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**Parents' Capabilities in Supporting Academic
Performance of Learners with Learning Difficulties:
Case Study of Nyagatare G.S. Rwisirabo**

By:

Francine

NIYONAGIRA

Reg. number: 221028340

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Supervisors: Dr. NASIFORO Beth Mukarwego

March, 2024

Certification

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled” **Parents’ Capabilities in Supporting Academic Performance of Learners with Learning Difficulties: Case Study of Nyagatare district,GS Rwisirabo**” is the work of Francine NIYONAGIRA, submitted in partially fulfillment of Requirements for the Degree of Masters of Education in Special Needs Education.

Signature.....

Supervisor: Dr. NASIFORO Beth MUKARWEGO

Date:/...../ 2024

DECLARATION

I, **Francine NIYONAGIRA**, confirm that this thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other award. This research has been complemented by referenced and acknowledged sources. The collaborative contributions like text, data, tables have been cited in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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Francine NIYONAGIRA

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to all my beloved family who assisted and instilled in me the values of hard work and encouraged me throughout the writing of this thesis. May almighty Father bless you all.

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I would like to thank all those people who directly contributed to the successful completion of this research. I would like to thank my supervisor Dr. NASIFORO BETH MUKARWEGO who worked very hard to make sure that I completed this thesis. I would like to thank my friends and classmates who worked very hard with me up to the completion of course work and thesis. May the Almighty God bless you.

ABSTRACT

Parents' capabilities play a crucial role in shaping the academic performance of learners, especially those with learning difficulties. This study aimed to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The objectives of the study were to examine the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

The study employed a descriptive research design and involved a sample of 92 respondents, including 40 learners with learning difficulties, 40 parents, 10 teachers, and 2 administrators from G.S. Rwisirabo . Data were collected using questionnaires for learners and interviews for parents, teachers, and administrators. Descriptive statistics, such as frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were used to analyze the data.

The findings revealed that parents' educational background had a significant impact on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners whose parents had higher levels of education tended to perform better academically compared to those whose parents had lower levels of education. Socioeconomic status also played a crucial role, with learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds generally outperforming their peers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Furthermore, the study found that parental involvement in their children's education was positively associated with academic performance. Learners whose parents actively participated in school activities, communicated with teachers, and provided support at home demonstrated better academic outcomes. However, the study also identified challenges related to limited access to support services for learners with learning difficulties and their families.

Based on the findings, the study recommends implementing targeted interventions to enhance parents' capabilities, such as providing educational support programs and resources for parents with lower levels of education. Strengthening the collaboration between schools and parents is also crucial to foster parental

involvement and create a supportive learning environment for learners with learning difficulties. Additionally, improving access to support services, including specialized educational resources and counseling, can further enhance the academic performance of these learners.

This study contributes to the understanding of the role of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in the context of Rwanda. The findings provide valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop effective strategies and interventions to support these learners and their families, ultimately promoting inclusive education and equal opportunities for all.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GS: Groupe Scolaire

ICT: Information and Communication Technology

LD: Learning Difficulties

PTA: Parent-Teacher Association

SEN: Special Educational Needs

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the research problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations and limitations, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, definition of key terms, and conclusion.

1.1 Background of the Study

The academic performance of learners with learning difficulties is a critical concern in the field of education worldwide. Learning difficulties refer to a range of disorders that affect an individual's ability to acquire, process, and apply information, leading to challenges in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). These difficulties can have significant implications for learners' educational experiences, long-term outcomes, and overall well-being.

Globally, the prevalence of learning difficulties among school-aged children is estimated to range from 5% to 15% (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2006) emphasizes the importance of inclusive education and the need to provide appropriate support for learners with diverse learning needs. This international framework has influenced educational policies and practices worldwide, promoting the inclusion and support of learners with learning difficulties in mainstream educational settings.

In the United States, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) mandates the provision of special education services to learners with specific learning disabilities (SLDs) to support their academic success (U.S. Department of Education, 2018). Similarly, the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (2012) has developed guidelines and recommendations for supporting learners with

learning difficulties in European countries, highlighting the importance of early intervention, specialized instruction, and collaboration between schools, families, and communities.

In Asia, countries like Singapore and Japan have implemented various initiatives to address the needs of learners with learning difficulties. The Singapore Ministry of Education (2022) has established specialized schools and integrated programs to provide targeted support and resources for these learners. In Japan, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT, 2021) has emphasized the development of inclusive education policies and practices to ensure equal educational opportunities for all learners, including those with learning difficulties.

In Australia, the Disability Standards for Education (Australian Government, 2005) provide a legal framework for ensuring that learners with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties, have access to education on the same basis as their peers without disabilities. The Australian Government has also funded research and initiatives to support inclusive education practices and the development of evidence-based interventions for learners with learning difficulties (Australian Government Department of Education, Skills and Employment, 2020).

In Africa, while progress has been made in promoting inclusive education, many challenges persist, such as limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and societal stigma associated with learning difficulties (Mukhopadhyay et al., 2012). In South Africa, the Education White Paper 6 on Special Needs Education (Department of Education, 2001) outlines the government's commitment to building an inclusive education system that accommodates the diverse learning needs of all learners. However, the implementation of inclusive practices and support for learners with learning difficulties remains a challenge in many South African schools (Engelbrecht et al., 2015).

In East Africa, countries like Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda have made efforts to address the educational needs of learners with learning difficulties. In Kenya, the Basic Education Act (2013) emphasizes the need for inclusive education and the provision of appropriate support and resources for learners with special needs, including those with learning difficulties (National Council for Law Report, 2013). In Tanzania, the National Strategy on Inclusive Education (2009-2017) aimed to promote access to quality education for all learners, including those with learning difficulties, through the development of inclusive policies and practices (United Republic of Tanzania, 2009). Uganda has also taken steps towards inclusive

education, with the National Integrated Early Childhood Development Policy (2016) recognizing the importance of early identification and intervention for learners with learning difficulties (Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, 2016). However, despite these efforts, the implementation of inclusive education practices and the provision of adequate support services for learners with learning difficulties remain ongoing challenges in these East African countries.

In Rwanda, the government has made significant strides in promoting inclusive education and supporting learners with special educational needs. The Rwandan Constitution (Republic of Rwanda, 2003) enshrines the right to education for all citizens, and the Education Sector Strategic Plan (Ministry of Education, 2018) emphasizes the importance of inclusive education and the need to provide appropriate support and accommodations for learners with special educational needs.

However, despite these efforts, learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda continue to face challenges in accessing quality education and achieving academic success (Karangwa et al., 2010). Research has consistently highlighted the crucial role of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic performance of learners, including those with learning difficulties (Epstein, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parental involvement, in particular, has been identified as a key factor influencing learners' academic outcomes (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). Studies have shown that learners whose parents actively engage in their education, such as monitoring homework, attending school events, and communicating with teachers, tend to have better academic performance (Fan & Chen, 2001; Jeynes, 2005). Additionally, parents' educational background and socioeconomic status have been found to impact learners' educational experiences and outcomes (Davis-Kean, 2005; Sirin, 2005). Learners from families with higher levels of parental education and socioeconomic status often have access to more educational resources and support, which can positively influence their academic performance.

Furthermore, access to support services has been identified as a critical factor in promoting the academic success of learners with learning difficulties (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014). Support services, such as specialized instruction, accommodations, assistive technology, and counseling, can help address the specific challenges faced by these learners and enhance their learning experiences (Kavale & Forness, 2000).

In the Rwandan context, there is limited research specifically focusing on the impact of parents' capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. While some studies have

explored the experiences and challenges of learners with disabilities in Rwandan schools (Karangwa et al., 2010; Mukamana & Habimana, 2018), there is a need for a more targeted investigation of the role of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties.

At the local level, G.S. Rwisirabo, a secondary school in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, has an inclusive education program and caters to learners with learning difficulties. However, observations and assessments conducted at the school indicate that learners with learning difficulties face challenges in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, leading to poor academic outcomes (Nkurunziza et al., 2019). The persistent academic underperformance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo has far-reaching consequences, including a widening achievement gap between these learners and their peers without learning difficulties (Mukamana & Habimana, 2018), limited opportunities for further education, employment, and social inclusion (Ndayishimiye & Niyibizi, 2020).

Understanding the influence of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services can provide valuable insights into how to support these learners effectively and promote their academic success. By examining the perspectives of learners, parents, teachers, and administrators, this research aims to shed light on the complex dynamics between parents' capabilities and learners' academic outcomes in the specific context of G.S. Rwisirabo.

The findings of this research have the potential to inform educational policies, practices, and interventions aimed at empowering parents, enhancing support for learners with learning difficulties, and promoting inclusive education in Rwanda and beyond. By generating empirical evidence and insights, this study can contribute to the development of targeted support programs, support strategies, and policies that promote the academic success and well-being of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda and foster equal opportunities for all.

1.2 Statement of the Research Problem

In an ideal educational setting, learners with learning difficulties should receive appropriate support, accommodations, and interventions to enable them to achieve academic success on par with their peers without learning difficulties. Inclusive education practices should be implemented effectively, ensuring that these learners have access to quality education and the necessary resources to reach their full potential (UNESCO, 1994). Parents' capabilities, including their educational background, socioeconomic status,

involvement in their children's education, and access to support services, should positively contribute to the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties (Epstein, 2011; Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Despite the efforts made by the Rwandan government to promote inclusive education and support learners with special educational needs, the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District remains a significant concern. These learners often struggle academically, performing below their grade level expectations (Nkurunziza et al., 2019). Observations and assessments conducted at G.S. Rwisirabo indicate that learners with learning difficulties face challenges in acquiring basic literacy and numeracy skills, leading to poor academic outcomes (Nkurunziza et al., 2019). While various factors contribute to this situation, the role of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic performance of these learners has not been adequately explored in the Rwandan context.

The persistent academic underperformance of learners with learning difficulties has far-reaching consequences, not only at G.S. Rwisirabo but across Rwanda. This underperformance contributes to a widening achievement gap between these learners and their peers without learning difficulties, as documented in various studies (Mukamana & Habimana, 2018). This gap can have long-term implications for their educational attainment, future prospects, and overall well-being. Without appropriate interventions and support, learners with learning difficulties may face limited opportunities for further education, employment, and social inclusion (Ndayishimiye & Niyibizi, 2020). This study aims to address this critical issue by investigating the influence of parental capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. By understanding the complex dynamics between parental factors and learners' outcomes, this research seeks to contribute to the development of effective strategies that bridge the achievement gap and promote inclusive education in Rwanda.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

1.3.1 General Objective

The general objective of this study is to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District.

1.3.2 Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of this study are:

1. To examine the effects of parents' educational background on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo.
2. To investigate the influence of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo.
3. To examine the contribution of parental involvement in their children's education to the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo.
4. To explore the effects of access to support services on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions guide this study:

1. What are the effects of parents' educational background on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo, as measured by their grades in core subjects (e.g., Mathematics, English, and Science)?
2. How does socioeconomic status influence the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo ?
3. What parental factors contribute to the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo?
4. How does access to support services affect the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo ?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study holds significant importance for various stakeholders in the education sector, particularly in the context of supporting learners with learning difficulties. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights and contribute to the existing body of knowledge in several ways:

1. Policymakers and Education Authorities: The results of this study will inform policymakers and education authorities in Rwanda about the critical role of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. This information can guide the development and implementation of policies and programs aimed at empowering parents and providing targeted support to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of these learners.

2. School Administrators and Teachers: The findings will assist school administrators and teachers at G.S. Rwisirabo and other educational institutions in understanding the specific challenges and needs of learners with learning difficulties in relation to their parents' capabilities. This knowledge can facilitate the design and implementation of appropriate interventions, teaching strategies, and support mechanisms to address the unique requirements of these learners and foster their academic success.

3. Parents and Caregivers: The study will raise awareness among parents and caregivers about the significance of their capabilities in influencing their children's academic performance, particularly for those with learning difficulties. The insights gained from this research can empower parents to actively engage in their children's education, seek necessary support, and collaborate with schools to create a conducive learning environment for their children.

4. Researchers and Academics: This study will contribute to the existing literature on the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, specifically in the Rwandan context. The findings can serve as a foundation for further research and stimulate academic discourse on this crucial topic, leading to the development of evidence-based practices and interventions.

5. Learners with Learning Difficulties: Ultimately, the beneficiaries of this study are the learners with learning difficulties themselves. By understanding the effects of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance, this research can contribute to the development of targeted support and interventions that address their specific needs. The findings can inform strategies to enhance their learning experiences, promote their academic success, and foster their overall well-being.

In summary, this study holds the potential to make a significant contribution to the field of inclusive education in Rwanda. By providing empirical evidence on the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, the findings can guide policy formulation, educational practices, and support services to ensure that these learners receive the necessary support and opportunities to thrive academically and reach their full potential.

1.6 Delimitations and Limitations

1.6.1 Delimitations

This study specifically focuses on the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, during the academic years 2023 and 2024. The findings may not be generalizable to other educational settings, geographical locations, or time periods.

The study examines the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services. While other factors may influence academic performance, they are not within the scope of this research.

The study primarily relies on data collected from learners with learning difficulties, their parents, teachers, and administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo . The perspectives of other stakeholders, such as policymakers or community members, are not included in this study.

The research is conducted within the specific socio-cultural and educational context of Rwanda, and the findings should be interpreted within this context.

1.6.2 Limitations

The study employs a descriptive research design, which may limit the ability to establish causal relationships between parents' capabilities and learners' academic performance. The findings provide insights into associations and relationships but cannot definitively determine cause and effect.

The sample size is relatively small, considering the specific focus on learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo . While efforts are made to ensure the representativeness of the sample, the limited sample

size may affect the generalizability of the findings to a wider population of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda.

The study relies on self-reported data from participants, which may be subject to biases or inaccuracies in recall or perception. Participants' responses may be influenced by social desirability bias or limitations in their ability to accurately assess certain variables.

The study is cross-sectional in nature, capturing data at a specific point in time during the academic years 2023 and 2024. Longitudinal data collected over an extended period could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the long-term effects of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance.

Access to support services is assessed based on the availability and utilization of services reported by participants. The quality, effectiveness, and appropriateness of these services are not directly evaluated in this study. Future research could explore these aspects in more depth.

The study does not control for all potential confounding variables that may influence learners' academic performance, such as school resources, teacher quality, or individual learner characteristics. While efforts are made to consider relevant factors, the complex nature of educational outcomes means that some variables may not be fully accounted for.

