

Assessing The Teachers' Preparedness To Support Learners With Learning Disabilities In Grade Six In Public Primary Schools In Kakamega County, Kenya

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Abstract:

Background: Learners with Learning Disabilities (LWLDs) encounter a variety of obstacles that limit their full involvement in social activities and academic programs, reducing their opportunities for academic success. Despite initiatives promoting inclusive education, over 20% of Grade Six LWLDs in Kakamega County continue to score below the national average in core subjects like mathematics and languages. This study aimed to assess teachers' preparedness to support LWLDs in grade six in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

Methods: The study was anchored on Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (1978) and utilized a descriptive research design. The study targeted 323 public primary schools, 323 head teachers, 508 grade six teachers, and 7 Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs). A sample of 136 schools was randomly selected, while 186 grade six teachers were chosen using proportionate random sampling. Purposive sampling was used to select 136 head teachers to participate in the study. Questionnaires for grade six teachers and an interview schedule for head teachers and QASOs were used to gather information from the respondents. These research instruments were pretested to establish their validity and reliability. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient of 0.8 was computed, and thus the instruments were deemed reliable. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS version 27 and presented in frequency tables, percentages, means, and standard deviations.

Results: The findings revealed that teacher preparedness to support LWLDs in grade six is inadequate in many aspects. Quantitative data revealed that while some teachers reported having training and awareness of LDs, a significant number either lacked sufficient knowledge or were uncertain about their capabilities. Many teachers reported challenges, such as large class sizes, lack of resources, and limited professional development opportunities, which hindered their preparedness. The majority of teachers did not attend refresher courses on teaching LWLDs, and many expressed difficulties in adapting teaching methodologies to suit the learners' needs. Qualitative data reinforced these findings, with head teachers and QASOs emphasizing the lack of specialized training, insufficient adaptation of teaching methods, and infrequent professional development as critical barriers to effective support for LWLDs.

Conclusion: Teachers in Kakamega County are not adequately prepared to support learners with LDs due to insufficient training, lack of resources, and limited professional development opportunities.

Recommendations: The school administrators should allocate resources for assistive technologies and ensure smaller class sizes to enhance individualized support for LWLDs. In addition, the study recommends that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) need to develop and disseminate formal guidelines for inclusive lesson planning and task modification to improve teaching practices.

Keywords: academic achievement, grade six learners, learners with learning disabilities, public primary schools, Teacher Predictors and teacher preparedness

I. INTRODUCTION

According to estimates, 16% of the world's population, or 1.3 billion people, currently suffer from disabilities

(Department of Economics, 2025). In America, effective teachers for learners with learning disabilities (LD) employ differentiated instruction, utilise technology effectively, and foster a supportive and inclusive classroom environment

(Bhat & Dar, 2024). Positive teacher-learner relationships are associated with increased motivation, engagement, and academic achievement among learners with LD (Van der Linde, 2021). Teachers who demonstrated empathy, warmth and genuine interest in their students with LD were more likely to foster positive relationships. Teachers' perceptions of students with LD significantly influence their academic achievement. In China, teachers who had positive perceptions of these learners' academic abilities are likely to adopt inclusive teaching practices that improve students' performance (Wang et al., 2024). Conversely, teachers who held negative perceptions often contributed to the stigmatisation and marginalisation of learners with disabilities, further hindering their academic progress. This highlighted the need for teachers to foster positive attitudes toward learners with disabilities to enhance academic outcomes.

In Nigeria, many teachers lacked the abilities and resources needed to recognise pupils with learning disabilities (LDs), which frequently caused early interventions to be postponed (Abubakar, 2024). The lack of standardised screening techniques and insufficient training in public primary schools were major contributors to this discrepancy, which resulted in learners' LDs being misidentified and underdiagnosed. In Egypt, a study showed that while teachers were generally aware of LDs, their preparedness to support these learners in grade six was limited, and most educators reported feeling inadequately trained in special education strategies, highlighting a lack of professional development opportunities that focused on LDs (Elhadi, 2021).

A number of studies have been undertaken in Kenya to investigate the teacher predictors of academic progress in grade six children with learning disabilities (LD), specifically within public primary schools. These studies examine educators' capacity to recognise students with learning disabilities (LD), their readiness to assist these individuals, their views on the academic performance of learners with LD, and the influence of teacher experience on the selection of instructional strategies. A study by Mwabili et al. (2020) demonstrated how educators recognise students with learning difficulties. Most educators identified students with learning disabilities through their writing, reading, comprehension, speech, behaviour, and academic achievement. Educators, administrators, evaluators, guardians, and other specialists participated in the identifying process. Lazarus (2023) demonstrated a positive correlation between teacher self-efficacy, years of teaching experience, and classroom conduct. The results of research question three clearly indicated the significant impact of years of teaching experience on teachers' classroom actions. Buhere et al. (2025) indicate that the majority of instructors believe that students with severe needs would benefit most from special schools, whereas those with minor needs would thrive in inclusive environments.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to assess teacher predictors of academic achievement among LWLDs in grade six in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The relationship between the study variables is diagrammatically shown in Figure 1.

