TEACHERS' APPLICATION OF INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME ON LOW ACADEMIC PERFORMING LEARNERS AGED 6 TO 8 YEARS IN LOITOKITOK SUBCOUNTY, KAJIADO COUNTY, KENYA

BY

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E55/25147/2011

THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES, IN THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
DECLARATION

I confirm that this research thesis is my original work and has not been presented in any other university for certification. The thesis has been complemented by referenced works duly acknowledged where text, data, graphics, pictures or tables have been borrowed from other works – including the internet; the sources are specifically accredited through referencing in accordance with anti-plagiarism regulations.

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To Mr Peter Gathigi Ndiritu and his wife Jane Njeri who facilitated my research by sharing their Loitokitok Sub county home with me when I needed a place to stay in the Sub County during my fieldwork.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<td>Association for the Development of Education in Africa</td>
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<td>CBMP</td>
<td>Cluster Based Mentoring Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>DES</td>
<td>Disability Evaluation System</td>
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<td>DFES</td>
<td>Department for Education and Skills</td>
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<td>EADSE</td>
<td>European Agency for Development in Special Education</td>
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<td>ECDE</td>
<td>Early Childhood Development and Education</td>
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<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education For All</td>
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<td>ESRA</td>
<td>Education Sector Reform Assistance</td>
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<td>GBEPE</td>
<td>Gansu Basic Education Project</td>
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<td>ICT</td>
<td>Information Communication Technology</td>
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<td>IQ</td>
<td>Intelligent Quotient</td>
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<td>IDEA</td>
<td>Individuals with Disabilities Education Act</td>
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<td>IEP</td>
<td>Individualized Educational Programme</td>
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<td>MoEST</td>
<td>Ministry of Education Science and Technology</td>
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<td>MoEVT</td>
<td>Ministry of Education and Vocational Training</td>
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<td>NBTL</td>
<td>New Break Through Literacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organization</td>
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<td>OECD</td>
<td>Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA</td>
<td>Parents Teachers Association</td>
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<td>SNE</td>
<td>Special Needs Education</td>
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<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>UNEFA</td>
<td>United Nations Education for All</td>
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<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<td>USDC</td>
<td>Uganda Society for Disabled Children</td>
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ABSTRACT

An Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) approach seeks to discourage teaching that is based on criteria of averages. Some learners will inevitably fall behind in class work. Teachers must always take into consideration the different abilities and needs of the learners. Therefore, curriculum must be adapted, differentiated, accommodated, and modified to meet the diverse needs of learners. Accessible and flexible curriculum is the key to creating classrooms that meet diverse learner’s needs. This study intended to determine the level of academic achievement by exploring the teachers’ knowledge of IEP, by finding out whether teachers use IEP in classrooms, by exploring the alternative strategies teachers use to mitigate low academic performance, by exploring the effect of applying IEP on learners’ academic performance, and exploring contribution of IEP on teacher-parent relationship to low learners academic achievement. The purpose of the study was to establish whether teacher’s applied IEP on low academic performing learners aged 6 to 8 years in classes 1, 2, and 3. The study may provide new insight to low academic performance. Guided by Maslow’s theory of motivation, the study endeavors to establish how application of IEP can motivate the low academic performing learners to aspire for higher academic performance. The study employed exploratory survey design in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County where teachers were implementing IEP infused Opportunity school and after school remedial teaching strategies to mitigate low academic performance. The pilot study was conducted in 2 primary schools where 1 headteacher, 2 teachers, 10 learners, and 10 parents were selected purposively. Pilot study ensured validity and reliability of the study instruments. Cronbach’s coefficient alpha was used to test the degree of internal consistency and a correlation coefficient of 0.5 was satisfactory to engage the exploratory survey. The target population was a total of 110 primary schools, 110 headteachers, 579 teachers, 35,000 learners, and 25,000 parents while the study sample size was 10 primary schools, 10 headteachers, 33 teachers, 10 last low academic performing learners in class 1, 2, and 3 aged 6 to 8 years from 10 schools and 1 parent of each 10 selected learners from class 1, 2, and 3 from 10 schools all purposively selected. Data were collected by using pro-forma and questionnaires. Descriptive statistic and thematic approach was employed to analyze the data using statistical package for social science. The quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics, and presented using frequency distribution, means, and percentages while qualitative data were thematically organized, analyzed, and presented using pie charts, bar graphs, and frequency distribution tables. The correlation coefficient of 0.75 was perfect for this final study. The study found that slightly half 54.5% of the headteachers, 71.9% of teachers and 80.4% of parents were not aware of IEP and 96.95% teachers reported that they did not use IEP. The main recommendation is that initial teacher trainee be trained for diverse learner, professional teacher training scheme be initiated by the government to equip teachers with the knowledge and skills of using IEP. Further, the study recommend that the government put in place a comprehensive Special Need Education (SNE) policy to make application of IEP mandatory in classrooms to enhance improved academic achievement.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the teachers' application of Individualized Education Programme (IEP) in mitigating low academic performance. It covers statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives, research questions, significance, limitation as well as delimitation of the study, theoretical framework, conceptual framework, and operational definitions of terms.

1.1 Background to the Study

Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) is a programme tailored to an individual learners educational needs and abilities in an inclusive classroom environment. Alban-Metcalfe (2001:20) define an inclusive classroom as"… one in which continuing emphasis on valuing individual differences leads all learners irrespective of social-cultural background, disability or difficulty in learning to succeed in terms of the fulfillment of academic and social achievement and in the development of positive attitudes to self and others". This inclusive classroom practice requires an additional demand on teachers especially those in general classrooms because they are not used to diverse learners (Engelbrecht, Green, Swart, & Muthukrishna, 2001). It is nevertheless the most suitable strategy to adapt to help the struggling learners to improve in academic performance. Therefore, development of an IEP in an inclusive environment requires that teachers and parents jointly think through
priorities of the learners carefully. IEP is designed to address the learner’s educational strengths and weaknesses making it an important avenue by which parents become equal partners in learner’s educational needs decision-making, planning, and implementation. The IEP begins with conducting a baseline assessment of the learners’ level of educational achievement, then knowledgeable school headteacher, teachers, and parents meet to determine the learners IEP. Individualized Educational Programme is important because academic achievement has become a yardstick of self-worth and success, thus the outcome of the education determines the quality of life, progress, and status of people living anywhere in the globe (Devis, & Mayuri, 2003). According to Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloft, & Pettipher (2002), teachers are the key force in determining the quality of an IEP in an inclusive environment, therefore, it is without doubt that knowledge and skills in application of IEP can make the teachers play a crucial role in transforming learning in classrooms. As the key figure in the curriculum, successful implementation of an inclusive classroom then competence in application of IEP is necessary.

The main reason for application of IEP in inclusive classroom is to uncover, recognize, accommodate, and address the diverse range of learning needs (South Africa Department of Education, 2000b). IEP had their origin in USA in the 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act (PL94-142) and reaffirmed in Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (1997), and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004) registration. The focus in USA has shifted to the development of IEP for implementation in regular classrooms (Lee-Tarver, 2006; Rosas, Winterman, Kroeger, & Jones, 2009)
making the academic achievement and academic growth possible for the low
academic performing learners. In USA, Individuals with Disabilities
Education Act (1997), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2004), and
the No Child Left Behind Act (2001) clearly specify that all learners including
those with significant cognitive deficit must have the opportunity to achieve
higher academic performance (Karger, 2004), creating room for systematic
change in curriculum for all tiers of education system to benefit all diverse
learners (Handler, 2006; Handler, Rey, Connell, Thier, & Feinberg,
2007; Heacox, 2002). According to the 26th Annual Report to Congress on
IDEA (U.S Department of Education, 2005), 96% of general education
teachers have children who are low academic performing learners in their
classrooms. In fact, nine (9) out of eleven (11) teachers have at least three (3)
learners with IEP. It is possible to replicate the application of IEP in
Loitokitok SubCounty where learning is lowest compared to other
SubCounties of Kenya (Uwezo Kenya, 2011; 2012; 2013) as it is applied by
teachers in USA, Canada, UK, Scotland, Ireland, Australia, New Zealand,
Romania, Sweden, Japan, and South Africa.

According to IEP the problem is not the curriculum, the major problem is that
teachers "teach the average learners" (Haagar, & Klingner, 2005) which
means that the educational needs of the low academic performing learners go
unmet. Teachers, parents, and stakeholders should be concerned because
research study done in USA shows that between 120,000 and 180,000 learners
with learning challenges have above intelligent quotient (IQ) (Winter, 1996).
Winter further notes that approximately 10% of high IQ learners read two or
more years below grade level, while (McEachern & Bornot, 2001) study shows that 2% - 10% learners enrolled in gifted IEP programmes in USA have learning challenges. Therefore, it is important to note that learners have individual learning differences. This means that without application of IEP in inclusive classroom, these learners' educational needs deficit would go unattended. Application of IEP therefore, serves as a tool to help teachers provide an effective instruction for the diverse learners. Other research studies indicate that 2%-5% of the higher academic achievers will have learning challenges and 2%-5% of the low academic achievers will be gifted learners (Delisie, & Galbraith, 2002; Dix, & Schafer, 1996; Maker, 1977; Whitemore, 1980). This makes the application of IEP the pivot of the educational programme of all learners and ideally it should serve as a tool to help teachers provide effective instructions in the classroom.

In USA, the No Child left Behind Act (2001) mandated all schools to ensure that all learners achieve higher academic performance through application of Individualized Educational Programme (Karger, 2004). The IEPs in Canada focuses on learners educational needs and are addressed systematically in collaboration between learners, teachers, and parents (Prince Edward Island Department of Education Student Services, 2005). In the United Kingdom, the use of IEP was introduced in the 1994 Code of Practice (Department For Education and Skills, 1994) and reiterated in the revised code (DFES, 2001).
In the Warnock Report (Disability Evaluation Systems, 1978) IEPs are referred to as “individual programme for individual children” (DES, 2009) and emphasized the importance of planning long and short-term learning objectives for children with educational needs in the mainstream domains. In Scotland, IEPs are conducted in terms of the Scottish Executives Raising Standards (Riddell, 2003) and in Ireland, the education for Persons with Educational Needs Act, 2004 provides for a future statutory framework for the preparation and implementation of IEPs (National Council for Special Education, 2006). In New Zealand, curriculum framework recognizes that all learners are to have opportunity to undertake study in the essential areas of learning and to develop essential skills and IEP are used as the criteria for judging the validity of all teaching and learning. The National Administration Guidelines (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2010a) requires that the board of trustees through teachers provide all learners in year one (1) to ten (10) with IEP to achieve success in all areas of national curriculum.

In Switzerland, application of IEP is based on the international classifications of functioning model of the World Health Organization (WHO) while in Romania IEPs are used as individual learners Personalized Intervention Programmes and are mainly meant to help struggling learners in education (Walker, 2010). In Sweden, IEP are used to monitor the progress towards curricular goals and what support is given twice a year for each and every learner. Teachers meet with individual learners and their parents to assess progress (European Agency for Development, 2010). In Japan IEP are used as “supervisory plans.” These plans establish supervisory aim from short and
long-term perspectives for each learner and progressively adopt these supervisory content in order to achieve academic goals for the learner (Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, 2010).

Mittler (2000) reviewed the status of IEP inclusive education in Africa and found that there has been a shift from categorical to a non categorical learner learning needs based approach to teaching. The study also revealed that emphasis is placed on changing the environment rather than the learner and a shift from exclusion to inclusion learning. Most African government commitment to SNE started in 1970s while the countries within the advanced economies have gone beyond categorical provision to full IEP inclusive provision and more specifically South Africa whose curriculum in all tiers of learning has been differentiated to meet learning needs of diverse learners (South Africa Department of Education, 2005). However most African countries are still grappling with the problem of making Individualized Education Programmed strategy for learners with diverse educational needs in the mainstream. Individualized Educational Programme in Africa is a new concept to many of its nations. Some African countries have shown practical interests in IEP by formulating educational policies and showing desire to give equal educational opportunities for all learners irrespective of their physical or mental restrictions (South Africa Department of Education, 2000b). According to Ainscow (1991) and Ballark (1996) dissatisfaction with the progress towards mainstreaming learners with diverse educational needs demand for more radical changes in African education system.
In the Republic of South Africa, application of IEP is used for intervention of low academic performance by differentiating national curriculum according to the learners’ ability and potential. The curriculum ladder is used to indicate how to adapt educational tasks according to the strength and educational needs of the individual learner (South Africa Department of Education, 2005). Furthermore in South Africa there are 12 million children in schools and approximately 366,000 teachers in approximately 25,000 schools including 390 Schools with IEP. The introduction of differentiated curriculum (South Africa Department of Education, 2005) was in response to Act 108 of 1996 and a National commitments to Education For All Children as stated in the UNESCO Salamanca’s Statement of 1994. The Education White Paper No 6 is the guiding principle for the implementation of the differentiated curriculum in South Africa (South Africa Department of Education, 2003).

Tanzania is moving towards embracing inclusive education to child’s educational needs in an inclusive environment (Mboya & Possi, 1996; Mmbaga, 2002; United Republic of Tanzania, 2003; 2004). The population of the Republic of united Tanzania is about 30,372,000. It is expected that approximately 3,372,000 people or 10% of the population have challenges (Ministry of Social Welfare Development, Women, & Children, 1998; United Republic of Tanzania, 2003). The government is trying to implement the IEP according to Salamanca’s Statement of 1994 by sensitizing the parents to send the children with diverse educational needs to mainstream schools.
There are more learners with intellectual challenge followed by those with hearing impairment and visual impairment challenges in Tanzania (Mboya, & Possi, 1996). It is plausible to note that by 2003, 2004, 2008, and 2011 the enrolment had increased by over 25%. By 2004 Special Needs Education in Tanzania was being provided in 18 special schools, 130 special units, and 28 schools offering Itinerant services for visually challenged learners giving a total of 176 Special Need facilities at primary school level (United Republic of Tanzania, 2004). The number of SNE Units attached to mainstreams school has rapidly increased from 79 in 1995 to 176 in 2004, to 208 in 2008 (MoEVT, 2008). Further, according to Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2011) enrolment of learners with SNE has increased in mainstream classes from 18992 in 2006 to 26436 in 2011 (MoEVT, 2011). The Government of Tanzania advocates that all school should be able to provides education to children with challenges and other barriers to learning. According to the Government of Tanzania (2004) and Kapinga (2014) one of the constraints for achieving education for All is the lack of knowledge and skills in the field of Special Need Education (SNE) on how to practice inclusive education to be able to address the educational needs of learners with learning challenges in mainstream classes by the teachers.

In Uganda, curriculum has not undergone the modifications that are necessary for inclusive education to cater for individual educational needs (Uganda Society for Disabled Children, 2003), which is necessary for low academic performing learners in an inclusive learning environment. In Kenya the updating of Special Need Education (SNE) policy (2009) by the government is
a positive step towards an IEP embraced classrooms in the Kenyan schools. Ideally it should be the driving force behind the IEP inclusive classrooms. Special Needs Education Programme in Kenya started after the Second World War of 1945 and has since been offered mainly to learners with learning challenges namely, hearing impairment, mental challenges, visual impairment, and physically challenged learners. Education to these learners was only offered in special schools, until 1970s when special Units and Integrated programmes were initiated by the Kenya Government. Special Needs Education (SNE) has continued to expand and currently include learners with/who, cerebral palsy, epilepsy, down syndrome, autism, emotional and behavior disorders, learning disabilities (LD), speech and language disorders, multiple challenges, albinism, healthy challenges, gifted and talented, as well as deaf blind, orphaned, abused, and learners in special circumstances.

The provision of education to SNE learners however, have been a major challenge to both teachers and the Ministry of Education. Infact, segregation in separate special education units or poor attempt at integration of SNE have left learners with learning needs challenges not achieving their potential. So far majority of learners with diverse educational needs in Kenya do not access appropriate education. For instance in 1999 there were only 22,000 learners with diverse educational needs enrolled in SNE Units and Integrated programmes. The number rose to 26,885 in 2003 (Koech, 1999) and 45,000 in 2008 (MoES & T, 2009). This compares unfavourably with the proportion in mainstream schools. By the end of 1990s there were 107 SNE schools in Kenya (Gichira, 1999) and in 2008 there were 1341 special units and 114
public special schools in Kenya which catered for learners with SNE (MoES & T, 2009). This is still inadequate despite government efforts to support the provision of equal access to education to all learners. The idea of application of IEP has evolved as a way of accessing all learners to equal educational opportunities and ensuring that the curriculum is flexible in all tiers of education to allow active participation in learning to all diverse learners in the classroom (Ngaruiya, 2003). The government of Kenya has tried to initiate interventions such updating of SNE (2009) policy, and study by Quality and Access Kenya (2011). However despite these efforts the problem of IEP embraced classrooms still persists in mainstream schools.

Infact, by 2003 three Quarters (3/4) of learners with SNE were still in Special Units (MoES&T, 2003) with only a quarter (1/4) in special units within mainstream schools. The policy of mainstreaming was being implemented so as to reach the majority of learners with SNE estimated at 750,000 within the primary school-age population with only 26,000 enrolled. The population of people with SNE is estimated at 10% of the total National population, 25% of these are children of school going age. Out of a total of 750,000 an estimated 90,000 have been identified and assessed. However only 14614 learners were enrolled in educational programmes for children with SNE by 2003 while an equal number were either at home or in regular schools with or without IEP. Today learners in SNE schools and units stand at 102749 learners (Draft Education Policy, 2012) of which 21050 are in special Need Education schools and 81649 are enrolled in integrated special units. According to Draft Education Policy (2012) this enrolment figure represent about one third (1/3)
of the expected number of learners with SNE. Such an exclusion from the mainstream perpetuates low academic achievements for low academic achieving learners in the mainstream classes. The Government of Kenya recognizes the important of SNE as an important tool for attaining the Education for All (EFA) in response to Salamanca’s statement of 1994. However, without sufficient skilled teachers in application of IEP and support of IEP in mainstream classrooms, it may not be possible and its likely to fail (KENPRO, 2010; Kapinga, 2014).

The Sessional Paper No1 of 2005 policy guidelines for SNE underscores the government’s commitments to ensure that learners with SNE have equal access to appropriate quality education. It will only be realized through provision and support of IEP embraced classrooms to enable access to appropriate education for all diverse learners. Despite the efforts made by the Kenya government to address the problem faced by the diverse learners, the study by the Reading University (UK) in Kenya reveals that Kenya government is faced with the problem of mainstreaming (Ogot, 2004). Further, in Kenya according to Benoit (2013) mainstreaming is hindered by ineffective guidelines provided on the basis of circulars, general education policy, and statements which have not been translated into a comprehensive Special Need Education (SNE) policy. It is against these backgrounds the researcher was prompted to carry out an exploratory study to establish whether teachers were applying IEP in mainstream classrooms for academic achievement.
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Education for all has been a major concern to all stakeholders in the field of education globally and Kenya in particular as mandated by Salamanca statement (Unesco, 1994) and United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (Unesco, 2006; 2009). Therefore, the learning needs of all learners should be met in an inclusive educational environment.

