive Skills for Learners with Intellectual Disabilities in Meru County, Kenya

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Abstract: The purpose of this study was to evaluate head-teachers' instructional supervision experience in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills on learners with intellectual disabilities 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 head teachers lacked essential SNE professional qualifications. This hampered effective instructional supervision in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills by learners with ID which has negative implications to acquisition of adaptive skills. The study concluded that head teacher's low qualification and lack of training in special needs education had a significant effect on the teaching and learning of adaptive skills among learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe South Sub-County. The study recommended that head teachers of SNE units need to be appropriately trained in order to execute adequate supervision of the teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disability.

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

I. INTRODUCTION

Monitoring teaching and learning in schools for learners with disability received a great deal of attention

globally (World Health Organization, 2020). A clinical study on Intellectual Disability (ID) by Naskar and Nath (2016) show that Intellectual Disability (ID) affects approximately 1-4% of the world's population. These large numbers of learners with ID lack adaptive skills and cognitive functioning which make them depend on their parents or guardians for living. In order to be independent, learners with ID require training in adaptive skills such as self-care, socializing, use of leisure time, money, communication, functional academics, community use, home living, health and safety, self-direction, work and social skills (Friend, 2008). They could be trained in adaptive skills and lead independent lives.

Shama, Yusoff, Kannan and Baba (2011), conducted studies in India, Malaysia and Thailand on instructional supervision on 'concerns of teachers and principals and the study revealed that supervisors seemed to be on a fault-finding mission. 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. Instructional supervision has a positive effect on teachers' professional growth in terms of gaining expertise in curriculum, teaching methods and resources, classroom management, and evaluation, according to a study conducted in Ghana by Donkoh and Dwamena (2014). If such positive experience could be extended to institutions for learners with ID, teaching and learning of adaptive skills can be effective, thus, enable learners with ID live independently.

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). The commissions suggested that skilled, competent, and knowledgeable staff supervise instruction in the schools. 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 instill teachers' professional integrity and accountability in a collegial and collaborative manner.

Manaseh (2016) points out that instructional leadership demands that the head teacher must be a competent teacher who keeps abreast with the recent development in curriculum in general and instructional supervision in particular. This includes understanding the curriculum for learners with ID, and specifically that of adaptive skills. The GoK through the MoE employed teachers to teach and train learners the skills to enable them live fulfilling and independent lives. However the current study in Igembe South Sub-County brought to the fore that most teachers are not trained in the area of ID.

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.

1.2 Specific Objective of the Study

Specifically the study sought to evaluate head-teachers' experience in instructional supervision on the teaching and learning of adaptive skills for 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. Lezotte (2001) posits that leadership in instructional delivery is critical in collaboration as well as professional growth. The head teacher is expected to be proactive and knowledgeable as far as adaptive skills for learners with ID are concerned. It is also their duty to ensure that teachers are motivated through individual development. This means that programs and activities are aligned for school improvement. This tenet enabled the study to collate pertinent data for objective on whose variable was head teacher qualifications. 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. Further, 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.

2.2 Empirical Studies and Knowledge Gaps

The major purpose of instructional supervision is to enhance professional development of teachers and to improve learner performance (Glickman, 2017). In this regard, the goal is to dispel ignorance and upgrade supervision skills. Glickman (2017) found that quality education is influenced in part by how well they are educated and supervised. Engelbrecht et al (2012) explored revealed that teaching of adaptive skills among learners with ID was hampered by head teachers' incompetence in relation to specialized education. Sheena, Maria and Experienced teachers understood the concept and purpose of instruction, planning, organization and implementation, dialogue and discussion (Dong, Fang & Hao, 2012). On the other hand, inexperienced teachers' perception was low in all aspects including planning, organization and even implementation. Vaz et al. (2015) posit that head teachers' qualification in instructional supervision was vital in classroom teaching and learning. This study however, did not associate the head teachers' qualification in performing his roles and responsibilities with teaching and learning of adaptive skills for learners with ID. The current study therefore set out to explore how qualification affected performance of roles and responsibilities of head teachers as instructional supervisors as it directly affected teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with ID.