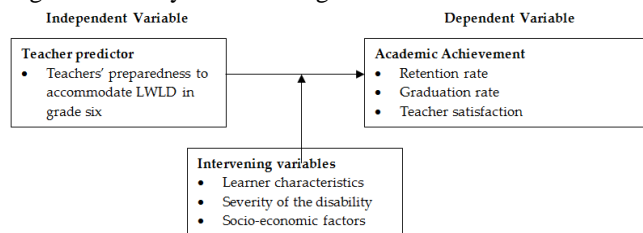


Figure 1: Relationship Between the Study Variables

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section discusses the theories and review of related literature under the following sub-sections:

A. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Vygotsky's social constructivism theory (1978), which emphasises the significance of social interaction and cultural context in cognitive development, informs this study. Vygotsky posits that learning is inherently a social process, wherein individuals construct knowledge through interactions with peers or educators who have more extensive information. The concept of the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD) refers to the spectrum of tasks that a learner can accomplish with the support of a more knowledgeable individual, yet cannot perform independently. This notion is a key element of the theory proposed by Vygotsky (1978). This principle highlights the importance of scaffolding, wherein educators provide temporary assistance to students as they acquire new skills and gradually reduce that support as the students achieve competence. Vygotsky's theory illustrates the importance of language in cognitive development. Vygotsky posits that language serves as a fundamental mechanism for reasoning and problem-solving, in addition to functioning as a communication tool. Students integrate external information via conversation and social interactions, incorporating it into their cognitive frameworks (Daniels, 2016). This illustrates the importance of vocal communication in educational settings, especially for students with learning challenges who may need more explicit verbal assistance and guidance.

Vygotsky's theory holds significant relevance to this study. The ZPD offers a framework for comprehending how educators can scaffold learning for students with learning disabilities. These learners frequently necessitate supplementary assistance to complete tasks that their peers may execute autonomously. Teachers equipped to recognize and assist learners with learning disabilities can efficiently offer this support, facilitating the transition from students' existing abilities to their potential academic success (Churher et al., 2014). Vygotsky's focus on social interaction in learning speaks to the importance of teacher preparedness and perception in promoting positive learning outcomes for students with learning disabilities. By modifying their instructional approaches and using encouraging language,

educators can facilitate significant interactions with students and enhance the internalization of concepts. Utilizing Vygotsky's approach enables teachers to transform their perceptions and implement inclusive teaching practices that improve learner participation and achievement. The theory supports the emphasis on teacher experience as a factor influencing learning outcomes. Experienced educators are more adept at facilitating learner support within the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) by employing suitable instructional strategies and adapting their teaching approaches according to student requirements. In Kakamega County, inexperienced teachers frequently face challenges in meeting the needs of LWLDs (Shah, 2022). The application of Vygotsky's theory elucidates the impact of teacher experience on the selection of teaching strategies and its subsequent effect on academic achievement.

B. EMPIRICAL LITERATURE

In addition to difficulties and anomalies in reading, writing, and maths at school, children with learning disabilities also struggle to comprehend what their teachers are teaching them and process information rapidly (Vaughn et al., 2024). Wehmeyer et al. (2021) examine the legislative history of the right to a free, appropriate public education for students with disabilities and the U.S. legal mandate for special education services to be delivered in the least restrictive environment (LRE). Research unequivocally indicates that inclusive placements are advantageous for children with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD), while more studies emphasise that engagement and access to the general education curriculum are superior in inclusive environments compared to segregated ones. Nonetheless, the limitation of this study resides in its emphasis on leadership rather than explicitly evaluating teachers' readiness or beliefs regarding their preparedness to address learning disabilities in the classroom. This proposed study aims to evaluate instructors' readiness to assist sixth-grade children with learning disabilities in public schools providing standard basic education in Kakamega County.