Despite these limitations, the study employs rigorous methodological procedures, including the use of validated instruments, pilot testing, and appropriate data analysis techniques, to ensure the reliability and validity of the findings. The researcher acknowledges these limitations and interprets the results within the specific context of the study. Future research can build upon the findings of this study and address the identified limitations to further enhance the understanding of the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda and beyond.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The study on the impact of parents' capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, is grounded in two key theoretical frameworks: Epstein's model of parental involvement and Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory.

Epstein's model of parental involvement (Epstein, 2011) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the various ways in which parents can engage in their children's education. The model identifies six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home,

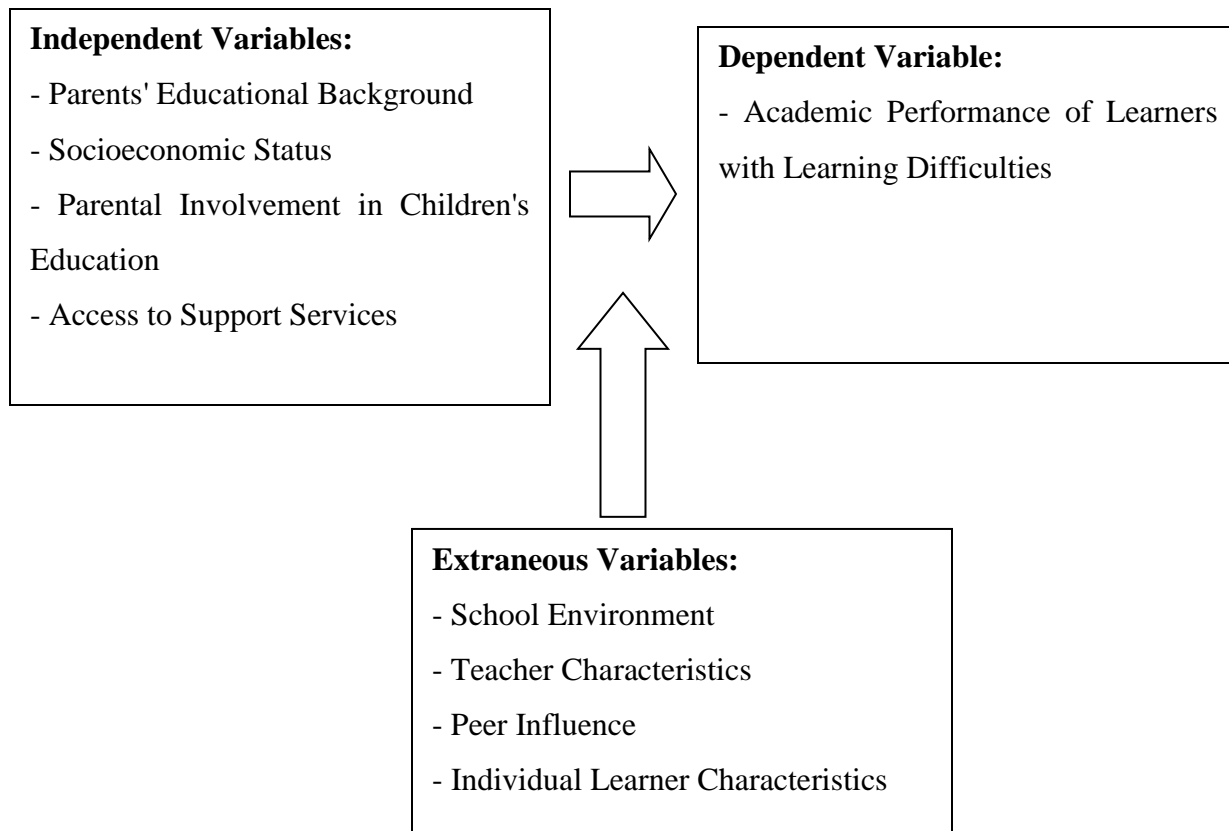
decision-making, and collaborating with the community. This model emphasizes the importance of collaborative partnerships between families, schools, and communities in promoting learners' academic success. It highlights the need for schools to create opportunities for parental involvement and to support parents in their efforts to engage in their children's education. In the context of learners with learning difficulties, Epstein's model provides a valuable framework for understanding how parental involvement can contribute to their academic performance. Parents who are actively involved in their children's education, through activities such as monitoring homework, communicating with teachers, and advocating for their children's needs, can positively influence their academic outcomes (Jeynes, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001). However, it is important to recognize that parental involvement may be influenced by various factors, such as parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and access to support services (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parents who face challenges in these areas may require additional support and resources to effectively engage in their children's education.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory is directly relevant to this research as it provides a comprehensive lens for understanding the multifaceted influences on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. By examining the interplay between individual characteristics (the child's learning difficulties), their immediate environments (home and school), and broader societal contexts (socioeconomic status, access to resources), this theory helps elucidate how parental capabilities operate within a complex system to impact student outcomes. It highlights the interconnectedness of various factors, emphasizing that parental influence isn't isolated but rather operates within a network of relationships and structures. This framework allows for a deeper analysis of how parental educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement, and access to support services interact and shape the academic experiences of learners with learning difficulties in the specific context of G.S. Rwisirabo.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study synthesizes the key variables and their hypothesized relationships based on the reviewed literature. The framework illustrates the interplay between parents' capabilities, learners' characteristics, and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework



The framework posits that parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services (independent variables) have a direct influence on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties (dependent variable). Higher levels of parental education, socioeconomic status, involvement, and access to support services are expected to positively impact learners' academic outcomes.

However, the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable may be influenced by extraneous variables such as the school environment, teacher characteristics, peer influence, and individual learner characteristics. These variables are recognized as potential confounding factors that may affect the observed relationships.

The conceptual framework guides the research design, data collection, and analysis by providing a structured understanding of the key variables and their hypothesized relationships. It serves as a foundation for examining the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in the specific context of G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda.

1.9 Operational Definition of Key Terms

1. Academic Performance: In this study, academic performance refers to the extent to which learners with learning difficulties achieve educational goals and meet the expected learning outcomes. It is measured through indicators such as grades, test scores, and teacher assessments.

2. Learning Difficulties: Learning difficulties are a range of disorders that affect an individual's ability to acquire, process, and apply information, leading to challenges in reading, writing, mathematics, and other academic areas. In this study, learning difficulties include conditions such as dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia.

3. Parents' Capabilities: Parents' capabilities refer to the various factors and resources that parents possess, which can influence their ability to support their children's education. In this study, parents' capabilities include their educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services.

4. Parental Involvement: Parental involvement refers to the active participation and engagement of parents in their children's education. It encompasses activities such as monitoring homework, communicating with teachers, attending school events, and providing educational support at home.

5. Socioeconomic Status: Socioeconomic status (SES) is a measure of an individual's or family's economic and social position in relation to others, based on factors such as income, education, and occupation. In this study, SES is considered as a potential influencing factor on learners' academic performance.

6. Support Services: Support services refer to the various resources, programs, and interventions available to assist learners with learning difficulties and their families. These services may include specialized educational support, counseling, assistive technology, and accommodations to facilitate learning and academic success.

1.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the study, highlighting the background, problem statement, objectives, research questions, significance, delimitations, limitations, and operational definitions of key terms. The study aims to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. By examining the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services, the study seeks to contribute to the understanding of this crucial issue and provide recommendations to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties. The following chapter will present a review of relevant literature to establish the theoretical and empirical foundations for this research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter presents a comprehensive review of literature relevant to the study of parents' capabilities and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The chapter is divided into three main sections: theoretical review, empirical literature, and conceptual framework. The theoretical review discusses the key theories and models that provide the foundation for understanding the relationship between parents' capabilities and learners' academic performance. The empirical literature section examines previous research studies that have investigated the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, access to support services, and learning difficulties on academic performance. The conceptual framework synthesizes the key variables and their hypothesized relationships based on the reviewed literature. The chapter concludes with a summary of the main points and identifies the gaps in the existing knowledge that the current study aims to address.

2.1 Theoretical and Conceptual Literature

The effects of parents' educational background on their children's academic performance have been a subject of extensive theoretical and conceptual exploration in the field of educational research. Various theories and frameworks have been proposed to understand the complex mechanisms through which parents' educational attainment influences their children's educational outcomes. This section discusses the relevant theories and conceptual frameworks that provide a foundation for understanding the relationship between parents' educational background and learners' academic performance, with a specific focus on learners with learning difficulties.

One of the most prominent theoretical perspectives in this area is the human capital theory, which emphasizes the role of education as an investment in an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities (Becker, 1964). According to this theory, parents who have attained higher levels of education are more

likely to possess a greater stock of human capital, which they can transmit to their children through various means, such as providing a stimulating home learning environment, engaging in educational activities, and serving as positive role models (Eccles, 2005). The human capital theory suggests that parents with higher educational attainment are better equipped to support their children's learning and development, as they have acquired the necessary knowledge, skills, and values through their own educational experiences (Davis-Kean, 2005).

Building upon the human capital theory, the family resource framework posits that parents' educational background influences their children's academic performance through the provision of various resources, including financial, social, and cultural capital (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). Financial capital refers to the monetary resources that parents can invest in their children's education, such as purchasing educational materials, providing access to enrichment activities, and creating a supportive learning environment at home (Duncan & Murnane, 2011). Social capital encompasses the networks, relationships, and connections that parents can leverage to support their children's educational aspirations and opportunities (Coleman, 1988). Cultural capital, on the other hand, refers to the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are valued and rewarded in the educational system, which parents can transmit to their children through socialization and exposure to cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 1986).

The family resource framework suggests that parents with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to possess and mobilize these various forms of capital to support their children's academic success (Lareau, 2011). For example, highly educated parents may have greater financial resources to invest in their children's education, such as providing access to high-quality schools, educational resources, and extracurricular activities (Reardon, 2011). They may also have more extensive social networks and connections that can provide their children with valuable information, opportunities, and support related to education and future careers (Horvat et al., 2003). Furthermore, highly educated parents are more likely to possess the cultural capital that aligns with the expectations and norms of the educational system, which they can transmit to their children through linguistic and behavioral practices that facilitate academic success (Lareau, 2011).

Another important theoretical perspective is the expectancy-value theory, which emphasizes the role of parents' educational expectations and values in shaping their children's academic performance (Eccles &

Wigfield, 2002). According to this theory, parents' educational background influences their beliefs, attitudes, and expectations regarding their children's education, which in turn affect their children's own academic expectations, motivation, and achievement (Davis-Kean, 2005). Parents with higher levels of educational attainment are more likely to hold higher educational expectations for their children and to communicate the value and importance of education (Yamamoto & Holloway, 2010). These parental expectations and values can influence children's academic self-concept, goal setting, and engagement in learning activities, ultimately contributing to their academic performance (Eccles, 2005).

The expectancy-value theory also suggests that parents' educational background may shape their involvement in their children's education, as highly educated parents are more likely to recognize the importance of parental involvement and to actively engage in their children's learning (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Parental involvement, such as monitoring homework, communicating with teachers, and participating in school events, has been consistently linked to positive academic outcomes for children (Jeynes, 2005). However, the nature and extent of parental involvement may vary based on parents' educational background, as parents with lower levels of education may face barriers, such as limited knowledge of the educational system, language difficulties, or time constraints, that hinder their ability to effectively engage in their children's education (Hill & Tyson, 2009).

In the context of learners with learning difficulties, the bioecological model of human development (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the complex interplay between individual characteristics, family factors, and environmental influences that shape their academic performance. This model emphasizes the importance of considering the multiple nested systems in which children develop, including the microsystem (e.g., family, school), mesosystem (e.g., interactions between family and school), exosystem (e.g., parents' workplace), and macrosystem (e.g., cultural values, educational policies) (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). The bioecological model suggests that parents' educational background is a significant factor within the microsystem that can influence children's academic performance through various proximal processes, such as parent-child interactions, parental involvement, and the provision of learning resources (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006).

Moreover, the bioecological model highlights the importance of considering the individual characteristics of learners with learning difficulties, such as their specific learning needs, strengths, and challenges, in

understanding the impact of parents' educational background on their academic performance (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006). Learners with learning difficulties may require additional support, accommodations, and resources to succeed academically (Kavale & Forness, 2000), and parents' educational background may influence their ability to advocate for and access these necessary supports (Lalvani, 2015). Highly educated parents may have greater knowledge and understanding of their children's learning needs, as well as the skills and resources to navigate the educational system and secure appropriate interventions and accommodations (Trainor, 2010). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education may face challenges in understanding and advocating for their children's learning needs, which can hinder their children's access to necessary support services (Lalvani, 2015).

The social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1986) also provides valuable insights into the role of parents' educational background in shaping learners' academic performance, particularly through the mechanism of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific situations or accomplish specific tasks (Bandura, 1986). According to this theory, parents' educational background can influence their children's self-efficacy beliefs through vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and the provision of mastery experiences (Bandura, 1997). Children who observe their parents successfully navigating educational challenges and attaining educational success are more likely to develop higher self-efficacy beliefs in their own academic abilities (Schunk & Pajares, 2002). Moreover, highly educated parents may be more likely to provide verbal encouragement and positive feedback that reinforces their children's self-efficacy beliefs (Bandura, 1997). They may also create opportunities for their children to engage in mastery experiences, such as providing challenging learning activities and supporting their children's efforts, which can further enhance their children's self-efficacy (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

For learners with learning difficulties, the development of positive self-efficacy beliefs is particularly important, as they may face additional challenges and setbacks in their academic pursuits (Klassen, 2002). Parents' educational background can play a crucial role in fostering their children's self-efficacy by providing a supportive and encouraging home environment, modeling positive attitudes towards learning, and helping their children develop effective coping strategies and problem-solving skills (Klassen, 2002). However, parents with lower levels of education may face challenges in providing the necessary support and guidance to enhance their children's self-efficacy, particularly if they themselves have had negative

educational experiences or lack the knowledge and skills to support their children's learning (Schunk & Pajares, 2002).

In addition to these theoretical perspectives, several conceptual frameworks have been proposed to explain the specific mechanisms through which parents' educational background influences their children's academic performance. One such framework is the parental investment model, which suggests that parents with higher levels of education are more likely to invest time, money, and resources in their children's education, leading to better academic outcomes (Conger & Dogan, 2007). This investment can take various forms, such as providing educational materials, engaging in educational activities, and creating a stimulating home learning environment (Conger & Dogan, 2007). The parental investment model also highlights the role of parental expectations and aspirations in shaping children's academic performance, as highly educated parents are more likely to hold high expectations for their children's educational attainment and to communicate the value of education (Davis-Kean, 2005).