Musembi (2014) in his findings revealed that head teachers lacked adequate training on instructional supervision, and so faced challenges in promoting acquisition of adaptive skills among learners with intellectual disability and other forms of disabilities. Similar findings were detailed in a study by Khamisi (2016), which indicated that lack of training among head teachers regarding instructional supervision was among the factors limiting supervision practices in primary schools in Kinango Sub-county, Kenya. Lack of training may be limiting effective integration of teaching and learning, observation is needed of adaptive skills for learners with ID in Igembe South, hence the need for this study. This study attempted to find out the status and challenges of head teachers instruction supervision in special institutions in Igembe South Sub-County, Meru County to avail data for comparative analysis.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

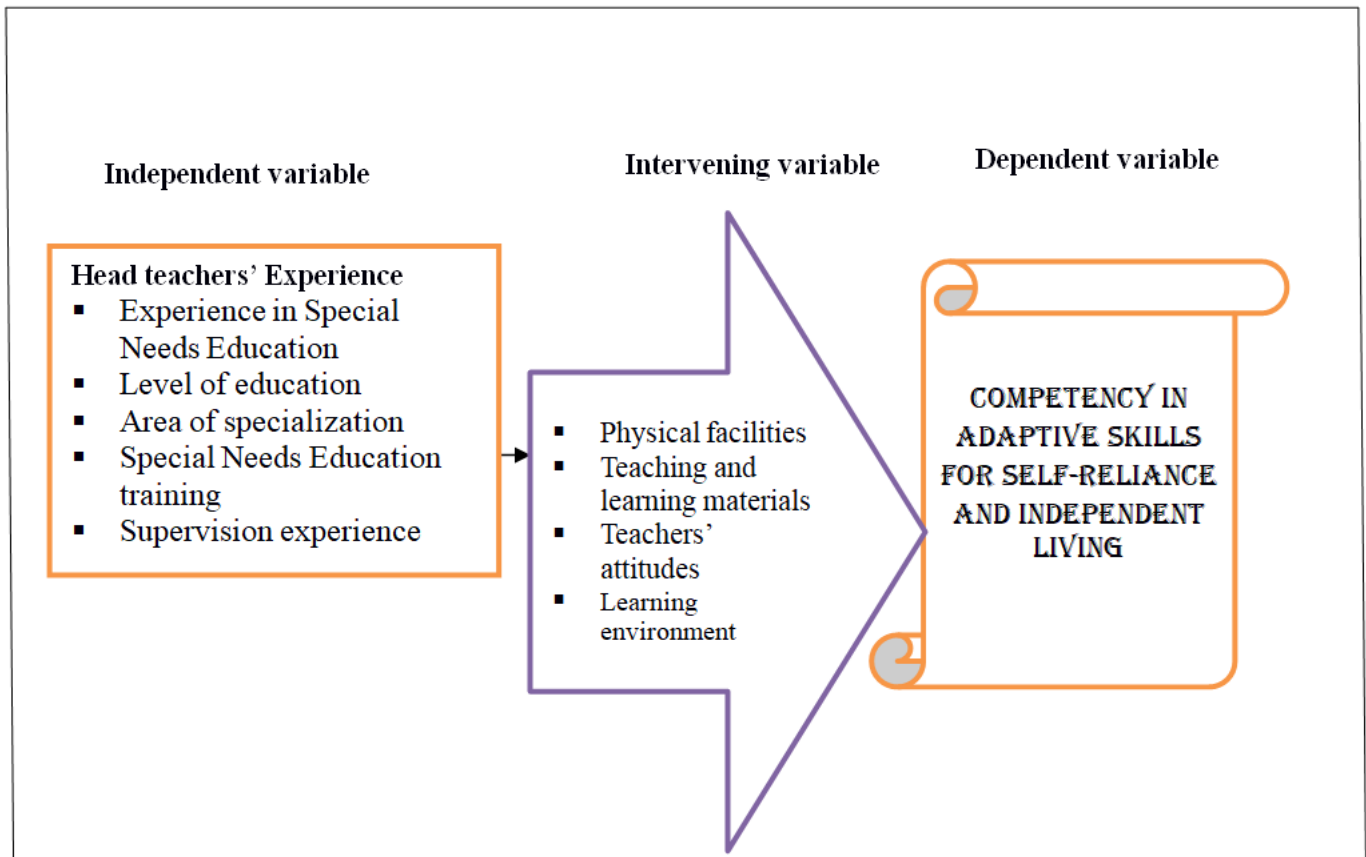


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Independent variables was teacher’s views on head teachers’ experience in instructional supervision. The interaction between independent and intervening variables led to dependent variable which was acquisition of competency in adaptive skills by learners with ID leading to self-reliance and independent living.