The Kenya government's overall goal for education, Special Need Education (SNE) subsector's vision is, "A society in which all persons regardless of their challenges and needs achieve education to realize their full potential," and its mission is to create a least restrictive educational environment for all diverse learners to have access to quality and appropriate education. However, low academic performance in lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Kenya public primary schools (Kenya National Examination Council ((KNEC), 2010; Uwezo Kenya, 2011; 2012) continue to pose a challenge to achieving education for all in Kenya today. Study by Saitoti (2005), Republic of Kenya (2005), and Onyango (2004) associate the problem of low academic performance to rigid curriculum an idea echoed by Muraya & Kimamo (2011) and Kangathi, Indosi, Okwacha, & Osondo (2012). In response to these problems the office of the prime minister initiated a study (Access & Quality Kenya, 2011) which advised curriculum to be tailored to learners learning readiness to meet learners diverse educational needs in their classrooms. Despite these efforts the learners in lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years continue to achieve low academic performance. This means curriculum need to be
tailored to learner’s level of educational needs. In fact, study conducted by Mitchell (2008:30) in USA indicates that, “making appropriate adaptation and modifications to the curriculum used in the country is fundamental to making an IEP in an inclusive classroom.”

In Africa and specifically South Africa, Department of Education (2005), maintains that curriculum differentiation according to the learners’ intellectual ability paves way for helping low academic performing learners achieve higher academic performance in an inclusive learning environment. This also concurs with the study done by Ndurumo (2002), and MoES & T (2001) which advises that curriculum should be tailored to suit the level of academic preparation of the learners. This can accelerate academic performance of low academic performing learners in Kenyan lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years. Thus, the researcher embarked on exploratory survey to find out whether teachers applied IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in Loitokitok SubCounty bearing in mind that Mitchell (2008), South Africa Department of Education (2005) and Quality and Access Kenya (2011) advises that curriculum be tailored to individual learners diverse educational needs. Further, Kenya government has updated SNE 2009 policy to embrace IEP inclusive education. Therefore, the problem addressed by this study was the teacher’s application of Individualized Educational programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners in class one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty, Kajiado County.
1.2.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish whether teacher’s applied Individualized Educational Programme on low academic performing learners in lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years. It was also to establish if teachers are aware of IEP, to find out whether teachers uses IEP in their classrooms, to determine other alternative strategies teachers employ to mitigate low academic performance, to explore the effect of IEP on low learners academic achievement, and to determine the contribution of IEP on teachers-parent relationship to learners academic achievement in lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County. The outcome of the study may provide a better understanding of how teachers support low academic performing learners by using IEP in an inclusive classroom by Kenyan teachers. It may also be helpful in suggesting suitable changes in government policies of inclusive education in Kenya and beyond.

1.2.2 Objectives of the Study

The broad objective of the study was to explore the teacher application of Individualized Educational Programme on low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty, Kajiado County.

The specific objectives of the study were:

(i) To establish teachers knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP).
(ii) To find out whether teachers use IEP in their classrooms to assist low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years.

(iii) To determine the strategies teachers use to mitigate the low academic performance of learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8).

(iv) To explore effects of IEP on low academic performing learners.

(v) To explore the contribution of IEP on teachers-parent relationship to low academic performing learner's academic achievement.

1.2.3 Research Questions

The study was to raise answers to the following questions:

(i) What do teachers know about IEP?

(ii) To what extent is IEP used in classrooms to assist low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8)?

(iii) Which other strategies do teachers employ in classrooms to mitigate low academic performance of learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years?

(iv) To what extent can IEP improve learners' academic performance?
To what extent influence of IEP on teachers-parent relationship contribute to low academic performing learner's academic achievement?

1.3 Significance of the Study

The significance of the study is four fold: first, it may provide an answer to the problems of catering for low academic performing learners with a wide range of interests, abilities and potentials in the lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years. Second, it may provide additional evidence on the positive impact of applying IEP to low academic performing learners in an inclusive classroom environment in lower classes. Third, may create a meaningful teacher, learner, and parents relationship that impact positively on low academic performing learners academic achievement. Finally, the application of IEP in Loitokitok SubCounty may become an intervention strategy in the lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years as the academic achievement of low academic performing learners is improved.

1.4 Limitations of the Study

A limitation of the study refers to the constraints or drawbacks both theoretical and practical that the researcher had little or no control over (Orodho, 2004). Being aware of these constraints enables the researcher to avoid pitfall and over expectations in the course of the research study (Mugenda & Mugenda, 1999; 2003).
The study was limited to class one (1), two (2), and three (3) learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years term tests scores from ten (10) schools. However it was adequate sample to provide a broader picture of the learner’s academic achievement. Another limitation was that the performance was limited to classroom term tests in class one (1), two (2), and three (3) in lower primary schools tested by the teachers. Therefore, the researcher had no control over the accuracy of the learners’ term test scores. Further, not all respondents were reached due to unavoidable circumstances from respondents and terrains. Finally, researcher did not have the control of respondents honesty, stress, fear, motivation, and personal biases. The researcher and research assistant had to guide the respondents using local language.

1.4.1 Delimitations of the Study

To do a study in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County was under certain delimitations. Specifically the study was delimited to public lower primary schools classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years, application of IEP, Opportunity schools strategy, After school remedial teaching strategy, and parents of selected learners. This was because the study wanted to establish whether teachers, learners, and parents consultatively as well as collaboratively applied IEP to low academic performing learners to improve their academic performance. Finally, study focused on kiswahili, English and Mathematics performance of learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) because they form the basis of effective learning other subject areas.
1.5 Assumptions of the Study

According to Orodho (2005), assumption in any particular study is a unique fact presumed to be true but has not been verified.

The study was based on the following assumptions:

(i) All respondents would be cooperative and provide reliable responses.
(ii) The school selected would have kept the past records of learners.
(iii) The learning environment would be suitable and appropriate to enhance effective learning using IEP.

1.6 Theoretical Framework

The study was informed by Maslow’s Theory of Motivation (1970). Maslow’s theory has five hierarchical levels of needs; physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness needs, positive self-esteem needs, and self-actualization needs of which if they are not met from the lower level people, tend not to function effectively and efficiently. In the classroom situation if the learning needs are not met from the lower level, learners are not motivated to work hard towards the higher level of learning. According to the theory, motivation is the driving force for inspiration to make efforts both intrinsically and extrinsically. Hence, schools, classrooms and learning orientations should be motivating to enhance persistent and sustained engagement in learning activities leading to a higher level of academic achievement.
The theory revolves around the assumption that lower level needs are more pressing and should be met first before people are motivated towards satisfying higher level needs. In a classroom situation, since the aim of each learner in a class is to perform learning activities successfully and gain competence to be able to move to the next level (Broom, 2006), then classroom learning activities should be differentiated to accommodate learner’s level of learning experiences. Therefore, to give the learners opportunity to perform the learning activities according to their intellectual ability motivates them to work hard to move to higher level of learning as Maslow’s theory suggests.

When the learners’ educational needs are provided from the lower level according to learners' educational needs, learners are enabled to move to the next educational level because learning is hierarchical. This is in congruent with Skinner (1953) who maintains that learning is motivated by rewards, such as competence and ability to do a learning activity successfully. In a classroom context competence and ability makes the learner find his intellectual adequacy leading to sustained persistence in the learning activities. Learner’s competence influence his judgment about the reasons for his success and failure in learning activities which triggers motivation to sustained continued involvement in the learning activities (Broom, 2006).

According to Maslow’s theory the fundamental needs should be satisfied before better learning can take place. Therefore, parents, and teachers should ensure that basic needs are met so that learners can be motivated to learn by
being actively engaged in the classroom learning activities. For instance, if the child's prime needs are met and especially food and nutrition (Sorhaindo & Feinstein, 2006), their attention will move to the next level, namely; safety and security needs. In educational situation, the safety and security needs of the learner include predictable consistent learning activities, orderly physical environment, and consistent predictable orderliness in the classroom. In a classroom situation predictable and consistent Learning environment structures and orderliness involve consistent predictable differentiated learning activities tailored to learner's level of learning experience and learners awareness of the next learning activities which prepares him to move to the next level of learning.

The belongingness needs allude to an individual learners' desire to be accepted by his teachers, parents, and peers. To inculcate a sense of belongingness to a learner who is a low academic achiever in the classroom therefore, teachers, learners, and parent should work together to decide on IEP for the learner to be used by the class teacher to tailor the classroom learning activities to learner's level of learning experiences. The other level of motivation needs is the desire to have positive self-esteem. This level of need is the need for the learners to succeed in class and recognition from teachers parents and peers.

Teachers, learners and parents should be part of the decision-making machinery in school through IEP where learning activity should be tailored to start with the most basic skills and gradually build up to more advanced skills.
In a classroom situation, learning activity is build up on previously mastered activity and increase in difficulty step by step. This will encourage the learner to actively engage in a learning activity because learning is tailored according to learners' educational needs. Since the learning orientation in IEP embraced inclusive environment is given in accordance to the intellectual level of the learner, self-positive perception need is met and the learner is encouraged to work hard. This concurs with Cripps, and Zyromski (2009) and Ndurumo’s (2002) view that learners will have stable and consistent self-concept in regard to academic endeavors when they find their academic adequacy in successfully solving a learning activity in class leading to self-drive to succeed in learning.

Self-actualization is the top of Maslow’s hierarchy of motivational needs. At this stage, a learner is said to have reached his potential in academic success. The ability to go through learning activities successfully in class energizes the learner to work hard, to be creative and to be a critical academic thinker. In a classroom situation, conditions which permit teachers and learners to use their initiatives and potential fully should be created through the use of IEP to tailor learning activities to suit learners level of competence and ability.

The main premise of Maslow’s Theory is that people will not seek to satisfy higher needs unless lower needs, called deficiency needs (Biehler, & Snowman, 1993) are met. In a classroom setting learners will be led to seek learning satisfaction and self actualization if their lower learning needs namely, prime needs, safety, belongingness, and positive self-esteem are
addressed through predictable consistent and orderly learning activities, and mainstream classroom environment by tailoring learning activities and classroom environment to learners learning needs. Teachers, parents and stakeholders in education, therefore are in a key position to satisfy these learners educational needs. Biehler & Snowman (1993) pointed out that Maslow's theory describe cognitive needs and aesthetic needs which play a critical role in satisfying learners learning needs. They maintain that such conditions as freedom to learn at learners own pace, predictable and consistent interactive tailored learning activities to learners level of competence, orderly learner's interactive environment are critical because their absence makes satisfaction of learners educational needs impossible.
Self-actualization needs

Individual learner's growth and fulfillment

Self-esteem needs

Individual Success, promotion, recognition, and reputation

Social needs

Learners desire to be accepted by teachers, peers, and parents

Safety needs

Consistent, predictable, and orderly, classroom, tasks, and school environment

Physiological needs

Food and nutrition enhance active engagement in the tasks given in the classroom (Sorhaindo & Feinstein, 2006)

Figure 1.1: Maslow’s Ladder of Needs Translated into Educational Motivation Strategies

Sources: Maslow, (1970)
1.6.1 Conceptual Framework

According to Mutai (2000), conceptual framework is the relationship between variables in a study shown graphically and diagrammatically. Conceptual framework is purposed to help the reader to quickly see the relationship between variables (Mugenda, 1999; 2003; Orodho, 2004).

The study was conceptualized based on application of IEP on low academic performing learners and how it influences their improved academic performance. In this study, it was conceptualized that improved academic performance was influenced by application of individualized educational programme (IEP) to low academic performing learners with intervention strategies such as identification of learners educational needs and abilities, involvements of teachers, learners, and parents in identification of learners educational needs and interventions using IEP in the classroom. The focus was on independent, intervening, and dependent variables.
Expected Outcomes
- Improved academic achievement of low academic performing learners
- Improved self esteem among low performing learners
- IEP application tool put in place.

Dependent variables
Academic achievement of low performing learners
Characterized by
Unidentified/mismatched abilities
- Identification of individual learners educational needs and abilities
- Lack of involvement of teachers, learners, and parents in learners educational needs and abilities identification and interventions
- Lack of the classroom embraced IEP

Interventions Strategies
Identifications of individual learner's educational needs and abilities
Teachers, learners, and parents involvements

Independent variable
Application of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework

Key
- [ ] Dependent variable
- [ ] Independent variable

Source: researcher's own adaptation, 2016
As seen from the diagram, the independent variable was application of IEP learner tailored learning activities. The IEP had the following intervention strategies; identification of individual learner’s educational needs and abilities, involvement of learners, teachers, parents, and the classroom-based individualized educational programme (IEP) to improve academic achievement for low academic performing learners. The dependent variable was academic achievement of low academic performing learners caused by unidentified or mismatched educational needs and abilities, lack of involvement of teachers, learners, and parents in the learners learning needs identifications and interventions. If IEP is applied on low academic performing learners, it was anticipated that there would be an improved academic achievement of low academic performing learners, improved self-esteem among low academic performing learners and Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) may become the awareness tool for learners, teachers, parents and community in Loitokitok SubCounty and the whole republic of Kenya.
1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

**Active engagement:** Learners persistent sustained participation in learning activity in the classroom.

**Active Learning:** Learners continued sustained participation in the learning progress in the classroom.

**Application:** Teachers professional ability to use the appropriate pedagogy in order to make a learner master learning easily in the classroom.

**Collaboration:** Working together between teachers, learners and parents in order to improve the learners academic achievement in the classroom.

**IEP inclusive Learning:** Provision of learning to all diverse learners using learner's tailored learning activities in the classroom.

**Individual Education Programme:** Is a programme tailored to individual learners educational needs in the classroom.

**Learners Benchmark:** The content the learner is expected to learn successfully within a stipulated period in the classroom.
Learners term tests: Assessments intended to measure learners level of academic achievement in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years.

Low Academic Performing Learners: Children who persistently perform poorly in learning activities in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years.

Post-test: A test given to low academic performing learners after having successfully completed a learning activity in the classroom to determine the level of his/her learning progress in the classroom.

Pre-test: A test given to low academic performing learners to determine his/her level of learning preparedness before the learner is introduced into a learning activity in the classroom.

Parental involvement in learning: The act of the parents being part of identifying and prioritizing the learners educational needs in the classrooms.
Parental participation in learning: Parents being part of prioritizing and determining the low academic performing learners educational needs, and designing of the IEP in the classroom to assist the learner to improve in academic performance.

Teacher’s knowledge of IEP: Teachers professional ability recognition and provision of a learner tailored learning activity that suits his/her level of learning preparedness in the classroom.

Variables: Variables are application of IEP and the academic achievement of low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:18) describe literature review as "...a narrative interpretative criticism of the existing research." They further explain that if that review is conducted carefully and well-presented, it will add much to an understanding of the selected problem and help place the results of the study in a historical perspective. In this study, the reviewed literature highlights findings in the literature that address the following study objectives; establishment of teacher's knowledge of Individualized Education Programme (IEP), to find out whether teachers use IEP in their classrooms to assist low academic performing learners, the other strategies used by teachers to mitigate the low academic performance in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3), the effect of Individualized Education Programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners, and contribution of Individualized Education Programme (IEP) on teacher-parent relationship to low academic performing learner's academic improvement.

2.1 Teacher's Knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

An IEP defines the individualized objectives of a learner who has been found with learning needs, (Kamens, 2004). IEP gathers learners information related to his competence across the learning areas, talents, aspirations, and then design instructional strategy. As mandated by IDEA (1997), IDEA (2004), and No Child Left Behind Act (2001). IEP starts with the formulation of learner's
educational need and abilities information gathering team who include class
teacher, parent of the learner, team coordinator, and support teacher with
expertise in the child’s educational needy areas who work jointly,
consultatively, and collaboratively. The learners educational needs and
abilities information gathered includes, level of learners competence across the
learning areas, preferred learning style, talents, aspirations, and the need for
specialized resources. The second step in IEP making process is the IEP
meeting where teachers, parents, and learners meet as equal participants in
jointly, consultatively, and collaboratively deciding on learners learning
priorities. The IEP meeting is facilitated by the following agenda, ensuring
sustained participant, keeping the meeting short, keeping paper work to
minimum, and documenting information in an easily understood format to all
involved members. Expected outcomes of the meeting are clarification of
parent expectations and future aspiration for the learner, prioritizing the
learners learning needs, identification of least restrictive educational
environment for diverse learning, individual IEP team members
responsibilities for learners date of review, and additional remedial task for
the learner (Cowne, 2003; Farrell, 2003; Gibson, & Blandford, 2005).

The third step of the IEP making process is the designing of the IEP by the
IEP designing team members. The team focuses on the educational needs of
the learner arising from the identified learning areas. The forth step is the
implementation of the IEP where skilling of all members involved in
appropriate teaching strategies and monitoring activities through capacity
building are done. IEP is usually implemented as agreed by the team members.
The learners' information collected by the IEP implementing team should be enough to provide regular effective IEP programme evaluation and monitoring. Collecting information from learners provides a means for assessing learners' progress and programme effectiveness. Comparison of the learners' information obtained at the beginning and at the end of the IEP allow the learners progress to be assessed. Finally, evaluation of the IEP is done to ascertain the learners' progress and academic achievement. IEP programme effectiveness is evaluated in terms of learners' academic achievement and additional learner's educational outcomes (Cowne, 2003; Farrell, 2003; Gibson, & Blandford, 2005).

Figure 2.1: IEP Making Process

IEP is intended to help learners reach educational goals more easily than they otherwise would (Katsiyannis, & Maag, 2001). Thus, IEP should be tailored to individual learner’s educational needs as identified by the teacher (Access, & Quality Kenya, 2011). The IEP describes how the learner learns and how the learner best demonstrates the learning and what the teacher will provide to help the learner learn more effectively (Welshaar, 2001). Tailoring curriculum to learners level of readiness can only be possible when teachers are able to differentiate, accommodate, and to adapt curriculum. In fact, Mitchell (2008) advises that in order to make curriculum accessible to all learners teachers must infuse activities which are age appropriate at all tiers of learning through curriculum differentiation, an idea also held by Fisher & Frey (2001).

According to Uwezo, Kenya (2011; 2012), 70% of the class three (3) learners in the republic of Kenya cannot read standard two (2) level story book. Further, the Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC, 2010) study of literacy in English at class three (3) reported similar poor attainment in class three (3). The report indicates that reading literacy achievement stood at mean score of 297.38 which is below the standardized mean of 300. However, learning level are lowest in Loitokitoki Sub County compared to other Sub Counties in Kenya. In fact, less than one (!) out of five (5) class three (3) learners cannot do class two (2) work (Uwezo Kenya, 2011; 2012). In their recommendations these studies underscored the need for intervention to address the low academic achievement in numeracy and literacy.
According to Engelbrecht, Green, Naicker, and Engelbrecht (1999) in any classroom, there are two learners who are not the same. They differ in their pace and style of learning hence teachers have to use individualized educational strategies of teaching in order to accommodate them all in one classroom. Therefore, IEP in an inclusive classroom requires teachers to be flexible in their approach to teaching and be able to differentiate and accommodate the curriculum and present learning activities according to learners’ level of preparedness. It is firmly found from research study that teachers’ skills in the classroom are positively related to learners’ academic achievement and application of differentiated curriculum in an IEP adopted classroom (Hirsch, 2000). On the other hand, positive attitudes among teachers have significantly contributed to the success of IEP (Skidmore, 2004). There is a strong agreement that meaningful IEP promotes higher academic achievement for low academic performing learners and foster learners self-esteem and meaningful development of relationship between learners, teachers and peers of all educational needs (Skidmore, 2004).

