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Challenges of Tacit Knowledge Sharing among Learners with Intellectual Disability in Selected Integrated Schools in Kenya.

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Abstract

Rationale of the study: Tacit knowledge sharing is a vital 21st-century skill, central to Kenya's Competency-Based Education, which promotes inclusivity and individualised learning. For learners with intellectual disabilities, it fosters personalised understanding through experiential learning and informal interactions, helping them overcome challenges such as accessibility and mobility. The objectives of the study were to analyse the challenges that impede tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities and to propose recommendations to facilitate it.

Methodology: The study adopted an embedded mixed-methods design. Data were collected from 111 learners with intellectual disabilities, 48 teachers, and 32 parents across 16 purposively selected schools in Kenya. Tools included semi-structured interviews and observations. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS and Excel, while qualitative data were analysed through thematic analysis in Atlas.ti. Ethical approvals were obtained, and all participants provided informed consent or assent under strict confidentiality.

Findings of the study: Speech impairments, attention deficits, cognitive delays, and social anxiety hinder tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities. Environmental and instructional barriers, such as rigid teaching methods and stigma, also impacted sharing. Teachers and parents cited communication challenges, cultural beliefs, limited resources, and weak policy implementation as key constraints.

Implications of the study: The study shows how social learning theories explain the development of tacit knowledge and highlights practical needs, such as teacher training and peer support. It also identifies policy priorities, including investment in adaptive resources and inclusive practices to strengthen learning for students with intellectual disabilities.

Originality: This study provides an original contribution by documenting the largely underexamined processes through which learners with intellectual disabilities acquire and share tacit knowledge in integrated classrooms.

Keywords

Tacit knowledge, knowledge sharing, learning, intellectual disability.

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1 Introduction

Educators play a pivotal role in Competency-Based Education (CBE) by facilitating the exchange of tacit knowledge with learners. They enhance information acquisition and retention by integrating indigenous knowledge into subject areas, fostering learners' natural talents. This approach not only empowers learners but also helps them feel actively involved in the learning process (Mavhunga & Kibirige, 2018). To ensure inclusivity, educators must adopt effective teaching strategies that incorporate practical, social, and conceptual skills, equipping learners to succeed in society (Lombardi, 2022). Preparing teachers to support learners with intellectual disabilities requires comprehensive training. Professional development programs, such as Positive Behavioural Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and collaborative problem-solving, improve educator effectiveness and student outcomes (Horner et al., 2019; Sugai et al., 2020). Additionally, fostering collaboration among teachers, parents, and specialists strengthens the educational support system, creating a unified approach to learner success (Friend & Cook, 2017).

Inclusive education policies, including the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006), advocate for the education of children with disabilities in integrated settings. This ensures social inclusion and reduces stigma (Slee, 2018). Tacit Knowledge-sharing interventions may enhance CBE implementation, necessitating adaptable teaching strategies (Black & Wiliam, 2018). Social-emotional learning (SEL) further supports tacit knowledge sharing by facilitating knowledge exchange during curriculum delivery (Durlak et al., 2015). Social-emotional learning is a journey of building essential life skills, for example, emotional intelligence, empathy, and resilience, that help one handle challenges and connect meaningfully with others. Understanding the challenges that learners with intellectual disabilities face is essential for fostering a supportive, inclusive learning environment, especially in implementing the CBE stage-based pathway.

2 Statement of the Problem

Tacit knowledge sharing (TKS) is essential for ensuring instructional experiences in integrated schools remain accessible. A strong knowledge-sharing culture allows learners to acquire knowledge without discrimination, aligning with Kenya's Constitution, Basic Education Act (2013), and international policies like the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC, 1989) and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD, 2006). Despite efforts to improve education for learners with intellectual disabilities, Kenya's National Special Needs Education Policy Framework (2009) has notable shortcomings in addressing the challenges of learners with ID when sharing tacit knowledge. Mutuota et al. (2020) highlight that the framework lacks provisions

for specialised educator training and targeted support. KISE (2018) found that 2.5% of Kenyan learners have intellectual disabilities, yet only 21.72% of teachers in integrated schools have special needs education training, with just 10.19% specialised in intellectual disabilities. This gap underscores the need for policies that enhance TKS among educators, learners, and support staff to address the challenges of these learners. The Competency-Based Education (CBE) in Kenya promotes innovation, creativity, originality, and parental involvement (KICD, 2019). TKS plays a key role in achieving these goals by fostering experiential learning, collaboration, and informal teacher-peer interactions. However, integrating TKS faces challenges due to limited specialised teacher training. Teachers without expertise in intellectual disabilities may struggle to implement effective instructional strategies, limiting opportunities for knowledge sharing. Kiugu et al. (2021) observed that parental non-involvement further exacerbates this issue, as parents are instrumental in knowledge acquisition outside the classroom.

A learner-centred classroom should accommodate all students, including those with intellectual disabilities (Akala, 2021). Research suggests that learners perform better when knowledge is communicated through reading or gestures, reinforcing the importance of TKS (KISE, 2018). However, communication barriers and stigma remain significant obstacles to TKS in schools. Despite extensive literature on collaborative learning and knowledge sharing, there is limited research on the challenges that learners with ID face when sharing tacit knowledge in Kenya. This study addresses that gap by exploring possible solutions to these challenges. Addressing these challenges requires a structured approach, including improved educator training, parental engagement programs, communication strategies tailored to learners with intellectual disabilities, and policy reforms that prioritise TKS in inclusive education settings. This study aimed to investigate the challenges of tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities in selected integrated schools in Kenya.