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

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. 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, interview schedule and observational checklist. Questionnaires for teachers consisted of four sections with a total of 19 items (3 open-ended items and 16 close-ended). The items were scored based on a 5-item Likert scale. Interview schedule for head teachers consisted of 12 open-ended items The interview guide for head teachers consisted of five sections, where section A was to establish the demographic information about the head teacher such as academic and professional qualification, area of specialization and years of experience as a head teacher. Section B to E was seeking to address the variables under study, arranged in

accordance with the research objectives. An Observational Checklist is a research instrument of gathering data. In this case, the checklist had two sections, A and B. Section A contained a demographic information such as name of school or Unit, class level, age of child, and date of admission. Section B contains a list of adaptive skills which are taught to learners with ID to enable them lead independent lives

3.4 Pilot Study

Piloting was done in Kathelwa Special Unit in Igembe Central sub-County. Test-retest method was used to establish the reliability of the research instruments. A Cronbach’s Alpha was used to calculate the reliability of the questionnaires and a value 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 analysed 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 OF THE STUDY

4.1 Bio-Data of the Respondents

Table 1: Instrument /Tools Return 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
Learners	104	104	100

The fifteen questionnaires for the teachers were also filled and returned. The entire one hundred and four 104(100%) observation checklists were filled by the researcher as she

collected information from the learners. They were filled according to the learners’ ability of performing given adaptive skills activities. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013) 60% questionnaire return rate is deemed sufficient for data analysis. The questionnaire return rate was above 60% which was very good and therefore suitable for analysis.

Table 2: Academic Qualification and Area of Specialization for Head teachers in Igembe south sub-county

SNE Institutions	Academic qualification	Area of Specialization	Frequency	Percentage
Athi Special School	Degree	Intellectual Disability	1	20
Athiru Gaiti Special Unit	Diploma	Early Childhood Development Education	1	20
Kathima Special Unit	A Level	Mathematics	1	20
Antubociu Special Unit	M.ED	EBD	1	20
Kilalai Special Unit	Diploma	Inclusive	1	20
Total			5	100

Table 4.2 shows that 1(20%) of the head teacher had a degree in special needs education specializing in intellectual disability. Another head teacher from Antubociu special Unit had a master’s degree in education (M.ED) and specialized in Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD). The third head teacher was from Kilalai and had a diploma in Inclusive Education and no specialization, while the other head teacher had done mathematics in A-level. Teachers were asked to indicate their highest level of academic qualification and the findings were as displayed in figure 4.1

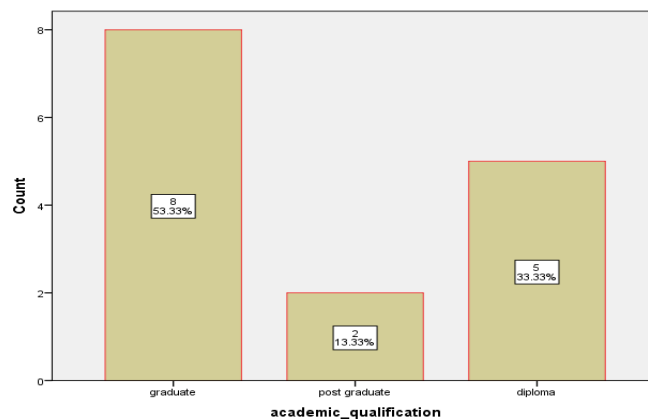


Figure 2: Teachers’ Academic qualification Figure 4.1 Teachers’ Academic qualification

Findings in Figure 4.1 show that 8(85.3%) of teachers had a bachelor’s degree while 5(33.3%) had diploma and 2(13.3%) had a master’s degree and all had specialised in inclusive education. According to their academic qualification 20% (1)

of the head teachers was qualified to supervise the teaching and learning of adaptive skills. This leaves 4(80%) of head teachers not in a position to supervise and assist the teachers to understand adaptive skills and train the learners accordingly. The researcher also requested the teachers to indicate their experience in teaching as shown in Figure 3.

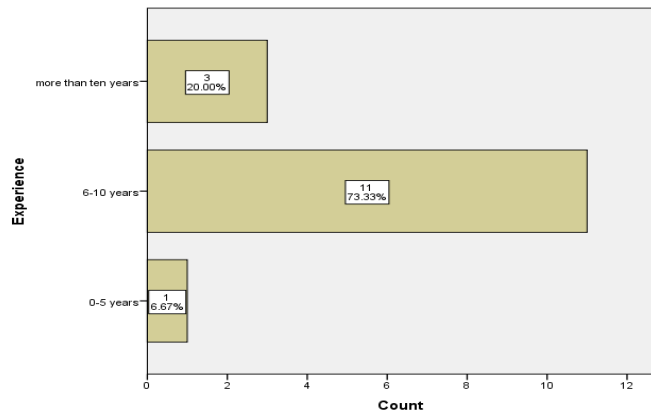


Figure 3: Teachers' Teaching Experience

The findings in the figure 4.2 indicate that 73.33% (11) of the teachers had between 6-10 years' experience while 20% (3) had more than ten years while 6.67% (1) had less than 5 years of experience. These findings suggest that the majority of teachers in these schools had more than 6 years of experience. With this experience, teachers were expected to impart functional adaptive skills to learners with ID for independent living. Despite the high number of teachers with long experience in teaching adaptive skills, high percentage of learners with ID had not acquired these important adaptive skills which would enable them live independently. For instance, the findings shown in Table 4.2 reveal that 61(58.6%) of learners with ID had not acquired social skills, whereas 69 (66.4%) of the learners had not acquired leisure skills.