According to Hattie (2005), schools with teachers committed to addressing the barriers to learning in an inclusive environment and encouragement of professional development in area of diverse needs education succeed in improving academic achievement for low academic performing learners. On the other hand, the knowledge of IEP and professional skills in IEP are prerequisite capacity in the development of IEP and the role of the teacher is critical to the delivery of IEP in an inclusive classroom (Shevlin, Kenny, & Loxley, 2008). Therefore, an exploratory study on whether teachers apply IEP
to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in Loitokitok SubCounty was necessary.

IEP embraced classroom concept of support of low academic performing learners has contributed to the realization of the higher academic achievement to low academic performing learners. (Shevlin, Kenny, & Loxley, 2008). IEP embraced classroom approach has advanced the concept of support of struggling learners in classroom (Winter, & Kilpatrick, 2004) and broadened the sense of responsibility to cater for each individual learners’ diverse educational needs (Florian, & Rouse, 2001). Hence, these studies can be replicated in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County in Kenya.

The teachers ability to re-conceptualize Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) aligns teaching practices toward supporting the whole class in an inclusive educational environment thereby enabling all learners to achieve higher academic achievement (Forlin, 2004). In more recent years, a move towards moving away from mixed ability teaching has evolved to address the issues of educational approaches to a class organization such as IEP and mainstreaming of learners in an inclusive environment.

A classroom teacher’s ability to work exclusively may shift emphasis from the more didactic teacher-led methods to a more learner’s need-centred method of teaching to enhance higher academic achievement for low academic performing learners (Borko, Davinroy, Blien, & Cumbo, 2003). Teachers ability to implement varying instructional strategies depends on their ability to cater for diverse learner’s needs as well as knowledge of their learners’
educational needs. Therefore, we can assume that teachers’ ability to adopt and differentiate instruction is ‘responsive’ ‘teaching rather than ‘one-size-fits all’ teaching strategy” (Tomlinson, 2003; 2004c). Westwood (2003) refers to differentiation as learning thing differently according to learners’ unique differences which is a recipe for IEP based on responsive teaching and learning (Tilstone, 2003). Khumalo (2000:34) attests that “…an inclusive classroom need to provide a safe and supportive learning atmosphere in which all learners are willing to participate in classroom learning activities without the feeling of being ridiculed.”

An IEP inclusive classroom operates on the premise that the mainstream teacher has the knowledge and understanding about the needs of different learners, IEP teaching techniques and curriculum differentiation strategies. Florian & Rouse (2009) state that the task of initial teacher education is to prepare teachers to enter profession which accepts, individual and collective responsibility for improving the learning and participation of all learners. Savolainen (2009) notes that teacher plays an essential role in learner performance. Studies suggest (Sanders, & Horn, 1988; Bailleul, Bataille, Logglois, Lanoe, & Mazereau, 2008) that the knowledge of the teacher about the IEP programme contributes more to learner achievement than any other factor. Therefore, the need for teachers to be equipped with IEP knowledge to meet the needs of all learners and to give all learners equal opportunities in learning is inevitable. Reynold (2009) says that it is the knowledge and values of the teacher that are brought to best in creating an effective learning
environment for learners making the teachers’ knowledge a critical influence on inclusive education.

In Spain, the government has initiated a significant reform of initial teacher education programme so that diversity in inclusive education can be taken care of across the curriculum where all teachers will deal with learning difficulties within subject areas (Cardona, 2009) while in Finland, teacher training is aimed at providing teachers with a wide variety of knowledge and skills that they can apply in various school settings and situations to benefit all learners (Savolainen, 2009). Rink (2002) states that teachers in inclusive classroom must have the knowledge to provide learners with developmentally appropriate content, clear instructions for task practice, opportunities to practice at an appropriate level of difficulty, opportunities to participate in appropriate designed task progression, and accurate feedback.

Lee-Tarver (2006) carried out a survey to investigate the perception of 123 regular teachers on the utility of IEP for learners with learning needs within an inclusive classroom and the results indicated that majority of teachers perceived IEP as a useful tool in curriculum preparation and that they were active participants in IEP-making process. Lee-Tarver concluded that it is essential for regular teachers to be provided with diverse learner’s professional development skills that would facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and skills for curriculum accommodation and adaption in their classroom for the benefit of all learners.
UNESCO (2009) advises that inclusive classrooms have to develop ways of teaching that respond to individual differences to benefit all learners. Teachers must have the knowledge of making essential methodology required to make inclusion successful. Loreman, Earle, Sharma, & Forlin (2007b) and Forlin, Sharma, & Loreman (2012) stress that pre-service teacher education is vital to the continued development and success of inclusive educational practice, while Florian (2009) is concerned whether teacher education responds to the challenges of diversity and whether it is possible to develop more equitable way of working in schools through the reform of teacher education for inclusive education.

OECD (2010) “Educating Teachers for Diversity” found surprisingly little knowledge on how teacher educators themselves are prepared for the challenges of diversity. Merryfield (2000) explained that one of the reasons why teachers are underprepared for diversity is the lack of knowledge, experience, commitment and understanding of faculty members who teach teachers in colleges and universities.

Forlin (2010) notes that a lack of formal induction into the role of teacher educator may make accommodation, adoption and differentiation of curriculum for diversity difficult for teachers who come out of colleges without the knowledge of IEP inclusive classroom. Teacher educators must be able to infuse knowledge and experience to teacher trainee so that they can be able to handle diversity in learning in their schools. Bondy, Ross, Adams, Nowak, Brownell, Hoppey, Kuhel, McCallum, & Stafford (2007) stress that
teacher educators must employ diverse approaches to learning for their teacher trainees because teachers trainees ultimately will become teachers of diverse learners. Thus, teacher educator must be explicit about IEP inclusive aspects of teaching and learning. 2020 Vision the report of the teaching and learning in 2020 Review Group (DFES, 2006) pointed out that any strategy for personalized learning must focus on improving the consistency of high quality teaching to meet all learners' needs as effectively as possible. This includes matching teaching to the different learners' abilities.

Prinsloo (2001) found that teachers' lack of the necessary knowledge skills and expertism to understand and assist the diverse learners, feelings of inadequacy in classrooms is what disrupts the effective teaching and successful learning in a diverse classroom. It is, therefore, important for teachers to be given professional development opportunities to gain necessary knowledge, skills and values to cope with learners of varying intellectual abilities and with diverse educational needs.

Wolpert (2001) found that individualized instructions improve the learning capacity of children with developmental disabilities. It is also echoed by South Africa Department of Education (2001b) which maintains that inclusion is about recognizing and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities. However, the study done by Naqvi (2009) reveals that teachers are inadequately prepared to address the educational needs of diverse learners in their classrooms. Engelbrecht, Swart, & Eloff (2001) warn that even though inclusive education has become a prominent item on the
international agenda and has provided a frame for recognizing diversity and providing quality education for all learners in inclusive environment, it has fallen prey to a lot of criticism. They argue that teachers are under a lot of stress because they are not acquainted with the principles and knowledge of inclusive education. From this discussion, it is possible to conclude that teachers lack competence in dealing with IEP inclusive environment that make teachers feel less confident. Teachers should be professionally developed to gain knowledge and skills for diverse learners learning needs.

In Kenya, the Sessional Paper No. 1 of 2005 on a Policy Framework for Education, Training and Research amplifies the government’s commitment to enhancing equality education for all learners and to produce human resources with adequate knowledge and skills to tackle the challenges of the 21st century. However, the instructional method adopted by the teachers remain, paramount in realization of these endeavors of the sectoral policy guidelines regarding quality of education (Odundo, 2003). Although the government and stakeholders continue to provide sound curriculum physical infrastructure and human resources, such measures alone cannot improve learning achievement without appropriate instructional strategies. Poor instructional methods have been associated with poor performance in our schools and in national examinations (Muraya, and Kimano, 2011; Kang’athi, Indosi, Okwacha, & sondo, 2012). The updated Special Needs Education (SNE) policy (2009) by the Kenya government should have been the driving force behind the IEP-embraced inclusive classrooms. Individualized educational programme has
been advocated as the most effective means of providing learners educational needs in a diverse classroom.

Teachers have the responsibility of creating and maintaining a classroom atmosphere which nurture the individual learners learning. Therefore, this study sought to establish whether teachers had knowledge and skills of applying IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic achievers in Loitokitok Sub-County. Research examining teachers' professional knowledge confirms the logical conclusion that the poor quality of learners learning correlates strongly with poor quality of teachers' teaching. Effective learners' learning and achievement is hampered by weakness in teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and classroom practices (Pontefract & Hardman, 2005; Moon, Leach, & Stevens, 2005; Byamugisa & Ssenabulya, 2005; Akyeampong, Pryor & Ampian, 2006; Muraya, & Kimamo, 2011; Kang’athi, Indosi, Okwacha, & Osono, 2012).

2.2 Teachers' Use of IEP in Classrooms to Assist Low Academic Performing Learners

The IEP embraced classroom is premised upon learning democratization idea that views the individualization of the learning and teaching activities as the best and most accountable approach for educating learners with exceptionality. Anamuah-Mensah, Mereku, and Ampian (2008), Dembele (2004), and Lewi, Keith, and Swart (2003) all states that the issues of teacher education and quality professional development that emerges from their studies in Africa reveals that teachers are not adequately prepared for diverse learners in the classrooms. Grounded in the individualization of the learners programme is
the fundamental notion that all learners regardless of diversity have the right to a learning activity designed to meet their particular strengths and needs in learning.

According to the Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994), experiences in many countries demonstrates that integrations of learners with diverse educational needs is best achieved in IEP embraced classroom that serves all diverse learners. It is with no doubt that this contextual educational environment learners with learning challenges can be helped to demonstrate improved academic achievement. The use of IEP in the classroom is acceptance of diverse learners in the mainstream classrooms (Engelbrecht, Engelbrecht, Green, & Naicker, 2010). The Salamanca Statement of 1994 therefore mandates teachers to use the IEP to all learners in the classroom.

According to Swart, Engelbrecht, Eloff, and Pettipher (2002), teachers are the key force in determining of IEP in the classroom and that they have a crucial role in transforming the classroom enabling learners to improve in academic achievement. The teachers’ crucial role in using the IEP in the class may be hindered by teachers’ attitudes towards IEP in the classrooms (Bothma, Greenvett, & Swart, 2000) and lack of Knowledge and skills of using IEP in classrooms (Florian & Rouse, 2009; Mittler, 2012) due to the fact that they are not trained to cope with diverse learners in classrooms. Nevertheless Pettigrew and Arkhurst (1999) advise that classroom need restructuring and teachers need in-service training for successful IEP embraced classrooms to become a reality in schools. The authors believe that it rests upon teachers to make IEP a
success in the classrooms. South Africa Department of Education (2002) recommend that teachers be trained to enable them handle learners diversity in the classrooms.

According to Kochhar, West, and Taymans (2000), supporters of full IEP embraced classrooms believe that learners with learning challenges can be accommodated in the general education setting socially, physically and academically by differentiating the learner activities without disruption of the rest of the classroom. However, the attitude held by majority of teachers regarding the IEP embraced classrooms is that it will create more work for them (Heflin & Bullock, 1999). This may be particularly stressing and frustrating for teachers and cause negative attitude towards IEP embraced classrooms, especially if they are already feeling overworked with their regular workload.

Jones, Thorn, Thompson, and Wilde (2002) reported that teachers workload resulting from IEP embraced classrooms could also have negative impact on learners with or without learning challenges. Nevertheless differentiation of the learning activities (Kochhar, West, & Taymnas, 2000) often benefit both learners with learning challenges and those without. The major worry teachers in the class rooms have (Mcleskey & Waldron, 2002) is that the overall academic performance of their class would plummet in their bid to cater for the diverse learners in the classroom.
Heflin and Bullock (1999) surveyed teachers’ attitude toward IEP embraced classrooms and found that the top problems of IEP embraced classroom reported by teachers were inadequate resources lack of knowledge about IEP and non-proportional ratios of learners with diverse needs, teachers feeling unprepared to meet the academic needs of diverse learners, and too much extra time making learning activities differentiation which impend the usage of IEP in their classrooms. Nevertheless teachers agreed that IEP embraced classrooms benefited the learners in academic achievements.

D’Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanleeuwen (1997) found that positive teacher attitudes towards IEP embraced classrooms are crucial to its success, while a study by Benders, Vail and Scott (1995) concluded that teachers with negative attitude towards mainstreaming did not use effective teaching strategies for learners with learning challenges as often as teachers with positive attitude.

The study by Mcleskey and Waldron, (2002) D’Alonzo, Giordano, and Vanteeuwen (1997), Shade and Steward (2001) reported that teachers needed extra training in the area of teaching learners with exceptionality in order to be adequately prepared.

Khumalo (2000) attest that IEP embraced classroom needs to provide a safe and supportive learners’ friendly learning environment in which all diverse learners are willing to participate in the learning activities. When the learning environment is not learners friendly as it should be, there is no doubt that it may impend learners’ effective learning. Therefore, teachers have the responsibility of creating and sustaining a classroom learning atmosphere
which nurtures learning (Engelbrecht, Green Naicker, & Engelbrecht, 1999). Night cited by Nghipondoka (2001) asserts that in an IEP embraced classroom, teachers should be flexible to accommodate all the diverse learners need through appropriate teaching programmes, organization, resources, and others learning activities adaptations that are necessary for diversity in the classroom. This type of flexibility of instructions is relevant to this objective as it assumes learning activities individualization in the classroom. Flexibility and accommodation of all diverse learners permit the teachers to tailor learning activities to learners level of competence thus improving learners’ academic achievement (Nghipondoka, 2001).

Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, and Reid (2005) believe that when teachers effectively use IEP constantly and consistently assessing learners understanding of learning while teaching responsively and enabling learners demonstrate competence in varied meaningful ways, all learners participate meaningfully as full members of the classroom. Johnson cited by Nghipondoka (2001) asserts that IEP embraced classroom requires individual learners’ activity based learning that allow learners to learn through interacting with activities an idea echoed by (Van Zyl, 2002). Prinsloo (2001) advises that learners experiencing barrier to learning require additional planning and modification of the learning activities in order to assist the learner to learn effectively. It is however, the responsibility of the teacher to use his competence to identify learning needs and support the learners to unfold their learning potential. In Kenya even after updating the SNE 2009 policy teachers put a lot of pressure on these learners and when they fail to meet the standard
set by the teachers in the classrooms they are made to repeat the class. This clearly means that teachers can be an impediment to learning when they lack competence to cater for diverse learners in their classrooms.

According to South African Department of Education (2002) low academic achievers were labelled as slow learners or learners with learning disabilities as a result they become excluded from the mainstream classrooms due to standard set by the classroom teachers. Classroom teachers should appreciate the fact that some learners will inevitably be left behind while others will be ahead in the class. It is these contextual learning environments that prompted the study to explore whether teachers are using IEP in their classrooms to enhance improved academic achievement of the low academic achieving learners.

Mudau (2004) stressed that inflexible learning activities are detrimental to the learning and development of the learner. A classroom teacher may teach at a pace which may be unfavourable to both low academic achievers and high academic achievers in the classroom. The learning activity or the way it is instructed to the learner may limit the learners' knowledge base or fail to enhance the intellectual development and emotional capacities of the learner (South Africa Department of Education, 2002) leading to poor academic outcome.

Davis (2008) contends that teachers are the most knowledgeable resources in programming for the learners' educational needs thus the quality of the teachers relationship with learners and parents has a major impact on the
overall outcome of the learners academic achievement. In a similar vein, Pearson study (2000) shows that context and classroom culture have significant effect on IEP practices and importantly influence the nature and the level of working between teachers and the learners which leads to improved academic achievement.

Mmbaga (2002) argues IEP embraced classrooms be part of the whole school equal opportunity policy in this case learners with learning difficulties needs would be incorporated into the learning activities, school, and classroom learning environment. In his previous studies Mmbaga (2002:36) confirms that children are experiencing learning difficulties in schools and has speculations that they are not learning. Mmbaga (2002) further states that there is lack of knowledge towards IEP embraced classrooms. He notes that most teachers in primary schools lack knowledge of IEP that makes it difficult for them to implement the IEP in their classrooms.

Senge (2002) advises that low academic learners should be provided with individualized learning activities. He further argues that this will help them more on the construction of new knowledge. While Wikan (2008) argues that low quality teacher education or lack of qualified teachers might be one reason behind poor learning outcomes of the learners. In their analysis Mitchell, Morton, and Homby (2010:64) concluded first that IEP provides a significant window on struggling learners educational needs and education practices in the classrooms. They further note that IEP raise important issues to do with differentiated learning activities, equity in the classroom, culture, the rights,
parental participation in learner’s learning, pedagogy, assessments, and accountability in learning. Second they conclude that IEP should lead to reforming classrooms to better accommodate learners’ diversity. Finally, they conclude that IEP should ultimately lead to a high standard of learners education that is reflected in improved educational outcomes and quality of life for learners with exceptionality. This reiterates the need for investigation into whether teachers are using IEP in their classrooms to improve learners’ academic achievements for low academic performing learners.

2.3 Other Strategies Used by Teachers to Mitigate the Low Academic Performance of Learners in Classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years

Academic performance of learners at the basic level of learning has been of great concern to the teachers, parents and stakeholders. Several strategies have been identified to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in lower primary schools classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years as discussed below:

2.3.1 Early Head-Start Strategy

Early head-start is an educational programme in USA designed to assist early childhood children living below the poverty line perform well in academics. Early head-start allows for teaching style to be tailored to individual learner and community (Currie & Thomas, 1995). In an analysis across a range of benchmark stipulated by the early head-start programme in United States of America (USA), the study reported that participants had positive outcomes including academic achievement marked by reading test scores, a reduction in
grade retention and rate of special needs education identification and high school completion rates (Bracey & Stellar, 2003; Barnett & Hussedt, 2005).

2.3.2 The Chilean Initiatives, Enlaces (links)

Enlaces started in 1992 and was meant for improving quality and equity of education through integrating ICT as learning and teaching resources for all learners in all tiers of curriculum in Chilean Public Schools (Hinostroza, 2003). By 2007, 89% of primary and 85% of secondary school learners had been reached covering 96% of the learners population with an impressive learning performance.