Another conceptual framework is the parental socialization model, which emphasizes the role of parents in transmitting educational values, beliefs, and behaviors to their children through daily interactions and practices (Taylor et al., 2004). According to this model, parents' educational background influences the way they socialize their children towards education, including the messages they convey about the importance of education, the learning activities they engage in, and the educational aspirations they hold for their children (Taylor et al., 2004). Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to engage in educational socialization practices that promote academic achievement, such as discussing educational topics, encouraging reading, and fostering a positive attitude towards learning (Davis-Kean, 2005). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education may face challenges in providing effective educational socialization, as they may lack the knowledge, skills, or resources to engage in these practices (Taylor et al., 2004).

The parental socialization model also highlights the role of parents in shaping their children's motivation and engagement in learning activities, which are critical factors in academic performance (Grolnick et al., 2009). Parents with higher levels of education are more likely to create a home environment that supports and encourages learning, by providing resources, structure, and emotional support that foster their children's intrinsic motivation and engagement in learning (Grolnick et al., 2009). They may also model

positive attitudes towards learning and encourage their children to persist in the face of academic challenges (Grolnick et al., 2009). However, parents with lower levels of education may struggle to provide the necessary support and structure to promote their children's motivation and engagement, particularly if they are facing economic or social stressors that limit their ability to be involved in their children's education (Grolnick et al., 2009).

In the context of learners with learning difficulties, the parental socialization model suggests that parents' educational background may influence their ability to provide effective support and advocacy for their children's learning needs (Trainor, 2010). Parents with higher levels of education may be more likely to recognize and understand their children's learning difficulties, seek out information and resources, and advocate for appropriate interventions and accommodations (Lalvani, 2015). They may also be more likely to engage in positive educational socialization practices that promote their children's self-esteem, resilience, and coping skills in the face of academic challenges (Trainor, 2010). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education may face barriers in understanding and advocating for their children's learning needs, and may struggle to provide the necessary support and socialization to promote their children's academic success (Lalvani, 2015).

Finally, the cultural capital theory (Bourdieu, 1986) provides a valuable lens for understanding the role of parents' educational background in shaping learners' academic performance, particularly in relation to the transmission of cultural knowledge, skills, and dispositions that are valued in the educational system. According to this theory, parents with higher levels of education possess greater cultural capital, which they can transmit to their children through socialization and exposure to cultural experiences (Bourdieu, 1986). This cultural capital includes knowledge of the dominant language, familiarity with the norms and expectations of the educational system, and possession of cultural resources such as books, art, and educational materials (Lareau, 2011).

The cultural capital theory suggests that children from highly educated families are more likely to develop the cultural competencies and dispositions that are rewarded in the educational system, such as linguistic proficiency, critical thinking skills, and cultural literacy (Lareau, 2011). These cultural advantages can translate into better academic performance, as children from highly educated families are more likely to be perceived as 'good students' by teachers and to receive positive feedback and opportunities for academic

success (Lareau, 2011). In contrast, children from families with lower levels of education may face cultural barriers in the educational system, as they may lack the cultural capital that is valued and rewarded by teachers and schools (Lareau, 2011).

For learners with learning difficulties, the cultural capital theory highlights the additional challenges they may face in acquiring the cultural competencies and dispositions that are necessary for academic success (Trainor, 2010). These learners may require specialized support and accommodations to develop the language skills, critical thinking abilities, and cultural knowledge that are valued in the educational system (Kavale & Forness, 2000). Parents' educational background may influence their ability to provide this support and advocacy, as highly educated parents are more likely to possess the cultural capital and knowledge of the educational system to ensure their children receive appropriate interventions and accommodations (Trainor, 2010). In contrast, parents with lower levels of education may face barriers in navigating the educational system and advocating for their children's learning needs, particularly if they themselves lack the cultural capital that is valued in schools (Lalvani, 2015).

In conclusion, the theoretical and conceptual literature on the effects of parents' educational background on their children's academic performance provides a rich and multifaceted understanding of the complex mechanisms through which this relationship operates. The human capital theory, family resource framework, expectancy-value theory, bioecological model, social cognitive theory, parental investment model, parental socialization model, and cultural capital theory all contribute valuable insights into the ways in which parents' educational attainment influences their children's educational outcomes, particularly for learners with learning difficulties. These theoretical perspectives highlight the importance of considering the multiple levels of influence, from individual characteristics to family dynamics to broader cultural and societal factors, in understanding the impact of parents' educational background on learners' academic performance. By drawing upon these diverse theoretical and conceptual frameworks, researchers can develop a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the factors that shape the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties, and identify potential points of intervention and support to promote their academic success.

2.2 Empirical Literature

2.2.1 Parents' Educational Background and Academic Performance

Numerous studies have investigated the relationship between parents' educational background and their children's academic performance in Rwanda, consistently identifying parental education as a significant predictor of learners' educational outcomes. A study by Kabarere et al. (2013) in Gasabo District, Rwanda, revealed that parents of children in high-performing schools had significantly higher levels of involvement in their children's education compared to parents of children in low-performing schools. The researchers emphasized that parents with higher levels of education tend to be more involved in their children's education, understand the value of education, and are better equipped to provide academic support at home, leading to higher educational expectations and achievements for their children. These findings highlight the crucial role of parental education in shaping children's educational experiences and outcomes.

Ntawiha et al. (2020) conducted a comprehensive study on the determinants of students' performance in selected public secondary schools in Rwanda. Their findings indicated that parents' educational background significantly influenced their children's academic performance, with students whose parents had higher levels of education generally performing better academically compared to those whose parents had lower levels of education. The researchers attributed this positive impact to the knowledge, skills, and resources that educated parents possess, enabling them to provide a supportive learning environment at home and effectively advocate for their children's educational needs. The study underscored the importance of parental education in creating an environment conducive to academic achievement.

A study by Mutesi and Ngabonziza (2022) in Musanze District further emphasized the positive association between parents' level of education and their children's academic performance. The researchers found that learners whose parents had higher levels of education tended to perform better academically compared to those whose parents had lower levels of education. They emphasized the significance of parents' educational background in shaping their ability to support their children's learning, provide educational resources, and create a stimulating home environment conducive to academic achievement. These findings underscore the multifaceted impact of parental education on various aspects of a child's educational journey.

While these studies consistently demonstrate the positive impact of parental education on learners' academic performance, it is important to recognize the complexity of this relationship. Factors such as socioeconomic status, parental involvement, access to support services, and cultural beliefs may interact with parents' educational background to influence their children's educational outcomes (Holloway et al., 2008; Desforges and Abouchaar, 2003). Future research should explore these complex interactions and their impact on the academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda, as these learners may face unique challenges and require specialized support tailored to their specific needs.

Furthermore, it is essential to examine the potential mediating and moderating factors that may influence the relationship between parental education and learners' academic performance. For instance, the quality of parent-child interactions, the educational resources available at home, and the extent of parental involvement in school-related activities could mediate the impact of parental education on learners' academic outcomes. Additionally, factors such as the child's age, gender, and learning style, as well as the school's educational practices and resources, could moderate the strength of this relationship.

Exploring these nuances can provide valuable insights into the mechanisms through which parental education influences academic performance and inform the development of targeted interventions and support strategies. By understanding the complex interplay of various factors, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders can design comprehensive programs that address the diverse needs of learners with learning difficulties and empower parents to effectively support their children's educational journeys.

2.2.2 Socioeconomic Status and Academic Performance

Socioeconomic status (SES) has been widely recognized as a significant factor influencing learners' academic performance in Rwanda, with several studies demonstrating a strong positive correlation between SES and educational outcomes. Nayebare et al. (2016) conducted a pioneering study in Kigali, Rwanda, examining the impact of socioeconomic status on primary school learners' academic achievement. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between SES and academic performance, indicating that learners from higher SES backgrounds tended to perform better academically than their peers from lower SES backgrounds. This study laid the foundation for further exploration of the relationship between socioeconomic factors and educational outcomes in the Rwandan context.

Building upon these initial findings, Kwizera and Ntakirutimana (2021) conducted a comprehensive investigation into the relationship between socioeconomic status and the academic achievement of learners with learning disabilities in secondary schools in Kigali. Their study found that learners with learning disabilities from lower SES backgrounds had significantly lower academic performance compared to their peers from higher SES backgrounds. The researchers attributed this gap to various factors, including limited access to educational resources, inadequate nutrition, unstable housing, and exposure to stressful life events, all of which can hinder the academic success of learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Mukarwego and Nzabwirwa (2018) further explored the impact of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of learners with special educational needs, including those with learning difficulties, in Huye District. Their findings corroborated previous studies, revealing that learners from higher SES backgrounds generally outperformed their peers from lower SES backgrounds. This study highlighted the significant influence of socioeconomic factors on the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with special needs, underscoring the need for targeted interventions and support to address the unique challenges faced by these learners.

While these studies consistently demonstrate the positive correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance, it is important to recognize the complexity of this relationship and the multitude of factors that may contribute to it. Factors such as parental education, school quality, community resources, and access to support services may interact with socioeconomic status to shape learners' academic outcomes (Kwizera & Ntakirutimana, 2021; Mukarwego & Nzabwirwa, 2018). Addressing achievement gaps related to socioeconomic status requires a holistic approach that addresses the multiple barriers and challenges faced by learners from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Future research should explore the specific mechanisms through which socioeconomic status influences academic performance, particularly for learners with learning difficulties. For instance, the impact of financial constraints on access to educational resources, the effects of family stress and instability on learning environments, and the role of community support systems could be investigated. Additionally, studies could examine the effectiveness of interventions and support programs aimed at mitigating the

negative effects of low socioeconomic status on academic performance, such as targeted financial assistance, access to supplemental educational resources, and community-based support networks.

By gaining a deeper understanding of the complex interplay between socioeconomic factors and academic performance, researchers and policymakers can develop evidence-based strategies to promote educational equity and ensure that all learners, regardless of their socioeconomic background, have access to quality education and the necessary support to achieve academic success.

2.2.3 Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Parental involvement in children's education has been consistently identified as a crucial factor in promoting learners' academic success in Rwanda, with numerous studies demonstrating its positive impact on learners' academic performance, motivation, and engagement. Kaberere et al. (2013) conducted a seminal study in Gasabo District, examining parental involvement in high and low-performing schools. Their findings revealed a significant positive correlation between parental involvement and learners' academic outcomes, regardless of the type of parental involvement or the learners' grade level. This study highlighted the importance of parental engagement and its potential to influence academic achievement across various educational settings and levels.

Building upon this foundation, Ntawiha et al. (2020) investigated the determinants of students' performance in selected public secondary schools in Rwanda. Their research findings underscored the significance of parental involvement in school activities as a significant predictor of academic achievement. Specifically, students whose parents actively participated in school events, parent-teacher meetings, and decision-making processes tended to perform better academically compared to their peers whose parents were less involved. These findings emphasize the crucial role of parental engagement in fostering an environment conducive to academic success.

Bahigansenga (2023) contributed to the growing body of research by exploring the role of parents in enhancing students' academic performance in Rwandan nine years basic education, with a case study in Nyagatare District. The study highlighted the importance of parental involvement in various forms, such as communication with teachers, participation in decision-making, and supporting learning at home. The

findings indicated that students whose parents were actively engaged in their education exhibited better academic performance and motivation compared to those with less parental involvement. This study underscores the multifaceted nature of parental involvement and its potential to positively influence academic outcomes across different educational stages.

While these studies consistently demonstrate the positive impact of parental involvement on learners' academic performance in Rwanda, it is crucial to recognize the potential barriers and challenges that parents may face. Factors such as parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, cultural beliefs, and access to resources may influence their ability to effectively engage in their children's education (Ntawiha et al., 2020; Bahigansenga, 2023). Future research should explore strategies to overcome these barriers and facilitate meaningful partnerships between schools, families, and communities to support learners' academic success.

Furthermore, it is important to investigate the specific mechanisms through which parental involvement influences academic performance. For instance, studies could examine the impact of parental involvement on factors such as learners' motivation, self-regulation, and study habits, as well as the quality of parent-teacher relationships and communication. Additionally, research could explore the effectiveness of different types of parental involvement (e.g., home-based involvement, school-based involvement, decision-making involvement) and their relative contributions to academic achievement.

By gaining a deeper understanding of the nuances and complexities of parental involvement, researchers and educators can develop targeted interventions and programs that empower parents to effectively engage in their children's education and foster an environment that supports academic success. These efforts can contribute to the overall improvement of educational outcomes in Rwanda and promote equitable access to quality education for all learners, regardless of their backgrounds or learning needs.

2.2.4 Access to Support Services for Learners with Learning Difficulties

Access to appropriate support services is crucial for promoting the academic success of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda, as highlighted by several groundbreaking studies. Nkurunziza et al. (2019) conducted a pioneering study in Nyagatare District, examining the challenges faced by learners with

learning difficulties in accessing educational support. Their findings revealed that limited access to specialized instruction, assistive technology, and accommodations hindered the academic progress and potential of these learners. This study shed light on the significant barriers and obstacles that learners with learning difficulties encounter in their pursuit of quality education.

Building upon this foundation, Ndayishimiye and Niyibizi (2020) conducted a comprehensive investigation into the long-term effects of special education services on the academic achievement of learners with learning disabilities in Kigali. Their study found that learners who received consistent and comprehensive special education services throughout their schooling had significantly higher academic performance compared to those who received limited or inconsistent services. These findings highlighted the critical role of access to specialized support services in promoting the academic success of learners with learning difficulties.

Karangwa and Ghesquière (2007), provided further insights by exploring the experiences and challenges of learners with disabilities, including those with learning difficulties, in Rwandan schools. Their findings underscored the need for improved access to support services, trained professionals, and appropriate accommodations to address the diverse needs of these learners and promote their inclusion and academic success. This study reinforced the importance of a comprehensive and inclusive approach to supporting learners with learning difficulties.

While these studies underscore the importance of access to support services for learners with learning difficulties, they also highlight the challenges and barriers that exist in the Rwandan context. Limited resources, inadequate teacher training, and societal stigma associated with learning difficulties can hinder the provision and utilization of these services (Karangwa, E., Ghesquière, 2007). Addressing these challenges requires a concerted effort from stakeholders, including schools, education systems, policymakers, and the broader community.