4.2 Head teacher's Qualification in Instructional Supervision and Acquisition of Adaptive Skills

The study set out to evaluate head-teachers' instructional supervision qualification in the teaching and learning of adaptive skills in Igembe South Sub-county. To achieve this, the researcher presented the teachers with a range of statements on a Likert scale where one (1) meant-strongly disagree, 2-disagree, 3-agree, 4-strongly agree) and asked them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the statements. Their responses are displayed in table 2.

Table 3: Head teacher's Qualification in Instructional Supervision

Statement	N=15	1	2	3	4
Head teacher is aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID	F	8	5	1	1
	%	53.3	33.3	6.7	6.7
Head teacher practices professional and effective instructional supervision.	F	11	3	1	1
	%	73.3	20.0	6.7	6.7

Head teacher is trained SNE and specialized in Intellectual Disabilities	F	6	4	2	3
	%	40	26.7	13.3	20
Educational qualification of some head teachers affects their ability to perform their instructional supervision role	F	8	3	3	1
	%	6.7	20.0	20.0	53.3

These findings in Table 3 depicts, 8 (53.3%) of teachers strongly disagreed that head teachers were aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID. 5 (33.3%) disagreed with the statement that head teachers were aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID. Therefore, a total of 11(73.3%) concurred that their head teachers did not understand what is meant by adaptive skills. On the other hand, 1(6.7%) claimed that their head teachers had some knowledge of what is meant by adaptive skills. Another 1(6.7%) strongly agreed that the head teachers are aware of adaptive skills for learners with ID.

A total of 2(13.4%) of teachers believed that head teachers knew about adaptive skills for learners with ID. This clearly shows that the instructional supervisors were not conversant with the skills learners with ID are supposed to learn. Head teachers were interviewed about their awareness of adaptive skills for learners with ID. Kathima Special Unit head teacher asserted that:

I am not aware of such skills since I have not studied special education needs. In fact, I do not even know what learners are supposed to learn. Therefore, I cannot tell the class teacher to teach this or that (Mpaku Ht, Kathima Special Unit, July, '2019).

The preceding observations by Mpaku and Mathioro were supported by the learner's performance in adaptive skills where it was established that in functional academics, only 3.8% (4) performed by themselves, work skills only 17.3% (18) performed without assistance, self-direction skills only 14.4% (15) of learners performed without assistance and community facilities use, only 18.3% (19) and Health and safety skills, only 19.2% (20) of learners performed without assistance.

One head teacher, 1(20%) was well qualified as he had specialized in the area of intellectual disabilities and therefore was aware of adaptive skills. He supported teaching staff to effectively implement the curriculum. The head teacher Athi Special School had this to say:

Learners with ID need to be assisted to live as normal life as possible. I therefore interact freely with my staff and learners. We discuss the adaptive skills for all foundation levels and then we provide teaching and learning materials. I encourage

teachers to improvise teaching resources which are not available. We also borrow other teaching and learning materials from our neighbouring regular primary school (Mathioro Ht, Athi Special School, July, 2019.)

Head teachers who are conversant with adaptive skills are only 20% (1). If this huge 80% (4) of head teachers are not aware of adaptive skills, then it is true that teachers are not effective in imparting the skills to learners. It also means that instructional leaders who are head teachers do not offer effective instructional support. The other skills identified by the head teacher included work skills like dress and shoe making, artwork and basketry to help the learner’s lead independent lives. In this study when such large percentages as 86.3% of respondents claim that their head teachers are not aware of adaptive skills, it may mean that no effective supervision took place in their learning institutions. This was escalated by a head teacher from one school involved in the study when asked if he was aware of adaptive skills that,

I am not aware of such skills since I have no knowledge in special educational needs. I do not even know what learners with ID are supposed to learn. So I cannot tell the teacher to teach this or that (Mathioro Ht, Kilalai Special Unit, July, 2019).