2.3.3 Gansu Basic Education Project (1999-2006)

Early childhood education is recognized as the fundamental cornerstone of building learners learning competence. It is for this reason that China with the help of European Union initiated the Gansu Basic Education Project (GBEP) in the rural areas where learning performance was low compared to other provinces of larger Republic of China. It is a major attempt to improve the quality of basic education in China. The project emphasizes on learners individualized learning, creativity and the development of the individual learner (GBEP, 2007). By 2002, there were 456,900 primary schools grade 1-6 with an enrolment of 66,874,300 learners a net rate of 90% (Zhang, & Zhao, 2006). Gansu province has eleven main ethnic minority groups the largest being Tibetan, Hui, Dongxians, and Mongolian. The basic education in Gansu fairly improved in 1990s but still lagged behind that of other provinces with low level of academic achievement.
The European Union (2006) appraisal mission and Robinson, & Yi (2007) reported that Gansu had low retention rates in primary school, high level of repetition in the first grade of primary schooling, a loss of learners in grade one (1) to six (6), poor school learning environments, significance weakness in school administration and inadequate educational information from teachers. In fact, many teachers were seen to be out of date in their knowledge and teaching approaches. The European mission recommended that teachers should be given quality teaching strategy through teachers professional development scheme to enhance improved learners academic performance (European Union, 2006) underscoring the need for teachers to have knowledge and skills of tailoring the learners learning activities to their level of educational preparedness.

2.3.4 The New Breakthrough to Literacy Strategy

The new breakthrough to literacy (NBTL) is one of a number of intervention strategies for improving reading and writing skills of Zambian learners in grade one (1) to seven (7). The programme is also used in Malawi, Botswana, Ghana, and Uganda. The evaluation done by Sampa (2003) and Linethan (2004) have consistently recognized the success of the strategy. Reading levels have improved considerably in both local and English languages in Zambian primary schools and in countries where it is being used as strategy for improving learners' performance.
2.3.5 The Cluster-Based Mentoring Programme (CBMP)

The programme is developed by the Aga khan University by the Institute for Educational Development to deliver school-based professional development for teachers to enable them to improve academic achievement for learners in lower primary in Pakistan and Kenya. CBMP is developed within the framework of education sector reform assistance (ESRA). Both governments have launched the programme on the premise that the teachers needed skills in the areas of curriculum context material development and pedagogical skills for multigrade settings found in rural areas (Pakistan Ministry of Education, 1998; 2002; Aga Khan Foundation Kenya, 2002).

2.3.6 Effective School Strategies

IEP like any other educational programme requires a competent manager. According to Lezotte, and Levine (1990), Levees (2009), and Lozette (2010) effective schools have competent headteachers, and teachers with an instructional focus on fundamental skills based on learners ability and potential. Effective school endeavors for high academic performance for all learners in a positive and caring educational environment where teachers, learners, parents, and local community work together. Bollen (1996: pg 11) in support of Lezotte and Levine argue that an effective school is the one that sustains “...the climate and culture in which an effective teaching and learning process will flourish.” An IEP may not work in absence of headteachers and teachers who have knowledge and skills of IEP.
Eshwani (1993) attributes low performance of learners with armchairs school headteachers who do not know what goes on in classrooms. He further asserts that school headteachers are instrumental to performance for they closely monitor all activities in their schools. According to Tirozzi (2001), and Zepeda (2004; 2007) school headteachers set forth the conditions necessary for teachers to implement change which is the integral component of the school performance improvement process. Tetty-Enyo (1997) observed that school headteachers influences the activities of the teachers and the learners leading to higher academic achievement.

Raju (1973) emphasizes that administrative role of the school headteachers involves directly controlling and management of all issues pertaining to educational enhancement in the school, this implies that all the activities are done on behalf of the school headteacher. Eshiwani (1993) identified that schools which consistently performed well tended to have sound and efficient headteachers which was, a crucial element in school success while Mworia (1993) asserts that school headteacher main role is to interpret national policies, executing curriculum programme, overseeing learners educational endeavors, inducting, and retaining parent and school relationship for effective learning. It is on this basis that IEP programme need competent headteachers who have knowledge and skills in IEP for effective applications.

### 2.3.7 Education for Marginalized Children of Kenya (EMACK)

Education for marginalized children of Kenya was started in 2006. EMACK is an initiative of Aga Khan Foundation in Kenya. EMACK is implemented in
standard one (1) to standard three (3) in 767 schools in Nairobi County, Mombasa County and Garissa County. These regions have been historically and educationally marginalized either through poverty or cultural practices and are underserved by the education system. The programme is managed by the communities and the community provides resource centres. The programme train teachers in effective teaching in languages, mathematics and science as well as reading to learn. The appraisal done by Aga Khan foundation East Africa (2013) on the impact of intervention to academic achievement revealed that the programme improved academic achievement of low learners.

2.3.8 Innovative Learning Approach Strategy

Innovative learning approach strategy is an Aga Khan Foundation in Kenya initiative implemented for standard one (1), standard two (2), and standard three (3) learners in Kwale SubCounty, Ijara SubCounty and Hulugho SubCounty. These SubCounties exhibits poor learning achievements over the years. These SubCounties are also classified as some of the poorest Sub Counties in Kenya. They have very low literacy level and learning outcome. Innovative learning Approach is funded by United Kingdom government. The initiative focus on Reading to Learn to improve learning outcome by integrating the teaching of curriculum at all levels with Individualized learners teaching reading and writing skills that enable every learner to succeed. It is an intervention strategy targeting lower primary and middle upper primary schools.
The programme is implemented on the premise that the skills acquired in lower primary can be applied in upper primary grades (Aga Khan Foundation East Africa, 2013). Reading to learn focuses on teaching reading from known to unknown with the help of the community and policy makers to ensure that successful practices are scaled up. It is implemented through cluster system. It covers a total of 106 schools where 46 schools are in Kwale SubCounty and Msambweni SubCounty, while 39 schools are in Kinango SubCounty and 21 schools in Ijara SubCounty. The appraisal done by Lucas, McEwani, Ngware, and Oketch (2013), and Aga Khan Foundation East Africa(2013) on the impact of the intervention to academic achievement revealed that the programme increased oral literacy by 0.077 or 8% of the baseline standard deviation.

2.3.9 Primary Mathematics and Reading (PRIMR)

This is a Primary Mathematics and Reading Learning Intervention Programme initiated in urban areas in Kenya namely, Nairobi, Nakuru, and Thika in 2011. The programme which covers 1300 primary schools is both a learning intervention to improve learning achievement in mathematics and English as well as research study to provide empirical evidence to the Ministry of Education on the most cost effective learning intervention that can be up scaled nationally to improve learning achievements. A core component of PRIMR is the reforming of the teaching methods. Before the introduction of the PRIMR teachers were equipped with instructional methodology that would enable them to teach the new lesson plans. The lesson plans are in line with
the core national curriculum but curriculum and, lessons were differentiated to learners tailored educational needs.

The strategy teaches all the skills both in literacy and numeracy in one inclusive learning activity. The programme is informed by the low learning achievement in Early Grade Mathematic and literacy in these SubCounties (Piper, 2010; Uwezo, 2009; 2011; KNEC, 2010). To ensure that teachers are up to date there are organized monthly sessions of related training as well as cluster based meetings with the trainers in the schools and zonal education offices. The programme has been able to develop books for learners and teachers. The trainer and Zonal education office has scheduled a fortnight meeting to discuss with teachers the areas of difficulties and to identify where assistant is required.

2.3.10 East Africa Quality Early Learning (EAQEL)

EAQEL is an Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) initiated intervention learning programme for standard one (1) to three (3) learners in Kwale SubCounty, Ijara SubCounty and Hulugho SubCounty. These SubCounties have had low learning achievements in lower primary classes over the years. The counties are also classified as some of the most poorest counties in Kenya with very low literacy level and low learning outcomes (Aga Khan Foundation East Africa, 2013). It was for this reason the AKF initiated the programme. The AKF works with 64 schools where the programme has increased access to reading materials to learners and communities by supplying English, Kiswahili, Mathematics, and storage facilities such as book cabinets and book
boxes to serve as mini libraries. The programme uses local language to teach other subjects. Teachers are encouraged to use locally available learning resources to produce learning and teaching materials. Regular reading and writing competitions are held to enhance mastery of reading and writing.

The programme is also implementing the reading for children component which is meant to increase parental participation in their children’s learning. Parents are allowed to borrow books from the mini library to use with their children at home. Parents and the older siblings undertake to read aloud to the young children, to narrate stories using pictures, and other everyday activities at least once a day to inculcate the culture of reading to the learners. The appraisal done by the Aga Khan East Africa (2013) found that reading to learn intervention strategy increased early-grade literacy across all SubCounties targeted revealing a small effect of 8% of standard deviation on oral literacy with no effect on numeracy test scores. The findings are in consistent with the finding of the work of Barjee, Coles, and Miguel (2007), Clay, McEwan, and Urquiola (2005), and Friedman, Gerard, and Falaingita (2010) which maintains that effective instructional input are accompanied by well aligned teacher preparation.

2.3.11 World Vision/Save the Children Literacy Boost Strategy

The literacy boost programme is a world Vision English literacy improvement intervention programme implemented in Mutumo SubCounty in Kitui County, Kalawa SubCounty in Makueni County of Kenya and a partner programme in Malawi (Dowd & Mabeti, 2011). In Kenya the project was started in 2012. The
World Vision has teamed up with the Save the Children to target class one (1) to class three (3). The programme is informed by study done by Kenya National Examinations Council (2010) and Uwezo Kenya (2011) which revealed that learners in the lower primary schools in Kenya are learning below standard mean score in English literacy. The programme focuses in addressing the gap in quality early years learning. Reading is usually disseminated in mother tongue with the learning and teaching materials developed by local teacher and learners. The communities are also involved in providing learning and teaching materials. Participation of the parents in learners learning motivates the learner to read for pleasure and for information. Save the Children NGO who is also a partner in this learning intervention programme has facilitated teachers capacity building through school based professional development to enhance competence in teaching English literacy.

The Save the Children work to create lasting change in lives of children in need around the world. In 2010 Save the Children reached more than 73 million children in 120 countries worldwide in health, education, children protection, and family livelihoods. In education area an intervention called Literacy Boost supports the development of reading skills in children and also it trains teachers to teach national curriculum with emphasis on these skills as well as mobilizing communities for reading action. An appraisal done in Malawi in a partner programme has that children exposed to Literacy Boost have gained progress in the core skills for sustained educational success
(Dowd & Mabeti, 2011). The programme is implemented in partnership with the Ministry of Education both in Kenya and Malawi.

2.3.12 Tusome Literacy Intervention Strategy

Tusome means “let us read” in English. The main objective of this programme is to address the low literacy level in the lower primary schools to enhance improved academic achievements in English literacy in Tana River and Kwale Counties. The programme targets Pokomo community in Tana River County, Digo and Duruma communities in Kwale County. These communities are relatively small in number and have low literacy level. Children in these communities perform relatively poor in learning and they have very low school completion rates (KNEC, 2010) and partly because of high illiteracy levels and inappropriate cultural practices exemplified by early marriages. The programme develops learning and teaching reading materials in mother tongue to ensure that children are able to transit from home environment to school environment. The learning and teaching materials are developed with the help of local community. The developed teaching and learning material cannot be used until they are approved by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). The former Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KIE).

The programme has also established the children and parents reading club to inculcate reading culture in children at school and at home. These learning intervention strategies both globally and locally seek to improve the quality of learning of learners who are low academic achievers in early childhood years.
of schooling. They are targeting the literacy and numeracy in standard one (1) to standard three (3) classes on the premise that competence in literacy and numeracy helps the learner to learn other areas of the curriculum effectively. Study around the world has confirmed that numeracy and literacy are fundamental to success in the early years of schooling. Infact Good, Gruba, and Kaminski (2001) noted that children who develop good reading skills are more likely to succeed at school. The World Bank’s Education Strategy Statement for 2020 also noted that, “in early primary years quality teaching is critical for giving learners foundation literacy and numeracy on which lifelong learning depends,” and Odora-Hopper (2009) in Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA) work on Literacy and effective learning describe literacy as a key element of lifelong learning.

The government of Kenya is committed to work with these partners to ensure quality and appropriate education for improved academic achievement to all learners. Despite all these measures IEP embraced inclusive environment remains limited in mainstream schools in Kenya. It is against these background that the researcher embarked on an exploratory survey to establish whether teachers are applying IEP in these learning interventions to mitigate low academic achievements and also to establish the other alternative strategies they are employing to enhance improved academic achievement in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) for learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years.
2.4 Effect of IEP on Academic Achievement of Low Academic Performing Learners

IEP is an instrument for helping low academic performing learners improve their academic performance. IEP helps the teachers to differentiate the curriculum to suit learners actual level of learning preparedness. It also enables teachers to design appropriate instructional design and the means by which learners will respond to the learning and the way under which the learners effectively engage in learning process (Rose & Meyer, 2002). Learners are not alike. Based on this know-how IEP programme applies an approach to teaching and learning that gives learners multiple options for taking in information and making sense of concept. IEP is a teaching strategy based on the premise that instructional approach should vary and be adopted in relation to the individual learner and diverse learners in a classroom (Tomlinson, 2004; South Africa Department of Education, 2001; 2005). IEP therefore creates an inclusive learning environment in a classroom.

According to the South Africa Department of Education (2001) for teachers to accommodate the diverse educational needs of the learners they are expected to use IEP teaching strategy in an inclusive classroom to adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of all learners. Therefore, teachers should be aware that there are learners who are inevitably slow in learning and others who are fast in learning. Subsequently, it is imperative that teachers should allow the learners to move at their own pace all along the way to actualization (Maslow, 1970).
The Salamanca Statement (UNESCO, 1994) proclaimed that classrooms should accommodate all children including those with learning challenges. The Dakar Statement (UNESCO, 2000) reflecting on a world education forum re-stated an international commitment to education for all learners in inclusive educational environments. The adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Learners with Learning Challenges (UN, 2006) is important for the low academic performing learners although it has still not been ratified in some countries. Rectifying this convention imposes an objection on signatory states to submit regular reports on progress and implementation of IEP.

Mittler (2008) notes that IEP provision constitutes one of the outstanding contentious issues in this convention which means that it has not been fully accommodated. The World Programme of Action (1983) and the World Conference on Education For All (EFA) 1990 held in Jomtien in Thailand affirmed the principles that every learner has a right to education. Ngugi (2002) observes that unless the curriculum is differentiated to accommodate all learners, then low academic achieving learners will continue performing poorly in their academic endeavors.

Research done by the MoEST (2001) and Ndurumo (2002) outlines the influence of IEP on low academic performing learners. Among the influences was that IEP enables teachers to provide a sequential and ladder-based arrangement of learning experience which suits learners with low learning characteristics. Fish (1995; 2008) advises that teachers should adopt IEP so that they are able to begin with learners from their level of educational
preparedness. Furthermore, research by MoEST (2001) points out that the current practice in education is to make special programmes like IEP available to learners with low academic performing characteristics. Ndurumo (2002) suggests that the educational programmes be designed with the best of motivations to make achievement and academic growth possible to all learners. Gearheart (1995) advises that teachers should be guided by IEP in assessing each learner’s educational strength and weakness for instructional strategy planning. IEP are therefore, redundant unless they are incorporated into class planning (Frankl, 2005).

A study by Fuchs and Fuchs (2007) has shown high improvement in the reading achievement after fifteen years of IEP pilot studies on reading among learners with reading disabilities. In large-scale field studies involving second through six grade classrooms effect size of .22 to .56 likert scales were reported when compared to classroom using a traditional teacher approach to reading.

Curriculum is viewed as one of the factors that act as bottlenecks to learning and impediment to improvement of academic performance in the classroom. Msimango (2002: pg 128) emphasizes that “...curriculum is the art of the education and framing systems.” It reflects the values and principles of our society. It may thus be seen as the engine that should drive the values and principles espoused by our society. It is however, imperative that the curriculum be made flexible enough to accommodate all learners in the classroom. Assessment of learners level of learning preparedness should be
done to identify area of learning deficit with a view to designing IEP intervention programme for the learner (Sethosa, 2001).

In area of academic progress (Cole & Majd, 2001) report that more learners without disabilities made comparable or greater gains in mathematics and reading when taught in an IEP embraced settings versus traditional classrooms where no learners with challenges are included. This suggests that IEP-embraced classroom provides greater access to the general education curriculum that benefits all learners. Further evidence for the positive effects of IEP-embraced classroom is reported by (McGregor & Vogelsberg, 1998).

Establishing struggling learners individual learning goals and strategy to meet the learning needs of the learner is essential for academic improvement (Carnine & Carnine, 2004). Despite the importance of active parental participation in learners educational needs intervention parents are not necessarily partners in decision making of their children’s educational needs identification (Garriott, Wandry, & Snyder, 2000). Parents have the attitudes that their participation in the IEP may not be valuable to the professional teachers (Barbour, &Barbour, 2001). Some parents decide to limit their involvement in making decision about their children learning needs identification and intervention. Other parents find their efforts to be involved blocked by the barriers they encounter in the decision-making process. Study done by Rock (2000) has identified issues such as parental responsibilities, attitudes, cultural background, and logistics as some of the bottlenecks to actively being involved in decision-making of their children educational
needs identifications and interventions. However, the IEP meeting is the most significant venue for exercising the right to parental involvement in learners educational needs decision-making. The IEP meeting process therefore, must be guided by the legal requirement as to who should be included in the IEP. It must also meet the legal threshold as to who participates in the IEP and how including of parents should be enhanced (Council for Exceptional Children, 1999; Huefner, 2000; Drasgow, Yell, & Robinson, 2001).

The practice of IEP should vary considerably from one classroom to another and from one learner to another depending on learners educational needs. It is important to note that understanding of the learners educational needs by the teachers and parents can influence their effectiveness and effective decision making (Fleming & Monda-Amaya, 2001) which means that parental involvement is mandatory. Luis, Korda, & Mumo (2009) conducted a pre-test post-test quantitative survey in Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in Malindi Sub County of Kenya after an IEP intervention on Kiswahili and English in standards one (1) through standard two (2) and found an improved academic performance as shown by the following tables;

### Table 2.1: Performance in Kiswahili and English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>70.5</td>
<td>75.25</td>
<td>4.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>93.85</td>
<td>97.3</td>
<td>3.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Improvement in reading skills in Kenya (Luis, Korda, & Mumo, 2009).
Table 2.2: Performance on all Tasks by all schools targeted
(Treatment and control)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language and Task</th>
<th>Baseline Average</th>
<th>Post-treatment Average</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% Change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Kiswahili</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>33.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>20.8</td>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage words</td>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>8.7</td>
<td>89%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension score</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>English</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Letter recognition</td>
<td>22.7</td>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word recognition</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>113%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passage words</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>20.85</td>
<td>9.43</td>
<td>83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension score</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phoneme segmentation</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>-0.6</td>
<td>-5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: Improvement in reading skills in Kenya (Luis, Korda, & Mumo, 2009)

It is noted that there is fairly a large improvement in academic achievement in both Kiswahili and English after an IEP intervention (Luis, Korda and Mumo 2009).