It is crucial for schools, education systems, and policymakers in Rwanda to prioritize the allocation of resources, establishment of partnerships with external agencies, and the availability of trained professionals to deliver appropriate interventions and accommodations for learners with learning

difficulties. This may involve collaboration with specialized institutions, non-governmental organizations, and community-based organizations to leverage available resources and expertise.

Additionally, it is essential to address societal attitudes and perceptions surrounding learning difficulties through awareness campaigns, educational programs, and community engagement initiatives. By fostering a culture of inclusivity and understanding, barriers related to stigma and misconceptions can be mitigated, enabling learners with learning difficulties to access the support services they need without fear of discrimination or marginalization.

Effective collaboration between schools, families, and community agencies is also essential in coordinating and delivering comprehensive support services to these learners (Mukamana & Habimana, 2018). Regular communication, shared decision-making, and the involvement of parents and caregivers in the planning and implementation of support services can enhance their effectiveness and ensure that the unique needs of each learner are addressed holistically.

Furthermore, research should continue to explore innovative and cost-effective approaches to delivering support services, such as leveraging technology and distance learning platforms, as well as developing culturally relevant and context-specific interventions. By continuously evaluating and refining the provision of support services, Rwanda can ensure that learners with learning difficulties have equitable access to quality education and the necessary resources to reach their full academic potential.

2.2.5 Learning Difficulties and Academic Performance

Learning difficulties can have a profound impact on learners' academic performance and overall educational experiences in Rwanda, as documented by various comprehensive studies. Nzeyimana et al. (2021) conducted a groundbreaking meta-analysis examining the academic achievement of learners with reading disabilities in Rwandan primary schools. Their findings revealed that learners with reading disabilities consistently performed significantly lower on measures of reading comprehension, word recognition, and fluency compared to their typically achieving peers. This study highlighted the persistent achievement gaps faced by learners with learning difficulties and underscored the need for targeted interventions to address their unique needs.

Building upon this foundation, Niyonagira (2024) conducted a seminal study assessing the impact of parents' capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District. The study identified various types of learning difficulties among the learners, including dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, and ADHD. The findings highlighted the persistent achievement gaps between learners with learning difficulties and their non-disabled peers, indicating that these learners often struggle across academic domains, including reading, writing, and mathematics. This study provided valuable insights into the specific challenges faced by learners with learning difficulties and the potential role of parental capabilities in mitigating these challenges.

Mukamana and Habimana (2018) further explored the experiences and challenges of learners with learning disabilities in Rwandan secondary schools. Their study revealed that learners with learning disabilities had significantly lower academic performance, higher dropout rates, and limited opportunities for further education compared to their peers without disabilities. These findings underscored the long-term consequences of learning difficulties on educational attainment and future prospects, reinforcing the urgency to address these challenges early and comprehensively.

These studies highlight the significant obstacles faced by learners with learning difficulties in achieving academic success in Rwanda. The deficits in cognitive processes, inadequate instructional support, and limited access to appropriate interventions can contribute to the underperformance of these learners (Nzeyimana et al., 2021; Niyonagira, 2024). Addressing the needs of learners with learning difficulties requires a comprehensive approach that considers the interplay between individual characteristics, family background, school experiences, and access to support services (Mukamana & Habimana, 2018).

To mitigate the impact of learning difficulties on academic performance, it is essential to implement evidence-based interventions and support strategies tailored to the specific needs of these learners. Effective interventions, such as specialized instruction, assistive technology, and accommodations, can help address the cognitive and academic challenges faced by learners with learning difficulties (Ndayishimiye & Niyibizi, 2020). Additionally, creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that foster a sense of belonging and provide opportunities for success can contribute to the academic and social-emotional well-being of learners with learning difficulties (Karangwa, E., Ghesquière, 2007).

Future research in Rwanda should continue to explore the complex factors influencing the academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties, as well as the effectiveness of interventions and support services designed to promote their success and inclusion in educational settings. This may involve longitudinal studies that track the educational trajectories of learners with learning difficulties, as well as evaluations of specific interventions and their long-term impact on academic achievement and overall well-being.

Collaboration among researchers, educators, policymakers, and stakeholders is crucial to develop evidence-based practices and policies that address the unique needs of these learners and ensure equal access to quality education. By leveraging the insights gained from research, Rwanda can implement comprehensive support systems, inclusive educational practices, and targeted interventions to empower learners with learning difficulties and unlock their full academic potential.

2.3 Gap Identification

The review of the existing literature on parents' capabilities and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties reveals several gaps that the current study aims to address.

Firstly, while there is a substantial body of research on the impact of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement on learners' academic performance in general, there is limited research specifically focusing on learners with learning difficulties. The majority of the existing studies have investigated these factors in relation to the general student population, leaving a gap in understanding how parents' capabilities specifically influence the academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties. Given the unique challenges and needs of these learners, it is crucial to examine the role of parents' capabilities in shaping their academic performance. The current study addresses this gap by specifically focusing on learners with learning difficulties and investigating the impact of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services on their academic performance.

Secondly, the existing literature has primarily focused on the individual effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and parental involvement on learners' academic performance. However, there is a lack of comprehensive research that examines the combined impact of these factors on the academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties. The current study aims to address this gap by investigating the interplay between these different aspects of parents' capabilities and their collective influence on learners' academic performance. By considering the interactions and cumulative effects of these factors, the study provides a more holistic understanding of how parents' capabilities shape the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties.

Thirdly, the majority of the reviewed studies have been conducted in developed countries, particularly in the United States and other Western contexts. There is a scarcity of research on the impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance in the specific socio-cultural and educational context of Rwanda. Given the unique challenges and opportunities faced by learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda, it is important to examine the role of parents' capabilities within this specific context. The current study addresses this gap by focusing on learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda, and investigating the impact of parents' capabilities on their academic performance within the Rwandan educational system. By conducting the research in this specific context, the study provides valuable insights that are relevant to the Rwandan setting and contributes to the understanding of inclusive education practices in the country.

Fourthly, the existing literature has predominantly employed quantitative research methods, such as surveys and statistical analyses, to investigate the relationship between parents' capabilities and learners' academic performance. While these methods provide valuable insights into the patterns and associations between variables, they may not capture the nuanced experiences and perspectives of learners, parents, teachers, and administrators. The current study addresses this gap by adopting a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. By incorporating interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators, the study provides a more in-depth understanding of the complex dynamics between parents' capabilities and learners' academic performance. The qualitative data complements the quantitative findings, allowing for a richer interpretation of the results and the identification of potential mechanisms and challenges that may not be apparent through quantitative methods alone.

Lastly, while the existing literature has highlighted the importance of access to support services for learners with learning difficulties, there is limited research on how parents' capabilities specifically influence their access to and utilization of these services. The current study addresses this gap by investigating the relationship between parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, and involvement in their children's education and their access to support services. By examining how parents' capabilities shape their ability to navigate the educational system and advocate for their children's needs, the study provides insights into the barriers and facilitators of accessing appropriate support services for learners with learning difficulties.

By addressing these identified gaps, the current study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of parents' capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, particularly in the context of Rwanda. The study's comprehensive approach, mixed-methods design, and focus on the specific needs and experiences of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda provide valuable insights that can inform inclusive education practices, policies, and interventions. The findings of the study have the potential to guide the development of targeted support programs for parents, enhance collaboration between schools and families, and ultimately promote the academic success and well-being of learners with learning difficulties in Rwanda and beyond.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive review of the theoretical and empirical literature related to parents' capabilities and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The theoretical review discussed Epstein's model of parental involvement and the ecological systems theory, highlighting the importance of parental engagement and the multiple contexts that influence learners' development and academic outcomes.

The empirical literature section examined previous research on the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, access to support services, and learning

difficulties on academic performance. The reviewed studies consistently demonstrated the significant impact of these factors on learners' educational experiences and outcomes.

The conceptual framework synthesized the key variables and their hypothesized relationships, providing a structured understanding of the interplay between parents' capabilities, learners' characteristics, and academic performance. The framework guides the research design and analysis of the current study.

While the reviewed literature provides valuable insights into the topic, there is a need for further research in the specific context of Rwanda, particularly focusing on learners with learning difficulties. The current study aims to address this gap by investigating the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The following chapter will present the research design and methodology employed to achieve the study's objectives and answer the research questions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and methodology employed in this study. It describes the research design, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, validity and reliability, data collection techniques, data analysis procedures, position of the researcher, and ethical issues. The chapter provides a detailed account of the systematic approach used to investigate the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda.

3.2 Research Design

This study adopted a descriptive research design to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Descriptive research aims to describe the characteristics of a phenomenon, population, or situation as they exist in the present (Kothari, 2004). This design was deemed appropriate for this study as it allowed the researcher to gather information about the current status of the variables under investigation and examine the relationships between them.

The descriptive design involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data through questionnaires and interviews. The quantitative data provided numerical and statistical insights into the variables of interest, while the qualitative data offered in-depth and contextual information to complement and enrich the quantitative findings. The combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted at G.S. Rwisirabo, a secondary school located in Nyagatare District, Eastern Province, Rwanda. G.S. Rwisirabo was purposively selected as the study site not only due to its inclusive education program and the presence of learners with learning difficulties but also because of its accessibility and the willingness of the school administration and staff to participate in the research. The school's location in a rural district presented an opportunity to explore the unique challenges and opportunities faced by learners with learning difficulties in such contexts, adding valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge on inclusive education in Rwanda.

Nyagatare District is situated in the northeastern part of Rwanda and is known for its agricultural activities and rural setting. The district has made efforts to promote inclusive education and support learners with special educational needs. Conducting the study in this specific location allowed for an examination of the impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance within the context of a rural Rwandan community.

3.4 Target Population

The target population for this study consisted of learners with learning difficulties, their parents, teachers, and administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The parents of these learners, as well as the teachers and administrators directly involved in their education, were also included in the target population.

The study aimed to understand the broader context of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. Thus, the total target population considered for this research comprised 162 individuals. This included all 75 learners identified as having learning difficulties at the school, alongside 75 parents of these learners, 10 teachers, and 2 administrators. The 38 learners who actively participated in the study represent a sample drawn from this larger population. These learners were enrolled in primary levels 1 through 6, with ages ranging from 7 to 16 years old. Table 3.1 presents the distribution of the target population.

Table 1 Distribution of the Target Population

Category	Frequency	Percentage
Learners	75	46.3%

Parents	75	46.3%
Teachers	10	6.2%
Administrators	2	1.2%
Total	162	100%

3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

From the target population of 162 individuals, a sample size of 92 participants was initially determined for this study using Taro Yamane's formula. However, practical considerations and the desire for balanced representation necessitated adjustments. Proportionate stratified sampling was employed, with the population stratified into learners, parents, teachers, and administrators.

While the target sample size for learners with learning difficulties was 40, due to factors such as potential absenteeism or withdrawal, a slightly larger sample was initially sought. However, the actual number of participants who completed the study in this category was 38, yielding a 95% response rate.

Similarly, the parent category aimed for 40 participants, and ultimately, 38 parents fully participated, resulting in the same 95% response rate.

Both the teacher and administrator categories achieved 100% participation, with all 10 teachers and both administrators taking part in the study as planned.

Overall, the total sample size achieved was 88 participants, representing a commendable 95.7% response rate from the initial target of 92. This high response rate strengthens the validity and reliability of the study's findings.

Table 2 presents the final sample size distribution across the different categories.

Table 2 Sample Size

Category	Target Sample
Learners with Learning Difficulties	40
Parents	40
Teachers	10
Administrators	2
Total	92

3.6 Research Instruments

This study employed two main research instruments: questionnaires and interview guides. The use of multiple instruments allowed for the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data, enhancing the depth and breadth of the information gathered.

3.6.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was developed to collect quantitative data from learners with learning difficulties, teachers, parents, and administrators. The questionnaire consisted of closed-ended questions that focused on the learners' perceptions of their parents' capabilities, including educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their education, and access to support services. The questions were designed to be easily understandable and age-appropriate for the learners.

The questionnaire was divided into several sections, each addressing a specific aspect of parents' capabilities. The sections included demographic information, parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, access to support services, and the learners' academic performance. The questions were presented in a Likert scale format, allowing learners to indicate their level of agreement or disagreement with each statement.

The questionnaire was translated into Kinyarwanda, the local language, to ensure that all learners could comprehend and respond to the questions accurately. The translated version was reviewed by language experts to ensure its clarity and cultural appropriateness.

3.6.2 Interview Guide

Semi-structured interview guides were developed to collect qualitative data from parents, teachers, and administrators. The interview guides consisted of open-ended questions that explored the participants' perspectives on the impact of parents' capabilities on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

Separate interview guides were prepared for each category of participants to capture their unique roles and experiences. The interview guide for parents focused on their educational background, socioeconomic status, involvement in their children's education, and access to support services. The guide also explored parents' perceptions of their children's academic performance and the challenges they faced in supporting their learning.

The interview guide for teachers explored their observations and experiences in working with learners with learning difficulties. The questions focused on the teachers' perceptions of the impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance, the strategies they employed to support these learners, and the challenges they encountered in the classroom.

The interview guide for administrators aimed to gain insights into the school's policies, practices, and support systems for learners with learning difficulties. The questions explored the administrators' perspectives on the role of parents' capabilities in learners' academic performance, the school's efforts to engage and support parents, and the overall impact of inclusive education practices.

The interview guides were designed to be flexible, allowing for probing and follow-up questions based on the participants' responses. The interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda or English, depending on the participants' language preference, to ensure effective communication and the capture of rich, detailed information.

3.6.3 Assessment of Learner Performance

Learner performance was assessed using a combination of methods. First, academic records, including report cards and standardized test scores, were collected and analyzed to provide quantitative data on learners' achievement levels in core subjects such as Mathematics, English, and Science. Additionally, teacher assessments and observations of learners' classroom performance were utilized to capture qualitative aspects of learning behavior and engagement.

This multifaceted approach to evaluating learner performance allowed for a comprehensive understanding of both academic achievements and the broader learning experiences of students with learning difficulties.

3.6.4 Observation checklist

An observation checklist was utilized to triangulate data and enhance the validity of the study. During classroom visits and parent-teacher meetings at G.S. Rwisirabo, the researcher systematically observed interactions and behaviors relevant to the research questions. The checklist focused on capturing evidence of parental involvement, learners' engagement and performance, and the overall classroom environment. This observational data was then compared to the responses provided in questionnaires and interviews, allowing for a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics between parental capabilities and learners' academic experiences.