In Australia, a study by Munchan and Agbenyega (2020) contends that although inclusive education in early childhood is more embraced within the equity and diversity movement, the insights and contributions of educators regarding effective practices and challenges are often overlooked. The study indicated that teachers often struggled to manage large classes, hindering their ability to provide individualised support. Moreover, a significant barrier to creating an inclusive learning environment was identified as the lack of collaboration among educators, special education needs coordinators (SENCOs), and external specialists. Although the study emphasised the importance of continuous professional development, a disparity persists in the support structures and resources accessible to educators in challenging school environments. The study emphasised that enhancing instructors' preparedness to address the needs of children with learning challenges necessitates continuous professional development and improved access to resources. This proposed study aims to evaluate instructors' readiness to assist sixth-

grade children with learning disabilities in public schools providing standard basic education in Kakamega County.

In Nigeria, Sebili et al. (2025) investigated the obstacles and readiness of educators in executing inclusive education for students with intellectual disabilities in the Educational District VI Area of Lagos State. The results indicated that educators possessed insufficient understanding of learning disabilities and their attributes. They had minimal experience recognising and evaluating learning disabilities. Educators indicated insufficient training and resources for instructing students with learning disabilities, which highlights the need for targeted professional development programs and additional resources to enhance their instructional strategies. The study effectively underscores the inadequacy of teacher preparedness but fails to explore the specific practical measures or forms of professional development necessary to address this deficiency. Charles (2025) investigated the preparedness of special education-trained teachers to execute inclusive education in specific public primary schools in Tanzania, utilising readiness theory as a framework. Findings indicated that although instructors exhibited attitudinal preparedness and basic knowledge for inclusive education, their functional readiness was hindered by insufficient in-service training, scarce teaching resources, and inadequate systemic support. A significant number of educators lacked specialised training, and the curriculum offered little direction for helping kids with learning difficulties.

Mwanzia and Kalai (2022) examine the impact of instructional supervision on the inclusion of learners with special needs in public primary schools in the Mbooni East and West sub-counties of Kenya. The research employed educational production theory and a descriptive survey design. The results demonstrated that there was no statistically significant mean difference between head teachers' frequency of instructional supervision and the inclusion of learners in primary education, as all calculated p-values exceeded the standard threshold of 0.05, thereby rejecting the null hypothesis. The research revealed that educators possessed insufficient knowledge of learning disabilities and lacked confidence in their capacity to recognise and assist students with such disabilities. Keitany (2022) examined the pedagogical competences of pre-primary teachers and the management of students with special needs in public pre-primary centres in Keiyo South Sub-County. The research was conducted using a descriptive survey design. The teacher competencies received the following ratings: administrative skills, identification of students with special needs, assessment skills, and interaction abilities. The research additionally revealed that school administrators could significantly assist teachers by facilitating access to materials, training, and professional development opportunities. The study, however, did not comprehensively examine the extent to which these administrative initiatives translate into concrete classroom preparedness, leading to a lack of clarity regarding the influence of administrative support on actual teaching outcomes. This study seeks to evaluate the readiness of instructors to assist sixth-grade children with learning disabilities in public schools providing standard basic education in Kakamega County.

III. METHODS AND MATERIALS

A. RESEARCH DESIGN AND SETTING

Data on teacher predictors of academic achievement among sixth-grade learners with LD in public schools providing regular primary education in Kakamega County was gathered for this study using a descriptive research approach. In addition to explaining what existed in a population at a specific period (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009), the descriptive study design allowed the researcher to collect data, compile, present, and interpret for the aim of clarity (Orodho, 2008). Kakamega County is located in western Kenya, between the Nandi Hills to the east and Lake Victoria to the west. It is a relatively small county, with an area of only 3,024 square kilometres (1,168 square miles). However, it is densely populated with a population of over 800,000 people (RoK, 2021). The county consists of 12 administrative sub-counties.

B. STUDY POPULATION

The target population comprised 323 public primary schools, 323 headteachers, 508 grade six teachers, and 7 QASOs. The total estimated target population was 838 as presented in Table 1.

Sub county	Target Population		
	Number of schools	Number of grade six teachers	LWLD
Khwisero	36	68	2211
Lurambi	29	56	2120
Malava	32	62	2905
Matungu	31	54	2054
Mumias East	32	47	2670
Mumias West	26	35	2122
Navakholo	25	33	1713
Butere	26	37	2120
Lugari	22	36	1829
Likuyani	20	31	1627
Shinyalu	23	26	1737
Ikolomani	21	23	1578
Total	323	508	22708

Source: County Education Office, Kakamega, (2024).

