

**AN ASSESSMENT OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION FOR IMPROVING
LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF TWO DISTRICTS IN
ZAMBIA**

by

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DECLARATION

I declare that ‘AN ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTATION TO IMPROVE LEARNER PERFORMANCE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF TWO DISTRICTS IN ZAMBIA’ is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

.....

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, ‘Mayo wane Hilda Nalwamba.’ She did so much to mould me into a person imbued with a great sense of dedication and commitment to hard work, as well as a solid foundation in the Christian faith which has taught me to depend on the soon coming ‘King Jesus’ in all that I do. These attributes of my life enabled me to attain the first and second degree and possibly, this third one via the flexible but very challenging open and distance (ODL) mode of study. GLORY TO GOD!

ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of strategy implementation is crucial to the improvement of learner performance, and to the effectiveness of schools. Literature reveals that research on strategy implementation has received much attention in business studies. However, little attention has been given to it in schools. It is this gap which this study endeavours to fill. The key research questions for this study aimed at garnering evidence on factors that influence strategic plan implementation. In the empirical study, two secondary schools and three education offices were purposively selected. A mixed methods research design was adopted, and in this regard, data was collected using interviews, focus group discussions, document analysis, participant observation and questionnaires. Data was analysed by means of organising, coding and categorising. The main findings of the study are that the factors that affect School Strategic Plans (SSPs) implementation are largely related to education management at all levels. There is also anecdotal evidence that teacher, learner and external stakeholder factors affect the implementation of SSPs. In all these factors, monitoring was the major factor. One recommendation proposes that the education managers at provincial and district levels and implementers at school levels should all be empowered with skills and knowledge on effective strategy implementation.

KEY WORDS: Strategy, implementation, strategic management, school strategic plans, school management, constraining factors, enabling factors.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AIEMS - Action to improve English Mathematics and Science education
AGEI - African Girls' Education Initiative
BESSIP - Basic Education Subsector Investment Plan
CDC - Curriculum Development Centre
CL - Cooperative Learning
CSRs - Civil Service Reforms
CSI - Comprehensive Strategy Instruction
DEBS - District Education Board Secretary
EFA - Education for All
EQUIP - Education Quality Improvement Program
FGDs - Focus Group Discussions
FNDP - Fifth National Development Plan
HOD - Head of Department
MBWA - Management by Walking Around
MDGs - Millennium Development Goals
MOE - Ministry of Education
MOESVTEE - Ministry of Education Science, Vocational Training Education
MFNP - Ministry of Finance and National Planning
MoU -Memorandum of Understanding
NIF - National Implementation Framework
ODL- Open and Distance Education
PEO - Provincial Education Office
PMP - Performance Management Package
PLP - Primary Literacy Programme
PREP - Learner Preparation
PSCAP -Public Service Capacity Building Programme
SADC - Southern Africa Development Community
SESO - Senior Education Standards Officer
SI - Strategy Implementation
SNDP - Second National Development Plan
SSPs - School Strategic Plans
STEP –UP -Strengthening Education Programs up
SWAP - Sector Wide Approach

UNESCO - United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNISA - University of South Africa

TOD - Teacher on Duty

ZPEC - Zambia Primary Education Course

Referencing has been done in terms of the Revised Harvard Method as prescribed by UNISA.

Referencing abbreviations:

n.p. – No page (refers to internet resources or journal articles where no page references are provided).

et al. – *et alii* – among others

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

1.1 INTRODUCTION

One of the major concerns within the education sectors of most countries today is poor learner performance in schools. One way which is used to mitigate this problem is strategic planning where transformative strategies to improve school education are devised. It is for this reason that the education policies of many countries such as Sweden have been dominated by active reform processes since the beginning of the 1960s (Johnson, Scholes & Scholes, 2008: 698). At a global level, efforts to improve education have been expressed through initiatives such as Education for All (EFA), the World Education Conference held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, the 2000 World Education Forum held in Dakar, Senegal and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) developed in 2000 (Ministry of Education¹, 2007: 17).

To attain the MDGs, the strategies used have included the formulation and implementation of regional programmes. Zambia has participated in some of these programmes such as the Southern Africa Development Community's (SADC) Protocol on Education and Training and the African Girls' Education Initiative (AGEI) (MOE, 2007: 17) to mention a few. This is in line with Edgerson, Kritsonis and Herrington's (2006: 5) notion that for success to occur, a shift in the status quo must take place, meaning that in order to be successful in what we want to do, there must be change or continuous improvements in what we are doing. Cardwell (2004: 81) reports that, in order to address the concerns about the level of learner achievement, the focus in the public policies on school education in many countries is on the transformation of schools. This wave of strategy formulation to improve learner performance has also spread to many African countries, including Zambia.

The current education policy document emphasizes 'partnership as a strategy' (MOE, 1996: ix) to improve education in Zambia. To fulfil the partnership strategy planned in this policy, since 2010, the MOE has worked with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) through the Education Quality Improvement Program 2 (EQUIP 2) to

¹ From this point on, this is referred to as MOE.

facilitate strategy formulation and implementation in schools. This was done in order to improve academic learner performance in the underperforming provinces. Further still, strategies to implement the education policies in schools are highlighted in the Fifth National Development Plan (FNDP), the National Implementation Framework (NIF) and the Sixth National Development Plans (SNDP). These include monitoring learner performance through increased standards visits (MOE, 2007: 55, 97)

Other strategic programmes which have been initiated and implemented to improve learner performance in Zambian schools include the current strategy for literacy instruction methodology called the 'Primary Literacy Programme' (PLP) which began in 2013 for primary schools (MOE, 2013: 1). Partnerships between the government and the private sector as a strategy to improve education have also been forged in Zambia.

Since strategy formulation and implementation are key to improving the quality of education in Zambia, there is a need to give it greater attention. Li, Gouhui and Eppler (2008: 2) noted that numerous studies acknowledge that strategies frequently fail not only because of inadequate strategy formulation, but mainly because of insufficient implementation. Part of the reason for this is that little research attention has been given to strategy implementation (SI) as compared to strategy formulation. This is true because up to now, no study has been conducted in Zambia on SI in secondary schools. However, many authors, including Li, Gouhui and Eppler, show a focus biased towards SI in business institutions and not in educational institutions, particularly high schools. This study, therefore, endeavours to fill this gap and explore better ways of implementing strategies to improve learner performance in Zambian schools. Although schools have many strategies to implement in their School Strategic Plans (SSPs), their strategies are part of one overall grand strategy which the PEO's office requires each school to have. This is why the term 'strategy' is used in the research title of this study.

Although the problem of not implementing school strategic plans is found in primary and secondary schools, the focus in this study will be on secondary schools only. The study proceeds from the premise that most of the high schools in Luapula province in northern Zambia are not doing well in the implementation of their school strategic plans,

1.2 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The concept of ‘strategy implementation’ and its impact on improving the performance of schools in the national examinations is fairly new and under-researched in Zambia. I believe that this study will increase research attention on SI in schools which has been reported to be inadequate by van Niekerk and van Niekerk (2006: 96). It will also increase knowledge and contribute to the development of theory on SI through research findings from this empirical study. The factors identified in the study will be used to guide the general principles that apply to SI in schools. It is envisaged that policy makers at the Ministry of Education (MOE), the Provincial Education Officers (PEOs), District Education Board Secretaries (DEBS), head teachers, heads of departments, school board members and teachers will be enriched with research-based findings that will guide their decisions in education policy and SI.

The findings will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education at all levels in devising effective school SI mechanisms. The findings will possibly guide the cooperating partners’ decisions on the kind of intervention programmes needed to help schools in implementing their SSPs to improve learner performance. All those involved indirectly in the implementation of school strategic plans at school level will be helped to make informed decisions for implementing their strategic tasks. Consequently, this will enrich their practice.

The field of education management will be enriched because the results of the study will enable the education managers at national, provincial and district levels to shape educational policies which can make the head teachers to ‘lead and create more excellent schools.’ (Harvard University Graduate School of Education, 2015: 1) Since the study will hopefully identify the factors influencing SI, the school managers will then begin to consider areas for improvement in the implementation of strategic plans in schools.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Strategy implementation in the education sector in Luapula Province is a problem. Efforts have been made at provincial, district and school levels to plan strategies aimed at improving learner performance. In 2010, USAID in conjunction with the Ministry of Education in the province, conducted action research to investigate the causes of poor learner performance which was rising in the schools. The findings of this research and the routine school monitoring visits by the Senior Education Standard Officers (SESOs) from the provincial education office (both of which I participated in), showed that the implementation of

assessment, monitoring, ‘learner preparation’ (commonly known as ‘PREP’), curriculum, decision making, orientation, incentives and record management were the major causal factors of poor learner performance. To address these factors, a strategy of formulating the Provincial Strategic Plan (PSP) was embarked on in October 2010. In the same year in December, the districts and schools were sensitized on the formulated PSP and also trained on how to formulate their strategies. All these strategies were to be implemented from January 2011 up to December 2015. The results of monitoring the implementation of these strategies (which I am involved in as an SESO), so far reveal that only about four out of 23 secondary schools in the province were on course in trying to implement their SSPs. This aroused my interest to investigate the underlying causes of this phenomenon.