The study objectives were:

i. Analyse the challenges that impede tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities in an integrated public primary school.
ii. Propose recommendations that can facilitate tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities and their teachers in an integrated public primary school.

3 Literature review

The literature was reviewed based on the objectives of the study:

3.1 Challenges that impede the sharing of tacit knowledge

Individuals possess organisational knowledge, especially tacit knowledge, instead of explicit knowledge (Njeri, 2019). However, the idea of sharing tacit knowledge has yet to be wholly adopted by many African setups. This becomes a significant obstacle to exchanging information as the owner must voluntarily reveal tacit knowledge by encouragement or facilitation rather than compulsion (Ogbonna, 2020). Although sharing knowledge is necessary for efficient and successful learning, learners may be reluctant to do so (Al-Kurdi et al., 2020; Navimipour & Charband, 2016). A common reason for this hesitancy is the deeply embedded stigma. Particularly in developing nations, few operational structures, methods, and procedures are in place to facilitate effective knowledge sharing, and most institutions need more chances to exchange tacit knowledge (Gul-Abbasi & Dastgeer, 2018). The other authors do not highlight the role that parents and guardians can play in tacit knowledge sharing, except for Odongo (2018), who suggests that the Kenyan government should support and facilitate regular parent meetings for peer-to-peer support and idea-sharing among children with special needs.

Bisschops et al. (2023) researched how to reduce the challenges faced by intellectually disabled individuals in sharing tacit knowledge. They found that there is a need for more communities of practice for experts handling such individuals to play a significant role in creating a literate community that has long been perceived as insignificant in national development. The findings of their participatory research revealed that, through collective thinking, CoP participants can help implement knowledge-sharing methodologies to support intellectually disabled learners. However, the authors did not explore how CoPs in settings with regular and intellectually disabled learners, such as integrated schools, can achieve this.

An analysis of research on the obstacles to the exchange of tacit knowledge from the body of literature sheds light on potential situations in developing nations such as Kenya. It is crucial to recognise the conditions that facilitate sharing to comprehend the obstacles that impede the exchange of tacit knowledge on projects (Ogbonna, 2020). Alves and Pinheiro (2022) and Todericiu and Boanta (2017) discovered several barriers to information sharing. These include the low value placed on the knowledge that an individual possesses, the lack of incentives or drive to share knowledge, the absence of standardised procedures and structures for sharing knowledge, the sharer's inadequate communication skills, the process's stifling of time and expense, and the organisational culture that permeates the group. This research focuses on a group of

learners at an integrated school who are both regular and intellectually handicapped. Job stability, motivating variables, time constraints, psychological factors, poor communication, reluctance to change, lack of rewards, irrational expectations, level of education, and lack of trust were shown to have a detrimental impact on the sharing of tacit knowledge in institutions (Khoza & Pretorius, 2017). Alves and Pinheiro (2022) noted that while many individuals are eager to impart tacit knowledge, the numerous obstacles that accompany it in the workplace demotivate them.

It has also been noted that consistent and divergent variables cause barriers to knowledge exchange between various professions and communities. Chumg et al. (2016) examined the factors influencing workers, especially those in schools, and their knowledge-sharing practices. They discovered a connection between knowledge-sharing behaviour, organisational culture, and the tendency towards social capital. Akgün et al. (2017) discovered that obstacles to exchanging tacit information among team members, even those occupying the same staffroom, arise from disparities in goals, values, working methods, distributional fairness, gossip, and hate. This conclusion is supported by Alves and Pinheiro (2022), who contend that variations in perception, team diversity, skills, communication, and organisational technology cause hurdles to knowledge sharing. Kucharska and Rebelo (2022) have identified additional perceived barriers, such as a lack of support from upper management, which may include the school Board of Management or the employer, and a reluctance to use technology to facilitate knowledge sharing.

Fayda-Kinik (2022) used case studies to examine the variables influencing academics' information sharing. They saw that academic ideas dominated their approach to knowledge sharing, rather than corporate culture. This remains the case even if the experiments were carried out at different times and in different places. The most substantial incentive was the expectation of a reward, which made information sharing less likely. The two studies found significant correlations between organisational commitment components and knowledge sharing. Technological factors were also identified as affecting KS compared to individual and organisational factors among learners (Fan & Beh, 2023). The knowledge sharer needs some form of motivation to share what they do not know with others. With the culture of academic competition still prevalent among some teachers and schools, it may become impractical for teachers to share tacit knowledge, whether in the same school or not.

According to Karamat et al. (2018), there are four primary hurdles to information sharing in Pakistan's health sector: autonomous, dependent, linking, and independent barriers. When it came to knowledge sharing, the

dependent variables had the most robust dependencies and driving forces. These drivers include employee discord, lack of cooperation, low employee enthusiasm, and reluctance to share knowledge (Alves & Pinheiro, 2022). Lack of self-efficacy, one of the core competencies to be developed in the CBC, deters tacit knowledge sharing and can be seen in teachers feeling insecure as they deliver in the classroom (Buhere, 2020). In many institutions, the lack of facilities that enable knowledge sharing has negatively impacted knowledge providers (The World Bank, 2019).