Table 1: Target Population

C. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES AND SAMPLE SIZE

In this section, the researcher presents the sampling methods and sample size.

a. SAMPLING TECHNIQUES

The sub-counties with a population of over 2000 LWLD were purposively sampled to take part in the study. Thus, 7 sub-counties were utilised in the study. Purposive sampling was used because it enabled the researcher to target sub-counties with a higher concentration of LWLD, thereby ensuring a sufficient and relevant sample for meaningful

analysis. These sub-counties were considered information-rich and more likely to provide reliable data on the teacher-related factors influencing academic achievement among LWLD. Therefore, the study included seven sub-counties that satisfied this criterion. The sample frame was made up of public primary schools in Kakamega County. The researcher used simple random sampling to select schools from each sampled sub-county. The researcher folded small pieces of paper with the names of the schools printed on them, placed them in a bucket, and thoroughly mixed them. Once the selected school was returned and fully mixed, the schools were chosen one at a time. This process was repeated until all 136 schools were selected.

Every public primary school in the sampled sub-counties provided a sample of responding sixth-grade teachers. Each sampled school appropriately contributed to the necessary sample size. The researcher randomly selected the participating sixth-grade teachers from each school using simple random sampling techniques. Small pieces of paper with the words "Yes" or "No" written on them were used for this process. The number of papers with a "Yes" response corresponded to the number of respondents needed from each school. Teachers of sixth grade were allowed to select only one piece of paper after all the papers had been folded, placed in a bucket, and thoroughly mixed. Before the opening, verification was made to guarantee that each instructor chose only one paper. Teachers filled out questionnaires, and the sample size was determined by selecting sheets with "Yes." This procedure was performed again in each of the schools being sampled in each sub-county until the required sample size of 186 was attained.

b. SAMPLE SIZE

A total of 186 sixth-grade teachers were employed in this study, which included a sample size of 136 schools. Krejcie and Morgan's table for calculating sample sizes was used to generate these numbers. A total of 136 headteachers were purposefully selected to participate in the study, and 186 sixth-grade teachers were chosen at random. Therefore, the entire study sample size consisted of 329 respondents, as shown in Table 2.

Sub county	Sample Size			
	No. schools	No. of head teachers	No. of grade six teachers	QASOs
Khwisero	23	23	36	1
Lurambi	17	17	29	1
Malava	21	21	32	1
Matungu	20	20	28	1
Mumias East	21	21	24	1
Mumias West	17	17	18	1
Butere	17	17	19	1
Total	136	136	186	7

Source: Researcher (2024)

Table 2: Sample Size

D. RESEARCH TOOLS

The research instruments for this study were questionnaires and interview schedules. Sixth-grade teachers from the selected schools were given questionnaires. Data was gathered using questionnaires because they could collect a large amount of information in a relatively short period, and the anonymity of the respondents ensured truthful responses. As a result, a semi-structured questionnaire with closed-ended items was used in the study. On the other hand, both QASOs and head teachers were subjected to an interview schedule. To obtain additional information to support the findings from the surveys, the interview schedule allowed the school headteachers to express their opinions based on the research objectives and questions. The interview schedule was created with the study's goals and enquiries in mind. The questions were structured to allow flexibility in responses, enabling the interviewees to provide detailed insights. Separate schedules were designed for headteachers and QASOs, tailored to their unique roles and perspectives within the school environment.

E. PILOT STUDY

Although it was not part of the final study, a pilot study was conducted in Lugari Sub-County, which offered an environment and features similar to the data that the planned study was meant to gather. To ensure the items were understandable, pertinent, and able to elicit the necessary information, a pilot study of the research instruments was carried out. To ensure validity, an interview schedule and questions were created using materials gathered from reputable sources by LWLD specialists. Five experienced instructors who work with LWLD validated them. A group of professionals participated in this validation process: two grade six teachers from the sampled schools and three county education officers experienced in handling LWLD to assist in reviewing these items. To ensure the reliability of the research tools, the Cronbach's Alpha method was used to calculate reliability and assess internal consistency. The degree of accuracy and consistency of the questionnaire's items was determined using Cronbach alpha (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2009). According to the questionnaire's Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient, a score of 0.8 was computed, and thus the instruments were deemed reliable.

F. DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The researcher obtained a research permit from the Ministry of Education via Kenyatta University's Graduate School before beginning data gathering. The researcher then sought permission from NACOSTI through the Dean of Students' office at Kenyatta University in order to carry out the study. After obtaining research permission, the researcher went to the Kakamega County Director of Education to request permission to conduct the study in the selected schools. The administrators of the sampled schools were then asked to consent to the study's participation by their teachers. Before the surveys were distributed, the instructors who were sampled provided their informed consent through an introductory letter. Confidentiality was guaranteed for the

teachers. The data collection tools were then gathered and used to extract information for analysis.

G. DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS PROCEDURE

Data analysis involved both qualitative and quantitative analysis.