Since Mouton (2001: 53) suggests that research problems may also be formulated in the form of questions as a way of focusing them, the main research question which this study seeks to answer is presented below. But since ‘objectives must always be set after having formulated a good research question’ (Sindin, 2012: 1), the research questions are presented first followed by the research aim and its objectives.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The questions that guided the study were:

1.4.1 Main question

The main question that was driving the study was:

- What are the underlying factors that enable or constrain the implementation of the school strategic plans in secondary schools in Luapula Province?

1.4.2 Specific questions

The following are the specific questions that will guide this study:

- What factors lead to successful school strategy implementation?
- What factors constrain the implementation of the school strategic plans?
- Are the factors that enable or constrain the implementation of the school strategic plans internal or external?

1.5 THE AIM OF THE STUDY

Mouton (2001: 188) asserted that research aims orientate the reader. It is for this reason that a study is proposed whose primary aim is to explore the underlying factors that enable or constrain the implementation of school strategic plans with a view to better guide schools and inform policy at the PEO's office. To attain this aim, the following objectives were targeted:

1.6 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Like the research questions, the research objectives were divided into main and specific objectives.

1.6.1 Main Research Objectives

The main research objectives that guided the study was to establish the underlying factors which enable or constrain the implementation of the school strategic plans in secondary schools in Luapula Province.

1.6.2 Specific Research Objectives

The specific objectives were:

- To investigate the factors leading to successful implementation of school strategies;
- To investigate the factors constraining the implementation of school strategic plans; and
- To determine whether the success or failure of implementation of school strategic plans can be attributed to internal or external factors.

When these objectives are achieved, the research questions above would have been answered.

1.7 RESEARCH DESIGN

A detailed description of the research design and methods used in this study is covered in Chapter 3. This section provides a preliminary overview of the research design and methods which were used in this research.

In the quest to avoid the monotony of using face-face interviews only and for the purpose of triangulation, a mixed design was selected. Qualitative and quantitative research designs were employed. Although the two designs were used, the qualitative design was largely used; hence making the study mostly qualitative.

1.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODS

Data was collected through interviews, document analysis, participant observation and questionnaires. A total of 27 participants were purposively selected: one PEO, two DEBS, and two principals were interviewed individually, while two groups of seven heads of departments (HODs) in each group were interviewed in focus group discussions (FGDs). Interviews were used to allow participants “to express themselves freely and divulge all the information they deem necessary” for this study (Schulze, 2002: 69). Focus group discussions were used in order “to save time and shed more light on the phenomena” (Schulze, 2002: 69). All interviews were conducted in the venues which participants chose as they desired. Eight SESOs filled in the questionnaires. Relevant documents were analysed and primary and secondary literature sources were also utilised.

Guided by the observation form (see appendix VIII), observations focused on management of various resources, leadership styles and skills, school climate, meetings held in terms of attendance, frequency types and agenda items and school culture. Observations helped me to find out how stakeholders in school interacted, and that complemented interview data so as to improve the trustworthiness of my research. I attended meetings and noted down the issues seen in the areas of focus highlighted in the observation form. These approaches made it possible for me to collect written, verbal and nonverbal data.

1.9 DATA ANALYSIS

As suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 370), data collected from the interviews was first transcribed. Then the data segments were formed and coded. The grouping of similar codes led to emergent categories. The data collected from questionnaires and documents were analysed by noting the frequency of similar answers from each participant’s responses which were also coded into themes or categories. The more frequent the responses in all the questionnaires or documents, the higher the score and percentage. Such responses were noted as major or important factors. Therefore, interpretations were focused on the most frequently repeated responses.

1.10 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 introduces the study, provides background information, states the aim and objectives of the study, describes the significance of the study, defines the problem statement,

provides information about the study setting, defines operational definitions and outlines the structure of the thesis.

Chapter 2 focuses on the review of relevant literature on theoretical perspectives for strategy implementation and factors that affect it.

Chapter 3 outlines the design of the study, the research methodology in data collection methods, data analysis, trustworthiness of the study and ethical considerations.

Chapter 4 presents, analyses and interprets the research findings.

Chapter 5 consists of a summary of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

1.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the background to the study has been given with examples drawn from Zambia where the study is based. The efforts which have been made to address the problem of poor academic learner performance through strategic programmes have also been highlighted. It is clear that attention in research on strategy implementation has been mainly in the field of business studies and very little has been done in education in this respect. This has left a gap that this study seeks to fill. The statement of the problem has been given to contextualize the study and delineate its scope. The research aim, objectives and questions have been highlighted, and the ethical standards including trustworthiness have been addressed.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter located the study in its educational context by presenting information on strategy implementation in education in different countries. This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on various aspects pertaining to strategy implementation in order to provide and conceptualisation needed. The relationship between strategic planning and strategy implementation is highlighted in order to direct the attention of the reader to the main issues discussed. A theoretical framework is presented in this chapter to frame the discussion of different literature strands and to show the relationship between strategy implementation and motivation. All this is done with a view to establishing a richer knowledge base on the factors at play in the implementation of planned strategies within schools.

The chapter examines the nature and extent of SI by looking at the following topics: the conceptualisation of SI, the nature of SI, theoretical framework for the study, studies on SI in schools and factors in SI.

2.2 CONCEPTUALISATION OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the concept strategy implementation (SI) to be conceptualised properly, it is necessary to define the term ‘strategy’. Strategy is an encompassing direction, setting broad aggregated agendas, a perspective to view the future and a template against which to evaluate current activities (Davis & Davis 2004: 30). Tembo (2004: 14) stated it is a means by which organisations meet objectives. According to Mothae and Sindane (2007: 145), strategy is a cluster of decisions on goals to pursue, actions to be taken and the manner in which resources can be used to achieve the set goals. These definitions show that a ‘strategy’ consists of various elements such as policies, decisions and actions.

Since the construct under scrutiny, namely strategy implementation (SI) consists of two words, it is important to define the term ‘implementation’ also. Henry (2001: 295) defined implementation as the execution and delivery of policies by organisations or arrangements among institutions.

Strategy implementation, therefore, can be defined as the process that turns strategic plans into a series of action tasks and ensures that these tasks are executed in such a way that the objectives of the strategic plan are achieved (van Niekerk & van Niekerk, 2006: 8). It is clear from the definitions above that SI involves actions to be taken towards achieving organisational objectives.

2.3 THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN STRATEGIC PLANNING AND STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Since strategy implementation has been explained, it is important to also define strategic planning because it is closely related to strategy implementation and therefore needs to be differentiated for clarity purposes. Strategic planning focuses on establishing organizational direction, setting priorities and identifying obstacles and opportunities that may limit or enable you to carry out your mission The Enterprise foundation, 1999:2). Gates (2010:1) takes strategic planning to be the process of defining an organization's plans for achieving its mission. From these definitions, it is clear that strategic planning does not only refer to the mere thinking of plans, but involves the act of clearly stating of plans of what should be done to achieve a goal. In the case of schools which were studied in this study, the desired goal is 'improved academic learner performance'.

Since strategic planning entails formulating desired plans and strategy implementation entails carrying out the formulated plans, the two are not the same. However, the focus in this study was on strategy implementation and hence the need to outline its nature.

2.4 THE NATURE OF STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Strategy implementation involves a number of tasks that should be executed. Thompson and Strickland (2003: 357) identified the principal tasks as building a capable organisation, budgeting, establishing strategy-supportive policies and procedures, instituting best practices, installing effective systems, developing a strategy-supporting reward system, creating a strategy-supporting culture and exercising effective leadership.

According to Dagada and Jakovljevic (2005: 116), the success of SI depends not only on the involvement of the organisation experts in both business and information systems, close alignment with business partners and the integration of the systems units, but also on the presence of a sponsor among top management.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Expectancy value theory is used to underpin the discussion on the factors that influence the implementation of the SSPs and different literature strands on SI within the school context. This theory was developed by Vroom in 1964 and later extended by Porter and Lawler's attempts to explain the determinants of workplace attitudes and behaviours (Drafke & Kossen, 2002: 95). It also focuses on factors that determine work motivation. Since the study aimed at investigating task /work implementation, it was deemed necessary to adopt this theory to provide insights into what motivates or demotivates the staff in the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools.