Alves and Pinheiro (2022) and Njeri (2019) argue that trust is essential for building confidence within a team. There should also be reduced transaction costs and strengthened collaboration and cooperation among team members to facilitate tacit knowledge sharing. Trust also helps reduce complexity, promoting learning and enabling learners to complete projects and assessments on time. Darling-Hammond et al. (2020) note that trust allows teachers and learners to share their knowledge freely, leading to skills acquisition. Trust is particularly crucial in tacit knowledge sharing, as it fosters a caring, culturally responsive learning community where learners are valued and well-known, thereby extending their learning (Ogbonna, 2020). This is especially important for learners with intellectual disabilities in inclusive schools. On the other hand, the absence of trust can decrease the team's added value and competitive advantage over others (Njeri, 2019). However, Bisschops et al. (2023) consider CoP as a solution for promoting tacit knowledge sharing and assisting learners with intellectual disabilities. This suggests that experts who work with learners with intellectual disabilities can collaborate to eliminate the stigma associated with these learners, making them active class participants.

3.2 Overcoming tacit knowledge-sharing barriers for learners with intellectual disabilities

Academics have researched the obstacles to informal knowledge sharing in classrooms. Akgün et al. (2017) proposed that project leadership may address information-sharing hurdles in a culture that values knowledge-sharing by closely observing team members' emotions. In this instance, the learners, instructors, and parents are referred to as team members. To foster information sharing without fear of retaliation, school administrators should cultivate a climate of trust. According to Belin (2021), integrating knowledge sharing into an institution's culture helps unlock its potential.

Scholars have advised organisations to place a high value on honesty and faith to reap the rewards of knowledge sharing, particularly when it comes to tacit knowledge. Ergün and Avcı (2018) studied Turkish learners and discovered that knowledge behaviour is influenced by self-efficacy, motivation, and a feeling of communal practice. Additionally,

information sharing is encouraged by variables such as reputation and the potential for improved status. According to Osei-Kyei et al. (2019), the study suggested that managers, in this case, school administrators, design interventions to avoid conflict and enhance reputation to promote information sharing. According to Llopis and Foss (2016) and Starmind Resources (2020), a cooperative environment encourages information sharing among those who would not otherwise be motivated to do so. Headteachers and managers can create roles that facilitate a culture of information exchange. Employees who are pleased with their work are more inclined to share their expertise (Belin, 2021).

Socialisation through CoPs enables the free exchange of tacit knowledge (Aljuwaiber, 2016). Communities of Practice are easy to form in a school setting and provide opportunities for team members to give presentations and sessions, thus encouraging knowledge sharing (Guthrie, 2022). School administration should form social networks such as communities of practice, as they provide an informal source of knowledge (Veena et al., 2019). Other ways of socialising include creating arenas for knowledge exchange, such as knowledge chat groups, discussion forums, and cafes (Manaf et al., 2018), as well as symposia, seminars, or workshops (Sergeeva & Roehrich, 2018). Adopting tacit knowledge sharing can improve learning in integrated schools. Starmind Resources (2020) concludes that knowledge sharing reduces repeated mistakes, helps people make more informed decisions, and increases productivity by 10-40%.

Studies have shown that information silos can be detrimental to organisations and that knowledge sharing is the best way to dismantle them. The silos are often created because of poor communication between different departments or teams, which can lead to wasted time and effort. This can happen when there is constant backtracking or duplication of work. To solve this problem, it is crucial to establish a centralised platform that enables easy information sharing. In the education field, ICT facilities can be adopted to help break down information silos. Regular stakeholder meetings can also be held to encourage knowledge-sharing and collaboration. By eliminating information silos, teachers can work together to improve their professional development and better serve their learners, especially those with special needs. Research has shown that removing information silos can lead to high-quality professional dialogue on teaching and learning and a culture of collaboration among teachers (Guthrie, 2022). Sharing tacit knowledge maximises everyone's contribution and makes learning much more enjoyable.

However, barriers to knowledge sharing in schools can still exist, so policies are needed to support it. Tacit knowledge can be challenging

to understand and embrace, so a policy that guides knowledge sharing is necessary. Without such a policy, knowledge traceability becomes a challenge.

4 Theoretical Framework

The Social Cognitive Learning Theory and Social Constructivism were employed in this research study, as they are relevant to the study of tacit knowledge sharing, a social psychological behaviour. Moreover, the study focuses on learners with intellectual disabilities, who are both psychologically and socially affected. Therefore, using these two theories was necessary to gain a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

4.1 Social Cognitive Learning Theory

Albert Bandura developed Social Cognitive Learning Theory in the 1960s, revolutionising the understanding of learning. Prior to this, behaviourism dominated, focusing on observable actions and reinforcement. Bandura introduced the idea that learning occurs through cognitive processes and social interactions, emphasising that individuals can acquire knowledge by observing others (Bandura, 1961). His famous Bobo Doll experiment demonstrated that children adopt aggressive behaviours simply by watching a model, challenging the belief that direct reinforcement is necessary.

The theory's core constructs include observational learning, reciprocal determinism, self-efficacy, and reinforcement. Observational learning involves attention, retention, reproduction, and motivation, guiding individuals to imitate behaviours (Bandura, 2001). Reciprocal determinism explains the dynamic interaction between personal traits, behaviour, and the environment. Self-efficacy, a key component in competency-based education (CBE), affects how individuals approach tasks (Bandura, 1986). Additionally, the theory highlights how people modify their actions based on observed consequences, even without direct reinforcement. Figure 1 shows the theory.