After the collection of the questionnaires, they were counted, scored and the results tabularised with the aid of a five-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics were used in analysing the data collected. Simple percentages, frequencies, tables and figures were used in presenting and describing the analyzed data and these aided in developing an insight into the results, thus ascertaining the tendencies and also demonstrating the association among portions of the study results (Gay et al., 2011).

H. LOGICAL AND ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Kenyatta University Ethical Review Committee granted the researcher permission to conduct the study. Through Kenyatta University's Graduate School, the researcher seeks a permit from the MOEST. Following the acquisition of research authorisation, the researcher went on to ask the Kakamega County Director of Education for permission to carry out the study. Before administering the surveys and conducting the interviews, the head teachers and grade six teachers who were sampled were asked for their informed consent via an introductory letter. Confidentiality was guaranteed to the grade six teachers and headteachers. After the data-gathering instruments were finished, the information was extracted for analysis. To gain the participants' permission, the researcher thoroughly explained the study's goal to them. Participants were given the opportunity to engage voluntarily, with the researcher ensuring that they were not coerced into answering the research questions. The study was designed to encourage cooperation from the participants without forcing them to participate. The information gathered was handled with the highest standards of privacy, safety, and integrity, with the sole purpose of supporting the study. The researcher took steps to ensure that the data was used exclusively for the study and that the research materials were securely stored and inaccessible to unauthorised parties.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A. GENERAL INFORMATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

In this section, a comprehensive interpretation and discussion of response rates, gender distribution, age distribution, academic qualifications, and work experience was done, as illustrated in the following tables.

Category	Initial Number	Final Number	Response rate
No. of head teachers	136	131	96%
No. of grade six teachers	186	167	90%

QASOs	7	7	100%
Total	329	305	93%

Table 3: Response Rate

In Table 3, the response rate for the study was notably high, with an overall response rate of 93%. Specifically, head teachers had a response rate of 96%, grade six teachers had 90%, and all QASOs responded, contributing to a 100% response rate. The high response rate is a positive indicator of the willingness and engagement of educational staff in Kakamega County to contribute to the study. This may imply that the study's findings can provide a clear and accurate reflection of the perceptions, preparedness, and background of educators in relation to teaching LWLDs. The 100% response rate from QASOs is particularly valuable as it allows for a comprehensive understanding of how they perceive and assess teacher preparedness and the support provided to LWLDs. The slight difference in response rates between headteachers and grade six teachers (96% vs 90%) does not significantly impact the reliability of the data.

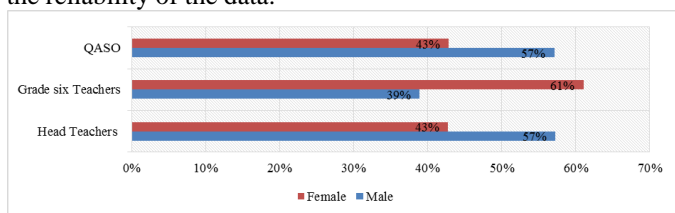


Figure 2: Distribution of Participants by Gender

In Figure 2, a higher percentage of male head teachers (57%) compared to female head teachers (43%). In contrast, there is a significant gender imbalance among grade six teachers, with 61% females and 39% males. The gender distribution of QASOs is more balanced, with a slight male majority (57%). The higher number of female grade six teachers (61%) is notable and may reflect a broader trend in primary education, where female teachers often outnumber males in many parts of the world, particularly in Kenya. This could influence the teaching styles and classroom management strategies employed in grade six, as teachers' gender can impact their teaching approach, as noted by research on gender dynamics in education (Daniel et al., 2025). The gender balance in QASOs, while skewed toward males, suggests that both genders are represented in the oversight and quality assurance roles, ensuring that teacher assessments and instructional support strategies are not gender-biased. Understanding the gender composition of the teachers in the study provides insight into how perceptions and readiness to assist LWLDs might differ based on gender, which could impact their approach to teaching LWLDs.

Category	Age category	Frequency	Percentage
Headteachers	25-29 years	7	5%
	30-39 years	25	19%
	40-49 years	74	56%
	Above 50 years	25	19%
	Total	131	100%
Grade six teachers	25-29 years	24	14%
	30-39 years	71	43%
	40-49 years	39	23%
	Above 50 years	33	20%
	Total	167	100%
QASOs	25-29 years	0	0%
	30-39 years	1	14%
	40-49 years	4	57%
	Above 50 years	2	29%
	Total	7	100%

Table 4: Distribution of Participants by Age

In Table 4, the majority of headteachers (56%) and sixth-grade teachers (43%) fall within the 40-49-year-old age category, indicating that these participants are relatively experienced. However, there is a notable number of younger teachers in the 25-29 years age range (14% for grade six teachers). QASOs are predominantly in the 40-49 years age category (57%). These findings suggest that the majority of teachers and headteachers have considerable experience, which could positively influence their ability to identify and support learners with learning disabilities. Older teachers may have more accumulated experience and may be better at implementing differentiated teaching strategies, which are critical in inclusive education settings. The relatively younger teachers (14% of grade six teachers) might benefit from further training and professional development to better support students with LDs. Given that experience is often correlated with effective teaching strategies for learners with LDs (Zegeye, 2022), the age and experience of the teachers in the study may influence their teaching approaches and their ability to address the needs of learners with LDs.