UNESCO (2006) describes IEP inclusive learning provision as a process of addressing and responding to diversity of educational needs of the learners through inclusive practices in education provision and culture in order to reduce exclusion within and from education. The UN (2006) convention on the rights of persons with special needs education, calls for all state parties to ensure inclusive education system at all tiers of learning which was echoed by Dakar framework for Action (2000) and Kenya updated SNE (2009) policy. Despite all these great efforts learners with learning challenges continue to
perform poorly in academic especially in less developed countries. This formed the basis for the study in trying to unearth whether teachers are applying IEP in classrooms to enhance improved academic performance of low academic performing learners.

2.5 Contribution of IEP on Teacher-Parent Relationship to Low Academic Performing Learner’s Academic Achievement

Individualized Education Programme (IEP) brings teachers, learners, and parents together for the benefit of learners academic performance improvement. IEP works effectively where there is strong collaboration between the learners, teachers and parents. The parental involvement in the learners academic endeavors enhances greater opportunity for an improved academic performance. The more intense the parents are involved, the greater the opportunities for higher academic performance (Bogenschneider, 1997; Bakker, Denessen, & Brush-Laeven, 2007). Parental involvement lifts teachers morale to work hard and effectively. On the other hand parental involvement gives parents opportunity to understand the school curriculum, the school activities and how to respond to the learners educational needs effectively. The nature of parent-teacher relationship has influences on the communication between the home and the school. The parental-teacher involvement in learners learning is associated with learners higher academic achievement in language, mathematics, enrolment in more challenging programmes, greater academic persistence, better social skills, easier adaptation to school, better attendance and lower dropout rates (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).
Sheldon and Epstein (2005a) conducted an exploratory study that looked at the effect of school that involves parents in learners' learning and their impact on mathematics achievement. They intended to answer three research questions; (1) the level of mathematic achievement in the sampled schools (2) the perceived effectiveness of partnership practices and (3) the relationship between those practices and mathematics achievement. The results indicated that over 57% of learners scored satisfactory or proficient range on standardized mathematics test. The relationship between schools that encouraged parents to engage in home learning activities was positive and strong with an increase in mathematics achievement.

Effective teacher-parent relationship has provided the classroom teachers with an ability to address related policy mandates (Epstein, 2001; Stroggilos, & Xanthacou, 2006; Turnbull, &Turnbull, 2006). Further more effective teacher-parent relationship with school-home environment has enabled an exchange of information about the learners (a) learning style (b) interest (c) reinforcement preferences (d) progress away from the school and (e) strength and needs of the parents (Yanok, & Derubetis, 1989; Porter, 2002; 2008). Positive parent-teacher relationship has enabled the teachers and parents to initiate effective strategies for solving learning problems for the learners (Epstein, 2001; Porter, 2008).

Christensen & Sheridan, (2001) reviewed more than 120 studies that reported positive correlation between parental influences and learners learning. They offer a list of 15 empirically supported ways in which families facilitated
children success in school. These are encouraging and discussing leisure reading, monitoring and showing interest in children’s academic and personal growth, engaging in frequent dialogue with children, encouraging children’s academic pursuit, setting clear and consistent limits, monitoring consistently how time is spent, communicating regularly with school teachers, attending and participating in school functions, displaying parental warmth and nurturance towards the child, providing quality reading materials, and mathematics experience, modeling learning by reading and using mathematics in daily life and reading with children, believing children’s effort will result in learning and orienting a child attention to learning opportunities. Multiple studies indicate that parental involvement has positive influence upon children’s acquisition of reading skills.

In the area of mathematics, Nuttall, Nuttall, Iseki, Shriberg & Cajero, (2000) found parental involvement correlated with mathematics achievement. They obtained their data on fourth, eighth and tenth grades from 112 IEP-embraced schools. Scores on achievement test in mathematics showed a positive correlation with teachers perceptions of the level of parental involvement.

According to Mitchell, Morton, & Homby (2010) collaborative learners problem-solving and decision-making focused on teaching and learning for learners with learning difficulties have the potential to create fundamental change in the ways that teachers teach learners to learn. Harris & Goodall (2008) reported that parents who support the learning of their children in schools and at home make the learner achieve high academic performance.
Teachers, parents and learners experience positive outcomes when parents are involved and collaboration in school increases. Minke & Anderson (2005) found that learners who experience high level of parental involvement are likely to demonstrate positive behaviour and earn higher grade than peers with low parental involvement. Shirvani (2007) conducted a study in which learners regularly took home monitoring sheet with information about homework conduct, and participation. Parents signed this monitoring sheet twice weekly and Shirvani reported that learners had higher homework grade and parents demonstrated a higher involvement with the learner’s homework assignment.

Cripps & Zyromski (2009) reviewed research regarding effect of parental involvement and concluded that when parental involvement increases then, parental and learners self-concept increases which leads to self-drive to success in learning. Parents are the most important mentor and teachers in a learner’s life. Study on child development consistently continues to cite the importance of parental involvement from the early childhood years all through and highlights the influence of parent and community involvement in a child’s academic achievement (Epstein, 2001; Comer, 2005). The history and philosophy of teacher-parental involvement is supported by ecological and developmental systems theories that stress the importance of relationships and interconnections of environment where children grow and learn (Vigotsky, 1978; Bronfenbrehner, 1986; Epstein, 2001).
Swap (1993) describes a new model of home to school relationship in a partnership model “The primary purpose of a partnership believes home and school is to support and enhance learners learning”. She explains that a partnership model assumes a envisioning of the school environment to one of collaboration where parents and schools work together for all children to achieve in academic performance. Swap (1993) outlines the important element of a partnership model, the first being two-way communication. Communication to parent is accomplished through education day gathering workshops with teachers, parent information centres, newsletters, and policy hand books. For instance, communication from parents information centers forms need assessments school improvement planning, volunteering participation on hiring committee and attending workshops with school personnel, school support to parents by enhancing their parenting skills through activities and workshops to provide opportunities in the school for parental capacity building while attending workshops with teachers. The second element is the enhancement of learning at home and at school as parents understand and provide opportunities that support schoolwork with teachers work and develop differentiated curriculum with parental input. Mutual support is the third element as teachers are responsive to parental needs support by volunteering in the school, parents and teacher celebrate accomplishment.

Epstein, Sanders, Sheldon, Simon, Salinas, Jansorn, & Williams (2009) have established six types of parental involvement in learners education in schools and at home. The framework would enable teachers and parents to develop an
effective programme that would bring school, family and community together in a positive manner that would enhance learners academic improvement in schools. Using the framework model as a guide, according to Epstein, is the key to educating learners and supporting families to support learners education at home and in schools. The steps for creating strong positive collaborations include;

• Parenting Support
According to Epstein et al (2009) parents need educational support to meet basic learning goals such as earning a high school diploma. Teachers should also encourage parents to promote family literacy by spending time reading with their children and setting a positive example of reading, which often inspires love of reading in children. Assisting parents to build a strong home environment helps learners to develop respect for parents and positive personal values.

• Facilitating Communication
Epstein’s et al (2009) believes that two-way communication between the school and the home is vital to learners success. Schools should encourage parents to attend at least one parent-teacher conference during the school year, according to Epstein’s et al (2009) six types of involvement, Teachers and support staff should communicate regularly with parents about students via email, telephone, class letters and newsletters. Parents also need the opportunity to communicate concerns on academic issues to teachers. Any families with language barriers should have translation assistance. Effective
communication ensures that everyone understands school policies and decisions.

• **Encourage Volunteerism**
Involving parents in children's education typically has positive results. Teachers might solicit parent volunteers to help in the classroom with special projects, class field trips or other supportive roles. Parents can be a gold mine of talents and skills, which can help teachers significantly in the process of teaching youngsters. If teachers poll parents at the beginning of the school year to learn knowledge and abilities, as well as availability, everyone can benefit from parental volunteerism. Bringing parents into the school environment helps learners to learn how to communicate with adults and may give learners more one-on-one attention.

• **Foster Home Learning**
Learners need a positive environment for home learning. Teachers should help parents learn how to supervise homework, set up an effective place for learners to work, communicate expectations for homework and support learners as they work on schoolwork at home. Learners often develop a more positive attitude about homework and improve test scores with an effective home learning environment.

• **Involve Parents in Decisions**
When parents are involved in school decisions and activities they can play a vital role in achieving goals that help learners. Parent organizations spearhead fundraisers that benefit the school and the learners. Parental committees can be
instrumental in school improvements that revitalize and focus energy on students. This type of parental involvement helps learners to benefit by seeing a parental role in school decision-making and helps parents to advocate more effectively for student benefits.

- **Community Activities**

Using Epstein's et al (2009) framework of six types of involvement, schools can work cooperatively with communities for activities that strengthen and develop strong learners, recreational, cultural and athletic programmes can provide important opportunities for learners learning. Schools should promote and endorse these community activities to show parents the value and importance of these programmes. Learners receive expanded exposure to different experiences and opportunities, which could assist with choices in future education and careers success.
Table 2.3: Framework for a Successful Parental Partnerships with Teachers, Learners and the Parents to enhance Learners Academic Improvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Parenting</th>
<th>Learners benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Assist families with parenting skills and setting home conditions to</td>
<td>• Awareness of family supervision; respect for parent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>support children as learners. Also, assist schools to better understand</td>
<td>• Positive personal qualities habits beliefs, and values as taught by family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>families.</td>
<td>• Balance between time spent on chores, on other activities, and on homework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Awareness of importance of school.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Communicating</th>
<th>Learners benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Conduct effective communications from school-to-home and from home-to-school</td>
<td>• Awareness of own progress and of actions needed to maintain or improve grades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>about school programmes and learners progress.</td>
<td>• Understanding of school policies on behaviour, attendance and other areas of learner conduct.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Informed decision about learning task and school activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Awareness of own role in partnerships serving as courier and communication</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<p>|   | Volunteering                                                              |                                                                                 |
|---|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|                                                                                 |
| 3 | Organize volunteers and audiences to support the school and learners.      |                                                                                 |
|   | Provide volunteer opportunities in various locations and at various times. |                                                                                 |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learners benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Skill in communicating with adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Increased learning of skills that receive tutoring or targeted attentions from volunteers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Awareness of many skills, talents, occupations and contributions of parents and other volunteers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 Learning at Home

Involve families with their children on homework and other curriculum-related activities and decisions.

Learners benefits

• Gains in skills, abilities and test scores linked to homework and class work.
• Homework completion.
• Positive attitude towards schoolwork.
• View of parents as more similar to teacher and of home as more similar to school.
• Self-concept of ability of a learner.

5 Decision Making

Include families as participants in school decisions, and develop parent leaders and representatives.

Learners benefits

• Awareness of representation of families in decisions.
• Understanding that student rights are protected
• Specific benefits linked to policies enacted by parent organizations and experienced by learners.

6 Collaborating with the Community

Coordinate resources and services from the community for families, learners, and the school, and provide services to the community.

Learners benefits

• Increased skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular experiences.
- Awareness of careers and options for future education and work.
- Specific benefits linked to programmes services, resumes and opportunities that connect learner with community.

Source: Epstein et al, (2009)

Epstein has always based her study on partnership practices on a model of collaboration and shared responsibility between families and schools. "There are many reasons for developing school family and community partnerships. They improve school programmes, school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents skills, leadership and connect families with others in the schools as well as in the community hence helping teachers with their work. However, the main reason to locate such partnership is to help the learners succeed in school and in later life. When parents, teachers, learners and others view one another as partners in education a caring community forms around the leaner and begins its work" (Epstein, 1995: pg 702).

The properties of successful partnership programme are; incremental progress in academic improvement, reviewing the programme regularly and continually improving the programme (Epstein, 1995). Partnership should be focused on helping more learners achieve through curriculum and instructional reform. Epstein strongly believed that professional development is essential as pre-service and in-service training should help teachers define their professional work in terms of partnerships.
According to Sui-Chu, & Willms (1996); Sanderful, Meier, & Campbell (2006) more involved parents build stronger relationship with their child and demonstrate that they care about the child’s academic success. The more involved the parents are in the children’s learning, the better the child performs academically and reaches a higher level of academic achievement (Bogenschneider, 1997; Bakker, Denessen, & Brus-laeven, 2007). This is echoed by Epstein (1995) who observes that parental involvement improves learners academic achievement, attains improved homework report card and, aspirations for higher academic attainments. Children whose parents are involved in their learning are more motivated and tend to be more involved in class, more concerned about their homework and more successful academically (National PTA, 1997). Parental involvement creates a positive relationship and develops trust between teachers, learners and parents paving way for a learners academic improvement. This means that teachers should consider parents as assets not as deficits in schools (Sarason, 1995).

No teacher effort or school programme no matter how elaborate can succeed without the strong active collaborative involvement and support of the learners parents (Sethosa, 2001). Implementing IEP without the support of the parents is virtually impossible because parents are the learners’ primary teachers. When the parents take the back seat in the education of their children effective learning is compromised. Teachers, parents and learners collaboration may be hampered by the fact that many teachers do not know the backgrounds of the communities and background of the learner they teach. They also do not know the family structure and problems that these communities encounter every day
(Sethosa, 2001; Lemmer, 2002; Pienaar, 2003). Teachers should make effort to reach out to the parents for the benefit of the learners academic improvement which is hampered by inadequate preparedness for diverse learners in their initial teacher professional training (Naqvi, 2009). Therefore, there was need to explore the influence of IEP on teachers-parents relationship on learners academic achievements.

2.6 Summary of the Literature Review

The success of IEP entirely depends on positive and meaningful relationship between the learner, teachers and parents. Teachers, learners, and parental collaboration enables the classroom teachers to plan and match learning with the learners' educational needs, abilities and preferences. There has been an extensive research study globally regionally and in Kenya on application of IEP and academic improvement with a strong agreement that meaningful classroom IEP promotes higher academic performance. It is interesting to note that all of the literature reviewed support the fact that IEP improves academic performance and its success depends on strong collaborative involvement between classroom teachers, learners, and parents in learners educational needs, identifications and interventions.

The reviewed literature highlights the crucial needs for teachers and parents in acquiring knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) and skills of applying IEP in the classrooms. Therefore, the current situations in Lower classes one (1) two (2), and three (3) learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty requires teachers and parents to consultatively
and collaboratively apply an instructional strategy like IEP which is the key to enhancing improved academic achievement. However curriculum globally, regionally and in Kenya remain rigid posing challenges to SNE learners. The current study focused on teachers’ application of IEP to low academic performing learners in order to improve their academic performance in class one (1) two (2), and three (3) learners aged six (6) to eight (8) in Loitokitok Sub County of Kajiado County.
CHAPTER THREE
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the research design, research variables, location of the study, target population, sampling techniques and sample size, research instruments, pilot study, the method employed to ensure the validity and reliability of the instruments, data collection techniques, data analysis and logistical and ethical considerations of the study.

3.1 Research Design

Research design is the plan that execute research methods of data collection and analysis (Creswell, 2009). The choice of the research design for this study depended on the study objectives in order to help the researcher answer the research questions (Crotty, 1998; Orodho, 2009; 2012) and seek new insight. The study employed a descriptive exploratory research survey design to establish whether teachers applied the individualized educational programme on low academic performing learners in lower primary classes one (1), two (2), and Three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County. Exploratory research design was preferred for this study because the study wanted to gather information to define study problem and seek new insight (Hair, Babin, Money, & Samouel, 2003). It was appropriate for this study because it fits well with research questions, data collection methods, and selection of study sample size to work with. In fact, the study was simple to carry out because it heavily relied on secondary data such as
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review of available literature and/or data or qualitative approaches such as informal discussion with learners, teachers, and stakeholders (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2003). It was more formal approach to the case study like in this study. Finally, it was the appropriate method to gather information that was to help the study to define the problem and make rational, sound conclusion, and informed suggestions for further studies.

3.2 Study Variables

The research variables of any scientific experiment or research process are factors that can be manipulated and measured. Any factor that takes on different values is a research variable and influences the outcome of the research study (Martyn, 2008).

The variables in this study consisted of independent and dependent variables as explained below;

3.2.1 Independent Variable

Independent variable is the core of the research study and is isolated and manipulated by the researcher (Martyn, 2008). The independent variable in this study was the application of IEP which had the following intervention strategies; identification of individual learners educational and abilities, involvement of parents/guardians/stakeholders, and use of the classroom embraced IEP.
3.2.2 Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is the measurable outcome of the manipulation of the results of the research study (Martyn, 2008). The dependent variable in this study was academic achievement of low academic performing learners. The academic achievements was established through analyzing learners' term tests.

3.3 Location of the Study

The study was conducted in Loitokitok Sub County of Kajiado County. According to the data at Loitokitok subcounty education office (2013) there were one hundred and ten (110) primary schools, one hundred and ten (110) headteachers, five hundred and seventy nine (579) teachers, thirty five thousand (35,000) learners, and twenty five thousand (25,000) parents. The Loitokitok SubCounty was ranked lowest in literacy and numeracy competency among the class one (1), two (2), and three (3) learners (Kenya National Examination Council (KNEC), 2010; Uwezo Kenya, 2011; 2012; 2013) compared to other SubCounties in the republic of Kenya. Infact, with most of learners reading below their age level. In their recommendations these studies underscored the need for intervention. Thus, teachers were implementing IEP infused Opportunity school and After school remedial teaching intervention strategies. Therefore, there was need to establish whether teachers appropriately applied Individualized Educational programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners in order to improve their academic performance. This study surveyed whether teachers were applying IEP to low academic performing learners in class one (1), two (2),and three (3) aged six
(6) to eight (8) years in order to improve their academic performance in Loitokitok Subcounty.

Figure 3.1: Map of Loitokitok SubCounty

3.4 Target Population

According to Orodho (2005), target population is a population having characteristics designed for investigation from which a sample population is selected. A sample population is a representative case from the large population. In this study the target population was a total of one hundred and ten (110) primary schools one hundred and ten (110) headteachers, five hundred and seventy nine (579) teachers, thirty five thousand (35,000) learners, and twenty five thousand (25,000) parents (MoES & T, 2013).
3.5 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

Sampling techniques are methods used to select a sample from the target population by reducing it to a more manageable size (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). According to de Leeuw, Hox, and Dilman (2008), sampling techniques are used when inferences are made about the target population. The researcher used purposive sampling techniques for selecting the participants for the study. The researcher purposively selected ten (10) schools, ten (10) headteachers, thirty three (33) lower primary school teachers from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3), last ten (10) low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) from ten (10) schools, and one parent for each selected learner from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) before the onset of the programme in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County.

In fact, according to Creswell (2002) purposive sampling technique allows the researcher to intentionally selects sample size or site to study in order to formulate rational informed conclusion and seek new insights. Further, Avoke (2005) asserts that purposive sampling enables a researcher to hand pick the cases to be included in the study on the basis of his judgment and typicality to build up a sample size that is satisfactory to specific needs of the study.

3.5.1 Sample Size

The sample size comprised ten (10) primary schools, ten (10) headteachers, thirty three (33) teachers from class one (1), two (2), and three (3) from ten (10) schools, three hundred (300) learners from ten (10) last low academic performing learners from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to
eight (8) years from ten (10) schools, and a total of three hundred (300) parents for each selected low academic performing learner making a total of 653 sample size for this study.