In an interview in Antubociu Special Unit head teacher was asked the same question on awareness of adaptive skills, he said that,

In college, I did and specialized in behaviour disorders and social maladjustment which is not related to intellectual disabilities. So, I have no idea about adaptive skills for learners with ID. I occasionally visit the special unit in the school but do not know what they do with their learners. I therefore don’t do any instructional supervision in the special unit (Kitharia Ht, Antubociu Special Unit, July, 2019.)

These observations suggest that some of the head teachers may not be effective in instructional supervision of teachers for learners with ID, since they are not professionally trained on essential skills required in teaching of learners with IDs. In regards to their head teachers portraying professional characteristics of an effective supervisor, 11(73.3%) strongly disagreed while 3(20%) disagreed that their head teachers practice professional and effective instructional supervision. In total, 14(93.3%) of the respondents disagreed with the

statement while 2(13.3%) claimed that their head teachers had traits of effective supervisors. Further, majority of the respondents 40% strongly disagreed while 4 (26.7%) disagreed. This makes a total of 10 (66.7%) of respondents asserted that their head teachers did not portray any evidence of special needs education

The researcher further sought to determine whether the head teacher’s training in SNE had an influence on the learner’s acquisition of adaptive skills. In order to determine whether SNE training had influenced the learners with ID acquisition of adaptive skills, and findings were presented in Table 4.

Table 4: Training in Intellectual Disabilities and performance in Adaptive Skills

Adaptive Skills	Do by self		Do with assistance		Could not do	
	F	%	F	%	F	%
Self-Care	58	56%	31	30%	15	14%
Social skills	45	41%	41	39%	20	19%
Leisure skills	35	34 %	47	45%	22	21%
Home & school living	23	22%	48	46%	33	32%
Com skills	32	31%	42	40%	30	29%
Health and safety	20	19%	51	49%	33	32%
Self-direction	14	14%	39	38%	50	48%
Functional academics	4	4%	25	24%	75	72%
Community facilities	19	18%	31	30%	54	52%
Work related abilities	18	17%	26	25%	60	58%

The findings in Table 4 show that 75 (72%) could not perform any functional academic skills; 60 (58%) could not perform work related skills while 54 (52%) could not perform adaptive skills related to community facilities. It was notable that 56% (58) were able to do self-care, 51(49%) could do health and safety with assistance while 47 (45%) could do leisure skills with assistance.

V. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Findings revealed that some head teachers in special units under study were not trained in Special Education Needs and therefor did not have adequate capacity to supervise teachers on the same content. Lack of such important skills means that they were not likely to offer effective supervision that would help the teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with ID. The current findings are supported by those of Wanzare (2013) which showed that newly appointed head teachers and also those who have been in the field long enough face challenges due to lack of training to prepare them for their new roles as head teachers.

These findings suggest that where head teachers lacked qualification, knowledge and experience in learners with ID, instructional supervisor was not effective which implied that learners with ID may not benefit as expected. These

observations are similar to those of Tshabalala (2013) who established that the majority of head teachers did not understand the concept of instructional supervision. Donkoh and Dwamena (2014) assert that trained supervisors can easily affect and improve teachers and learner's performance. These may also play an important role in enhancing acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID. These findings agree with Vaz et al. (2015) who explained that head teachers' qualification in teaching and learning of adaptive skills was essential for independent living of learners with ID.

The preceding findings could have been different if the head teachers had professional training and necessary experience in instructional supervision of teachers and learners with ID. This suggests that the head teacher's training in SNE has a significant influence on the likelihood of learners with ID acquiring health and safety skills as compared to those who lack SNE training. It can be deduced that SNE trained head teachers increase the likelihood of their learners acquiring adaptive skills while lack of training impedes acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with ID. Donkoh and Dwamena (2014) who posit that trained supervisors affect teachers and learners' performance and play a crucial role in enhancing acquisition of adaptive skills by learners with intellectual disability. These findings were also echoed by Vaz et al. (2015), who explained that head teachers' qualification in teaching and learning of adaptive skills was essential towards independent living of learners with ID. This essentially improves teaching and instructional supervision which enables learners with ID in acquisition of adaptive skills.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the findings it is logical to conclude that the head teacher's low qualification and lack of training in special needs education had a significant effect on the teaching and learning of adaptive skills among learners with intellectual disabilities in Igembe South.

VII. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. There can be a policy that the head teachers of SNE units are appropriately trained in order to execute adequate supervision of the teaching and learning of adaptive skills to learners with intellectual disability
- ii. 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.
- iii. The head teachers of SNE schools should utilize either collaborative or non-direct supervision method to promote consultation, cooperation and motivation between the teachers and supervisors. This is because it was found that direct supervision did not promote acquisition of adaptive skills.

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