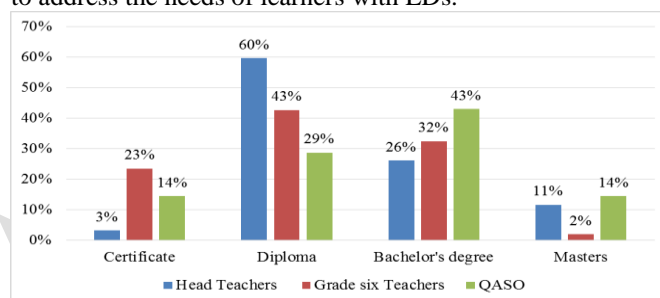


Figure 3: Distribution of Participants by Highest Academic Qualification

In Figure 3, a majority of headteachers (60%) and grade six teachers (43%) hold a diploma. A large number of teachers also have bachelor's degrees (26% for headteachers and 32% for grade six teachers). Fewer participants hold master's degrees (11% for headteachers and 2% for grade six teachers). The dominance of diploma holders among the teachers suggests that while most have received professional training in education, many may not have advanced qualifications in special education, which could impact their ability to effectively support learners with learning disabilities. As discussed by Lockwood et al. (2022), teachers with higher academic qualifications, particularly in special education, tend to have a better understanding of the needs of learners with LDs and are more equipped to employ specialised teaching strategies. The relatively small proportion of teachers with master's degrees (especially in special education) indicates a need for continued professional development and advanced training in inclusive education to enhance the academic achievement of learners with LDs in Kakamega County.

Category	Distribution of Participants by working experience		
	Year of experience	Frequency	Percentage
Headteachers	1-5 years	2	2%
	6-9 years	68	52%
	10-14 years	44	34%
	Above 15 years	17	13%
	Total	131	100%
Grade six teachers	1-5 years	29	17%
	6-9 years	96	58%

	10-14 years	32	19%
	Above 15 years	10	6%
	Total	167	100%
QASOs	1-5 years	1	14%
	6-9 years	1	14%
	10-14 years	3	43%
	Above 15 years	2	29%
	Total	7	100%

Table 5: Distribution of Participants by Working Experience

In Table 5, the majority of headteachers and grade six teachers have between 6 and 9 years of experience (52% for headteachers and 58% for grade six teachers). The work experience distribution shows that most QASOs (43%) have between 10 and 14 years of experience. The predominance of teachers with moderate work experience (6-9 years) suggests that they are likely to have encountered various teaching situations and may possess a solid foundation in classroom management. However, teachers with fewer than five years of experience may benefit from mentorship and further training in inclusive practices, as their classroom management and lesson delivery skills may not yet be fully developed for working with learners with LDs. The experience level of QASOs suggests they are likely to be seasoned professionals capable of valuable insights into how teaching quality for learners with LDs is assessed and improved.

B. TEACHERS' PREPAREDNESS TO SUPPORT LWLDS IN GRADE SIX IN PUBLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN KAKAMEGA COUNTY, KENYA

The study aimed to assess teachers' preparedness to support LWLDS in grade six in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The analysis is divided into two main stages: quantitative (univariate and bivariate) and qualitative.

a. UNIVARIATE ANALYSIS

The first stage of the analysis focuses on teachers' self-reported preparedness, measured using a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics such as frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to interpret the data as presented in Table 6.