According to Steyn (2002: 96), the expectancy-value theory postulated by Victor Vroom in 1964 holds that there are three determinants of motivation: (i) the valence of outcome (reward), (ii) the expectancy that performance will result in reward and (iii) the expectancy that effort will result in performance. Leadership-central.com (2010: 2) refers to the relationship between effort and performance in Vroom's expectancy-value theory as "effort performance relation" and that of the relationship between the reward and performance as "performance-reward" relation.

Expanding on this, Lunenburg, (2011: 1) explained that Vroom's expectancy theory is based on the premise that people will be motivated make greater effort if they believe that their efforts will result in higher performance and thus better rewards. Lunenburg (2011: 2) noted that breaking down this definition exposes three key components focused on by this theory which are: expectancy, performance and reward:

- **Expectancy:** According to Lunenburg (2011: 2), expectancy refers to the amount of effort that an employee is willing to exert in the hope that the increased effort will result in better performance, and due rewards. Leadership central.com (2010: 2) explains that the perception of the individual is that the effort that he or she will put forward will actually result in the attainment of the performance and that this cognitive evaluation is heavily weighted by an individual's past experiences, personality, self-confidence and emotional state.

In the case of SSP implementation, the school managers need to motivate their teachers in such a way that they desire to perform very well. It is possible that SI has failed in some

schools because teachers did not have this expectancy and the opposite could have been the case in the schools where SI succeeded.

- **Performance:** Sun, Vancouver and Weinhardt (2014: 1), explained that an employee may be willing to work towards a higher level of performance because he perceives that there is a relationship between his performance and the rewards he gains. If working a few extra hours a week will result in an eventual promotion, the willingness to work those extra hours increases due to the employee's desire to be awarded the promotion. Lunenburg (2011: 2) reported that Vroom called this behaviour in employees “instrumentality”. Therefore, if teachers’ instrumentality in the implementation of SSPs is strengthened by their supervisors by way of promising rewards for high performance, for example, they would put in their best and SI in schools would have a better chance of success. However, this is also related to skill and ability. If an individual does not regard himself as sufficiently competent to do a certain job, he becomes demotivated because he sees that he cannot get the desired reward. Managers therefore should capacitate their employees and also give them tasks that match their abilities.
- **Rewards.** An assessment must also be made as to how valuable the employee finds the rewards to be. The reward therefore has to be something the employee finds value in, making the effort worth the perceived value of the reward. For many employees, the prospect of a promotion is a reward that is highly valuable and worth all the effort that they would need to make in order to earn it (Lunenburg, 2011: 1). At school level, rewards can include other things apart from promotions since vacancies for promotions are limited. Attractive rewards coupled with administrative support can increase instrumentality in the implementers of strategies in schools.

Since leadership is clearly indicated as a critical element in influencing employee attitude and behaviour towards the implementation of plans, it is used as a lens for assessing reasons why schools fail or succeed in the implementation of their SSPs. This is why I selected education leaders at provincial, district, school and subject department level to participate in this study.

Apart from identifying the suitability of the expectancy-valence theory for this study, my choice of the theory was further influenced by Foley (2011) who explored the K–3 Teachers’ Implementation of Comprehension Strategy Instruction (CSI) using expectancy-value theory

in the USA. In her study, Foley (2011: 209) found that expectancy significantly influences general implementation rate. She therefore concluded that a relationship exists between teacher expectancy value and teacher receptiveness to implement an innovation. This theory is therefore suitable for studying the implementation of SSPs in schools because the focus of the research is the construct 'strategy implementation.' That there is a relationship between the valence of teacher expectation and teacher receptiveness to implement an innovation (Foley, 2011: 209) gave greater impetus to the selection of the expectance-value theory.

According to Bush (2007: 392), leadership means influencing others' actions in achieving desirable ends. He added that leaders are people who shape motivations and actions of others. This definition confirms the need for the expectancy-value theory to be applied to this study because it requires that managers as leaders should aim at getting the best out of their employees in terms of performance.

Bush (2007: 392) linked leadership to values or purpose (while Steyn (2002: 96) stated that expectancy-value theory also focuses on value attached to efforts or performance, outcomes of performance and rewards Therefore, leaders, teachers and other stakeholders in secondary schools must evaluate the outcome of implementing SSPs before they give their attention and time to their implementation. They should see their efforts in accomplishing the task as valuable. In summary, the expectancy-value theory explains human behaviour as a function of two factors: (a) the perceived value of the reward that certain behaviour yields and (b) the expectation in the doer that certain behaviour will actually yield that reward (Foley, 2011: 199) An effective leader, therefore, should actively work to create optimum conditions for outstanding performance. He or she should inspire persons or groups to such an extent that they would willingly and enthusiastically work to accomplish set goals. It is clear here that the leadership is a crucial issue among others in SI.

2.6 ISSUES ON STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

Li, Guohui and Eppler (2008: 2) argued that strategies frequently fail not only because of inadequate strategy formulation, but mainly because of insufficient implementation and due to the fact that, despite being so important, SI has received less research attention than strategy formulation. Even though they are aware of this shortcoming, Li, Guohui and Eppler's research is biased towards SI in business institutions and not learning institutions such as high schools in particular. Van Niekerk and van Niekerk (2006: 96) corroborated the fact that little attention has been given to SI in education and that with few exceptions, the

notion of strategy management in schools is an entirely new concept in South Africa. This same situation prevails in Zambia as well where strategy implementation skills have not yet been developed in school leaders.

It is generally accepted that “leadership is one of the critical components of SI” (van Niekerk & van Niekerk, 2006: 209). This is true of all contexts in which strategies are implemented, including the educational context. If leadership is regarded as critical for successful strategy execution, it is then important to investigate the type of leadership that exists in the schools; hence the focus on the head teachers’ leadership in this study.

The other issue is that “researchers have not agreed on the outlines of a theory on implementation and the variables crucial to successful implementation” (Brynard, 2005: 653). He added that there is also an argument on what constitutes implementation success especially in the multi-factor setting.

2.7 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIES IN SCHOOLS

There are many examples of studies conducted to see whether new strategies are implemented in schools. For example, in New Zealand, a study was conducted to determine the enabling factors in the implementation of that country’s new 2010 curriculum. The study found that planning, leading and supporting the implementation were contributing factors in the implementation of their 2010 curriculum (Education Review Office, 2009: n.p). The findings of this and other studies on factors that influence SI in schools suggest that while leadership may be the most crucial factor, it is not the only one. Steyn (2005: 47) reports that a study, which was conducted in the United States of America to establish the factors that influenced the implementation of invitational education as a strategy to attract people to schools, found that leadership, teachers, in-school and out of school conditions, and the requirements of professional development programmes influenced the implementation of invitational education in schools

While this study may not have investigated specific aspects of leadership, others have focused on educational leaders’ perceptions. For example, in a study on the use and impact of strategic planning as perceived by school superintendents in Nebraska, in the USA, Heller (1997: 1) established that there is a significant relationship between the perceived effectiveness of strategic planning and the degree of implementation. This implies that the school managers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of school strategic plans influence the

implementation of the strategies in the school. Since perception relates to action to implement strategies, it is important to study the leaders' actions and see how they relate to strategy implementation.

Leaders' actions in SI are successful when they are coupled with good approaches. The role of 'approach' in SI was established by Joseph (2009) in his study on leadership and strategic planning in two secondary schools of Singapore, where it was found that the approach used by the principal to implement the planned strategies influenced the implementation of school strategies. In this study, it was found that democratic and consultative approaches more readily inspired staff to execute plans compared to a command and control approach (Joseph, 2009: 3).

Realising that such studies have been carried out elsewhere, I was motivated to investigate whether there are also other factors that influence SI in high schools of the Mansa and Samfya districts in Luapula province in Zambia. This is also because the findings in these studies may not be adequate, and may only apply to the contexts of the institutions where they were done and not in Zambia, particularly in the Mansa and Samfya districts. However, a closer look at the literature on SI shows that there are other factors which are crucial in the SI phenomenon.

2.8 FACTORS THAT AFFECT STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION

The focus here is on the factors that enable and those that hinder successful strategy implementation. These are discussed as either enabling or constraining factors.

2.8.1 Enabling Factors

Some of the factors that create an enabling environment for SI include resources, space and time, leadership monitoring and feedback, coordination, control and community involvement to mention a few.

2.8.1.1 Resources

It is evident from experience that planned strategies cannot implement themselves without the involvement of competent people who are able to implement them. In schools as in any other organisations, the staff and what they use to implement the strategies make up the resources. Therefore, without resources, no strategies can be implemented. Of all the resources needed for effective implementation of strategic plans, human resources are the most important.