3.7 Validity and Reliability

3.7.1 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a research instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Cohen et al., 2011). To ensure the validity of the questionnaire and interview guides, several steps were taken.

Content validity was established by reviewing the instruments with a panel of experts in the field of inclusive education and educational psychology. The experts assessed the relevance, clarity, and comprehensiveness of the questions in relation to the research objectives and variables under investigation. Their feedback and suggestions were incorporated to refine the instruments.

Face validity was assessed by conducting a pilot study with a small sample of learners, parents, teachers, and administrators who were not part of the main study. The pilot participants provided feedback on the clarity, comprehensibility, and appropriateness of the questions. Based on their feedback, necessary adjustments were made to improve the instruments' face validity.

Construct validity was ensured by aligning the questions in the instruments with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks that guided the study. The questions were designed to capture the key constructs of parents' capabilities, including educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services, as well as the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

3.7.2 Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency and stability of a research instrument in measuring the intended constructs (Cohen et al., 2011). To enhance the reliability of the questionnaire and interview guides, the following measures were taken:

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the questionnaire. The questionnaire items were grouped into relevant subscales, and the alpha coefficient was calculated for

each subscale. A coefficient value of 0.7 or higher was considered acceptable, indicating good internal consistency (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

Inter-rater reliability was established for the interview guides by involving multiple researchers in the data collection and analysis process. The researchers independently coded a sample of the interview transcripts and compared their coding results. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved through consensus to ensure consistent interpretation and coding of the qualitative data.

Test-retest reliability was not applicable in this study due to the cross-sectional nature of the data collection. However, the stability of the instruments was enhanced by conducting the pilot study and making necessary revisions based on the feedback received.

The reliability of the data was further strengthened by employing data triangulation. The use of multiple data sources, including questionnaires and interviews with different participant categories, allowed for the corroboration and cross-verification of findings, enhancing the overall reliability of the study.

3.8 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection for this study involved the administration of questionnaires to learners with learning difficulties and conducting interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo. The following steps were followed in the data collection process:

1. **Obtaining permissions:** Prior to data collection, the researcher obtained the necessary permissions from the University of Rwanda College of Education and the school administration of G.S. Rwisirabo. Ethical clearance was also obtained from the relevant institutional review board.
2. **Participant recruitment:** The researcher collaborated with the school administration to identify learners with learning difficulties based on the inclusion criteria. The parents of these learners were contacted and invited to participate in the study. Teachers and administrators directly involved in the education of learners with learning difficulties were also approached for participation.

3. Informed consent: All participants were provided with detailed information about the study, including its purpose, procedures, and potential risks and benefits. Oral informed consent was obtained from parents for their own participation and for the participation of their children. Assent was also obtained from the learners. Teachers and administrators provided written informed consent for their participation.

4. Questionnaire administration: The researcher administered the questionnaires to learners with learning difficulties in a quiet and comfortable setting within the school premises. The questionnaires were provided in Kinyarwanda, and the researcher was available to clarify any questions or provide assistance as needed. The questionnaires were completed anonymously to ensure confidentiality.

5. Conducting interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with parents, teachers, and administrators at mutually convenient times and locations. The interviews were conducted in Kinyarwanda or English, based on the participants' preference. The interviews were audio-recorded with the participants' permission and later transcribed verbatim for analysis.

6. Data storage and confidentiality: All data collected, including questionnaires and interview recordings and transcripts, were securely stored in a locked cabinet and password-protected electronic files. Participants' identities were kept confidential by assigning unique codes to each participant and using these codes in all data files and reports.

7. Data validation: After transcribing the interviews, the researcher conducted member checking by providing participants with a summary of their responses for verification and feedback. This process helped ensure the accuracy and credibility of the qualitative data.

The data collection process was carried out over a period of two months, allowing sufficient time for the administration of questionnaires and the conduct of interviews. The researcher maintained a reflective journal throughout the data collection process to record observations, insights, and any challenges encountered.

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

3.9 Data Analysis Procedures

The collected data was analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative methods to comprehensively address the research objectives and questions.

Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was coded and entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations, were computed to provide a summary of the participants' demographic characteristics and their responses to the questionnaire items. Pearson's correlation coefficient was employed to examine the relationships between parents' capabilities and learners' academic performance. Further, multiple regression analysis was performed to evaluate the predictive power of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance, while taking into account relevant demographic variables.

Qualitative data derived from the interviews was analyzed using thematic analysis, as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The interview transcripts were meticulously read and re-read to gain a thorough understanding of the data. Initial codes were then generated based on the research questions and any recurring patterns observed within the data. These codes were subsequently organized into potential themes, which were further reviewed and refined to ensure clarity and distinctiveness. Finally, the identified themes were given concise names and definitions that accurately captured the core ideas expressed by the participants. Illustrative quotes from the interviews were used to substantiate and provide context for these themes.

3.10 Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations are crucial in any research involving human participants. In this study, the following ethical principles were adhered to:

1. Confidentiality and anonymity: Participants' identities were protected by assigning unique codes to each participant and using these codes in all data files and reports. No identifying information was included in the dissemination of the findings. All data collected, including questionnaires and interview recordings and transcripts, were securely stored in a locked cabinet and password-protected electronic files, accessible only to the researcher and the research supervisor.

2. Minimizing harm: The study was designed to minimize any potential harm or discomfort to the participants. The questionnaires and interviews were conducted in a sensitive and non-judgmental manner, and participants were assured that there were no right or wrong answers. Participants were provided with the opportunity to ask questions and express any concerns they had about the study.

3. Beneficence: The study aimed to contribute to the understanding of the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, with the ultimate goal of informing inclusive education practices and support services. The findings of the study will be shared with the participating school and the wider educational community to promote the well-being and success of learners with learning difficulties.

Throughout the research process, the researcher maintained open communication with the participants, addressing any concerns or questions they had. The researcher also adhered to the ethical guidelines set by the University of Rwanda and the international standards for research involving human participants.

3.11 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detailed description of the research design and methodology employed in this study. The study adopted a descriptive research design, utilizing both quantitative and qualitative approaches to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda.

The target population consisted of learners with learning difficulties, their parents, teachers, and administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo . Purposive sampling was used to select a sample of 92 participants, including 40 learners, 40 parents, 10 teachers, and 2 administrators. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used as the primary data collection instruments, and their validity and reliability were established through expert review, pilot testing, and appropriate statistical measures.

Data collection involved the administration of questionnaires to learners and conducting interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators. The data analysis procedures included both quantitative and

qualitative approaches, using descriptive and inferential statistics for the questionnaire data and thematic analysis for the interview data.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, minimizing harm, beneficence, and ethical approval, were strictly adhered to throughout the study.

The following chapter will present the results of the data analysis, addressing the research objectives and questions and providing a comprehensive understanding of the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo .

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS, AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study, which aimed to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The chapter is organized into several sections, starting with the response rate, demographic characteristics of the respondents, and the types of learning difficulties identified among the learners. The main sections of the chapter focus on the presentation and analysis of the findings based on the research objectives, including the effects of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The chapter concludes with a summary of the key findings.

4.1 Response Rate

The study targeted a sample of 92 participants, including 40 learners with learning difficulties, 40 parents, 10 teachers, and 2 administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo . Out of the 92 targeted participants, 88 successfully participated in the study, resulting in a response rate of 95.7%. Table 3 presents the response rate for each category of participants.

Table 3 Response Rate

Category	Target Sample	Actual Participants	Response Rate
Learners with Learning Difficulties	40	38	95%
Parents	40	38	95%
Teachers	10	10	100%

Administrators	2	2	100%
Total	92	88	95.7%

The high response rate can be attributed to the effective communication and rapport established with the participants, as well as the support provided by the school administration in facilitating the data collection process. The high response rate enhances the representativeness of the sample and strengthens the validity of the findings.

4.2 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

4.2.1 Demographic Data of Teachers

The study involved 10 teachers who were directly involved in teaching learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo . Table 4.2 presents the demographic characteristics of the teachers, including their gender, age, teaching experience, and educational qualification.

Table 4 Demographic Data of Teachers

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	4	40%
	Female	6	60%
Age	20-29 years	2	20%
	30-39 years	5	50%
	40-49 years	3	30%
Teaching Experience	1-5 years	3	30%
	6-10 years	4	40%
	11-15 years	2	20%
	16-20 years	1	10%
Educational Qualification	Diploma	4	40%
	Bachelor's	5	50%
	Master's	1	10%

The majority of the teachers (60%) were female, and half of them (50%) were in the age group of 30-39 years. The teachers had varied teaching experience, with 40% having 6-10 years of experience and 30% having 1-5 years of experience. In terms of educational qualifications, half of the teachers (50%) had a bachelor's degree, while 40% had a diploma, and one teacher (10%) had a master's degree.

4.2.2 Demographic Data of Learners with Learning Difficulties

The study involved 38 learners with learning difficulties from G.S. Rwisirabo . Table 5 presents the demographic characteristics of these learners, including their gender, age, and grade level.

Table 5 Demographic Data of Learners with Learning Difficulties

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	18	47.4%
	Female	20	52.6%
Age	7-10 years	12	31.6%
	11-13 years	18	47.4%
	14-16 years	8	21.0%
Grade Level	Primary 1	4	10.5%
	Primary 2	6	15.8%
	Primary 3	8	21.1%
	Primary 4	10	26.3%
	Primary 5	6	15.8%
	Primary 6	4	10.5%

Among the learners with learning difficulties, there was a slightly higher representation of females (52.6%) compared to males (47.4%). The majority of the learners (47.4%) were in the age group of 11-13 years, followed by 31.6% in the age group of 7-10 years and 21.0% in the age group of 14-16 years. The

learners were distributed across different grade levels, with the highest representation in Primary 4 (26.3%) and Primary 3 (21.1%).

4.3 Types of Learning Difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo

The study identified various types of learning difficulties among the learners at G.S. Rwisirabo . Table 6 presents the frequency and percentage distribution of the learning difficulties identified.

Table 6 Types of Learning Difficulties at G.S Rwisirabo

Learning Difficulty	Frequency	Percentage
Dyslexia	12	31.6%
Dyscalculia	10	26.3%
Dysgraphia	8	21.1%
Dyspraxia	6	15.8%
ADHD	2	5.2%
Total	38	100%

The most prevalent learning difficulty identified among the learners was dyslexia, accounting for 31.6% of the learners. Dyslexia is a specific learning disorder that affects reading skills, including accurate and fluent word recognition, decoding, and spelling (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The second most common learning difficulty was dyscalculia (26.3%), which is characterized by difficulties in understanding and manipulating numbers, performing mathematical calculations, and grasping mathematical concepts (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

Dysgraphia, a learning difficulty that affects writing skills, including handwriting, spelling, and written expression, was identified in 21.1% of the learners. Dyspraxia, which affects motor coordination and planning, was found in 15.8% of the learners.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), although not a specific learning difficulty, was identified in 5.2% of the learners. ADHD can co-occur with learning difficulties and impact learners' academic performance and overall functioning (American Psychiatric Association, 2013).

The identification of these learning difficulties provides a basis for understanding the specific challenges faced by learners at G.S. Rwisirabo and highlights the need for targeted interventions and support services to address their unique needs.

4.4 Presentation and Analysis of Findings

4.4.1 Findings of Objective One: Parents' Educational Background and Academic Performance

The first objective of this study was to examine the effects of parents' educational background on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. The analysis incorporates both quantitative and qualitative data derived from questionnaires, interviews, and observations, providing a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between parental education and academic outcomes for these learners.

Quantitative Findings

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results. The data reveals significant variation in academic performance based on the educational background of the parents.

Table 7 Parents' Educational Background and Academic Performance

Parents' Educational Level	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Academic Performance (SD)
No formal education	6	15.8%	45.5 (8.2)
Primary education	12	31.6%	52.3 (10.1)
Secondary education	14	36.8%	61.8 (11.5)
Tertiary education	6	15.8%	72.5 (9.6)

The quantitative data indicates that a majority of parents (68.4%) have either primary or secondary education, while smaller percentages of parents had no formal education (15.8%) or tertiary education (15.8%). The mean academic performance of learners is notably varied across these educational levels, with the lowest mean performance recorded among learners whose parents had no formal education (45.5%), and the highest among those whose parents had tertiary education (72.5%).

These findings underscore the substantial influence of parental education on academic outcomes, suggesting that parents with higher educational attainment are better positioned to support their children's learning, which in turn, results in higher academic performance. The data reveals a clear upward trend in learners' academic performance correlating with the increasing educational levels of their parents.

The correlation analysis further supports this relationship, with a strong positive and statistically significant correlation ($r = 0.68$, $p < 0.01$) between parents' educational level and learners' academic performance. This indicates that as the educational level of parents increases, there is a corresponding improvement in the academic performance of their children.

Qualitative Insights from Interviews and Observations

To complement the quantitative findings, qualitative data from interviews and observations provide deeper insights into how parental education impacts learners' academic performance. These insights help elucidate the mechanisms through which parental educational background influences educational outcomes.

Parental Involvement and Understanding of Educational Processes

During interviews, several teachers and administrators provided detailed accounts of how parents with higher educational levels are more actively involved in their children's education. Teacher A noted:

"Parents who have a higher level of education are more proactive in engaging with their children's schoolwork. They tend to communicate more frequently with teachers, attend school meetings, and provide a structured environment at home that is conducive to studying. This active involvement is crucial because it sets the tone for the child's own engagement with their studies."

This observation was corroborated by Administrator B, who added:

"We see a direct link between the level of parental education and the support children receive at home. Parents with higher education often possess the necessary skills to help their children with homework and to navigate educational challenges. They also tend to have higher expectations for their children's academic success, which motivates the learners to perform better."

Moreover, during classroom observations, it was noted that learners whose parents had higher education levels were generally more engaged and participated more actively in class. They often came to class prepared, had completed their homework, and were more confident in asking questions and seeking help when needed. This behavior suggests that the educational background of parents contributes not only to academic performance but also to learners' attitudes towards learning.

Challenges Faced by Parents with Lower Educational Levels

Conversely, the challenges faced by parents with lower educational backgrounds were highlighted in the interviews. Parent C, whose education was limited to primary school, expressed:

"I always try to help my child, but there are times when I don't understand the homework myself. It can be frustrating because I want to be supportive, but I don't always know how to be."