Teacher's Preparedness Statement	SA		A		NS		D		SD		Total
	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	
I am knowledgeable, trained, and conscious of LWLDS	3	23%	5	31%	3	23%	2	14%	1	8%	167
I face serious challenges when teaching LWLDS	2	1%	3	20%	2	14%	9	55%	1	10%	167
I design activities for students with learning difficulties	1	7%	5	32%	5	35%	1	10%	2	16%	167
I modify tasks and activities to accommodate the needs of students with learning difficulties	1	4%	7	46%	3	23%	2	14%	1	9%	167
I attend a refresher course on teaching LWLDS regularly	1	10%	4	24%	4	25%	5	32%	1	10%	167
I have no problem adapting my teaching methodologies and learning activities to suit LWLDS	1	6%	6	37%	2	17%	3	23%	2	17%	167
My degree of training is effective enough to instruct LWLDS	7	4%	7	46%	5	35%	1	10%	9	5%	167

Table 6: Teachers' Preparedness in Supporting LWLDS in Grade Six in Public Primary

In Table 6, a significant percentage of instructors (23%) strongly concurred that they possess training, expertise, and understanding regarding children with learning difficulties. Nonetheless, 31% of educators concurred, while 23% remained uncertain. This indicates that, although some educators feel sufficiently equipped, a considerable number lack adequate awareness or have not undergone specialised training to manage learning disabilities effectively. This corresponds with the findings of Mwanzia and Kalai (2022), who determined that insufficient specialised training among educators constitutes a substantial obstacle to the effective inclusion of learners with learning disabilities in mainstream classes. The study highlighted the significance of pre-service and in-service training to prepare teachers with the practical skills necessary to recognise and address the distinct needs of these learners.

A majority (55%) of educators expressed disagreement or severe disagreement with the assertion that they encounter only minor problems when instructing students with learning disabilities. This suggests that the majority of educators recognise the challenges they encounter, including substantial class sizes and insufficient resources, which impede their ability to teach these kids effectively. Keitany (2022) corroborates these findings, indicating that educators in inclusive classrooms frequently encounter substantial obstacles, including inadequate resources, excessive class sizes, and insufficient support from school administration. The study emphasised that these obstacles impede effective instruction and contribute to teacher discontent and burnout. Kiarie (2020) also observed that the absence of instructional aids and specialised resources in Kenyan schools presents considerable obstacles for educators. The findings align with the present study, indicating that addressing these difficulties necessitates systemic measures, such as increased funding for inclusive education programs. The survey reveals that 39% of teachers create activities for kids with learning disabilities, but a significant 35% expressed uncertainty, and 26% disagreed. This indicates a restricted ability among certain educators to customise learning activities to address varied demands, as observed by Charles (2025). Their research highlighted that successful inclusive education relies on teachers' capacity to formulate individualised educational plans (IEPs) and adapt classroom activities to assist learners with learning disabilities (LDs). Nevertheless, they discovered that educators frequently lack the requisite knowledge or resources to execute such tactics proficiently. Furthermore, Opiyo et al. (2020) noted that numerous Kenyan educators depend on conventional, uniform teaching methods that do not accommodate the varied requirements of students. The results indicate that professional development programs ought to concentrate on enhancing teachers' competencies when creating and executing differentiated instruction.

Subsequent data indicated that merely 34% of educators consistently participated in refresher courses on instructing students with learning disabilities, whilst 42% expressed disagreement or strong disagreement. This study aligns with Keitany (2022), who discovered that insufficient access to professional development opportunities restricts instructors' capacity to implement innovative teaching practices for learners with learning disabilities. Regular refresher courses

are vital for keeping educators informed about best practices, allowing them to apply successful, evidence-based solutions in their classrooms. Moreover, 43% of teachers agreed that they had no problem adapting teaching methodologies for learners with LDs. Nevertheless, 40% either expressed disagreement or uncertainty. This corresponds with Munchan and Agbenyega (2020), who observed that educators' capacity to modify their instructional methods is directly affected by their confidence and availability of professional development opportunities. The study highlighted that teachers who receive continuous support and training are more likely to feel confident in modifying their methodologies to meet diverse learner needs.

b. QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Interviews with head teachers and QASOs revealed critical insights into the preparedness of teachers to support LWLDs in grade six. Several key themes emerged from the qualitative data, which provide deeper insights into teachers' preparedness to support LWLDs.

✓ Theme 1: Training, Knowledge, and Awareness of LDs

Many teachers reported a lack of specialized training in LDs. While teachers have general pedagogical knowledge, they often struggle to identify and address the unique needs of LWLDs. A headteacher stated,

"The awareness among teachers about LDs is minimal."
(Male headteacher, 2025)

Consequently, a female QASO echoed this concern, saying;

"Most teachers lack the skills to make practical interventions." (Male QASO, 2025)

This limited knowledge delays necessary interventions, hindering the academic progress of students with LDs. The study findings indicate that teachers lack specialised training in identifying and addressing LDs. This aligns with findings by O'Brien et al. (2024), who reported limited knowledge of LDs among teachers in Nigeria, suggesting the need for targeted training programmes. Similarly, Wehmeyer et al. (2021) emphasised the role of school leadership in providing resources and fostering an inclusive school environment to improve teacher preparedness. However, as the current study highlights, gaps in teacher training directly affect their ability to identify and intervene effectively in supporting learners with LDs.