David (2009: 255) confirms that the true potential of SI resides in people. This is true because all other resources needed for effective SI cannot work unless people utilise them (Zambia Institute of Chartered Accountants, 2007: 5). That is why Fiddler, Edwards, Evans, Mann and Thomas (1996: 125) argued that the most potent elements in the implementation of strategic change are people and systems. In the same vein, to highlight the importance of the matter, David (2009: 254) submitted that a well-designed strategy system can fail if insufficient attention is given to the human resource dimension.

This can be proved from the findings of the study by Mate (2006) which was conducted to examine the implementation of Performance Management Package (PMP) in the Zambian civil service. In this study, it was found that human resources were among the major factors which negatively affected many operations (Mate, 2006: 64). Although this is the case, Johnson, Scholes and Whittington (2008: 480) argued that the possession of resources including people does not guarantee strategic success. Therefore, other resources such as material and physical resources are also needed to succeed in SI.

Material resources also hinder the implementation of strategy as seen in Zvaiwa's (1981) study on the implementation of the Zambia Primary English Course (ZPEC) guidelines. The results of this study showed that ZPEC could not be fully implemented in schools because of lack of materials (Zvaiwa, 1981: 131). These materials also cannot be optimally used without proper infrastructure or physical resources. That is why the Zambian government through the Ministry of Education, Science, Vocational Training and Early Education (MOESVTEE) embarked on building teachers' houses, toilets and early childhood care and development education model centres in Lusaka and other places to implement planned strategies in education (MOE, 2008: 8). This shows that different types of resources are needed to implement strategies in organisations. Ranzik and Swanson (2010: 360) added that resources include not only personnel and equipment, but also space, time and funds.

The availability of funds does not automatically guarantee success in the implementation of strategic plans. Therefore, special attention should be paid when allocating funds to schools for the implementation of SSPs. In the strategy execution process, there should be allocation of sufficient funds and other resources to activities critical to the strategic process (Thomson, Strickland, & Gamble, 2010: 42).

There are some tangible examples that prove that financial resources are crucial to successful SI. The 1992 education policy in Zambia (Focus on Learning) failed because funds were not

mobilized to develop the formal education sector in schools as the policy required (Ministry of Finance and National Planning, 2008: 35). In 1999, there was a slow start in the implementation of the Basic Education Subsector Investment Plan (BESSIP) because only 19% pooled funds were actually spent (MOE, 2008: 8). This was because at that time, the approach to this programme was that of having pooled funding as a condition for the successful implementation of the two development plans which were to be implemented. SI here failed not only in this strategy but also in others that followed.

The other strategy which failed due to inadequate and erratic funding from the treasury was the implementation of the public service reforms which included the Public Service Capacity Building Program (PSCAP) introduced in October 2006. When this programme was evaluated in 2005, the results showed that lack of funding was the key factor that militated against the successful execution of the strategic plans in public institutions (Billi, 2011: 110). Chang (2008: 6) advises that consultation and negotiation with development partners can be used to mobilise support for the implementers of the strategies.

2.8.1.2 Space and time

It is true that the effective implementation of strategies can be hindered or enhanced by the availability of space in the places where the strategies are to be implemented. For example, an increase in physical space through school infrastructure development was attributed to the rise in enrolment in Grades 1-7 in 2010 as compared to previous years (MOESVTEE, 2011: 36). Where there is space, time will not be wasted to implement the strategies but where the space needed is either unavailable or inadequate, time is wasted as adjustments are made to have room for implementing a set strategy. The rush to catch up can lead to ineffective SI. UNESCO (2004: 170) asserted that in order for focused change strategies to be implemented effectively, sufficient time should be allowed.

It can be seen that the two constructs, time and space, relate well to SI. That is why Edgeron, *et al.* (2006: 3) contended that principals can influence the working patterns of teachers by arranging physical space and time to promote norms of collegiality and experimentation. Fowler (2009: 294) suggested that the best time to implement a new policy in schools is at the beginning of the school year or semester. He called this time ‘a logical point in time.’

2.8.1.3 Leadership

It is argued that no matter how plentiful all types of resources are, if effective leadership does not exist in a school, the implementation of strategic plans cannot be successful. Therefore, school leaders should exercise leadership needed to drive implementation and keep improving strategy execution in process (Thompson, Strickland & Gamble, 2010: 42). The importance of effective leadership in SI has brought about the formulation of leadership guidelines, as the adopted strategies move to implementation. These guidelines require that school leaders be strategic in the way they do things, including: focusing attention on crucial aspects in the implementation, trying out things, handling all resources and guarding the implementation in order to ensure its success (Bryson, 2004: 250).

In order for all these guidelines to be practised in schools where new strategic plans are developed, the school leaders should be personally committed. Mulambya (1996: 13) pointed out that a strategic leader should be a person of thought and action. In the same vein, Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009: 61) argued that today, the internal, dynamic, systematic and complex threats to organisational survival require leaders who can think and act in an integrated, systematic and spiritual way. In other words, these are leaders who are fully committed to their task. Such leaders have charisma.

Concerning schools, charisma is taken to be “a characteristic that describes leaders who are able to exert profound influence on their followers, school performance and climate by the force of their personality, abilities, personal charm, magnetism, inspiration and emotion” (Steyn, 2005: 46). Charisma also involves judging the moods of individuals and larger audiences and adjusting words and actions to suit the situation (Capon, 2008: 187). When the head teachers attain these levels of charisma, they can succeed in steering the teachers in the implementation of SSPs by designing change efforts. This means involving the teachers in their decisions and entails participative leadership.

Participative leadership should be practised in schools where the leader involves staff, peers, supervisors and other stakeholders in the decision-making process (Capon, 2008: 187). This calls for some attributes of transformational leadership which include increasing awareness of what is right, good and important and showing the capacity for self-management, commitment and courage (Ranzik & Swanson, 2010: 93). When transformational leaders focus on the individual and collective understandings, skills and commitment of teachers by

eliciting high levels of commitment and professionalism from them, the school performs at high levels (Marks & Printy, 2003: 376).

David (2009: 255) maintained that managers can build support for SI by not dictating decisions, while depending heavily on informal questioning and seeking to probe and clarify until a consensus emerges. Therefore, principals should provide support to teachers to allow them to continue developing new habits during implementation. Chang (2008: 6) advised that consultations and negotiations with development partners can be used to mobilise support for the implementers of the strategies. Supported strategies should be monitored.

2.8.1.4 Control through monitoring, feedback and follow up

In upholding the importance of monitoring and feedback, Fiddler, *et al.* (1996: 59) advised that as actions to carry out the planned strategies are implemented, they should be monitored and compared with the plan so that any corrective action can be taken. In line with this view, Fowler (2009: 295) emphasised that there should be feedback to implementers after school leaders have monitored them. Bryson (2004: 261) suggested that special monitoring teams should be assembled at all levels where monitoring is to be done. This would enhance serious control because each team would pay particular attention to specific areas to be monitored and apply control measures accordingly.

During the change process, control is applied to ensure that the desired change is on track (Fiddler, *et al.*, 1996: 146). Strategic control in a change process enables the introduction, establishment and maintenance of a good culture in strategy implementation. It is concerned with shaping the behaviour of employees and the context of the organisation (Johnson & Scholes, 2002: 448) by ensuring that all that happens in the organisation does not negatively affect the implementation of strategies. It is also the on-going monitoring of staff, managers and activities of an organisation to evaluate efficiency and effectiveness (Capon, 2008: 354).

Since control largely focuses on workers in the organisation, Mosley, Megginson and Pietri (2001: 308) submitted that controls should be accepted by the people they affect, and therefore, controls and their applicability must be communicated clearly to those responsible for implementing them, and to those who will be controlled by them. The head teachers should ensure that the control of the performance of teachers and also the SSP activities begin right from start and continues throughout the implementation period while taking corrective

actions to achieve the planned strategies. This type of continuous control process requires follow-up.

It cannot be wise to put up strategies for implementation, support the implementation in all possible ways, and yet not follow up on what has been put in place for effective strategy implementation. MOE (2007: 16) noted that a good principal institutes good follow-up strategies. Sergioivanni, Kelleher, McCarthy and Fowler (2009: 150) suggested that follow-up can be successful by asking questions such as: Who will do what? When? With whom? What system of supervision is in place to monitor what is going on? When teachers need help, do they get it on the spot? These questions suggest the need for coordination of responsibilities and other relevant aspects. Mate (2006: 6) found that lack of coordination between government departments contributed to inadequate operations thereby causing problems in the implementation of the Performance Management Package. There is also a need to ensure effective coordination of programmes, as discussed below.

2.8.1.5 Coordination

Crucial as coordination is in the effective implementation of SSPs, it should be carefully done. This realisation led the Government of Zambia to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with cooperating partners such as United International Children Emergency Fund and the Japanese International Cooperation Agency in 2003 to harmonise the education Sector-Wide Approach (SWAP) with the MOE sector plan. This was due to the lessons learnt in the implementation of the Basic Education Subsector Investment Plan (BESSIP) (MOESVTEE, 2011: 12). Steiner (1979: 260) proposed that appropriate systems for coordinating effort and guiding individual activity must be devised and installed for the implementation of strategic plans to succeed.