Table 3.1 Target Population and study Sample Size

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study units</th>
<th>Target population</th>
<th>Accessible population</th>
<th>Sample size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head teachers</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>25,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learners</td>
<td>35,000</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>60,799</strong></td>
<td><strong>653</strong></td>
<td><strong>653</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Njaru, 2016

3.6 Research Instruments

The study employed pro-forma to obtain term tests scores for each ten (10) last low academic performing learners from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight years (8) from ten (10) schools for analysis to generate the level of each learner's academic achievement after one (1) term of academic session and open ended questionnaires to capture information on headteachers, teachers, knowledge, skills, ability to apply IEP in classrooms, and parental involvement in IEP making process and implementations. Local translator was used to elicit information from the learners and parents.
3.7 Pilot Study

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:185) recommend that prior to conducting a study, the researcher has to “...find a small sample of individuals that are similar to those who would be used in the actual study and administer the instrument to them.” A pilot study was done in Loitokitok Subcounty to purposively sampled 10 learners from two (2)schools, one (1) headteacher, two (2) teachers, and ten (10) parents using the entire research procedure including analysis of the data collected using the procedure used in the main study. The pilot study was carried out with a fewer subjects than those involved in the main study.

A pilot study was conducted to pretest the research instruments to establish their validity and reliability. The validity of the questionnaires used to obtain information related to the headteachers, teachers, and parents knowledge, skills, and use of IEP, and parents related information on involvement in IEP making as well as implementation process was subjected to rating Content Validity Index (CVI). Those questionnaires that were less than 50% complete were discarded while those that were 50% complete were improved. The ten (10) low academic performing learners were purposively selected from classes one (1) two (2), and three (3) from two (2) lower primary classes in Rombo zone of Loitokitok SubCounty. The quantitative data in the pro-forma collected from term tests scores was analyzed using statistical packages of social science and presented using descriptive statistics namely frequency distribution, means, and percentages. The qualitative data collected through
the open ended questionnaire on information related to teachers knowledge, skills, application of IEP, parental involvement on IEP making process, and implementations were validated, edited, and coded into themes consistent to the pilot study objectives and analyzed thematically from which conclusion was made. The findings were presented using pie charts, bar graphs and frequency distribution tables. The internal consistency was tested using Crobanch alpha which was systematically and consistently computed using the following formula, $\alpha = \frac{N_r (1 + r (N -1))}{N}$ where $r$ = the mean inter-item correlation and $N$ = number of items in the scales. The correlation coefficient of 0.5 was found and deemed satisfactory to engage the exploratory study. The pilot participating respondents were not included in the main study.

3.7.1 Validity of the Study Instruments

Wiesma (1985) posits that validity is the extent to which an instrument achieves the purpose for which it was designed for an idea echoed by Wallen, & Fraenkel, (2001). Exploratory survey was done on learners term tests scores provided by the purposively selected learners from two (2) schools during the pilot study. Open ended questionnaires to obtain data on teachers-related information on knowledge, skills, application of IEP, and parental involvement in IEP making and implementation process was subjected to rating and content validity index (CVI) using the following formula,

$$CVI = \frac{\text{No of Items Rated Valid}}{\text{All Items in the Questionnaire}}$$ (Amin, 2005).
3.7.2 Reliability of the Study Instruments

The reliability of the research instrument is the extent to which the instrument yields the same results on repeated trials (Orodho, 2004) and according to Kombo & Tromp (2006), reliability of the research instrument is a measure of how consistent the results of the research instrument are. If a test-retest is done, the instrument produces similar results (Zikmund, & Babin, 2010). In this study all objectives and variables in the questionnaire and pro-forma from the pilot study were tested for internal consistency using Crobach’s coefficient alpha to test the degree of internal consistency to ensure reliability. The correlation coefficient of 0.5 was satisfactory to engage exploratory survey while the correlation coefficient of 0.75 was found in final study and was perfect for this study. The more closer correlation coefficient is to one (1) the higher the degree of internal consistency (Mugenda, 2008). Cronbach alpha coefficient was used because it is the most common method for testing the internal consistency of a scale for reliability (Pallant, 2007).

3.8 Data Collection Procedures

The researcher presented research permit from the Ministry of Education Science & Technology to Loitokitok Sub County director of education to be allowed to visit sampled schools. At school level researcher presented the research permit to head teachers of the ten (10) selected schools to be allowed to book appointment with teachers, learners and parents of the ten (10) last low academic performing learners from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3). The researcher took a step further to present the research permit to area chief,
assistant chief and village opinion leaders to be allowed to carry out exploratory study within the area of their jurisdictions. The pro-forma was employed to obtain the term tests scores of the ten (10) last low academic performing learners from classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years at the onset of learning intervention and after one (1) term academic session from ten 10 selected schools for analysis to generate the level of each learners academic achievement. The data from teachers and parental knowledge, skills, use, and involvement in application of IEP was obtained using open ended questionnaire.

3.9 Data Analysis

Before the actual data analysis the raw data was validated, edited, and coded into themes consistent to study objectives and research questions. The quantitative data collected from learners term tests scores were analyzed using descriptive statistics namely; frequency distribution means and percentages. The qualitative data collected through open ended questionnaires were systematically organized into themes consistent to study objectives and research questions from which conclusions and generalization were made. The findings were presented using pie charts, bar graphs and frequency distribution tables.
3.10 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

The researcher sought for a letter from the Graduate School of Kenyatta University allowing him to collect data once the proposal was approved. This letter was presented to the Ministry of Education, Science & Technology to get a permit to visit the Loitokitok Sub County of Kajiado County and selected schools. The SubCounty Director of Education issued the letter to be presented to the headteachers. Parents were asked to sign an informed consent statement on behalf of learners using the local translator indicating that they understood the purpose of the research, the confidentiality of any personal information provided in connection with the research and expectation of them as participants.

The informed consent from parents on behalf of the learners indicated that each learner was making a voluntary decision whether or not to participate in the research study and that there was no obligation or subsequent repercussion for not participating. It also provided contact information for the primary and the secondary researchers. In addition, the parents on behalf of participants were to sign acknowledgement of the informed consent. The study ensured the safety of the participants by making sure that they were protected from emotional or physical harm (Polit and Hungler, 1999). The study also ensured that both parents and learners gave informed consent. The privacy of the participants was ensured as far as allowed by law (Macionis, 2006).
3.10.1 Care and Protection of Research Participants

The current study was an academic research for Master of Education (M.Ed) in Early Childhood Education of Kenyatta University. The research participants had the right to withdraw from the study at any time in the research process. In the event of withdrawal of the participants the researcher had to replace the participant who had withdrawn with one participant from the sampled school through a purposive sampling technique. However, the researcher had the right to scrutinize the probable reason for withdrawal of the participant, and if possible try to address any discomforts which might have caused such a withdrawal. The special groups in this study included the parents of children in school some of whom were illiterate. The safeguard regarding their protection was full disclosure of the intention of research beside the approval by the County Director of Education, the SubCounty Education Officer, the Area Chief the Village Headman, and village opinion leader. They were guaranteed confidentiality of information given and the identity of subjects. The researcher used a research assistant to interpret the responses into local language.

3.10.2 Protection of Research Participant Confidentiality

The identity of the respondents was not revealed as names were not used but instead codes assigned to each respondent. The information gathered was kept in the personal laptop and hard disc of the researcher with password only known to him.
3.10.3 Informed Consent Process

The researcher sought informed consent from all the research participants, namely; the parents, the headteachers, teachers and classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) whose parent gave the informed consent on their behalf. The content of the consent was fully disclosed orally using local translator to all those who could not read and write. The researcher informed the participants that it was their right to raise any information or queries and complaints regarding their participation in the research either personally or through the head teacher or teachers. The participants were informed accordingly about information that could come up in the course of research and which could be pertinent to participation in research.

3.10.4 Community Considerations

The sampled parents were contacted through their children. The purpose of the study and the significance of the study were explained to the parents and the community. Through the exploration survey, the researcher expected to find out if teachers were applying Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in Loitokitok SubCounty.
CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION, INTERPRETATION, AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study based on the data collected from the respondents. The presentation of the findings and discussions are made as per research objectives. These include to establish teachers knowledge of IEP; to find out whether teachers use IEP in their classrooms to assist low academic performing learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years; to determine what other strategies teachers use to mitigate the low academic performance in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years; to explore effects of IEP on low academic performing learners; to explore the contribution of IEP on teacher-parent relationship to learners academic achievement and recommending intervention stakeholders and policy-makers should put in place to ensure improvement of academic achievements of low academic performing learners.

Despite the fact that all questionnaires issued out were not responded to, the researcher was able to get at least 98% respondence rate in all categories (headteachers, teachers, learners, and parents) which were adequate for analysis. Relationship between variables was shown using percentage, frequency distribution tables, pie charts, bar graphs, and means. Discussion of the results was carried out using descriptive statistics and thematic approach as per the objectives of the study.
4.1 Characteristics of the Respondents

The characteristics of the respondents analyzed include; headteachers and teachers professional and academic training, head teachers, and teachers teaching experiences, parents academic qualifications, headteachers, teachers, and parental knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP), teachers use of IEP in classrooms, SubCounty education office support of the use of IEP in classrooms, head teachers support of IEP in schools, head teachers and teachers request of parental support in using IEP in the classrooms, strategies employed to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in lower primary classes one (1) two (2), and three (3) learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years, analysis of learners term tests scores, parental participation in IEP making process in the school, and parental support of the use of IEP in classrooms.

4.2.0 Teachers Knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

The objectives of the study is five fold; first, the study focused on teachers knowledge of IEP. The researcher wanted to know the level of professional development of headteachers and teachers, teaching experiences and parents academic qualifications by exploring headteachers, teachers professional and academic training, teaching experiences and parents academic qualifications to establish the level of knowledge and skills for use of IEP in their classrooms. When headteachers and teachers were asked whether they were trained
professionals, all headteachers and teachers who were interviewed said that they were trained professional teachers.

**Table 4.1: Headteachers’ and Teachers’ Professional Training**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headteachers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**4.2.1 Headteachers’ and Teachers’ Professional and Academic Training**

The researcher wanted to know whether there was professional development scheme for teachers to equip teachers with IEP knowledge and skills for use in their classrooms. The study revealed that majority of headteachers 5(45.5%) and teachers 19(59.4 %.) had Primary Teacher Certificate (P1) as their level of professional training. However, 3(27.3%) of headteachers had bachelor of education as their highest level of professional training. None of the headteachers had ECDE or SNE professional training qualifications as their highest level of professional training which is a prerequisite for an in-depth understanding of early childhood learners educational needs and capacity to tailor learning task into learners level of learning experience. The foregoing suggest that teachers were not prepared for diverse learners in mainstream classes.
4.2.2 Teaching Experience

The researcher wanted to know the level of teaching experience for both headteachers and teachers to establish their in-depth knowledge and use of IEP in their classrooms. The study revealed that on average most headteachers and teachers had taught for 21 years and 16 years respectively while the headteachers and teachers with the lowest years of experience had 6 years and the highest had 30 years.

Table 4.2: Years of Teaching Experience of Headteachers, and Teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statistics</th>
<th>Headteachers</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>21.27</td>
<td>16.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
<td>6.482</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Least number of years of experiences</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest number of years of experiences</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2.3 Parents Academic Qualifications.

The researcher wanted to know the parental level of academic qualifications to determine their knowledge of IEP and the extent to which they can be able to influence their children's academic performance. The study revealed that majority of parents 188(74.6%) had attended school while 64(25.4%) of them said that they had not attended school. Education attainment level of the parents is very crucial for influencing and predicting their children's academic performance. Parents with lower level of academic attainment may feel incapable of assisting their children or playing the role in child academic life as they may not understand the materials or feel comfortable with their abilities (Hill, Castellino, Landsford, Nowlin, Dodge, Bates, & Pettit, 2004).

![Figure 4.2: Parental school attendance.](image)

In addition, 85(42.1%) of parents said that they had post-secondary education as their highest level of education followed closely by 80(40.1%) of parents with secondary education. Further, 36(17.8%) of parents had primary school education as their highest level of education, 64 (25.5%) did not attend school at all. Research study has shown that parents with higher education are more academically involved and place greater emphasis on academia of their
children (Tavani, & Losh, 2003). Thus, more involved parents are able to build stronger academic relationship with their children and demonstrate that they care about the child’s academic success (Sui-Chu, & Willms, 1996; Sandefur, Meier, & Campbell, 2006).

Figure 4.3: Parents Level of Education.

4.2.4 Headteachers’ Teachers’ and Parental knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

The researcher wanted to determine the extent to which headteachers, teachers, and parental knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) impact on learners academic performance. When asked whether they were aware of Individualized Educational Programme, slightly more than half of headteachers 6(54.5%) said that they were not aware of Individualized Educational Programme with only 5(45.5%) of headteachers being aware of IEP. However, majority of teachers 23 (71.9%) and parents 212 (80.4%) saying that they were not aware of IEP. With only 9 (28.1%) of teachers and 52 (19.6%) of parents saying that they were aware of IEP. The foregoing implies that more headteachers were knowledgeable about Individualized
Educational Programmes unlike teachers and parents. Interestingly though knowledgeable about Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) headteachers did not use Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in their schools or support it to mitigate the problem of low academic performance. The updating of SNE (2009) ought to have been a driving force in supporting learners struggling with learning in an inclusive classroom using IEP. This may not be possible because SNE in Kenya is provided on the basis of circulars and general education policy and statements which have not been translated into a comprehensive policy.

The research study has shown that being aware of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) to an extent of acquiring knowledge and skills help teachers to differentiate the curriculum to suit the learners level of educational preparedness and assist teachers to be able to use appropriate instructional design to which learners respond effectively and the means to which the learners are able to actively engage in the learning activities effectively (Rose, & Meyer, 2002). On the other hand, Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) assists teachers to determine the learners level of cognitive skills before they are introduced to learning programme (Lynch, & Adams, 2008). The individualized educational programme discourage discriminatory instructions in schools (Nghipondoka, 2001). Awareness of IEP by the majority headteachers and yet they were not supporting teachers and parents to use IEP to improve academic performance negates these studies. Infact, 80.4% of parents being not aware of IEP clearly suggests that there is no meaningful teachers, learners, and parental relationship that may enhance the improved
academic performance of the low academic performing learners. Infact, the most accurate predictor of learner’s academic achievement in the school is the extent to which the teachers, learners, and parents are able to collaboratively work together (Henderson & Mapp 2002) to improve academic performance.

![Bar Chart]

Figure 4.4: Head Teachers’ Teachers’ and Parental knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

4.3.0 Teachers’ use of Individualized Educational Programme in classrooms

Secondly, the study embarked on the use of Individualized Education programme to find out whether teachers were applying Individualized Education Programme (IEP) to low academic performing learners in their classrooms.

Although all headteachers said that there was no Individualized Educational Programme in their schools 1(3.1%) of the teacher said that it was available in their school while the majority of teachers 31(96.9%) said that it was not used in their classrooms. The in-depth insight here is that learners’ diverse
educational needs were not taken care of. The study done by Broderick, Mehta-Parekh, and Reid (2005) indicates that when teachers effectively differentiate instructions by constantly assessing learners educational preparedness, teaching responsively, and enabling learners to demonstrate competence in varied meaningful ways enable most learners to participate successfully as full members of the classroom peers. In fact, IEP making process in the classroom is an ongoing initiative of teachers, learners, and parents mandated with the classroom formal role as learners learning problem-solving initiative in the school to assist classroom teachers to develop and implement learner tailored IEP that enhance improved academic achievement for low academic performing learners (British Columbia Ministry of Education, 2006).

Availability of an Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in a diverse classroom is a prerequisite to enable the learners including the struggling learners to achieve improved academic performance. Despite the fact that government has initiated committees and commissions on education provision for all learners in Kenya their recommendations cannot be responded to unless there are clear visions and goals on SNE that are entrenched in a comprehensive SNE policy rather than statements and documents SNE policy provided under general education in the republic of Kenya. Therefore, there should be a National SNE policy framework and advisory board to harmonize education service provision for learners with SNE in Kenya. The comprehensive framework should provide principles and strategies to be
followed in order to create equal access to appropriate quality education for low academic performing learners in Kenya.

![Figure 4.5: Use of Individualized Educational Programme in classrooms.](image)

4.3.1 County Education Office Support of the use of IEP in classrooms.

The researcher wanted to find out whether County education office supported the use of IEP in classrooms to influence teachers-learners and parents work together to enhance learners academic achievements as mandated by the Sessional paper No 1 of 2005 and the updated SNE policy (2009). All teachers said that education office rarely supports the use of individualized programme in their schools. The updating of Special Needs Education (SNE) policy (2009) did not have any implication on teachers to compel them to use IEP in their classrooms. This negates the purpose and goals of Sessional paper No 1 of 2005 which has mandated the government to develop a comprehensive SNE policy to cover all aspects and level of education bringing teachers, learners, and parents to work together to improve learners academic achievements.
updated SNE (2009) policy should have been a driving force in making the inclusive education possible to implement by encouraging teachers, learners, and parents to jointly work together and decide on learners education needs deficit interventions strategies coordinated by the SubCounty education office. The problem stem from the fact that SNE in Kenya is provided on the basis of circulars and general education policy and statements which have not been translated into comprehensive policy that may compel SubCounty education officials to enforce the policy (MoES & T, 2009).

4.3.2 The Headteachers' Support of Individualized Educational Programme in Schools.

The study revealed that headteachers did not support the use of individualized educational programme in their schools. This was confirmed by all teachers who were interviewed and said that headteachers rarely support use of individualized educational programme. The expectations for learners' academic success are placed on the teachers in school and parents at home. It is inevitable for headteachers to create and initiate this expectation by heavily investing on teachers learners and parents. The school success in improving academic performance can best be done by supporting the individualized educational programme in the school. Teachers should be supported to be flexible in their teaching approach, to be innovative and creative in their approaches to teaching and learning in a diverse classroom (Nghipondoka, 2001). This endorses the fact that flexibility in teaching enables teachers to consistently and continuously develop and implement instructional approaches that are beneficial to all learners. South Africa Department of Education
(2002) encourages teachers to use differentiated curriculum strategy of teaching that suit all learners in the classroom.

4.3.3 Headteachers’ and Teachers’ Request of Parental Support in Using Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in their classrooms

When Headteachers and teachers were asked whether they ever requested for parental support to enable them to use individualized educational programme (IEP) in their classrooms, all headteachers and teachers pointed out that parental support was minimal. It is important for parents to be involved in learners educational needs identifications and intervention in the classrooms. In fact, study has shown that with parental support teachers, parents, and learners experience positive learning outcomes (Minke, & Anderson, 2005). A strong parental and teacher collaboration produces learners with positive behaviour and earns higher academic grade level than peers with low parental involvements. In fact, parents who help their children at school and at home with homework usually have children who perform well academically at all tier of learning (Shirvani, 2007; Harris, & Goodall, 2008). Unfortunately lack of teachers-parent involvement in learners learning may hamper effective IEP intervention that may enhance learners improved academic achievement. Therefore, there is need for a comprehensive policy on SNE entrenched into the Kenya constitution to ensure that SNE services are improved rather than providing the SNE on the basis of circulars, statements, and general education policy not translated into a comprehensive SNE policy.
4.4.0 Other Strategies Employed to Mitigate the Problem of Low Academic Performance in Lower Primary Classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years

Thirdly, the study investigated on other strategies teachers use to mitigate low academic performance in Loitokitok SubCounty. The majority (96.95%) of teachers said that there were two strategies used to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty namely, Opportunity school programme strategy and After school remedial teaching strategy.