This sentiment was echoed by teachers who observed that learners with parents who had limited education often struggled more in school. These learners were less likely to have the academic support at home that their peers received, which could manifest in lower performance and a lack of preparedness for class. Teacher B pointed out:

"These learners sometimes come to school without having completed their homework or without understanding the material. It places them at a disadvantage compared to their peers, and this gap only widens over time."

The observations align with the quantitative data, which shows a lower mean academic performance for learners whose parents had no formal education. These findings suggest that the educational background of parents plays a critical role in shaping the home environment and the support structure available to learners, which in turn affects their academic success.

The Broader Educational Environment and Parental Expectations

Further qualitative data suggest that parental expectations, shaped by their educational experiences, also play a significant role in academic performance. Parents with higher education levels often set higher expectations for their children, which can drive learners to strive for better academic outcomes. Teacher C highlighted:

"Parents who have experienced the benefits of education themselves often encourage their children to aim higher. They understand the long-term value of education and communicate this to their children. As a result, these learners are often more motivated and disciplined."

Administrator B supported this view, noting that these parents are also more likely to be aware of and take advantage of additional educational resources, such as tutoring or extracurricular activities, which further supports their children's academic development.

In contrast, the interviews revealed that parents with lower educational levels might have lower expectations for their children's academic success, which could limit the learners' aspirations. Parent D shared:

"My parents didn't go to school, so I never thought much about it either. I just want my child to pass, but I don't push too hard because I don't want to stress them out."

This perspective may contribute to a less rigorous academic environment at home, where educational goals are set lower, impacting the learner's motivation and overall performance.

Impact of Parental Education on Learner Confidence and Engagement

Another important theme that emerged from the interviews and observations was the impact of parental education on learners' confidence and engagement in the classroom. Learners whose parents had higher education levels were often observed to be more confident in their interactions with teachers and peers. They were more likely to ask questions, seek clarification, and engage actively in class discussions. This behavior suggests that these learners have internalized positive attitudes towards learning, likely influenced by their parents' own educational values and practices.

Teacher D observed:

"You can tell which students have that extra support at home. They're the ones who are not afraid to make mistakes or ask questions. They have a certain level of confidence that comes from knowing their parents are behind them, supporting their education."

This finding highlights the broader psychological and emotional impact of parental education on learners, beyond just academic performance. The confidence and engagement these learners display in the classroom are critical factors in their overall academic success.

Discussion

The study highlights a strong positive correlation between parental education and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, emphasizing the critical role of parents in shaping educational outcomes. Educated parents are better equipped to provide academic support, set higher expectations, and foster a positive learning environment, which aligns with Davis-Kean (2005) and Dubow et al. (2009). Conversely, learners with less-educated parents face challenges, including lower academic support and engagement, which can contribute to underperformance, as noted by Sirin (2005). The study also reveals that parental education impacts learners' confidence and classroom behavior, consistent with Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and Jeynes (2005). These findings affirm the importance of parental education in shaping academic trajectories, supporting Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory (Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006) and Bourdieu's cultural capital theory (1986). This comprehensive understanding underscores the need for targeted interventions to support less-educated parents in fostering their children's academic success.

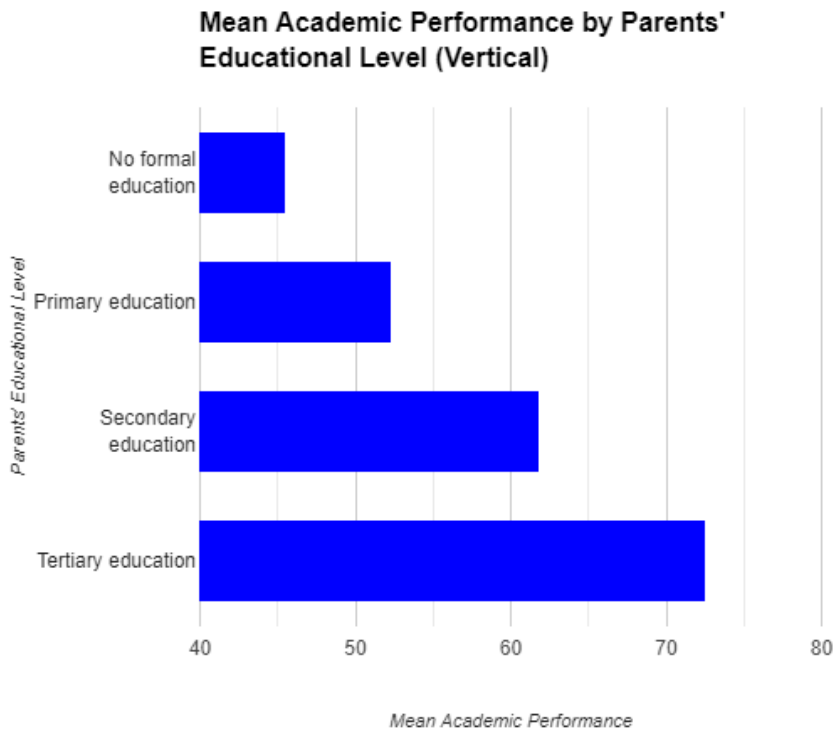


Figure 1 Bar graph showing the mean academic performance of learners across different levels of parents' educational background

4.4.2 Findings of Objective Two: Socioeconomic Status and Academic Performance

The second objective of this study was to explore the influence of socioeconomic status (SES) on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. This analysis integrates quantitative data with qualitative insights from interviews and observations to provide a comprehensive understanding of how SES impacts academic outcomes.

Quantitative Findings

Table 8 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results, highlighting significant variation in academic performance based on the socioeconomic background of the learners.

Table 8 Socioeconomic Status and Academic Performance

Socioeconomic Status	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Academic Performance (SD)
Low	18	47.4%	50.2 (10.5)
Middle	14	36.8%	62.4 (11.8)
High	6	15.8%	75.8 (8.9)

The results show that nearly half of the learners (47.4%) come from low socioeconomic backgrounds, with 36.8% from middle SES, and 15.8% from high SES. The mean academic performance varied significantly across these categories, with learners from low SES backgrounds recording the lowest mean academic performance (50.2%) and those from high SES backgrounds achieving the highest (75.8%).

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between socioeconomic status and academic performance ($r = 0.62, p < 0.01$), indicating that learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to perform better academically than their peers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

Qualitative Insights from Interviews and Observations

The quantitative findings are supported and enriched by qualitative data, offering deeper insights into how SES influences academic performance. Interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators, along with classroom observations, highlight the challenges faced by learners from different socioeconomic backgrounds.

Challenges Faced by Learners from Low Socioeconomic Backgrounds

A significant theme from the interviews was the struggle learners from low-income families face in accessing the resources necessary for academic success. Parent C, representing a low SES background, shared:

"As a parent from a low-income family, it can be difficult to provide all the necessary resources and support for my child's education. We struggle to make ends meet, and sometimes education takes a backseat to more pressing needs like food and shelter."

This sentiment reflects broader literature, such as Sirin (2005) and Reardon (2011), which emphasize how limited financial resources can negatively impact educational outcomes. Learners from low SES backgrounds often lack access to supplementary educational materials, tutoring, and a conducive study environment, hindering their academic progress.

Educational Inequality and the Role of Schools

Administrators and teachers at G.S. Rwisirabo acknowledged the significant influence of SES on academic performance and emphasized the school's role in mitigating these disparities. Administrator A highlighted the school's efforts:

"We recognize that learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may face additional barriers to learning. As a school, we strive to provide a level playing field by offering scholarships, fee waivers, and access to educational resources and support services."

These efforts are crucial in addressing the educational inequality often linked to socioeconomic disparities. Teacher B further elaborated on the importance of understanding and addressing the diverse needs of learners from different SES backgrounds:

"It's crucial to understand the unique challenges faced by learners from different socioeconomic backgrounds. We try to create an inclusive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of our learners and provides them with the necessary support to succeed academically."

This inclusive approach aligns with Lareau's (2011) findings on the importance of cultural capital and the supportive role that schools can play in compensating for socioeconomic disadvantages.

Impact of Socioeconomic Status on Academic Confidence and Engagement

Classroom observations revealed that learners from higher SES backgrounds generally displayed more confidence and engagement in academic activities. These learners were more likely to participate in class discussions, complete assignments on time, and seek help when needed. This behavior is consistent with

literature suggesting that higher SES provides a supportive environment that fosters academic confidence and engagement (Lareau, 2011).

Conversely, learners from lower SES backgrounds often exhibited lower levels of engagement and confidence. They were more likely to struggle with completing assignments and participating in class, reflecting the challenges discussed by Sirin (2005) and Reardon (2011), who note that limited access to educational resources and support can negatively impact a learner's academic trajectory.

Discussion

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data highlight the significant impact of socioeconomic status (SES) on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The strong positive correlation between SES and academic outcomes underscores the challenges faced by learners from lower SES backgrounds, who often lack access to educational resources and supportive environments, as noted by Sirin (2005) and Reardon (2011). This disadvantage can lead to lower academic performance and engagement, consistent with Lareau's (2011) findings on the role of cultural capital in education. The study emphasizes the need for targeted interventions to address these disparities and promote educational equity, aligning with the broader literature on socioeconomic influences in education.

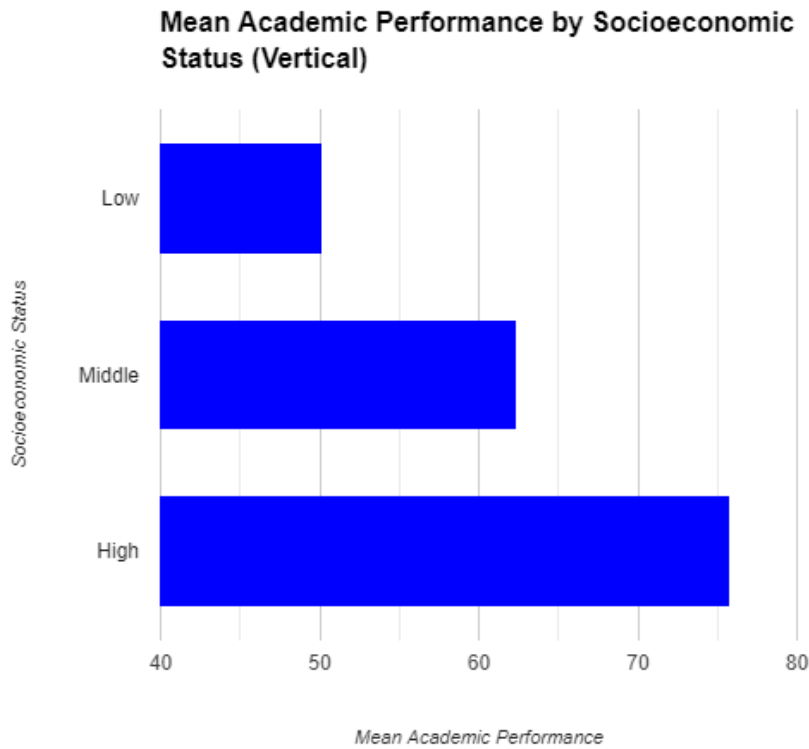


Figure 2 Bar graph showing the mean academic performance of learners across different socioeconomic categories

4.4.3 Findings of Objective Three: Parental Involvement in Children's Education

The third objective of this study was to assess the impact of parental involvement in their children's education on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. The analysis combines quantitative data with qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive understanding of how varying levels of parental involvement influence academic outcomes.

Quantitative Findings

Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results, demonstrating significant differences in academic performance based on the level of parental involvement.

Table 9 Parental Involvement in Children's Education

Level of Parental Involvement	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Academic Performance (SD)
Low	12	31.6%	48.5 (9.7)
Moderate	18	47.4%	59.2 (11.2)
High	8	21.0%	73.6 (10.5)

The results indicate that nearly half of the learners (47.4%) have parents with moderate levels of involvement in their education, 31.6% have parents with low involvement, and 21.0% have parents with high involvement. The mean academic performance varied significantly across these categories, with learners whose parents had low involvement recording the lowest mean academic performance (48.5%) and those with high parental involvement achieving the highest (73.6%).

The correlation analysis revealed a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between parental involvement and academic performance ($r = 0.58, p < 0.01$). This suggests that increased parental involvement is associated with better academic outcomes for learners.

Qualitative Insights from Interviews and Observations

The quantitative findings are supported by qualitative data, which provides deeper insights into how parental involvement impacts learners' academic performance. Interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators, as well as classroom observations, underscore the importance of parental engagement in education.

Impact of Parental Involvement on Academic Performance

A significant theme that emerged from the interviews was the positive impact of active parental involvement on learners' academic success. Parent D shared their experience:

"I make it a point to regularly communicate with my child's teachers, attend school meetings, and help with homework. I believe that my involvement sends a strong message to my child about the importance of education and motivates them to do their best."

This aligns with existing research by Jeynes (2005) and Fan and Chen (2001), which highlights the crucial role of parental involvement in promoting academic success. When parents actively engage in their children's education, monitor their progress, and provide support and encouragement, learners tend to perform better academically (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

Teacher and Administrator Perspectives on Parental Involvement

Teachers and administrators at G.S. Rwisirabo emphasized the significant role that parental involvement plays in enhancing learners' academic performance. Teacher C stated:

"We have seen firsthand the positive impact of parental involvement on learners' academic performance. When parents are actively engaged, learners tend to be more motivated, disciplined, and focused on their studies."

This observation supports the findings of Henderson and Mapp (2002), who argue that parental involvement is a key factor in student motivation and academic discipline. Administrator B also highlighted the school's efforts to encourage parental involvement:

"We try to create opportunities for parents to get involved in their children's education. We organize parent-teacher conferences, workshops, and school events that encourage parental participation. We believe that a strong partnership between home and school is essential for learners' success."

These initiatives align with the literature that emphasizes the importance of fostering partnerships between schools and parents to promote academic achievement (Epstein, 2011).

Challenges in Achieving High Levels of Parental Involvement

However, the interviews also revealed challenges in achieving high levels of parental involvement, particularly among parents who may lack the time, resources, or understanding to engage fully in their children's education. This is consistent with findings from Hill and Tyson (2009), who noted that parental

involvement can be influenced by various factors, including socioeconomic status and parental education levels.

Discussion

The findings from both quantitative and qualitative data underscore the significant impact of parental involvement on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The positive correlation between parental involvement and academic outcomes highlights the crucial role that parents play in supporting their children's education. These findings are consistent with previous research, which emphasizes the importance of active parental engagement in promoting academic success (Jeynes, 2005; Fan & Chen, 2001). Schools should continue to foster strong partnerships with parents, providing them with the necessary resources and opportunities to be actively involved in their children's education, thereby enhancing academic outcomes (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Epstein, 2011).