✓ Theme 2: Challenges Faced by Teachers

Teachers identified several challenges, including large class sizes, a lack of resources, and limited parental involvement. One headteacher lamented,

"With a class of 70 students, how can a teacher be expected to give personalized attention to a child with LDs."
(Male Headteacher- school B, 2025)

These challenges are compounded by the lack of assistive technologies and the absence of a supportive inclusive education environment. The study identified large class sizes, lack of resources, and limited parental involvement as major barriers. These findings echo the work of Munchan and

Agbenyega (2020), who identified similar challenges in regular classroom settings. They argued that inadequate support networks and the absence of collaboration among stakeholders hinder the creation of inclusive learning environments. The findings underscore the need for a collaborative approach involving educators, SENCOs, and external specialists to overcome these barriers.

✓ Theme 3: Adaptation and Modification of Teaching Activities

Teachers varied in their ability to adapt their teaching methods for LWLDs. While some attempted to simplify tasks, the lack of formal guidelines or frameworks for inclusive lesson planning hindered the effectiveness of these adaptations. A headteacher noted,

"Some teachers try to simplify tasks, but without proper training, these modifications are not effective."

Teachers' inconsistent ability to adapt teaching methods for learners with LDs highlights a significant gap in practical skills. This finding aligns with Charles (2025), who found that secondary school teachers in Tanzania lacked the necessary training and curriculum guidance for addressing LDs. The absence of structured frameworks for inclusive lesson planning, as noted in the current study, reinforces the need for more comprehensive teacher education programs that include hands-on strategies for modifying teaching activities.

✓ Theme 4: Professional Development and Training Gaps

While the importance of regular refresher courses was emphasized, they were found to be infrequent and inaccessible. A head teacher stated,

"Refresher courses are essential, but they are rarely organized." (Male headteacher, 2025)

The need for more frequent, accessible professional development opportunities was highlighted as a key factor for improving teacher preparedness. These findings underline the critical need for targeted professional development programs, better resource allocation, and systematic support to enhance teachers' preparedness to support learners with learning disabilities in public primary schools in Kakamega County, Kenya. The lack of frequent and accessible professional development opportunities was a recurring theme. This aligns with Wehmeyer et al. (2021), who emphasised the importance of ongoing professional development in improving teacher readiness. The current study's findings suggest systematic and regular refresher courses to keep teachers updated on inclusive education practices. Additionally, Sebili et al. (2025) highlighted that professional development programmes must include practical measures for addressing LD challenges to bridge the gaps in teacher preparedness.

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. CONCLUSION

The study concluded that teachers in Kakamega County are not adequately prepared to support learners with LDs due

to insufficient training, lack of resources, and limited professional development opportunities. While some teachers attempt to adapt teaching methods, the lack of formal guidelines and consistent training hampers the effectiveness of these efforts. The challenges faced, including large class sizes and minimal parental involvement, exacerbate the situation, making it difficult to provide personalised attention to learners with LDs.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

- ✓ The study's findings revealed that inadequate training primarily hindered teacher preparation for identifying learners with learning disabilities. School administrators allocate resources for assistive technologies and ensure smaller class sizes to improve individual support for learners with learning disabilities. The study recommends that Quality Assurance and Standards Officers (QASOs) develop and disseminate formal guidelines for inclusive lesson planning and task modification to enhance teaching practices.
- ✓ Further research should investigate the effects of continuous professional development on teachers' attitudes and instructional strategies for learners with learning disabilities. This study could examine limitations associated with training gaps and evaluate the impact of regular capacity-building workshops on teacher perceptions and classroom practices.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I give thanks to the all-powerful God for granting me the opportunity to pursue this course and for bringing me this far. I extend special appreciation to my project supervisors, Dr. Alice Olewe (prior to her retirement) and Dr. Margaret Makanya, for their invaluable insight, scholarly guidance, and supervision throughout the research-writing process. Their perseverance, meticulousness, understanding, counsel, direction, unwavering support, and encouragement enabled me to complete this research project. Their leadership and expertise greatly inspired the successful execution of this endeavor.

I also wish to thank my colleagues, as well as all the instructors and staff at Kenyatta University's Department of Special Needs Education, for their encouragement and support throughout my studies. I am further grateful to my biological and religious families, and to the Next Generation Leadership Program, for their emotional, financial, and spiritual support. A special thank you goes to Mary Gitata, Gellian Omondi and Mr. Michael Olela for their assistance with this undertaking. May God bless you all.

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