4.4.1 Opportunity Schools Programme Strategy

The opportunity school programme strategy is informed by the need to improve the academic performances in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) learners and the fact Loitokitok SubCounty was learning below the national means score with only 15% of learners having acquired numeracy and reading competence as required (KNEC, 2010; Uwezo Kenya, 2011). The SubCounty has also very low transition rate from lower primary to upper primary schools. The Opportunity School Programme strategy was initiated in Loitokitok SubCounty in 2012 to cover 20 schools. The Opportunity school programme strategy endeavors to meet the learners educational needs through building teachers capacity to improve the classroom instructional practices, building the capacity of the school, and building the capacity of the parents to create a strong collaborative school environment. This was expected to improved learners academic performance in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged
six (6) to eight (8) years. According to teachers' assessment of the learners' readiness for Opportunity school programme was done by evaluating the learners' baseline performance by pre-testing the learners in mathematics, English, and Kiswahili before the introduction of Opportunity school programme by the teachers. The choice of these three subjects was informed by the fact that ability to do well in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili would help learners to learn other subject area effectively. The programme runs for a period of three months academic duration, after which a post-test was done in mathematics, English, and Kiswahili by class teachers to assess the learners' level of academic achievements.

4.4.1.1 Standard I Performance in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili before and after Introduction of Opportunity School Programme Strategy

The study shows that there was an improvement of the performance in English by 1.9% and a drop in mathematics performance by -22.5% and Kiswahili performance by -12.9% after introduction of Opportunity school strategy. The study indicates that opportunity school strategy did not have much effect on the performance of the learners and hence classroom-based Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) should be employed to ascertain whether the learners' performance would improve. IEP would make the Opportunity school strategy involve the learner as an individual to cater for learner's educational needs according to the learner's educational ability and intellectual adequacy.
Table 4.3: Standard 1 Performance in Mathematics, English and Kiswahili

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>29.98</td>
<td>71.12</td>
<td>55.06</td>
<td>-16.06</td>
<td>-22.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22.32</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>55.04</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>26.02</td>
<td>61.08</td>
<td>53.22</td>
<td>-7.86</td>
<td>-12.9%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


It was observed that there was no improvement on performance in mathematics by -19.0% English by -3.7% and Kiswahili by -1.4% after the introduction of opportunity school strategy. This means that opportunity school strategy should be made more learners individualized to ensure that each learner educational needs are met appropriately, effectively, and adequately. In addition, teachers need to be trained in other more effective remedial teaching methods like the individualized educational programme (IEP).

Table 4.4 Standard 2 Performance in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>29.00</td>
<td>70.12</td>
<td>57.36</td>
<td>-12.8</td>
<td>-19.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>22.36</td>
<td>54.12</td>
<td>52.12</td>
<td>-2.0</td>
<td>-3.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>24.52</td>
<td>58.56</td>
<td>57.72</td>
<td>-0.8</td>
<td>-1.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.1.3 Standard 3 Performance in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili before and after Opportunity School Strategy

Apart from performance in Mathematics which shows a drop in performance by -18.1% the study revealed that there was an improvement in English performance by 6.7% and Kiswahili performance by 4.4% respectively after the introduction of Opportunity programme strategy. The study revealed that the programme needs to be made more learner individualized to ensure improvement of academic performance of the learners in all subjects. Found to be missing was the experimental control group in Opportunity schools intervention strategy.

Table 4.5: Standard 3 Performance in Mathematics English and Kiswahili

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Baseline</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>% change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>26.8</td>
<td>64.9</td>
<td>53.2</td>
<td>-11.7</td>
<td>-18.1%</td>
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<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>21.5</td>
<td>49.7</td>
<td>53.0</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>54.1</td>
<td>56.5</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>4.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2 After School Remedial Teaching Strategy

After school remedial teaching is giving an extra after school coaxing of the learners who are struggling with learning for at least one (1) hour and may go beyond the school to the learners home where parents may continue with the remedial coaxing. The after school remedial teaching is meant to improve the educational outcome of the learners who are at risk of academic failure. In response to this serious challenge teachers and parents are searching for ways
to increase the academic competence of these learners. After school remedial teaching help the learner to plan for independent application of the strategy in the classroom (Deshler, & Schumaker, 2005). The continuation of the remedial teaching beyond school was possible where the parents are literate, well-informed about the learners' educational deficits and where there is a strong collaboration between teachers, parents and learners. According to the teachers, learners' abilities determine who will move on to the next level of learning activities. In addition, teachers use the individual performance of learners in especially mathematics and languages to determine those who require after school remedial teaching on the premise that ability to do well in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili helps the learners to learn other subject areas. To determine those who require after school remedial teaching, teachers assess learners' level of academic achievements in Mathematics, English, and Kiswahili after which learners are recommended to join after school remedial teaching for a period of three (3) months.

4.4.2.1 Standard 1 Performance in Mathematics, English and Kiswahili Before and After School Remedial Teaching

The study shows that there was a drop in the learners performance in mathematics by -7.7% and an improvement in Kiswahili by 5.1%. However, there was no change in English performance which is 0.0%. The After school remedial teaching should have been one on one both in context and learner teacher interactions for it to be effective.
Table 4.6: Standard 1 Performance in Mathematics, English and Kiswahili after School remedial teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>%change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>35.54</td>
<td>32.81</td>
<td>-2.73</td>
<td>-7.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>30.19</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>0.01</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>30.41</td>
<td>31.95</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>5.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.4.2.2 Standard 2 Performance in Mathematics, English and Kiswahili After School Remedial Teaching

The study revealed that there was a drop in mathematics performance by -0.3%, an improvement in both English by 3.0% and Kiswahili by 6.8% after school remedial teaching. This was a very small percentage change in improvement for both English and Kiswahili. The After school remedial teaching needs to be made more learners individualized both in context and instructions to make it more effective.

Table 4.7: Standard 2 Performance in Mathematics English and Kiswahili Performance After School Remedial Teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post-test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>%change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>-0.1</td>
<td>-0.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>34.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>29.0</td>
<td>30.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4.2.3 Standard 3 Performance in Mathematics, English and Kiswahili After School Remedial Teaching

The study revealed that there was an improvement in performance of learners in class III after school remedial teaching in Mathematics by 3.6%, English by 2.2% and Kiswahili by 2.2% respectively. The improvement is impressive but its a very small percentage change. Therefore, the After school remedial teaching need to be infused with IEP intervention strategy such as appropriate identification of learners educational needs and abilities for effective instructions.

Table 4.8: Standard 3 Mathematics, English and Kiswahili Performance after School Remedial teaching

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subjects</th>
<th>Pre-test</th>
<th>Post- test</th>
<th>Change</th>
<th>%change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>34.9</td>
<td>36.1</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>37.3</td>
<td>38.1</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiswahili</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>35.8</td>
<td>0.78</td>
<td>2.2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Opportunity school programme and After school remedial teaching programme have made very small percentage change in academic performance improvement. The main key insight across both programmes is the need for learner individualized educational programme (IEP) that is appropriate in establishing learners actual level of learning preparedness. On the other hand teachers should be committed to the idea that some learners will inevitably be behind others in the classroom because of the learners diverse individual differences. The study done globally regionally, and locally
clearly shows that individualized educational programme would improve learners academic performance. Found to be missing was the experimental control group in both programmes and base line assessment in After school remedial teaching. Opportunity school and After school remedial teaching are good initiatives and therefore, they can bridge the gap arising from the lack of IEP inclusive classrooms in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County.

4.5.0 Effects of IEP on Academic Achievement of low Academic Performing Learners

Fourth, the study focused on effect of IEP on Learners academic achievement. The researcher wanted to explore the effects of IEP on academic achievement by analyzing learners term tests, teachers parental, and learners collaboration on learners learning needs identifications and interventions. The study revealed that teachers did not apply IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance. In the absence of IEP teachers were applying other strategies to ameliorate the problem of low academic performance. The study has revealed that inadequate professional knowledge of IEP lack of teachers-parental, and learners collaborations on learners learning hampers the use of IEP to mitigate low academic achievement in Loitokitok SubCounty. The Sessional Paper No.1of 2005 has clearly stated the overall government policy direction on learners with SNE by setting out clear policy guideline for SNE learners. It further underscores the government commitment to ensure learners with SNE have equal access to quality and appropriate learning in inclusive environment and re-affirmed by updating SNE (2009) policy. Although Kenya government is committed to provision of education to all learners, the absence
of IEP in Loitokitok negate the purpose of the SNE policy in Kenya. This hinders the realization of the Ministry of Education’s goals of providing quality educational services to SNE learners in Kenya, and subsequently harboring the development and implementation of IEP inclusive education in Loitokitok Sub County. Despite the fact that all head teachers, and teachers interviewed were professionally trained slightly more than half of head teachers 54.5% said that they had no knowledge of IEP with only 45.5% of head teachers saying had the knowledge of IEP. However majority of teachers 71.9% said they had no knowledge of IEP, while only 28.1% of teachers had the knowledge of IEP.

Figure 4.6: Head Teachers' Teachers' and Parental knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP)

This implies that more head teachers (45.5%) were more knowledgeable about IEP as compared to teachers (28.9%). Interestingly, although knowledgeable about the IEP they did not initiate or support the use of IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance. This negate the studies by Rose and Meyer’s (2002) and Lynch and Adam’s (2008) which posits that acquiring the
knowledge and skills of IEP help the teachers to tailor learning activities to
learners level of learning experiences. IEP inclusive classroom is meant to
help teacher identify ways to make all learners succeed in the educational
setting. Teachers can achieve this by adapting both physical environment and
the curriculum to ensure that every learner benefits from learning experiences.
The study revealed that no parent participated in IEP making process and
learners learning interventions. The study clearly suggests that learners are at
risk of performing poorly in their academic performance.

The study by Harris & Goodall (2008) points that parents who support the
learning of their children both at school and at home have children who
achieve higher academic achievement, an idea echoed by Minke &
Anderson's (2005). The Kenya SNE policy and specifically the updated SNE
(2009) policy ideally ought to be the driving force in ensuring that IEP
inclusive learning is implemented to benefit the diverse learners in the
classroom. Interestingly the policy does not have the influence to enhance
effective use of IEP in mainstream classes. Infact this is contrary to Sessional
paper No.1 of 2005 which states the government aim is to develop a
comprehensive IEP inclusive policy that cover all aspects of learners
educational needs in all tiers of learning. It is therefore, imperative to develop
a National policy that comprehensively defines how to identify areas of
learners educational needs. Comprehensive IEP inclusive policy framework is
essential to guide the work of all actors involved in provision of education to
ensure consistent and coordinated implementation of inclusive education. The
policy is important in the elimination of disparities and enhancement of equity
and equality for all learners educational needs in inclusive classroom. The Koech Report (1999) recommends establishment of a National SNE Advisory Board. The report also noted that there is no comprehensive SNE policy or legal framework on SNE despite existence of various policy guidelines. The problem stems from the fact that SNE in Kenya is provided on the basis of circulars and general education policy and statements which have not been translated into comprehensive policy.

4.6.0 Contribution of IEP on Teachers-Parent Relationship to Low Academic Performing Learner’s Academic Achievement

Finally, the study investigated on the contribution of IEP on teachers-parent relationship on low academic learners academic achievement. The researcher wanted to determine the extent to which IEP contribute on teachers-parents relationship to learners academic achievement. Generally no teacher effort or school programme no matter how elaborate can succeed without strong and active collaborative involvement and support of the learners’ parents on learners educational needs (Sethosa, 2001). Implementing a learners IEP without the support of the parents is virtually impossible because parents are the learners’ primary teachers. When the parents take the back seats in the education of their children effective learning is compromised. The study revealed that no parent had participated in individualized educational training workshop in the school. The study clearly shows that learners are at risk of performing poorly in their academic endeavours. The study by Harris, and Goodall (2008) observed that parents who support the learning of their children in school and at home have children who achieve higher academic performance. This means that learners experience positive academic outcomes when parents are involved and when there is strong collaborations between the parents and the
classroom teacher. This is in congruent with Minke, and Anderson’s (2005) observations that learners who experience higher level of parental involvement demonstrate higher grade performance than peers with low parental involvement in their learning.

4.6.1 Parental Participation in IEP Making process in the School

The researcher wanted to find out the contribution of learners IEP making process by teachers, learners, and parents to learners academic performance. IEP making process bring teachers, learners and parents together to prioritize learners educational needs. Parents become more knowledgeable about IEP by participating in IEP making process (Coppola, Reiman, Beck, & Engiles, 2010). The IEP makes parents and teachers equal partners in learners education decision making, paving way for learners academic improvement. When asked whether they attended and participated in the IEP making, majority of parents 259 (99.6%) said that they did not while a very small proportion of the parents 1(0.4%) said that they have been attending the IEP making meetings. Perhaps the respondents did not understand the question although translated to the language of the catchment area. International research on the education of learners with learning challenges has emphasized the importance of involving parents in designing and implementing the IEP tailored to learners educational strengths and educational needs (Hobbs & Sila, 2008; Angel. Stoner, & Shelden, 2009).
Lack of participation may result in IEP being less responsive to unique learning needs of the learners (Feldman, 2009). The school should have made it mandatory that those parents with children at risk of performing poorly attend the learners educational needs identifications and intervention IEP making meetings. Parents have legal rights to be part of decision-making of their children’s learning (Kenya Children Act, 2001). The research study has shown that the more the parents are involved in their children schooling, the better the children perform academically and reach higher levels of academic achievements (Bogenschneider, 1997; Bakker, Denessen, & Brus-laeven, 2007). Infact the study done by Materechena (2002) in North West part of South Africa revealed that 87% of the respondents indicated that if parents were not involved in the learning of their children it may result in their children’s learning being difficult. This is also supported by Ainscow, Farrel, & Tweddle (2000) study in England which found teachers-parent partnership on IEP making promotes successful inclusive learning. Parents should therefore, not be left behind in their children’s learning.

![Figure 4.7: Parental Participation in the IEP making](image)

Figure 4.7: Parental Participation in the IEP making
Further the study reveals that 259 (99.6%) of parents said that they did not attend IEP designing. Thus they never participated in designing of their children's individualized educational programme (IEP) to mitigate the problem of low academic performance of their children with only one parent who reported that he did. Perhaps he did not understand the question although locally translated. Educational policies, white papers, and educational reform initiatives around the world purportedly position parents alongside teachers as the main stakeholders in learners educational experiences (Advisory committee on school-based management, 2000; Young, & Levin, 2002; U.S Department of education, 2003; Department of education and skills Canada, 2005; Gorink, 2005; MoES&T, 2009). Parental participations is mandatory for the benefit of learners' educational needs interventions. It also foster teacher, learner, and parent relationship.

![Figure 4.8: Parental Participation in Designing of IEP](image)

4.6.3 Parental Support of the Use of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in classrooms

The researcher wanted to establish whether parents supported the use of IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in the classroom. The majority of parents 98.8% reported that they would recommend teachers to use
IEP on their children to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in the classroom while 2(1.2%) of them said that they would not recommend their children to use IEP even though they were experiencing learning difficulties in their classrooms. This suggests that a lot of advocacy about the importance and use of IEP in mitigating the problem of low academic performance is necessary. Parent-teacher involvement in learners learning is associated with learners higher academic achievements especially in language and numeracy, enrolment in more challenging programmes, greater academic persistence in the classroom task, better social skills, quick school life adaptations, better school attendance and consequently lowers the chances of learner’s chances of repeating classes and dropping out of school (Henderson, & Mapp, 2002).

The idea behind creating a strong positive teacher, learner and parental relationship is to improve classroom and home learning environments that may enhance improved academic performance in the classroom. This may not be possible because there is no comprehensive SNE policy to mandate teachers learners and parents to work together. SNE in Kenya is provided on the basis of Ministry of Education Science and Technology circulars, general education policy and statements which are not translated into comprehensive SNE policy (MoES & T, 2009). The teachers, learners and parents relationship increases parents services in the school, after school, and support parents skills in learners’ educational needs interventions. Infact parents are the effective resource for improving learners academic performance. Furthermore parent involvement in learners learning have a positive effect on learners, teachers,
and classroom as a whole (Banda, Coleman, & Matuszny, 2007). The more the parents are involved in their children learning especially in their early years the greater the effect on academic achievement in the classroom (Cooper, & Crosnoe, 2007; Jeynes, 2007). Once parents are involved in low academic performing learners greatest academic achievement is realized in the classroom (Sirvani, 2007)

![Figure 4.9: Parental Support of use of IEP in classrooms](image)

In addition, it was observed that parents did not support headteachers and teachers in using individualized educational programme in their classrooms as it was reported by all headteachers and teachers who were interviewed because they had no knowledge of IEP. This suggests that there was no teachers, learners and parental involvement on learners educational needs assessments. Research studies have shown that parents who support the learning of their children in schools and at home help the learners in improving academic performance (Minke, & Anderson, 2005; Shirvani, 2007; Harris, & Goodall, 2008). This suggests that parental involvement in learners academic needs is paramount to enable learners to improve in academic performance. The parental involvements in the learners learning improves learners academic achievements (Epstein, 1995; Carter, 2002; Mahon, 2010).
CHAPTER FIVE
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND
SUGGESTION FOR FURTHER STUDIES

5.0 Introduction
This chapter gives a summary of the findings and the conclusions arrived at. It also outlines the recommendations made in line with the study findings. Finally the researcher presents suggestions for further studies.

5.1 Summary
The purpose of the study was to establish teacher’s application of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners. It was also to establish if teachers have knowledge and ability to use IEP, to find out whether teachers use IEP in their classrooms, to determine other strategies teachers employ to mitigate low academic performance, to explore the effect of IEP on learners academic achievement and, to determine the contribution of IEP on teacher-parent relationship to learners academic achievement in lower primary classes one (1) two (2) and, three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty of Kajiado County. The study found that due to lack of IEP there was very small percentage change in improvement of academic performance in English, Mathematics, and Kiswahili.

The objectives of the study were five folds, first the study focused on establishment of whether teachers have the knowledge of IEP to effectively help struggling learners in learning to improve in their academic performance
in Loitokitok Sub County of Kajiando County, Kenya. Data collected by exploring learners term tests was obtained using pro-forma for analysis to generate learners level of academic achievement and open ended questionnaires administered to teachers and parents of low academic performing learners to obtain information related to the IEP awareness, skills, and use in the classroom were analyzed and organized into themes consistent to study objectives.