One system which has been strongly recommended in literature on strategic management is that of putting in place a coordinator to perform tasks such as monitoring progress, handling communication, taking the initiative to solve problems and providing training and other assistance to the implementers (Fowler, 2009: 292). Research has confirmed the importance of having coordinators for successful strategy implementation. In their study of the implementation of policy change in large urban high schools in the USA, Louis and Miles (1990, cited in Fowler, 2009: 292) found that the presence of someone who had assumed the major responsibility for coordinating the project was a major predictor of success. The community could be involved here.

2.8.1.6 Community involvement

The involvement of communities in school activities such as decision making can help to make SI successful. Boot (2011: 20) noted that deep relationships between communities and schools in developing countries can have multiple benefits. He noted that in the implementation of school improvement programmes by Plan Zambia, in the Chibombo district, meetings with communities were used to enhance the participation of communities in schools for improvement. The report confirms that schools where the strategic plans have been stated can achieve them by involving the school community. This is true especially now that the public is no longer content to accept without question, the actions in organisations and also that the public has found that they can effect change through their voices and actions (DeCenzo & Robbins, 2005: 34). Therefore, schools should partner with the communities in order to ensure successful SI because working together with the community can foster a sense of responsibility in those involved. Hence, head teachers have been called upon to take this approach as a valuable enterprise (MOE, 2009: 11).

2.8.1.7 Communication

In order for the school community to be involved effectively, there should be effective communication. Communication can be effective if it is two-way, and if the parties involved in the communication respect and trust each other (Capon, 2008: 181). This means that the head teacher should see to it that there is respect and trust among all stakeholders involved in strategy implementation, so that their efforts in the implementation are not provided with reluctance.

One of the most important things which must be communicated to all stakeholders early enough is the rationale for objectives and strategies. David (2009: 229) emphasised that it should be communicated clearly and thoroughly throughout the organisation. Perhaps, when the rationale for implementing the strategy is grasped and appreciated, implementation may be well done. One of the reasons why there could have been a problem in the implementation of the SSPs is because the central offices or authorities in charge of education did not communicate and support the implementation effectively.

2.8.1.8 Central offices

In Zambia, the central offices may mean the offices of the Provincial Education Office (PEO) and the DEBS in charge of education in the districts. According to MOE (1996: 50), the PEO

is responsible for the coordination, monitoring and supervision of policy standards to ensure that the schools perform well in terms of learner performance. Fowler (2009: 296) argued that the practice of authorities at the central office of only showing the school leaders the new policy and leaving them alone to struggle to survive, is neither an effective way to induct the implementers nor an effective way to manage the implementation. He recommended that these authorities should monitor the implementation in schools and give them feedback. This feedback can be given in review meetings.

2.8.1.9 Review meetings

When new strategies are embarked on, meetings should be held to review the implementation and make necessary adjustments. These adjustments can be made to address any obstacles noted. Thompson, *et al.* (2010: 42) submitted that when stumbling blocks are encountered, management has to see to it that they are addressed in a timely and effective fashion. If reviews are not held to identify and address the problems, implementation may fail. Kelly (1999: 145) recommended that it is necessary to review strategy implementation since circumstances may require a number of assumed strategies to be changed in order to cope with new factors and constraints bearing on implementation. The importance of reviews in SI has been noted in Zambia. Due to the unfolding reality of available resources, it has been planned to review the strategies in MOESVTEE's NIF III in Zambia only occasionally (MOESVTEE, 2011: xvi).

Meetings help to identify the need for reviews. Research has also shown that meetings help teachers to keep abreast of new ideas and information and gain a positive change in attitude towards the planned strategies (Mulundano, 2006: 45). It should not be assumed that the ideas, adjustments and everything else that comes from the review meeting will be done by the staff. The school manager should ensure that teachers are implementing the agreed development tasks or approaches by physically going round to see that they are on course. This can be done by walking around the school premises.

2.8.1.10 Management by walking around

Management by walking around (MBWA) is used to create a climate that matches the strategy (Digman, 1990: 313). It is the technique that effective leaders use to keep abreast of what is happening in the workplace, and to learn what issues they need to address. Using this technique, leaders make regular visits to the field and talk with many different people at

different times and on different levels. An example of where MBWA worked well is given from the Walmart company in Amazon where the founder Walton insisted that top managers should get into the stores to talk to the stores managers and listen to what associates have to say (Thompson, *et al.*, 2010: 44).

In the case of the head teacher, as he moves around to ensure the contents of the strategy are being observed, he or she indirectly persuades the implementers to adhere to the requirements in the strategy. This can help the head teacher to have evidence during staff appraisal. Persuasion can also be done through sharing.

2.8.1.11 Sharing

It has been confirmed that sharing is an enabling factor in successful SI. Steyn (2005: 20) contended that when employing new strategies for change to occur, there should be opportunities for teachers to share their achievements and problems. This notion cannot be doubted because when teachers meet for this purpose, those who are achieving the strategies will strengthen the colleagues who have problems in the implementation. Steyn (2005: 48) added that sharing stimulates teachers' reflections and broadens their perspectives. This is why it is better to share and describe what is desired than tell people what to do and how to do it (Purkey & Aspy, 2003: 53). This builds better relationships in schools and in this way, a good working environment is enhanced which is also a factor in SI.

2.8.1.12 Relationships

If the relationships among the staff (including the managers) in the school are not sound, it is highly unlikely that strategies can be well implemented. Therefore, the way people interact and the relationship they build in schools, for example, is crucial to the success of SI (Johnson, Scholes & Whittington, 2008: 434). Edgerson, *et al.* (2006: 2) asserted that teachers who see principals as facilitators, supporters and reinforcers for the jointly determined school mission rather than as guides, directors and leaders of their own personal agenda are far more likely to feel personally accountable for student learning. This means the way teachers perceive the principal's leadership determines their input into SI.

2.8.1.13 Culture

It is important to note that unless something can be done to remove the tension between the old and the new culture, the force of culture can neutralise and emasculate strategy changes

(David, 2009: 249). Because organisational culture functions as a control system which tells people what to do and what not to do (Van Houte, 2005: 79), Steyn (2005: 48) maintained that the success of any innovation depends on the maintenance of the desired culture in a school.

Creating a strategy supportive culture is essential to the success of strategy implementation. David (2009: 250) stated that one way in which such a culture can be created is by role modelling or positive reinforcement. Therefore, the head teacher in schools should ‘walk their talk’ concerning the culture of doing things in the implementation of SSPs. As strategists, they should strive to preserve, emphasise and build upon aspects of an existing culture that supports proposed new strategies. This includes changing a firm’s culture to fit a new strategy which, according to David (2009: 250), is usually more effective than changing a strategy to fit an existing change. In this process of changing culture, communication is very important. Van Houte (2005: 79) argues that in order to alter culture, new beliefs have to be communicated to the members of the organisation who need to absorb them. This shows that schools can be ‘recultured’ (Steyn, 2005: 47). Some of the areas in which reculturing may be embarked on are teamwork and networking.

2.8.1.14 Team work and networking

As the saying goes: ‘united we stand, divided we fall’, hence there is more likelihood of successful SI in the schools where there is unity of purpose, and this has been proved in schools. Steyn (2005: 14) noted that team work has capacity to bring about immense change in SI in schools. Halubono (1998: 58) asserted that teams and team work are vital group dynamics in the modern workplace because they help members to be more goal-oriented. When goals are attained, rewarding should be employed.

2.8.1.15 Rewards

Digman (1990: 327) confirmed that managers and people in general, tend to do better when they are rewarded for doing well. This indicates that good performance can be enhanced greatly by more rewarding. Chanda (2009: 105) reiterated that increased performance is only enhanced through rewarding of excellent performance. Therefore, key thrusts that succeed should be rewarded generously and visibly.

Rewards are a crucial enabling factor in successful strategy implementation and therefore, they should be carefully linked to the performance of strategy implementers. Rewards must

be linked to strategies in order for strategy to succeed (David, 2009: 258). Experience shows that for strategies to succeed, the implementers should accept and own them.

2.8.1.16 Acceptance and ownership

Acceptance brings about what Capon (2008: 161) called ‘refreezing’ where acceptance indicates that standards officers believe that old behaviour is unsuitable to new strategy and must be stopped. When this acceptance comes into the minds of implementers, they are likely to own SI and work to see it succeed.