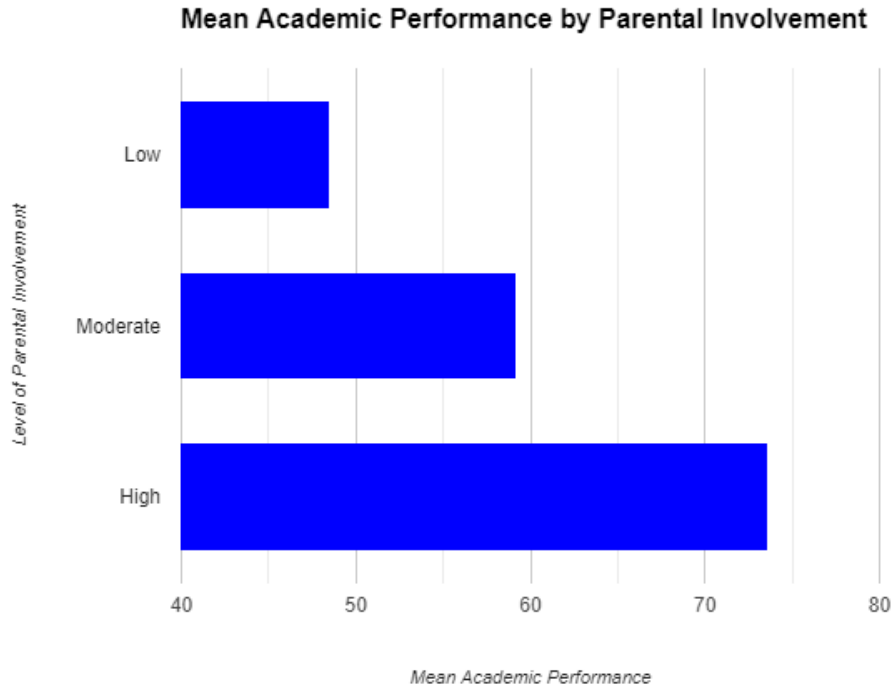


Figure 3 Bar graph showing the mean academic performance of learners across different levels of parental involvement

4.4.4 Findings of Objective Four: Access to Support Services

The fourth objective of the study was to explore the effects of access to support services on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of this issue. Table 10 presents the descriptive statistics and correlation analysis results based on the quantitative data.

Table 10 Access to Support Services

Access to Support Services	Frequency	Percentage	Mean Academic Performance (SD)
Limited	14	36.8%	50.6 (10.3)
Moderate	18	47.4%	61.5 (11.9)
Adequate	6	15.8%	74.2 (9.1)

Correlation Analysis

The correlation between access to support services and learners' academic performance was found to be positive and statistically significant ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates a strong positive relationship, suggesting that learners who had better access to support services tended to perform better academically compared to their peers with limited access.

Descriptive Statistics and Observations

The data indicate that nearly half of the learners (47.4%) had moderate access to support services, while 36.8% had limited access, and only 15.8% had adequate access. The mean academic performance varied across these categories, with those having limited access to support services showing the lowest mean academic performance (50.6%), and those with adequate access showing the highest mean academic performance (74.2%).

Observational data collected during classroom visits and parent-teacher meetings revealed a direct impact of access to support services on student engagement and participation. In classrooms where learners had

adequate support services, there was a noticeable increase in active participation, confidence, and overall academic performance. Conversely, in environments where support services were limited, learners often appeared disengaged, struggled to keep up with lessons, and exhibited signs of frustration.

These observations are consistent with the quantitative findings, reinforcing the importance of support services in enhancing the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties.

Qualitative Insights from Interviews

The significance of support services was further highlighted through interviews with parents, teachers, and administrators. Parent E shared their experience, stating:

"When we first learned about our child's learning difficulties, we were at a loss. However, the school helped us connect with the necessary support services, such as educational assessments, remedial programs, and counseling. These services have made a significant difference in our child's academic performance and overall well-being."

This testimonial underscores the critical role that access to support services plays in not only improving academic outcomes but also in supporting the emotional and social well-being of learners.

Teachers and administrators also emphasized the importance of these services. Teacher D stated:

"We have a dedicated team of special education teachers and support staff who work closely with learners with learning difficulties. They provide individualized support, accommodations, and interventions to help these learners overcome their challenges and succeed academically."

Administrator A added:

"We strive to create an inclusive learning environment that caters to the diverse needs of our learners. We collaborate with external agencies and professionals to ensure that learners with learning difficulties have access to the necessary support services. We also provide training and resources to our teachers to enhance their ability to support these learners effectively."

Discussion

The findings from this study reveal a clear and significant relationship between access to support services and the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The positive correlation ($r = 0.55$, $p < 0.01$) aligns with previous research, which has consistently highlighted the importance of specialized support services in improving educational outcomes for learners with learning difficulties.

For instance, Kavale and Forness (2000) emphasize that specialized educational programs, assistive technology, and counseling services are critical in addressing the unique challenges faced by these learners. The present study's findings, which show higher academic performance among learners with adequate access to support services, support the view that such services are essential for academic success. Similarly, Cortiella and Horowitz (2014) have noted that access to tailored educational resources and accommodations can significantly enhance the learning experience for students with learning difficulties. This study's observational data, which revealed increased engagement and participation in classrooms where support services were readily available, further corroborates the argument that such services play a pivotal role in fostering a conducive learning environment (Cortiella & Horowitz, 2014).

The qualitative data gathered through interviews also reinforces these findings. The experiences shared by parents and educators highlight the transformative impact that access to support services can have on learners' academic performance and overall well-being. The insights provided by Parent E mirror the findings of Mukamana and Habimana (2018), who discussed the critical need for a collaborative approach in supporting learners with learning difficulties. The active involvement of parents, combined with the school's efforts to connect families with necessary support services, aligns with the recommendations by Epstein (2011) regarding the importance of family-school partnerships in promoting educational success. Moreover, the study's findings underline the persistent challenges faced by learners with limited access to support services. Observations of disengagement and frustration among these learners point to the detrimental effects of inadequate support, a concern echoed in studies by Nkurunziza et al. (2019), who found that limited access to specialized support can hinder the academic progress of learners with learning difficulties.

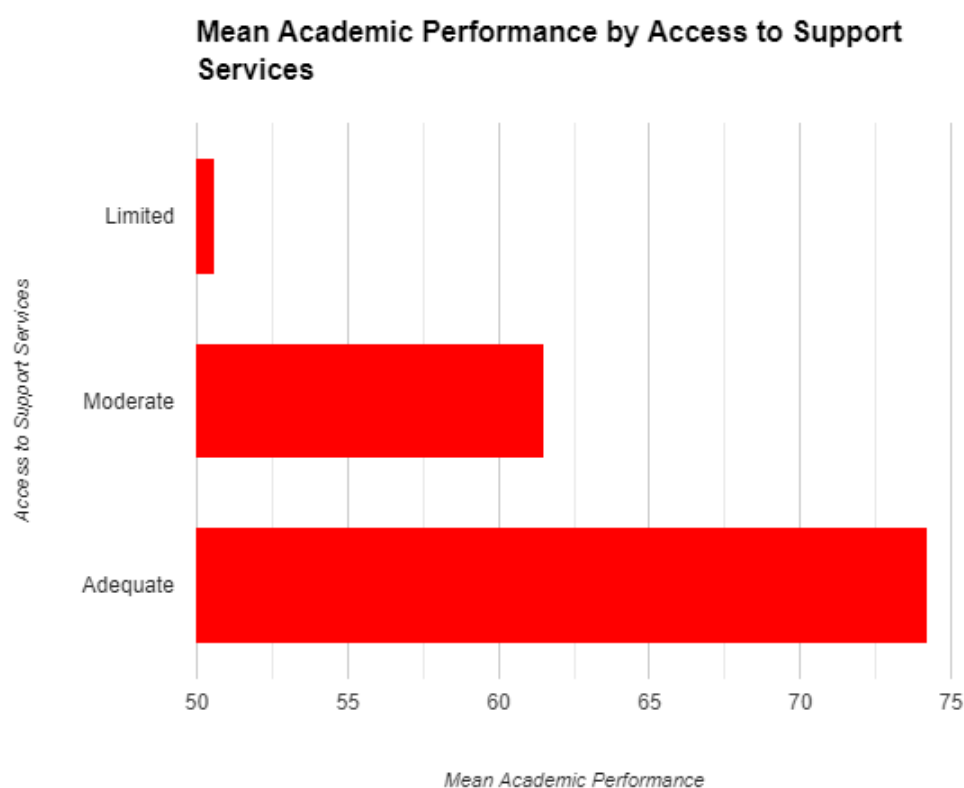


Figure 4 Bar graph showing the mean academic performance of learners across different levels of access to support services

4.5 Summary of the Chapter

This chapter presented the findings of the study, which aimed to assess the impact of Parents’ Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The study achieved a high response rate of 95.7%, enhancing the representativeness of the sample.

The demographic characteristics of the teachers and learners with learning difficulties were presented, providing insights into the composition of the sample. The study identified various types of learning difficulties among the learners, with dyslexia being the most prevalent, followed by dyscalculia, dysgraphia, dyspraxia, and ADHD.

The findings were organized based on the research objectives. The first objective examined the effects of parents' educational background on learners' academic performance. The results showed a strong positive correlation between parents' educational level and learners' academic performance, indicating that learners whose parents had higher levels of education tended to perform better academically.

The second objective investigated the influence of socioeconomic status on learners' academic performance. The findings revealed a strong positive correlation between socioeconomic status and academic performance, suggesting that learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds generally outperformed their peers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.

The third objective assessed the impact of parental involvement in children's education on learners' academic performance. The results demonstrated a strong positive correlation between parental involvement and academic performance, indicating that learners whose parents were actively involved in their education tended to perform better academically.

The fourth objective explored the effects of access to support services on learners' academic performance. The findings showed a strong positive correlation between access to support services and academic performance, suggesting that learners who had better access to support services tended to perform better academically compared to their peers with limited access.

The chapter also included verbatim quotes from parents, teachers, and administrators to provide rich and nuanced descriptions of their experiences and perspectives. The findings were compared and contrasted with existing literature, highlighting the consistency of the results with previous research on the impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance.

The chapter concluded by emphasizing the need for targeted interventions, support programs, and collaborative efforts among schools, families, and external agencies to address the specific needs of learners with learning difficulties and promote their academic success.

The following chapter will present the summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a summary of the study, highlighting the key findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data. It also presents recommendations for various stakeholders, including school management, teachers, parents, and suggestions for further research. The chapter concludes by discussing the strengths and limitations of the study.

5.2 Summary of the Study

The purpose of this study was to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda. The study employed a descriptive research design and involved a sample of 88 participants, including 38 learners with learning difficulties, 38 parents, 10 teachers, and 2 administrators.

The study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

1. To examine the effects of parents' educational background on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo .
2. To investigate the influence of socioeconomic status on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo .
3. To assess the impact of parental involvement in their children's education on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo .
4. To explore the effects of access to support services on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo .

Data were collected using questionnaires for learners and semi-structured interviews for parents, teachers, and administrators. The data were analyzed using both quantitative and qualitative techniques, including descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and thematic analysis.

The key findings of the study are as follows:

1. Parents' educational background had a significant positive effect on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners whose parents had higher levels of education tended to perform better academically compared to their peers whose parents had lower levels of education.
2. Socioeconomic status had a significant positive influence on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds generally outperformed their peers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds.
3. Parental involvement in children's education had a significant positive impact on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners whose parents were actively involved in their education tended to perform better academically compared to their peers whose parents had lower levels of involvement.
4. Access to support services had a significant positive effect on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners who had better access to support services tended to perform better academically compared to their peers with limited access to such services.

The findings of the study highlighted the importance of parents' capabilities in shaping the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. The results were consistent with existing literature, emphasizing the critical role of parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services in promoting learners' academic success.

5.3 Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. Parents' educational background plays a crucial role in the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Higher levels of parental education are associated with better academic outcomes for these learners. This may be attributed to the knowledge, skills, and resources that educated parents possess,

which enable them to provide a supportive learning environment at home and advocate for their children's educational needs.

2. Socioeconomic status is a significant determinant of the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Learners from higher socioeconomic backgrounds tend to have access to better educational resources, enriching experiences, and a supportive home environment, which contribute to their academic success. On the other hand, learners from lower socioeconomic backgrounds often face additional challenges and barriers that can hinder their academic progress.

3. Parental involvement in children's education is a key factor in promoting the academic success of learners with learning difficulties. When parents actively engage in their children's education, monitor their progress, and provide support and encouragement, learners are more likely to perform better academically. Parental involvement sends a strong message about the value of education and motivates learners to strive for excellence.

4. Access to support services is essential for the academic success of learners with learning difficulties. Learners who have access to specialized educational programs, assistive technology, counseling services, and accommodations are better equipped to overcome the challenges associated with their learning difficulties and achieve academic success. Limited access to support services can hinder the progress and potential of these learners.

The study concludes that parents' capabilities, encompassing their educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services, have a significant impact on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. It is crucial for schools, educators, parents, and policymakers to recognize the importance of these factors and work collaboratively to create an enabling environment that supports the learning and development of these learners.

The findings of this study underscore the need for targeted interventions and support mechanisms that address the specific needs of learners with learning difficulties and their families. This may include providing educational resources and workshops for parents, offering financial assistance and scholarships

to learners from disadvantaged backgrounds, fostering meaningful partnerships between schools and parents, and ensuring the availability and accessibility of comprehensive support services.

By empowering parents, creating inclusive learning environments, and providing appropriate support services, we can unlock the potential of learners with learning difficulties and enable them to achieve academic success. It is essential to recognize that every learner, regardless of their learning challenges, has the right to quality education and the opportunity to reach their full potential.

The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge on the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties, particularly in the context of Rwanda. It provides valuable insights and recommendations for educators, policymakers, and stakeholders to develop evidence-based strategies and interventions that promote inclusive education and support the learning and development of these learners.