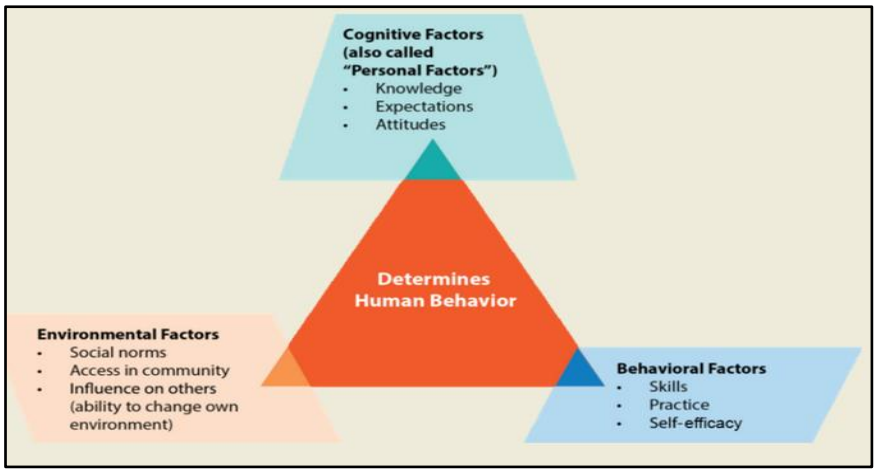

Figure 1: Social Cognitive Learning Theory (Bandura, 2001)

In the context of tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities, Social Cognitive Learning Theory offers a practical and valuable framework.

4.2 Social Constructivism Theory

Lev Vygotsky's Social Constructivism theory, developed in the early to mid-20th century, reshaped understanding of learning by emphasising the role of social interaction. Unlike behaviourist perspectives that viewed learning as a response to external stimuli, Vygotsky proposed that knowledge is actively co-constructed through collaboration, dialogue, and engagement with more knowledgeable individuals (Saleem et al., 2021; Vygotsky, 1978). A central concept in his theory is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which highlights the gap between what learners can achieve independently and what they can accomplish with guidance. Learning is most effective when scaffolding is provided within this zone, allowing learners to gradually internalise cognitive functions like problem-solving and reasoning (Vygotsky, 1978). Social Constructivism has significant implications for education, particularly in tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities. Tacit knowledge, often exchanged through informal interactions, benefits from collaborative learning environments that encourage discussions and teamwork. Teachers can foster such engagement by using group activities, discussions, and practical projects. This approach enhances critical thinking, problem-solving skills, and overall subject comprehension, reinforcing core competencies in competency-based education (CBE). For learners with intellectual disabilities, scaffolding is essential to support their cognitive development. Vygotsky's framework underscores the importance of inclusive educational practices in which parents, teachers, and students actively participate in knowledge-sharing to create meaningful learning experiences. By leveraging these principles, education systems can better

address the challenges of tacit knowledge exchange in integrated learning environments.

5 Research Methodology

This study adopted a pragmatic research worldview, which integrates both positivist and interpretivist paradigms to address complex social phenomena through practical, action-oriented inquiry (Kaushik & Walsh, 2019). Pragmatism was appropriate as it allowed the researcher to combine objective data with subjective insights to develop actionable recommendations.

The study employed an embedded mixed-methods research design (Creswell & Cresswell, 2018), where qualitative data were embedded within a predominantly quantitative structure. This enabled the triangulation of data collected concurrently through semi-structured interviews and observation. Triangulation was essential because the phenomenon involved attitudes, actions and contextual influences that could not be captured through one method alone. The target population included learners with intellectual disabilities registered for the Kenya Intermediate Level Education Assessment (KILEA), their teachers, and parents. A multi-stage sampling technique was used: purposive sampling identified 16 schools (two per region across Kenya's eight educational regions) with the highest enrolment of learners with intellectual disabilities; information-oriented purposive sampling selected 111 learners and 48 teachers. Snowball sampling was used to reach 32 parents or guardians. Data collection tools included semi-structured interview schedules and an observation guide. Quantitative data were analysed using SPSS Version 29 and Excel 2023, focusing on descriptive statistics such as frequencies, means, and percentages. The results are presented in tables and charts. Qualitative data were analysed thematically using Atlas.ti Version 9, allowing for the identification and interpretation of recurring patterns and themes from participant narratives. Ethical considerations included obtaining research approval from the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and an accredited ethics review committee. Informed consent was obtained from all adult participants, while assent and guardian consent were sought for learners. Confidentiality and participant dignity were upheld throughout, with no identifying information used in data reporting. The study adhered to ethical principles of respect, inclusivity, and sensitivity, especially in handling interactions with learners with intellectual disabilities, ensuring a non-discriminatory and enabling research environment (Jenkin et al., 2020).

6 Results

The study had a sample size of 16 schools. From the schools, the sample for intellectually disabled learners registered for KILEA was

111, and their teachers were 48. Table 1 indicates their response rate.

Table 1: Response Rate

Respondents	Sample	Responses (N)	Percentages (%)
ID Learners	111	95	86
Teachers	48	47	98
Total (N)	**159**	**142**	**89**

Table 1 indicates the responses from different categories of respondents: ID learners and teachers. With 142 actual respondents out of 159 potential respondents providing feedback, the overall response rate was 89%. For the intellectually disabled learners, a response rate of 95 (86%) was achieved. For the teachers, 47(98%) responded to the semi-structured interviews.

For the parents, the study had a sample of at least two (2) parents per school and snowball sampling was utilised to expand the sample by leveraging referrals from initially engaged parents or guardians. The study interviewed forty-five (45) parents, giving a response rate of 140.6%. The response rate of 140.6% indicates that the survey exceeded its minimum target of 32 parents by obtaining responses from 45 parents. This high response rate reflects that the snowball sampling method effectively increased participation beyond the initial convenience sampling expectations.