For Steyn (2005: 46), ownership refers to team members experiencing meaningfulness of their task. This experience cannot just occur in those involved in the implementation of SSPs. Rather than dictating and imposing his decisions, the head teacher should work to create a sense of ownership in the teachers, that the strategy being implemented in the school is theirs. The ownership culture makes a difference when management is a facilitator rather than a dictator (David, 2009: 255). The best way to instil this in the implementers is by involving them right from the beginning of the decisions up to the implementation stage. Therefore, the leaders in the schools should enhance ownership in those involved in the implementation of SSPs right from their formulation. Having discussed the enabling factors, the constraining factors are also now discussed to give a balanced assessment.

2.8.2 Constraining Factors

The aspects that hinder the implementation of SSPs should also be discussed so that they are known and not allowed to stand in the way of the implementation of SSPs in schools. The opposite of all the above factors can also hinder the implementation of SSPs. Some of the constraining factors found in literature are discussed below.

2.8.2.1 Lack of orientation

If the implementers are not well oriented on what the SSPs are about, why they are there and how they should be implemented, they would only be doing trial and error in their implementation which would end up floundering. Research has proved that lack of orientation hinders effective implementation of strategies. In his study that evaluated the Performance Management Package (PMP) in the Zambia’s civil service, Mate (2006: 67) found that the effective implementation of the PMP was hampered by lack of comprehensive

induction. Orientation can make SI successful because when people are clear about what to do and why, they become more motivated and enthusiastic and tend to succeed.

Orientation makes implementers see the 'big picture.' Mundende (2007: 26) reported that when the strategy to teach geography through field projects was introduced in high schools in Zambia, failure to see the big picture of the requirements and meaning of the projects to be implemented led to failure to implement geography field projects. Therefore, orientation on the SSPs should be a priority. Although David (2009: 246) asserted that reorienting an organisation to get people to think and act strategically is not an easy task, but it should be done because lack of orientation gives no direction in the implementation of strategies when the implementers do not understand the strategy level.

2.8.2.2 Lack of clarity about policies

Lack of proper orientation hinders proper understanding of the policies and strategies to be implemented. The fact that lack of understanding makes strategy implementation unsuccessful has been confirmed by Mutombo and Mwenda (2010) who found that one of the factors that negatively affected the implementation of the re-entry policy in Zambian schools was lack of understanding of the policy by stakeholders such as parents and learners themselves. Cole (2004: 138) advised that those who are involved in the strategic management should establish policies that will guide the implementation of decisions.

Ranzik and Swanson (2010: 363) emphasised that during the implementation of educational change, activities aimed at making the staff understand change should be carried out. While the activities for the purpose of understanding should also be arrived at by the head teachers and the strategy coordinator, teachers should also be strategically involved in designing these activities so that they cooperate in the implementation thereof. When implementers understand what SI is all about, they are likely to accept it. It should be noted that this understanding is sometimes hindered by the simultaneous implementation of multiple strategies.

2.8.2.3 Simultaneous implementations

Sometimes, the control that the government puts on schools negatively affects the implementation of SSPs. This is due to contradictions in simultaneous implementations. For example, when one strategy is being implemented in a sector, and then the government calls for another strategy to be implemented in the same sector without considering its effects on

the prevailing strategy implementation, the subsequent implementation may undermine the success of the existing one. This was seen in Zambia between 2000 and 2006 when the high increase in enrolment for Grade 1 learners which the government demanded, hindered the success of an existing policy for increasing teacher supply and infrastructure to improve the quality of primary education. This was because when the number of teachers and classrooms increased, many new entrants (Grade 1 learners) were attracted and overcrowding somehow compromised the quality of education which the investment policy was trying to address (MOFA, 2008: 14).

In this case, there was also a problem of lack of coherence in the policies which were put in place at that time to improve education. The other problem which also existed at that time of BESSIP was fragmentation by way of allowing individual education projects to be supported by individual donors. The MOE (2003: 41) noted that the practice of giving assistance to individual projects in BESSIP led to institutional fragmentation and incoherent policies which disadvantaged the implementation of the sector plan. Lack of coherence in policies distorts direction in SI.

2.8.2.4 Negative attitudes

The problem of negative attitudes not only prevails in subordinates but also in the leaders. Therefore, a warning is that the leaders should not embark on policy implementation with a casual 'let's just see what happens' attitude. Negative attitudes may make head teachers in schools approach their strategic tasks casually, which could demoralise teachers.

The effects of workers' negative attitudes have been proven in the studies which have been done to assess the implementation of various strategic programmes. One such study conducted by Mate (2006) evaluated the implementation of Performance Management Package (PMP) within the Zambian civil service. Most civil servants interviewed felt that the civil service reforms (CSRs) come and go, but things basically remain the same. Obviously, this attitude made the civil servants take their new roles in the Performance Management Package (PMP) reform casually, which led to the failure of the implementation of the reforms. The same situation happened in India in the 1990s, where the negative attitudes of the civil servants caused the implementation of the reforms in the civil service to flounder (Michelo, 2007: 31). It would not be an exaggeration to say that due the negative attitude in among the implementers of new reforms in India was the cause of the problem. This informed the need to look at resistance in SI.

2.8.2.5 Resistance

Resistance can be considered the single greatest threat to successful SI (David, 2009: 246). This is because resistance in workers makes them dislike the given tasks and fail to perform them. Therefore, dealing with opposition and resistance is one of the greatest challenges school leaders face especially when new changes are imposed from high-level administrators outside the school (Fowler, 2009: 300). It could be that the authorities from the top mostly use what David (2009: 249) calls ‘force change strategy’ which results in high resistance. Therefore, force should not be used in the implementation of strategies in institutions because it leads to a lack of cooperation from those who are expected to comply.

Another point that David (2009: 250) advanced is that when new strategies are externally dictated, both managers and employees struggle to find meaning in them. He further explained that implementers often resist SI because they do not understand what is happening, and that this can happen at any stage or level of the SI process. Resistance can be manifested in three possible responses, namely exiting or leaving the organisation, always speaking about the problems, and disloyalty expressed by tacitly or openly by failing to conform to the policy (Weimer & Vining, 1992, cited in Fowler, 2009: 302).

School leaders should be prepared for resistance and devise ways of removing it or minimizing its impact. Fowler (2009: 303) suggests that the following can be employed.

- Involving representatives of all major implementers to reduce the likelihood of widespread resistance;
- Using persuasion by non-judgementally listening to opponents’ objectives;
- Analysing the opponents’ objectives to see if they have any merit;
- Providing opponents with information if their objections are unfounded to help them realise that they have no legitimate ground for opposition;
- Modifying the policy to meet some objections and allowing these to be part of the necessary mutual adaptation;
- Transferring the resisting individual groups; and
- Forming a steering committee to assure an oversight role if groups or an office which is important to the implementation is a problem.

Perhaps, if schools opt to use these suggested coping strategies, the implementation would not fail. Resistance does not only develop in implementers due to lack of understanding. It can also be caused by scepticism and poor conditions of service.

2.8.2.6 Scepticism

In simple terms, scepticism means not being sure of what is happening. It can be caused by unclear strategies or their background or rationale. Fowler (2009: 286) contended that innovation for the sake of innovation also creates an atmosphere of scepticism about all change. An example is where innovation is expected every year. This frequently makes implementation of the new policy fail because the implementers sense that the innovation is just for that year and therefore, they do not take it seriously (Fowler, 2009: 286).

The fact that innovation for the sake of it makes workers sceptical is not just assumed but has been supported by research. Fowler (2009: 301) reported on the implementation of authentic assessment which an outside organisation insisted should be implemented; however, it was found that teachers were sceptical about the value of the new policy. It was found that both across and within these schools, authentic assessment never achieved anything close to systematic implementation. Kelly (1999: 40) noted that the 1976 education reforms for development in Zambia which the United National Independent Party (UNIP) government imposed on education could not be implemented largely because the draft document was not supported by the stakeholders before implementing it. But the government ignored this opposition. It is recorded that there was scepticism and outright disbelief in the capacity of the Zambian people and social institutions to mobilise resources for achieving the goals contained in the education reforms. This made the implementation fail. The lesson from this is that the mind-set of the implementers makes them behave in ways that can sabotage SI.

2.8.2.7 Sabotage

The danger of sabotage is that even just one individual who desires it can irreparably damage SI efforts (David, 2009: 258). When many people involved in SI are negative and decide to sabotage SI, the effects are exponential. The answer to this could be one of the major causes of the failed implementation of SSPs in secondary schools. The ways in which strategy implementers can sabotage the implementation vary.

Fowler (2009: 302) asserted that a new change can be sabotaged in schools using the forms of disloyalty such as “token compliance” and “delayed compliance”. In the former type of

sabotage, teachers take shortcuts in their implementation and principals ignore those shortcuts. In the latter case, the principals may for example, allow teachers to use holidays to do their tasks such as writing and submitting reports which were needed during the course of the term. Fowler (2009: 302) added that the other way in which implementation can be sabotaged is through a practice he calls “outright sabotage” whereby implementers fabricate reports or lose all the necessary documents. In many schools, false reports are forwarded, received and unfortunately publicised without verification, thus undermining the SI system. However, the cause of failure in SI also arises from the government controls.