5.4 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are made:

5.4.1 Recommendations to School Management

- Develop and implement targeted intervention programs that provide additional academic support and resources to learners with learning difficulties, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds.
- Establish partnerships with external agencies and professionals to ensure the availability and accessibility of comprehensive support services, including educational assessments, remedial programs, and counseling services.
- Provide training and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their skills and knowledge in supporting learners with learning difficulties.
- Foster a collaborative and inclusive school culture that values diversity and promotes a sense of belonging for all learners, regardless of their learning challenges.
- Allocate sufficient resources and funding to support the implementation of inclusive education practices and the provision of necessary accommodations and interventions.

5.4.2 Recommendations to Teachers

- Adopt inclusive teaching practices that cater to the diverse learning needs of learners with learning difficulties, such as differentiated instruction, multi-sensory approaches, and the use of assistive technology.
- Establish open and regular communication with parents to keep them informed about their children's progress, challenges, and support needs.
- Collaborate with special education teachers and support staff to develop individualized education plans (IEPs) that address the specific learning goals and accommodations for each learner with learning difficulties.
- Create a supportive and nurturing classroom environment that encourages learners to take risks, ask questions, and seek help when needed.
- Engage in continuous professional development to stay updated on best practices and evidence-based interventions for supporting learners with learning difficulties.

5.4.3 Recommendations to Parents

- Actively participate in your children's education by monitoring their progress, assisting with homework, and maintaining regular communication with teachers and school personnel.
- Seek information and resources to better understand your children's learning difficulties and how to support their learning at home.
- Advocate for your children's educational needs and rights, and collaborate with the school to ensure that appropriate accommodations and support services are provided.
- Create a supportive and stimulating home environment that encourages learning, curiosity, and academic exploration.
- Celebrate your children's strengths, progress, and achievements, and provide emotional support and encouragement throughout their educational journey.

5.4.4 Recommendations for Further Research

- Conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the long-term impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance and life outcomes of learners with learning difficulties.
- Explore the effectiveness of specific intervention programs and support services in improving the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in the Rwandan context.
- Investigate the role of teacher training and professional development in enhancing the capacity of educators to support learners with learning difficulties effectively.
- Examine the impact of school-community partnerships and collaborative initiatives on the provision of comprehensive support services for learners with learning difficulties and their families.
- Conduct comparative studies to explore the experiences and academic outcomes of learners with learning difficulties in different educational settings, such as inclusive schools versus special education schools.

5.5 Strengths and Limitations of the Study

5.5.1 Strengths

- The study employed a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative and qualitative data, which provided a comprehensive understanding of the impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance.
- The study involved a diverse sample of participants, including learners, parents, teachers, and administrators, allowing for multiple perspectives and insights.
- The study utilized valid and reliable research instruments, such as questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, which were piloted and reviewed by experts to ensure their appropriateness and effectiveness.
- The study followed rigorous ethical procedures, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the protection of participants' rights and well-being.

5.5.2 Limitations

- The study was conducted in a specific school setting, G.S. Rwisirabo , which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other educational contexts.
- The study relied on self-reported data from participants, which may be subject to social desirability bias or recall bias.

- The study employed a cross-sectional design, which provides a snapshot of the relationships between variables at a specific point in time. Longitudinal studies could offer further insights into the long-term impact of parents' capabilities on learners' academic performance.
- The study focused on specific aspects of parents' capabilities, such as educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services. Other factors that may influence learners' academic performance were not exhaustively explored.

Despite these limitations, the study provides valuable insights and contributes to the understanding of the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in the Rwandan context. The findings and recommendations of this study can serve as a foundation for further research and inform the development of evidence-based interventions and policies to support these learners and their families.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the study, highlighting the key findings and conclusions drawn from the analysis of the data. The study aimed to assess the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties at G.S. Rwisirabo in Nyagatare District, Rwanda.

The findings revealed that parents' educational background, socioeconomic status, parental involvement, and access to support services had significant positive effects on the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Higher levels of parental education, socioeconomic status, involvement, and access to support services were associated with better academic outcomes for these learners.

The study concluded that parents' capabilities play a crucial role in shaping the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. It emphasized the need for targeted interventions, support mechanisms, and collaborative efforts among schools, families, and external agencies to address the specific needs of these learners and promote their academic success.

Recommendations were made for school management, teachers, parents, and further research to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties. The recommendations focused on providing additional academic support, fostering inclusive learning environments, promoting parental involvement, and ensuring the availability and accessibility of comprehensive support services.

The strengths and limitations of the study were discussed, acknowledging the contributions and constraints of the research. Despite the limitations, the study provides valuable insights and contributes to the understanding of the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties in the Rwandan context.

In conclusion, this study highlights the importance of recognizing and addressing the diverse needs of learners with learning difficulties and the critical role that parents' capabilities play in their academic success. By empowering parents, creating inclusive learning environments, and providing appropriate support services, we can unlock the potential of these learners and enable them to achieve their full potential. It is essential for all stakeholders to work collaboratively towards the goal of inclusive education and to ensure that every learner, regardless of their learning challenges, has access to quality education and the opportunity to succeed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Questionnaire for Learners

Dear learner,

This questionnaire is part of a research study aimed at assessing the impact of Parents' Capabilities in Supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties. Your participation in this study is voluntary, and your responses will be kept confidential. Please answer the following questions honestly and to the best of your knowledge.

Section A: Demographic Information

1. Gender:

- Male
- Female

2. Age: _____ years

3. Grade level: _____

Section B: Learning Difficulties

4. What type of learning difficulty have you been diagnosed with? (Tick all that apply)

- Dyslexia
- Dyscalculia
- Dysgraphia
- Dyspraxia
- ADHD
- Other (please specify): _____

Section C: Parents' Educational Background

5. What is the highest level of education completed by your father?

- No formal education
- Primary education

- Secondary education
- Tertiary education

6. What is the highest level of education completed by your mother?

- No formal education
- Primary education
- Secondary education
- Tertiary education

Section D: Socioeconomic Status

7. How would you describe your family's socioeconomic status?

- Low
- Middle
- High

Section E: Parental Involvement

8. How often do your parents help you with your homework?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

9. How often do your parents attend school meetings or events?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

10. How often do your parents communicate with your teachers about your academic progress?

- Never - Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Section F: Access to Support Services

11. How would you describe your access to support services (e.g., educational assessments, remedial programs, counseling) at school?

- Limited
- Moderate
- Adequate

12. How often do you receive individualized support or accommodations from your teachers?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Section G: Academic Performance

13. How would you rate your overall academic performance?

- Poor
- Below average
- Average
- Above average
- Excellent

14. In which subjects do you experience the most difficulty?

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics

- Science
- Social Studies
- Other (please specify): _____

15. How often do you receive positive feedback or recognition for your academic achievements?

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Your responses will be kept confidential and will be used solely for the purpose of this research study.

Appendix B: Interview Guide for Parents

1. Can you tell me about your child's learning difficulties? When and how were they diagnosed?
2. How has your child's learning difficulty affected their academic performance?
3. What is your highest level of education? How do you think your educational background has influenced your ability to support your child's learning?
4. Can you describe your family's socioeconomic status? How has this impacted your child's access to educational resources and support services?
5. In what ways are you involved in your child's education? How often do you assist with homework, attend school meetings, or communicate with teachers?
6. What challenges have you faced in supporting your child's learning and academic progress?
7. How would you describe the support services and accommodations provided by the school for your child's learning difficulties?
8. What improvements or additional support do you think would benefit your child's academic performance?
9. How has your child's learning difficulty affected your family dynamics and relationships?
10. What advice would you give to other parents who have children with learning difficulties?

Appendix C: Interview Guide for Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching learners with learning difficulties? What specific training or experience do you have in this area?
2. How do you identify and assess learners with learning difficulties in your classroom?
3. What are the most common types of learning difficulties you encounter among your students?
4. How do you adapt your teaching strategies and materials to accommodate learners with learning difficulties?
5. In your experience, how does parental involvement impact the academic performance of learners with learning difficulties?
6. How do you communicate with parents about their children's learning progress and support needs?
7. What challenges do you face in teaching and supporting learners with learning difficulties?
8. How would you describe the collaboration between teachers, special education staff, and support services in your school?
9. What professional development opportunities have you received related to teaching learners with learning difficulties? How have these impacted your practice?
10. What recommendations would you make to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties in your school?

Appendix D: Interview Guide for Administrators

1. Can you describe the policies and practices in place at your school to support learners with learning difficulties?
2. How do you ensure that teachers are adequately trained and equipped to teach learners with learning difficulties?
3. What support services and resources are available to learners with learning difficulties and their families in your school?
4. How do you promote parental involvement and engage parents in their children's education, particularly for learners with learning difficulties?
5. What challenges does your school face in providing inclusive education and supporting learners with learning difficulties?
6. How do you allocate resources and funding to support the needs of learners with learning difficulties?
7. How do you monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and support services for learners with learning difficulties?
8. What collaborations or partnerships does your school have with external agencies or professionals to support learners with learning difficulties?
9. How do you foster a school culture that values diversity, inclusion, and support for all learners, including those with learning difficulties?
10. What future plans or initiatives does your school have to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties?

Appendix E: Questionnaire for Administrators

1. Does your school have a policy or plan in place to support learners with learning difficulties? If yes, please describe it briefly.
2. What types of learning difficulties are most commonly observed among learners in your school?
3. How does your school identify and assess learners with learning difficulties?
4. What support services and accommodations are provided to learners with learning difficulties in your school?
5. How do you ensure that teachers are adequately trained and equipped to teach learners with learning difficulties?
6. How does your school promote and facilitate parental involvement in the education of learners with learning difficulties?
7. What challenges does your school face in providing inclusive education and supporting learners with learning difficulties?
8. How do you allocate resources and funding to support the needs of learners with learning difficulties?
9. How do you monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of interventions and support services for learners with learning difficulties?

10. What future plans or initiatives does your school have to enhance the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties?

Appendix F: Questionnaire for Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching learners with learning difficulties?
2. What specific training or professional development have you received related to teaching learners with learning difficulties?
3. How do you identify and assess learners with learning difficulties in your classroom?
4. What are the most common types of learning difficulties you encounter among your students?
5. How do you adapt your teaching strategies and materials to accommodate learners with learning difficulties?
6. How do you communicate with parents about their children's learning progress and support needs?
7. What challenges do you face in teaching and supporting learners with learning difficulties?
8. How would you describe the collaboration between teachers, special education staff, and support services in your school?
9. What additional resources or support would benefit your ability to effectively teach learners with learning difficulties?

10. What recommendations would you make to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of learners with learning difficulties in your school?

Appendix G: Questionnaire for Parents

1. What type of learning difficulty has your child been diagnosed with?
2. How has your child's learning difficulty affected their academic performance at school?
3. What is your highest level of education?
4. How would you describe your family's socioeconomic status?
5. In what ways are you involved in your child's education? (e.g., helping with homework, attending school meetings, communicating with teachers)
6. What challenges have you faced in supporting your child's learning and academic progress?
7. How would you rate the support services and accommodations provided by the school for your child's learning difficulties?
8. What improvements or additional support do you think would benefit your child's academic performance?
9. How has your child's learning difficulty affected your family dynamics and relationships?
10. What advice would you give to other parents who have children with learning difficulties?

Appendix H: Observation checklist

Observation Area	Observation Item	Yes	No	Comments
Academic Performance	Actively participates in class activities			
	Completes assignments on time			
	Demonstrates understanding of concepts			
	Asks for clarification when needed			
	Exhibits difficulty in specific subject areas (e.g., reading, writing, math)			
Parental Involvement	Parent attends school meetings/events			
	Parent communicates with teachers			
	Parent assists with homework/coursework			
	Parent provides educational resources (e.g., books, study materials)			
Access to Support Services	Parent advocates for child's learning needs			
	Learner receives specialized instruction/accommodations			
	Learner uses assistive technology (if applicable)			
	Learner receives counseling/emotional support			
Classroom Environment	Learner receives additional tutoring/remedial support			
	Learner's learning needs are adequately supported			
	Teacher provides differentiated instruction			
	Teacher uses multi-sensory teaching approaches			
	Classroom is inclusive and supportive			
	Accommodations are provided for learner's needs			
	Peer interactions are positive and inclusive			

Republic of Rwanda
University of Rwanda
College of Education
Nyagatare District
Tel:0787603474
Email:niyo1fafa@gmail.com
On 24th July,2023

To,Headmaster of GS Rwisirabo

Dear sir,

RE: Requesting permission for data collection

I am pleased to write this letter to request permission for data collection in the school that you are heading.

In fact,I am student of Masters of Education in Special Needs Education from University of Rwanda College of Education Rukara Campus. We are on the step of collecting data on different topics depending of our choice. On my side I have chosen to collect my data in your school about" **Parents' Capabilities in Supporting Academic Performance of Learners with Learning Difficulties** ".I have attached recommendation letter from university of Rwanda College of Education.

Once given this opportunity of collecting data in your school, I assure you that all protocols, rules and regulations will be followed, and privacy regulation adhered to.

I am waiting forward to hearing from you.

Your faithfully,



Francine Niyonagira



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA

College of Education

School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education

CERTIFICATION OF CORRECTIONS MADE

I the undersigned certify that as the Main reader of this thesis, I have checked that the corrections required have been made, and hereby recommended for acceptance by University of Rwanda the final copy of the thesis entitled: **Parents' Capabilities in Supporting Academic Performance of Learners with Learning Difficulties: Case Study of Nyagatare G.S. Rwisirabo**

Name of student: **NIYONAGIRA Francine**

Student's Number: **221028340**

This is in fulfillment of the degree of Masters of Inclusive and Special Needs Education/ School of Education.

Name: Dr. Jeannette Musengimana

Signature:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Musengimana'.

Digitally signed by
MUSENGIMANA
Jeannette
Date: 2024.10.03
11:49:23 +0200

Date: 03/10/2024



UNIVERSITY of
RWANDA

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/ Madam,

Re: 22 1028 340/ Francine NIYONAGIRA

The School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education offers a master's degree in special Needs Education. As part of the academic requirements students must write their dissertation on a topic of their choice after conducting a research study.

In order to facilitate them complete their studies we seek for your cooperation in allowing the above named student conduct his/her research on the topic:

.....
Parents' capabilities in supporting academic performance of learners with learning difficulties: case study of Nyagatare districts.....
to collect data in your Institution/ Organization. This will enable the student to write his dissertation.

In case you require any other information regarding this exercise you are welcome to contact the School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely yours.,

Done at UR-CE on: 26th July 2023

Ass.Prof. Evariste Karangwa

Dean, School of Inclusive and Special Needs Education

Email: karangwa28@gmail.com