6.1 Analyse the challenges that impede tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities

The study sought to examine the challenges that hinder the effective sharing of tacit knowledge among learners with intellectual disabilities, as experienced and perceived by learners, teachers, and parents. Understanding these barriers is essential to inform strategies to enhance learning processes and support mechanisms. The following section presents a detailed analysis of the key challenges identified through data collection and highlights their impact on tacit knowledge acquisition and sharing.

6.1.1 Observation of ID learners' challenges impeding tacit knowledge sharing

The study observed the challenges ID learners faced during tacit knowledge-sharing activities. This is shown in Figure 2.

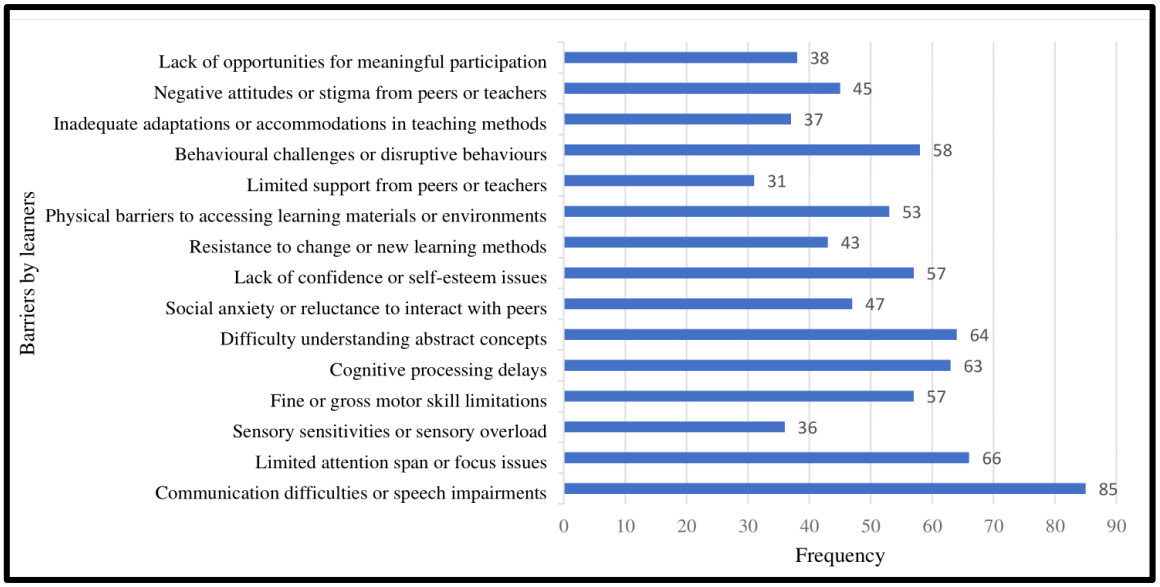

Figure 2: Barriers by learners

From Figure 2, the most frequently occurring challenge to tacit knowledge sharing among learners with ID was communication difficulties or speech impairments, 85 (10.9%), followed by limited attention span or focus issues, 66 (8.5%), and difficulty understanding abstract concepts, 64 (8.2%). Cognitive processing delays and lack of confidence or self-esteem issues were also prominent, 63 (8.1%) and 57 (7.3%), respectively. Behavioural challenges or disruptive behaviours were noted in 58 (7.4%), while fine or gross motor skill limitations appeared in 57 (7.3%). Physical barriers to accessing learning materials or environments were recorded 53 (6.8%), and social anxiety or reluctance to interact with peers was observed 47 (6.0%). Other barriers included negative attitudes or stigma from peers or teachers 45 (5.8%), resistance to change or new learning methods 43 (5.5%), lack of opportunities for meaningful participation 38 (4.9%), inadequate adaptations or accommodations in teaching methods 37 (4.7%), sensory sensitivities or sensory overload 36 (4.6%), and limited support from peers or teachers, which was the least cited at 31 (4.0%).

Furthermore, the observation data from the study on learners with intellectual disabilities were used to identify instances where environmental factors, instructional methods, or social interactions hindered tacit knowledge sharing. These observations provided direct evidence of the barriers affecting learners' ability to acquire and exchange tacit knowledge within their educational settings.

For the environmental factors, these factors appeared 14 times in 12 primary documents. They included factors such as harsh weather conditions (floods, droughts), uneven grounds, noise pollution, and distance to school, leading to truancy.

For the Instructional methods, they appeared 10 times in 9 primary documents. They included factors like rigid teaching methods, the use of language above learners' level, large class sizes, frequent curriculum changes causing adaptation difficulties and lack of interactive and adaptive teaching strategies.

Social interactions appeared 17 times in 17 primary documents. These included issues like language barriers, social stigma and discrimination from peers and society, anxiety and lack of confidence in interacting with others. Others include limited trust in the learning environment, poor self-esteem issues and fear of participation, limited support in learning activities, and stigmatisation due to cultural beliefs and superstitions.

Learners' specific challenges appeared 11 times in 10 primary documents. These included issues like limitations in fine and gross motor skills that affect participation, cognitive processing delays, short attention spans, poor memory retention, and lack of speech.

6.1.2 Interviews with teachers and parents on challenges facing tacit knowledge sharing

The teacher and parents were interviewed about the challenges that hinder tacit knowledge sharing. Their feedback is presented in the following two sections.