2.9 CHAPTER SUMMARY

In this chapter, the strategy implementation phenomenon has been explained to give an idea of how it has been conceived by some authors and also what it entails. The phenomenon has been understood to be a way of coming up with new plans and implementing those plans in order to improve targeted areas. It is clear that this phenomenon begins with correct thinking and requires the involvement of all relevant stakeholders in the implementation. The theoretical framework discussed in this section emphasises the determinants of good performance for those involved in SI, giving an idea of why some implementers in schools did well and why others could not implement the SSPs properly.

The two issues teased out from literature concerning SI are that it has been little researched in schools and also that the theories on SI and variables crucial to it are scanty. The discussion has highlighted several factors that enable and those that hinder the implementation of strategies. It is evident from the discussion that the factors that influence SI are both internal and external and that they largely pertain to resources.

The internal factors are largely to do with leadership, climate, attitudes and behaviours, processes and procedures in organisations including schools. The external ones pertain to education authorities at national, provincial and district levels who are the initiators of strategic planning and implementation to improve the quality of education in schools. Since all these factors have been extracted from literature, it was important to identify others and also prove them empirically through an assessment of the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools. Therefore, a study was conducted whose design and methodology are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH PARADIGMS, DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter explored the literature on the factors that either enable or constrain the implementation of improvement strategies in secondary schools. The review of literature was meant to answer the key question: what are the underlying factors that enable or constrain the implementation of the SSPs in secondary schools? Particular reference was made to the factors that influence the implementation of strategies in education in Zambia as reported in the national reports on education and studies conducted.

This chapter seeks to outline and explain the research paradigms, design, methods, procedures and techniques which were chosen and used in order to find answers to the research questions earlier raised in Chapter 1. Efforts have been made to justify why and how each of these aspects was chosen.

3.2 RESEARCH PARADIGMS

When research is embarked on, it is not just out of the blue that a researcher wakes up and begins to do it. It is done because the researcher has some views and beliefs about what is happening in the area he or she wants to research. This influences the researcher's choice of methods. In literature, it is clear that the whole framework of worldviews, beliefs, values and methods within which research takes place is called a 'paradigm' (Jourbish, Kurrham, Fatima & Haider, 2011: 2083). Zulu (2007: 49) asserted that paradigms are patterns or models of understanding and that they shape our understanding of the world in relation to ourselves and those we interact with in our circumstances. This then means that the study occurs within an identified and chosen research paradigm which gives direction on the choice of suitable data to collect and techniques to use for collecting, analysing and interpreting data. Jourbish, *et al.* (2011: 2084) noted that there are several research paradigms used in contemporary qualitative research such as interpretivism, positivism, post-positivism, post-modernism, and participatory/cooperative construction paradigm. This study adopts an interpretivist approach because it holds that "reality can only be understood through subjective interpretation of reality". This philosophy is key to studying phenomena in their natural environment. Interpretivists say even interpretations are part of scientific knowledge being pursued (Zulu,

2007: 10). Because I wanted to see how SI was taking place in secondary schools, I followed the interpretivist paradigm.

Therefore, this paradigm necessitated the use of data collection methods such as participant observation, document analysis and interviews which would make it possible to see and hear reality and also the questionnaires which made me hear the views of the SESOs concerning SI. Interviews, for example, suited the interpretivist paradigm, since interpretive researchers conduct open-ended interviews to understand how people experience phenomena (Terre Blanche, Durrheim & Painter, 2006: 279).

The interpretivist paradigm leads to a subjective interpretation of reality as can be seen from the interpretations which are either based on what interviewees said, records found in the documents, what was seen happening during field work or what SESOs wrote as responses. Ospina's (2004: 3) contention that qualitative research should use an inductive mode of "letting data speak" was adhered to. Nevertheless, questionnaires, which are more quantitative in nature, are becoming more acceptable in qualitative research. Since there seems to be some debate about using "surveys" in qualitative research, this point needs to be clarified. Debating on this issue, Marsland, Wilson, Abeyasekera and Kleih (2001: 199) observed that qualitative surveys involving a small number of participants have become quite common. I consequently use the word "questionnaire" in terms of the qualitative paradigm that I largely adopted.

3.3 REASONS FOR CHOOSING INTERPRETIVISM

It is assumed that qualitative researchers are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience (Jourbish, *et al.*, 2011: 2083). As the research progresses, data should be interpreted in order to gain the understanding of what is going on (Jourbish, *et al.*, 2011: 2084). For example, I interpreted data which I obtained from the management meetings which I attended where I heard members agree to resume morning 'prep' (in school 'F'). The TOD report for the following day stated that morning 'prep' was conducted the previous day. This could be interpreted to suggest that strategies work out better when they are agreed upon rather than when they are imposed.

Qualitative research represents the approach known as interpretivism. Interpretive researchers do not disturb the context unduly, but attempt to become a natural part of the context in which phenomena occur (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006: 287). In this regard, I asked for a class

to teach so that I could fit into what teachers were doing. I was involved in reporting on time for work daily, not missing classes, preparing lesson plans, teaching, attending staff meetings, taking tea at break and so forth.

In addition to the above general reasons, the choice of paradigms also depends on the assumptions of the available or existing frameworks'. Jourbish, *et al.* (2011: 2084) noted that paradigms are made up of views based on:

- Philosophy
- Ontology
- Epistemology
- Methodology

3.3.1 Philosophical View

The way in which research is conducted may be conceived in terms of research philosophy by which this research is influenced and guided. According to Cambridge Dictionary Online (2015:1), philosophy is the use of reason in understanding such things as the nature of the real world and existence, the use and limits of knowledge, and the principles of moral judgment. This guided me in arriving at conclusions which were based on the reasons from systematically analysed findings drawn from the research data. The philosophical viewpoint that I have adopted on this dissertation is the interpretivist one which is founded on the “theoretical belief that reality is socially constructed and fluid. Thus, what we know is always negotiated within cultures, social settings and relationship with other people” (Cohen & Crabtree, 2006: n.p.).

3.3.2 Ontological View

White (2005: 81) explained that ontology is a Greek word which if broken into two means ‘onto’ (being) ‘logia’ (written or spoken discourse). He went on to state that the ontological view on what is reality or truth in qualitative research is the one constructed by the individuals involved in the research situation such as the researcher, the individuals being investigated and or the audience. This can be taken to mean that what should be taken as reality or truth in the study is what is written or spoken by research participants.

Therefore, what informants said was noted and written down as reality and truth. Hence, the decision to use questionnaires and interactive methods such as interviews, observations and document analysis because they made it possible for reality to be observed read or heard and interpreted (interpretivism). According to Terre Blanche, Durrheim and Painter (2006: 278), this choice was ontological because the methods chosen enabled me to assess reality. There was also an influence of the epistemological view in the choice of data collection methods.

In this thesis, the more specific ontological question I seek to answer is “what is the nature of strategy implementation in Zambia?” Ultimately, this basic question leads to more general enquiry: “what guarantees successful strategy implementation in schools?” and “why are there problems in this regard?” Up to this point in the research, the literature review has explored known data on strategic implementation in schools in an attempt to answer the last two questions.

3.3.3 Epistemological View

White (2005: 82) explained that epistemology is also a Greek word which means knowledge, and is a study or theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity. He adds that epistemology is about the relationship between the researcher and the research subject which is being studied. For Terre Blanche, *et al.* (2006: 278), epistemology is the assumption about how things are known.

White (2005: 83) further explained that in epistemology, the qualitative researcher chooses not to distance herself from the people being studied in the setting. This indicates that the closer the researcher is to the informants, the more likely that he will observe and hear reality as experienced naturally. This increases the validity of data and the results too. To a lesser extent, I agree with this epistemological view. As indicated in Chapter 1, I have been involved in monitoring and evaluation of strategy implementation in Zambian schools. The fact that I undertake this research arises out of my need to know the phenomenon of SI which is such an important aspect of the educational landscape and what affects this phenomenon in schools. This is obviously a miniscule element of knowledge within the vast body of knowledge in education. Nevertheless, I hope that this will contribute to the entire body of knowledge in this field and, indeed, to knowledge generally.