The findings were presented using frequency distribution, means, percentages, pie charts, distribution tables, and bar graphs. The results of the study indicated that all headteachers and teachers who responded to the questionnaires were professionally trained teachers, 27.3% of headteachers had Bachelor of Education degree as their highest level of professional development. None had Special Needs Education (SNE) or Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) certificates which were an impediment for using Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in mitigating the problem of low academic performing learners in their schools up to 74.6% of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were educated. The study further revealed that slightly more than half of headteachers (54.5%) had no Knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) and the majority of parents (80.4%) and teachers (71.9%) had no knowledge of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) which was a serious drawback for working together positively to ensure learners success in academic performance.
Second, the study investigated the use of IEP in the classrooms. The study revealed that teachers did not use the IEP in their classrooms and did not attend to educational needs of the learners as individual learners, and that the school administration did not support the use of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in their schools. Further, the study revealed that parents did not support teachers in using IEP in their classrooms. Instead teachers were using alternative strategies to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in their classrooms.

Thirdly, the study focused on other strategies teachers used to mitigate the low academic performance. Up to 96.95% of teachers reported that there were no Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in their schools and instead they were using other alternative teaching strategies in mitigating the problem of low academic performance in classrooms, namely; opportunity schools strategy and after school remedial teaching strategy. Headteachers need to be actively involved in finding means to garner greater teacher-parental involvements by using IEP and by improving Opportunity school and After school strategies to be more learners individualized to enhance improved academic performance in the classrooms.

Fourth, the study focused on effects of IEP on academic achievements. Despite the fact that globally, regionally and locally IEP is associated with improved academic performance, study revealed that there were no IEP used in Loitokitok SubCounty to mitigate low academic achievement in lower primary classes one (1) two (2) and three (3). Finally the study further focused
on contribution of IEP on teachers-parent relationship to academic achievement. The study revealed that 99.6% of parents reported that they did not participate in IEP training, in designing of an IEP, and IEP making process in the school.

5.2 Conclusions

From the findings, it is apparent that though teachers were professionally trained they did not have the knowledge and the skills in using the IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in their classrooms. The focus on the acquisition of knowledge and professional skills is fundamental to formulating and implementing an IEP in an inclusive classroom environment. IEP inclusive classroom operates on the premise that the classroom teacher has the knowledge and skills to understand the needs for different learners in the class. The initial teacher training colleges have not been able prepare teachers to enter teaching professions with knowledge and skills for diverse learners in the classroom.

Classroom teachers did not work with parents to support learning and learners in the classroom. Infact the most accurate predictor of a learners academic achievement in the class is the extent to which the class teacher and the learner's parents are able to create classroom and home environments that encourage learning (Henderson, & Mapp, 2002).

Finally, the baseline performance assessment which is critical both for estimating underlying intellectual capacity and for setting up appropriate educational programmes was not done before introducing learners to the After
school remedial teaching strategy. In fact, failure to understand learning materials, thus performing poorly in pre-school and lower primary may be due to the fact that skills and abilities the learner had before joining the school were not appropriately assessed to determine the level of learners learning readiness in the classroom. Thus, the knowledge and Skills of appropriately applying the IEP in the classroom is essential for improving academic performance in a diverse classroom. Its with no doubts application of IEP improves academic performance in the classroom. This means that identification of learners educational needs and abilities before introduction of a learning intervention strategy is important for it assists the teacher to match the previous experience with the planned learning activities. This will enable the learners to master the learning activities in the classroom effectively. Learner’s educational needs and abilities identifications is best done when teachers consultatively and collaboratively work together with learners and parents for they are the learners primary teachers.

The lack of using IEP to tailor learning to learners level of learning readiness, lack of teachers, learners, and parental involvement in learners educational needs identification and intervention has facilitated to poor academic performance in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in Loitokitok SubCounty. The study underscores the importance of applying IEP to low academic achieving learners in classes one (1), two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years in order to enhance their improved academic achievement.
5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made from the findings of the study:

(i) Teachers have no professional knowledge and skills in area of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) to enable them cater for the diverse educational needs of the learners in the classroom. The study recommends that government should ensure that the initial teacher training prepares teachers for diverse learners.

(ii) Majority of teachers have only primary teacher education certificate (P1) which is not adequate professional achievement for diverse learners, government consequently, need to initiate an in-service teacher professional development programme geared towards equipping teachers with new knowledge and skills in inclusive education practices that are more effective than the most used traditional methods in the classrooms.

(iii) Some learners will inevitably be left behind in learning because each learner has individual ability differences. Therefore, it is recommended that teachers should differentiate the curriculum to accommodate the diverse learners in the classroom.

(iv) The process of teachers in-service professional development programme may be based on sound instructional practices such as Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) with high chance of impacting on learners’ learning and improving learner academic performance. Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) is an
effective instructional strategy because it takes the advantage of the fact that learning occurs best when the learners are ready for learning (Caine, Caine, & Crowells, 1999).

(v) Throughout the literature reviewed for this study, Individualized Education Programme (IEP) is depicted as the most appropriate and effective strategy to mitigate the problem of low academic performing learners and boosting the academic performance of the struggling learners in classrooms. The study recommends that classrooms should embrace IEP.

(vi) The study recommends that the learners educational needs intervention be done by linking the teachers, parents and learners in facilitating the practices and implementations of inclusive education in its entirety.

(vii) The study recommends that teachers and parents be enabled through workshops and seminars to accept change of attitudes towards IEP, acquire knowledge, patience, and skills to differentiate and accommodate the curriculum to suit learners level of preparedness to learn.

(viii) Improving the educational outcome for learners who are at risk for academic failure is the main reason why learners are given after school remedial teaching. The study recommends that remedial teaching be one-on-one learners interaction with the teacher both in content, skills, selections, and presentations and especially through revised IEP.
The focus of after school remedial teaching should not be to provide help with homework and assignments instead, it should be 'learner' strategic remedial teaching starting with the most basic skills and build up to a more advanced skills in the learning activities.

The study recommends that headteachers provide parents with appropriate relevant capacity building to enable them participate in learners educational needs identifications and interventions using IEP.

Finally the study recommends that government should make a comprehensive Special Need Education (SNE) policy in Kenya.

5.4 Recommendations for Further Research

To understand further the important of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP), its impacts on academic performance, the factors that may affect the formulation, and implementation of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) in classrooms, further research is recommended in the following areas:

(a) The study was carried out in one SubCounty only. Similar studies should be replicated in other counties not covered by this study.

(b) Further studies should be carried out using experimental research design on the effect of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners aged six (6) to eight (8) years because the study revealed that teachers are not using individualized educational programme to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in schools.
(c) The study recommends for a longitudinal study to investigate the impact of Individualized Educational Programme (IEP) on low academic performing learners in Kenya.

(d) The study recommends further research that will come out with new generation of assessment tools that are appropriate for a large number of diverse learners educational needs in the classroom.
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Respondent Consent

My name is Harrison Njaru Mbogo, I am an M.Ed student from Kenyatta University. I am conducting a study on: “Teachers’ application of individualized educational programme on low academic performing learners aged 6 to 8 years in Loitokitok Subcounty, Kajiado County”. The information will be used by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and the County Governments to improve children’s academic performance in class 1, 2 and 3 who are performing poorly in this county as well as in other regions of Kenya.

Procedures to be followed

Participation in this study will require that I ask you some questions and record the responses from you in a questionnaire. I may also audio tape your responses to help me transcribe later for data analysis.

Please remember that participation in this study is voluntary. You have the right to refuse to participate in this study. Kindly note that your refusal to participate in the study will not have any repercussion whatsoever.

You may ask the questions related to the study at any time. You may refuse to respond to any questions and you may stop an interview at any time. You may also stop being in the study at any time without consequences to the services you receive in this school or even from teachers.
Discomforts and risks
Some of the questions to be asked are on social aspects, sometimes touching on personal life or cognitive ability which may make you a little uncomfortable. If so wish, you may refuse to answer these questions. Consequently, you may also stop the task given at any time.

Benefits
If you participate in this study, you will help us to learn the factors hindering children’s good academic achievement in class 1, 2 and 3. Your children will also benefit by setting and making an individualized education programme (IEP) to improve their academic performance.

Reward
Parents who will participate in this study will get a small token and lunch will be provided.

Confidentiality
The study will be conducted in the school (head teachers, lower primary school teachers, learners and parent of low academic performing learners will purposively be appointed. Your name will not be recorded on the questionnaires. The questionnaires will be kept safely.

Contact information
If you have any questions, you may contact. Dr. Nyakwara Begi on 07722 250 188, Dr. John, Teria Ngasike on 0719890857, and Dr. Racheal Wanjiuru Kangethe Kamau on 0718 722 747 or the Kenyatta University Ethical Review Committee secretariat on kuerc@ku.ac.ke.
Participant’s statement
The above information regarding my participation in the study is clear to me. I have been given a chance to ask questions and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction. My participation in this study is entirely voluntary. I understand that my records will be kept private and that I can leave the study at any time.

Name of participant ........................................................................

................................................................. ........................................

Signature or thumbprint Date

Investigator’s statement
I, the undersigned, have explained to the volunteer in a language she/he understands, the procedures to be followed in the study and the risks and benefits involved.

Name of Researcher ........................................................................

................................................................. ........................................

Participant signature Date
APPENDIX II

Questionnaire for Headteachers

Preamble

I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Early Childhood Education of Kenyatta University currently undertaking research.

You have been identified as one of the respondents and therefore requested to provide the information. The information gathered will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and for research purpose only. Please, therefore, respond to the questions by following the instructions given.

Section A: Background Information

1) Name of School

2) Name of SubCounty

3) Name of County

Section B: Headteacher related information

Headteachers Level of Professional Training and Professional Experiences

4) Are you trained professional teacher? Yes, [ ] No, [ ]

5) What is your professional qualifications?

6) How many years have you been a teacher?

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________

________________________________________
Headteacher Awareness of IEP

7) Are you aware of individualized educational programme (IEP)?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

8) Do you use IEP in your school to mitigate the problem of low academic performance?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

9) If the answer to Q8 is No what strategy do your school use to mitigate the problem of low academic performance? ______________________

Education Office Support

10) Do the education offices support the use of Individualized Educational Programme to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in your school? Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Parental Support

11) Do parents support the use of IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in your school? Yes [ ]  No [ ]

13) Have you ever requested parental support to enable you to use IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in your school? Yes [ ]  No [ ]
APPENDIX III

Questionnaire for teachers

Preamble

I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Early Childhood Education of Kenyatta University currently undertaking research.

You have been identified as one of the respondents and therefore requested to provide the information. The information gathered will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and for research purpose only. Please, therefore, respond to the questions by following the instructions given.

Section A: Background Information

1) Name of School __________________________________________

2) Name of SubCounty

3) Name of County __________________________________________

Section B: Teacher Related Information

Teachers Level of Professional Training and Professional Experiences

4) Are you trained professional teacher? Yes, [ ] No, [ ]

5) What is your professional qualifications?

________________________________________________________________________

6) How many years have you been a teacher?

________________________________________________________________________
Teacher Awareness of IEP

7) Are you aware of individualized educational programme (IEP)?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]

8) Do you use IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in your classroom? Yes [ ]  No [ ]

9) If the answer to Q8 is No what strategy do you use in your classroom to mitigate the problem of low academic performance?

Education Office Support

10) Do the education office support you to use Individualized Educational Programme to mitigate the problem of low academic performance in your classroom?  Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Parental Support

11) Do parents support you in using IEP in your classroom to mitigate the problem of low academic performance? Yes [ ]  No [ ]

12) Have you ever requested the parents to support you to use IEP in your classroom to mitigate the problem of low academic performance?
   Yes [ ]  No [ ]
APPENDIX IV

Pro-Forma for reporting the learners term tests scores by teachers in classes one (1) two (2), and three (3) aged six (6) to eight (8) years

Preamble

I am a post graduate student in the department of Early Childhood Education of Kenyatta University Currently undertaking research.

This learner has been identified as one of the respondents and therefore, you are requested to provide term tests scores for English, Kiswahili, and Mathematics. The information gathered will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and for research purpose only. Please therefore, respond to the questions by following the instructions given.

Section A: Background Information

1. Name of School

2. Name of SubCounty

3. Name of County

4. Name of the Learner

Section B: Term Tests Scores

<table>
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<th>Kiswahili</th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Test 1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Test 2</td>
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<td>Test 3</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX Va

Questionnaire for Parents of Low Academic Performing Learners

Preamble

I am a postgraduate student in the Department of Early Childhood Education of Kenyatta University currently undertaking research.

You have been identified as one of the respondents and therefore requested to provide the information. The information gathered will be treated with a lot of confidentiality and for research purpose only. Please, therefore, respond to the questions by following the instructions given.

Section A. Background Information

1) Name of the School.................................
2) Name of the SubCounty...........................
3) Name of the County..............................

Section B; IEP making process related information

Parental Level of Education

4) Have you ever attended any school? Yes [ ] No [ ]
5) If your answer to question above is yes, indicate your highest level of education.
   • Primary school [ ]
   • Secondary school [ ]
   • Post secondary school [ ]
Parental Awareness of IEP

6) Are you aware of individualized educational programme (IEP)?
   Yes [ ]      No [ ]

Parental Participation in IEP making process

7) Have you ever participated in IEP training workshop at your child’s school? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Parental Participation in IEP Making

8) Have you ever participated in IEP making at your child’s school in order to help mitigate the problem of his/her low academic performance?
   Yes [ ]      No [ ]

9) Do teachers use IEP to mitigate the problem of low academic performance of your child?
   Yes [ ]      No [ ]

10) Have you ever participated in designing IEP in your child’s school to help mitigate the problem of his low academic performance?
    Yes [ ]      No [ ]
Education Office Support

11) Do the education office support the use of IEP in your child’s school in order to help the mitigation of the problem of his/her low academic performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Headteacher Support

12) Do the headteacher support the use of IEP on your child in order to mitigate his/her problem of low academic performance? Yes [ ] No [ ]

13) Since your child is experiencing learning difficulties would you recommend him/her to use IEP in the classroom to mitigate the problem of low academic performance? No [ ] Yes [ ]
APPENDIX Vb

Inkikilikwanat oo ntoiwo oo Ngera e nursery

Kara eng’erai naata enchada, aisamea enkisuma oo ng’era kutitik tee Kenyatta university nagira aas orashu aing’oru orkilikuai oje.

Kitayioloki anaa obo loontung’anak lookilikuanishoreki naagira aomon pee kincho ilo kilikuai. Ore orkilikuai oigero tene tiabori naa kewoli aitobiraki teng’olon anaa ingikilikuanat ake. Kaaomon, pee isuj inkitanapata naishooyioki.

Section A: Orkilikuai Tengiterunoto

1) Enkarna e sukuul ____________________________

2) Enkarna e subcounty __________________________

3) Enkarna e county _____________________________

Section B: Enetabaitie intoiwou teng’isuma

4) Itijing’a aikata sukuul? Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

5) Ore tenaa “ee” nilimu enitabaikia teng’isuma ino.
   - Sukuul e primary [ ]
   - Sukuul e secondary [ ]
   - University [ ]

Eyiulounoto oo ntoiwo u ipirta IEP

6) Iyiolo eng’isuma emakewon aa IEP?
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]
Easata oo ntoiwo tengitobirata e IEP

7) Keeta aikata entAASA te IEP ira kiti te sukuul?
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

Iyasat oo ntoiwo.

8) Keeta aikata enitaasa te nkitobirata engisuma emakewon te sukuul ira kiti pee isaida ena shida enye natum.
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

Imakisi kutik aashu meim

9) Kitumia irmualimuni eng’isuma e makewon pee eishu ina shida/enyamali natum enkerai etueim entemata?
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

10) Itaasa aikata entoki naje tengitobirata engisuma emakewon tesukuul ira kiti pee intayu inanyamali eng’erai nemeim entemata?
    Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

Erisharoto engisuma engopis

11) Keirishaa engikuma engopis eyasata engisuma emakewon tesukuul ino opa ira kiti pee etayu enyamali enkerai nemeim entemata?
    Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

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Ormualimui kitok

12) Kisaidia ashi ormualimui kitok eyasata engisuma emakewon pee eishu enyamali enkerai nemeim entemata
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]

13) Amaa amu iimayie apa siiyie ingolikinot tengitisho ino, ijoki ninye pee itumia enkisuma emakewon te deresa pee eeishu enyamali nemein enkerai entemata?
   Ee [ ] Aa [ ]
APPENDIX VI

Sample of modified IEP

Learner’s Information

Learner’s name___________________________________________

Date of birth ____________________________________________

Learners No _____________________________________________

Learners’ parent/guardian name_____________________________________

Parent/guardian phone No ________________________________________

School present grade _________________________________________

Date of IEP meeting _________________________________________

Date of learner’s introduction to IEP _____________________________

Date of IEP review _________________________________________

Learner’s Performance Profile

• Learner’s performance background information

________________________________________________________________

• English _____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

• Writing _____________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________
• Reading

• Mathematics

• Science

• Social studies

IEP eligibility

Eligible [ ] Not Eligible [ ]

Areas of educational difficulties

Rational of IEP teaching method

IEP Instructional Consideration

Items ticked ‘yes’ must be addressed in this IEP

Is the learner reading below age level? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Is the learner over age? Yes [ ] No [ ]

Has the learner been persistently performing poorly in class?

   Yes [ ] No [ ]
Does the learner have poor task engagement in classroom?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Does the learner need an alternative Instructions?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Are the educational needs of the learners adequately addressed in the class?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

Is the learners classroom environment affecting the learners effective learning?

Yes [ ]  No [ ]

**Termly academic achievement goals and the benchmark**

Area of educational difficulties ____________________________________________

Term goal ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benchmark</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Evaluation method</th>
<th>Test1</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Test2</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Test3</th>
<th>Grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</tbody>
</table>

Areas tested _______________________________________________________

Termly goal _______________________________________________________
**Extra Classwork /Homework**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Hours per week</th>
<th>Where to be done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Programme modification needed to attain term goals and progress in the curriculum

Yes [ ] No [ ]

**Learner to be Allowed to Learn in a Differentiated Curriculum in Accordance to his Ability in an IEP Inclusive Classroom**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location of teaching and learning</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Extents of learning engagement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In the classroom</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource room</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homebound extra work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Extra Remedial Work in Specified Difficult Areas of Learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Difficult areas</th>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Progress</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Social science</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Promotion to the Next Level of Learning**

Promotion focusing on area of curriculum progressive success

Identify area that needs extra remedial work

**Evaluation /Assessment Modification**

Is the learner progressing well in class?  Yes [  ]  No [  ]

Are instructional modifications necessary?  Yes [  ]  No [  ]

Identify the area of modification

Rationale for modification and alternative assessment and instructional plan
Progress Report

Parents will be informed of the learner's progress report in class through learner's portfolios assessment, continuous assessment tests, and terminal examinations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Number of times tests are done</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learners portfolios assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous assessment tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terminal examinations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Transferal of Rights /if Applicable

I understand that the rights under Individuals with Educational need Education Improvement Act will transfer me upon reaching my eighteenth birthday.

Learners signature_________________________ Date________________

Recommend instructions/and/or behavioural interventions

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________
The classroom IEP Development Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Team member’s signature</th>
<th>Position/title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guardian</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education office representative</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General education teacher</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learner</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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</tbody>
</table>