6.1.2.1 Teachers' perspectives

The teachers were asked about some of the main challenges they face in promoting tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities. The themes that appeared were resource and material limitations, communication barriers, variability in learners' abilities and needs, social and cultural barriers and instructional challenges. Some verbatim per themes were:

Resource and material limitations:

> *"…Lack of sufficient materials and equipment to be used in the activities…" [T047]*
> *"…Limited access to assistive technology devices…" [T013]*
> *"…Lack of manpower in handling the learners and time management…" [T043]*

Communication barriers:

> *"…Language barrier…" [T003]*
> *"…Un-developed speech. Other learners are unable to understand verbal instructions due to undeveloped speech…" [T040]*
> *"…social anxiety…" [T010]*

Variability in learners' abilities and needs:

> *"…Lack of concentration span…" [T034]*
> *"…Learners' cognitive delays affecting retention and comprehension…" [T006]*

Social and cultural barriers:

> *"…cultural stigma…" [T036]*
> *"…Time constraints and resistance to change as teachers feel uncomfortable…" [T044]*

Instructional challenges:

"…Handling large classes of learners who require individual learning methods and have different ability levels…" [T037]

"…High absenteeism leading to inconsistency in learning progress…" [T017]

The teachers rated how attitudes towards sharing tacit knowledge among learners, teachers, and parents impact effectiveness. They used a 4-point Likert scale of very positive, positive, negative and very negative. Figure 3 shows the data.

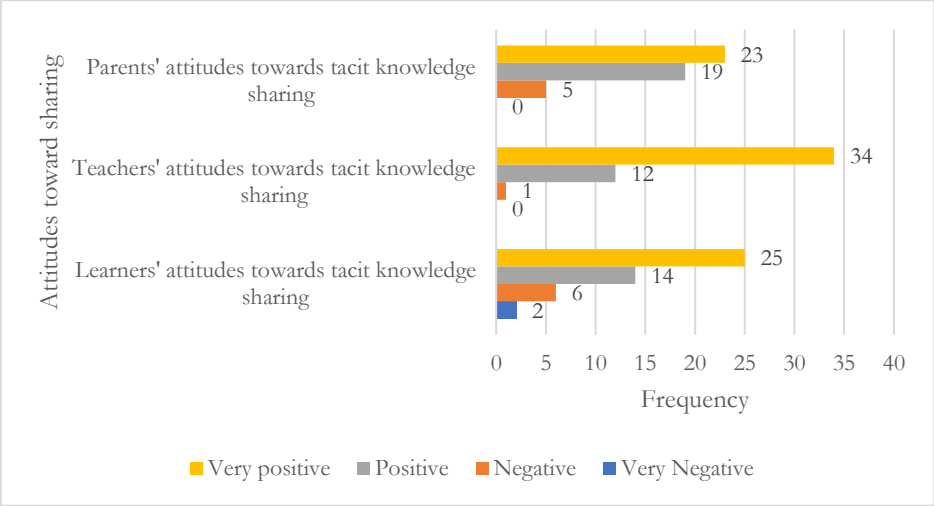

Figure 33: Attitude toward knowledge sharing

Figure 3 shows that 34(72%) teachers felt that attitude very positively impacts tacit knowledge sharing, while only 1(2%) thought it negatively affected knowledge sharing. They also felt that parents' attitude very positively affects knowledge sharing, 23(49%). Similarly, learners' attitudes affect knowledge sharing very positively, 25(53%).

Further, the teachers were asked about cultural factors they encountered that influence the sharing of tacit knowledge among learners with intellectual disabilities. Figure 4 shows the data. The key relationship "Is part of" indicates a hierarchical relationship in which an element belongs to a broader theme.

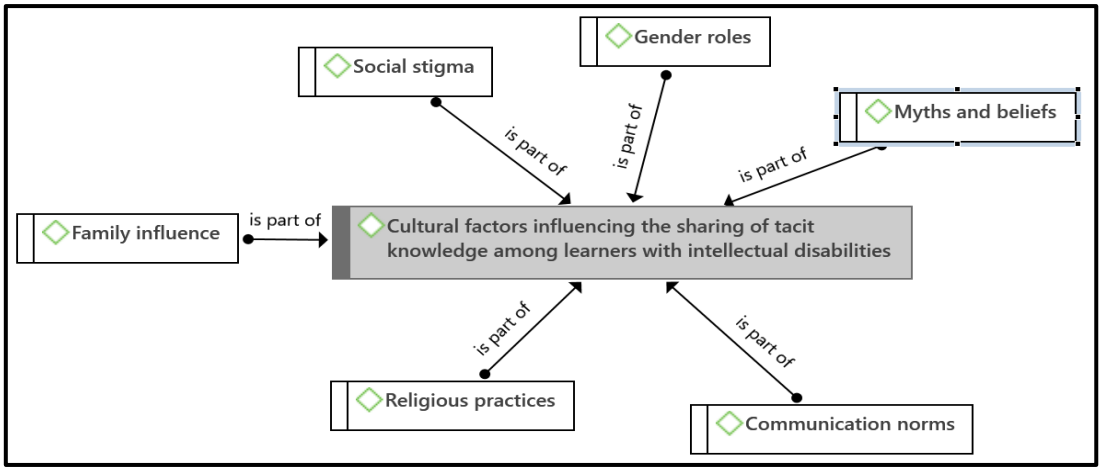

Figure 4: Cultural factors influencing the sharing of tacit knowledge among learners with intellectual disabilities

From Figure 4, the teachers indicated that the main cultural issues affecting tacit knowledge sharing were social stigma, family influence, myths and beliefs, gender roles, religious practices and communication norms. Some verbatim per theme in Figure 4 were:

Social stigma:

"…the community focuses on the disability other than ability, there is discrimination and stereotyping, social exclusion…" [T044]

"…the community focuses on the disability other than ability, there is discrimination, stereotyping, social exclusion…" [T007]

Myths and beliefs:

"…Some communities believe that children with intellectual disabilities are cursed, so they do not want to expose them…" [T018]

"…Kamba's believe in myths that special needs learners are bewitched. …" [T025]

Family influence:

"…stigma by lack of acceptance, most when only one of the children has ID and others are okay…" [T006]

"…Some parents hiding children with intellectual disabilities…" [T008]

Gender roles:

"…Culturally in the ATR some skills are dressed male-oriented and some female-oriented thus cutting off reducing the learner attitude to cross the line.…" [T047]

Religious practices:

"…Religion factors- Muslim learners tend to refrain from some activities that Christian learners participate in…" [T049]

Communication norms:

"…Communication norms and styles- verbal vs non-verbal communication…" [T037]

"…Individualist cultures- emphasise independent learning and personal achievements…" [T040]

The teachers were further probed on their perception of the policy environment in the school or education system and its connection to promoting tacit knowledge sharing among learners with intellectual disabilities. Table 2 shows the themes and some verbatim.

Table 2: Policy perception and its link to promoting tacit knowledge sharing

Themes	Verbatim
Positive perception and potential benefits	"*Very effective if well-implemented.*" *"The policy of creating a safe and inclusive classroom environment which is very positive"* *"It is on promotional levels because it builds strong capabilities that are not easily forgotten if kept on practising."*
Need for proper implementation and reinforcement.	*"The policy needs to be reinforced and implemented."* *"Strict guidelines should be put in place by policymakers."*
Mixed and neutral perceptions	*"Very accommodative."* *"Conducive but lacking but lacking in some aspects."*

Parents perspectives

The parents were asked about the challenges they have encountered in supporting tacit knowledge sharing for their child with an intellectual disability. Table 19 shows the data.

Table 3: Challenges faced by parents when supporting tacit knowledge sharing

Challenges faced by parents when supporting tacit knowledge sharing	Frequency	Percentage
Limited access to specialised resources and support services	36	9.6
Difficulty in finding suitable instructional methods tailored to the child's needs	35	9.3
Communication barriers with the child, particularly in understanding their learning preferences	35	9.3
Lack of support from educational institutions or professionals	19	5.1
Limited understanding of the child's specific learning needs and how to address them effectively	30	8.0
Time constraints for providing adequate support and involvement in the child's learning	36	9.6
Financial constraints for accessing additional resources or therapies	36	9.6
Difficulty in finding peer support or communities for parents of children with intellectual disabilities	29	7.7
Inadequate training or knowledge of effective strategies for supporting the child's learning	30	8.0
Stigma or societal attitudes towards disabilities lead to feelings of isolation or judgment.	29	7.7
Limited access to assistive technology or tools that could aid in the child's learning	30	8.0
Emotional challenges for parents, including stress, worry, and feelings of inadequacy	30	8.0
Total (N)	**375**	**100.0**

From Table 3, the challenges most frequently encountered by parents were limited access to specialised resources and support services, time constraints for providing adequate support and involvement in the child's learning, and financial constraints 36 (9.6%). They were least challenged by a lack of support

from educational institutions or professionals 19(5.1%).

7 Discussion of the Findings

The research found that communication challenges, including speech impairment, were the most significant barriers to the sharing of tacit knowledge among learners with intellectual disabilities. These challenges limit learners' ability to express their thoughts, demonstrate skills, or articulate unspoken understandings essential to tacit knowledge sharing. As a result, learners may struggle to participate fully in collaborative or experiential learning activities, leading to reduced peer interaction and missed learning opportunities. This is consistent with the assertions of Ezeh et al. (2021), who posit that intellectually disabled learners are likely to have severe linguistic and expression limitations, which hinder them from engaging in nonverbal or experiential learning processes. Similarly, research by Van-Houten (2021) confirms that constraints on verbal and nonverbal communication prevent social learning and the spontaneous propagation of daily knowledge, both of which are very important features of tacit knowledge sharing.

Apart from communication challenges, short attention span (11 times), cognitive lag, and weak comprehension of abstract concepts were also significant challenges. These challenges affect learners' ability to focus, process information efficiently, and grasp nuanced or non-concrete ideas, limiting their engagement in meaningful learning interactions. These findings are in line with the observations of Darling-Hammond et al. (2020), who indicated that difficulties in cognitive processing restrict their ability to learn and internalise non-explicit information. Behavioural issues and low self-esteem also contributed to this, in line with previous studies by Li and Xue (2023), which highlight the role of behavioural and psychological factors in restraining social participation and peer learning.

Physical learning environments, such as noise pollution, access to the school, and physical inaccessibility, were also found to influence the transmission of knowledge negatively. Pradhan and Naik (2024) also agree, pointing out the role of inclusive learning environments responsive to physical and sensory abilities in enhancing equitable learning outcomes. Likewise, classroom pedagogical practices, such as doctrinaire pedagogy, large class sizes, and the failure to adapt content to suit learners' levels, were identified as significant obstacles to the transmission of tacit knowledge. This concurs with Jacquart et al. (2019), who argue that inclusive pedagogies must account for learners' diversity and accept differentiation to enable active participation.

Social interaction was also a challenge, hindering tacit knowledge sharing. Learners reported challenges of stigma, fear, and anxiety

in participating, the very same challenges reported by teachers and parents. This further agrees with studies conducted by Dreilinger (2021), which reiterated that stigma and social exclusion play a significant role in not wanting learners with intellectual disability to engage in collaborative learning activities. Cultural myths and beliefs, for examples, viewing intellectual disability as a curse, were also revealed by the participants among rural communities. A study by Reupert et al. (2021) indicates that cultural myths have been shown to produce negative attitudes and influence parental decisions to isolate their children.

The teachers noted resource shortages, understaffing, and the absence of assistive equipment as the main challenges. This is supported by Balume (2025), who cites systematic underfinancing of special education in most of the developing world, combined with inadequate infrastructure and constrained professional capacity. Teachers also identified cultural attitudes and policy shortfalls as determinants. While some teachers recognised the potential of inclusive policy-making, others noted poor implementation, mirroring the work of Done and Andrews (2020), who argue that inclusive education policies are often rhetorical, lacking political will and mechanisms for implementation.

Economic, emotional, and time constraints were most frequently mentioned as challenges they face, along with communication failures and the lack of professional help from parents. These findings are corroborated by a study by Lakhani et al. (2025), which shows that families of intellectually disabled children have high caregiving burdens, low social support, and poor institutional support. However, evidence from research such as that of Gammage and Nolte (2020) suggests that through guided parental training and community sensitisation, the obstacles can be neutralised, leading to improved parent-child communication and learning results.

Nevertheless, the finding that the majority of teachers viewed learners' and parents' attitudes towards tacit knowledge sharing as "very positive" may appear somewhat optimistic. While this consciousness aligns with inclusive education precepts that prioritise learners' agency and the caregiving role, it runs counter to work such as De-Ridder (2020), which documents ongoing challenges with stakeholders' buy-in and adoption of inclusive pedagogies in contexts with deep-seated traditional beliefs and low consciousness.

8 Conclusion of the Study

The study identified a range of systemic, institutional, and sociocultural challenges that significantly hinder the successful transfer of tacit knowledge among learners with intellectual disabilities in integrated public primary schools. One of the primary setbacks was the limited availability of assistive equipment and adaptive learning materials,

which restricted access to experiential or intuitive processing and articulation of knowledge. In most circumstances, resource-poor contexts made it challenging to facilitate multimodal learning, thereby undermining inclusive learning practices.

Insufficient teacher training in inclusive education and specialised pedagogical approaches also emerged as a critical challenge. Many teachers lacked the skills to facilitate experiential and social learning processes, such as modelling, scaffolding, and differentiated instruction—methods crucial for the transmission of tacit knowledge. Furthermore, there was an overreliance on traditional didactic teaching styles, which are ill-suited for supporting the learning needs of learners with intellectual disabilities.

The study also uncovered low levels of parental engagement in school-based learning processes. While parents played a key role at home, inconsistent school-home communication and limited parental awareness of inclusive learning strategies reduced opportunities to reinforce tacit knowledge sharing outside the classroom. Negative attitudes and social stigma from some peers and educators further impeded collaboration and knowledge exchange. Learners with intellectual disabilities often faced social exclusion or were underestimated, diminishing their confidence to participate and share what they knew.

9 Recommendations of the Study

The study makes the following recommendations to address the challenges that learners with intellectual disabilities face when sharing tacit knowledge.

- Strengthen teacher training in inclusive pedagogy: The Ministry of Education and teacher training institutions should integrate continuous professional development in inclusive pedagogies grounded in Social Cognitive Learning Theory and Social Constructivism. Teachers should be equipped with skills to facilitate scaffolding, observation-based learning, and reciprocal interactions in line with learners' Zones of Proximal Development (ZPD).
- Invest in assistive technologies and adaptive learning resources. The government and school administrators should allocate funding to procure assistive technologies and customised materials that promote multimodal learning. These tools support learners' self-efficacy and motivation.
- Promote family engagement and community sensitisation. Schools should initiate structured parental training and outreach programs to improve home-based learning support. Community sensitisation campaigns can reduce stigma and reinforce the

co-construction of knowledge beyond the classroom.

- Encourage peer interaction and social inclusion activities. Schools should introduce structured peer learning programs and co-curricular inclusion initiatives (e.g., buddy systems, group projects). These activities reinforce observational learning, motivation, and mutual modelling.

10 Implications of the Study

The study reaffirms the relevance of Social Cognitive Learning Theory and Social Constructivism in understanding how learners with intellectual disabilities acquire and share tacit knowledge. Bandura's concept of observational learning was evident in classroom settings where learners imitated peers and teachers in both academic and life skills contexts. Similarly, self-efficacy played a critical role in learner participation. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) was reflected in learners' improved performance with guided support from teachers and peers, underscoring the importance of scaffolding and collaborative engagement in integrated classrooms. The study advances theoretical discourse by demonstrating how these two frameworks complement each other in explaining tacit learning within inclusive education.

For practitioners, the findings underscore the need for intentional design of classroom environments that support tacit knowledge exchange. Teachers must move beyond content delivery and embrace experiential, interactive, and peer-based approaches that align with both Social Cognitive and Social Constructivist principles. The need for multi-sensory instructional materials, assistive technologies, and social learning activities is urgent to accommodate the diverse learning styles of learners with intellectual disabilities. Moreover, teacher training programs should include modules on these theories and on how to apply them in practice in inclusive classrooms. Parents and guardians also require training to sustain learning outside the school setting.

From a policy perspective, the study points to gaps in the implementation and operationalisation of inclusive education frameworks in Kenya. Although inclusion is supported by national education strategies, the lack of targeted funding, trained personnel, and accountability systems weakens its effectiveness. Policies must go beyond access and address the quality of engagement and participation, especially regarding informal, tacit knowledge-sharing opportunities. Furthermore, intersectoral collaboration among the Ministry of Education, KICD, KNEC, and community-based organisations is necessary to support inclusive learning environments grounded in evidence-based educational theory.

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