3.3.4 Methodological View

According to Terre Blanche, *et al* (2006: 278), ‘methodology’ is a practical procedure that gives effect to epistemology. This can be understood to mean that knowledge can be acquired when a method is followed to guide that acquisition. Different views exist on the methodology of gathering knowledge or truth through research. White (2005: 82) differentiated between methodology in quantitative and qualitative research. He noted that methodologically, in quantitative studies, there is an established set of procedures and steps that guide the researcher, while in qualitative research there is greater flexibility in both methods and process. With this understanding, it was decided to employ the methodology of collecting data using ways which were going to bring her close to the informants’ experiences. This justified why participant observation, for example, was selected. The flexibility aspects noted in White’s epistemological view also persuaded the researcher to choose qualitative research because flexibility allowed for the following advantages in the study:

- Making changes in questions as the situation unfolded during data collection. For example, the 4th research question in the proposal was eliminated when it was realised that the question was a research topic on its own.
- Making decisions about what else to follow up on, such as issues arising from interviews, documents and observations. This enriched the data.

3.4 RESEARCH DESIGN

Kombo and Tromp (2006: 8) asserted that the term research means to look for, examine, investigate or explore. For Orodho and Tromp (2002: 2), research is a process of arriving at dependable solutions to problems through the planned systematic collection, analysis and interpretation of data. This definition is similar to the way many other authors define research. For example, McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 231) defined research as the systematic process of collecting and logically analysing data for some purpose.

Ospina (2004: 1) contended that the term systematic in research means planned, ordered and agreed upon rules. This then suggests that research should be designed in such a way that some system is followed in the way it is done. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 8) noted that research is systematic because a general system is followed in terms of identifying a problem, reviewing literature and collecting data. In other words, a research seeks to answer the

question of how, what, and from whom will data be collected, and what methods of data collection will be used (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 22). This indicates that research should follow a structure of a desired design. Thus Kombo and Tromp (2006: 70) took research design to be the structure of research.

According to Mouton (2001: 55), a research design is a plan or blueprint of how you intend to conduct research. It describes how the study will be conducted by stating the plan for conducting the study. From this notion, it can be concluded that research designs determine the type of research methodologies which will be followed in the study. Therefore, the research design should be chosen before the research methods are chosen. That is perhaps why Mouton (2001: 55) argued that research designs and research methodologies are not one and the same. The researcher uses the term research design to mean the characteristics or plan of a qualitative and quantitative study. In line with Mouton's view that the research design comes first followed by research methodology, the research design has been discussed first. Since it is clear what a research design is, it is important to point out that the design which was chosen for this study was largely the qualitative research design of an interactive type, although a quantitative design was also used, but to a lesser extent. This entails a mixed research design.

3.4.1 Mixed Research Design

The motivation to adopt a mixed design which combines qualitative and quantitative paradigms is becoming increasingly popular because many situations are best investigated using a variety of designs. Jeant and Hibel (2011: 636) confirmed that mixed method approaches have been used in many research projects.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 27) added that the mixed methods designs lends itself to triangulation where both the qualitative and quantitative data collecting methods are used at the same time so that together, a more comprehensive set of data is collected. They posited that fusing each approach provides complete and more valid results (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 28). The motivation to use a mixed design was also due to the advantage noted by Newman, Duane, Ming, Jianping and Maas, (2006) that it contributed to the understanding of the behaviour of the study participants. This motivated me to introduce a questionnaire to maximise the understanding of influencing factors on SI. The researcher believed that by mixing the research designs, the trustworthiness of the results could be ensured.

Triangulation entails collecting material in as many different ways and from as many diverse sources as possible to help the researcher to better understand a phenomenon (White, 2005: 105; Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006: 287). In this case, the study adopted data and method triangulation for corroboration purposes. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 348) noted that corroboration helps to countercheck what different sources of data show at different times and different situations when the researcher is in the field. For example, in this study, while participating and observing what was on the observation schedule and teaching at each school, relevant documents were also studied to obtain data on what was going on in the school with respect to SI. In order to determine the perspectives of people outside the schools, (the SESOs), a questionnaire was used and the results were compared with interview transcripts of the HODs and teachers. White (2005: 89) calls this “data triangulation”.

3.4.2 Qualitative Research Design

Qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore a social or human problem (Jourbish, Kurram, Ahmed, Fatima & Haider, 2011: 2083). This type of research design involves description (Kombo & Tromp 2006: 9), uses natural settings (Kombo & Tromp, 2006: 9, Woods 2006: 1, Jourbish *et al.*, 2011: 2083) and seeks out the ‘why’, that is to say, it aims at helping in understanding why things are the way they are (Jourbish, *et al.*, 2011: 2082). Qualitative researchers tend to keep field notes as they participate in the field work (Mouton, 2001: 107). This study followed a qualitative approach because it carried the characteristics of qualitative research outlined above: The description of what was observed in meetings (for example) has been given. The study sought to find out the implementation of the SSPs was problematic in schools. The researcher lived in the schools’ natural setting, and kept field notes.

Qualitative research design has been chosen because it also allows for the identification of tradition (Bryman, 2004: 266). Right or wrong, ways of doing things traditionally in schools were suspected to be among the hindrances to the implementation of SSPs. This contributed to the decision to conduct a case study.

3.4.3 Case Study Design

In this paper, the case study has been taken to be a design because a case study is a design (Hyett, Kenny & Dickson-Swift, 2014: n.p.²), and not a methodology. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 23) and White (2005: 105) maintained that in case study designs, the researcher explores in detail a single entity or phenomenon (the case) which could be either a bound system, a program, an event, an activity, an organisation, institution or a set of individuals bounded by time and place and context by employing a multiple sources of data found in the setting. In this study, the phenomenon of strategy implementation for the period 2011-2015 was studied in two selected schools using a small population, and as such, this study qualifies as a case study. Concerning a single entity or phenomenon which can be studied in a case study, McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 316) took policy implementation as one of the examples of one phenomenon which could be studied in a case regardless of a number of sites and participants. Bell (2005: 10) also confirmed that case studies have been done about implementation processes and that they can identify interactive processes at work which affect the implementation of systems. Furthermore, Bryman (2004: 48) submitted that a single school can be a case. This means that a number of schools can be cases and the same applies to the selection of two individual schools.

McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 26) further noted that case studies are interactive designs because of a face-to-face approach used in data collection. Mouton (2001: 149) also pointed out that case studies employ multiple sources of data found in the setting; the researcher, therefore, used various data sources mentioned in this chapter. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 72) maintained that a case study is a way of organising educational data and since the study aimed at obtaining educational data, a case study was opted for. This design was also chosen to look for what is common and particular about the cases which were studied. The study was largely done in natural situations because schools were studied as daily activities were happening. In addition to this qualitative approach, the study to a lesser extent employed a quantitative research design.

3.4.4 Quantitative Research Design

To a little extent, a quantitative research design was also employed in this study. A self-administered questionnaire was used on Senior Education Standards Officers (SESOs) and as

² No page numbers are provided in this journal article

such, the study was quantitative. White (2005:8) proposes that a quantitative researcher should remain distant and independent of what is being researched. In this sense then, the questionnaires which were administered by the SESOs themselves in the absence of the researcher were consistent with White's proposition stated above. By using a self-administered questionnaire, the researcher was distant from the SESOs who were also research participants. This design was also used to maximise the search for contributory factors in strategy implementation and hence strengthen trustworthiness of results. The narrative responses from the participants were translated into figures and tallied. Tallies were then converted into percentages to get a picture of what the responses indicated.

The discussion above strengthens the earlier claim that this study is a mixed research design.

3.5 POPULATION

In research, a population is a group of individuals, objects, items or events that have one thing in common which the researcher is interested in studying (White, 2005: 113). In addition to these characteristics, McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 119) stated that the population can also be called the "target population" or "universe" and that they conform to specific criteria to which the researcher intends to generalise the results of the research. They further argued that a target population is different from the list of elements from which the sample is actually selected which is termed the "survey population or sampling frame".

From this background, it can be taken that the target population is bigger than a sampling frame. In this light, the target population for this study consisted of 26 secondary schools in the province and the sampling frame was a total of 9 secondary schools in Mansa and Samfya districts of Luapula province.

3.6 SELECTION OF CASES

Two secondary schools were purposively and conveniently (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 123) selected in that they are all "known to have been involved in the same situation" (Bryman, 2004: 346), which in this case was improving learner achievement through the implementation of SSPs.

Drawing from Joseph's (2009) study where two opposing schools, one deemed to be successful and the other one deemed to be unsuccessful were studied, the researcher studied

two secondary schools because they represented two unique cases of good and bad with respect to SI. Specifically, one was deemed to be implementing, and the other was not seen to be implementing the strategic plans. These schools had “information rich cases for in-depth study” (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 319) with regard to how they went about the process of strategy implementation. School ‘F’, an urban co-educational government boarding school was selected as an extreme case because it was known to be outstanding. School ‘N’, an urban co-education government boarding school was chosen as an intense case for being known to be below average (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 320) in the implementation of the SSPs. The reports of the monitoring visits by the provincial and district education standards officers and EQUIP 2 had shown that school ‘F’ had implemented most of the SSPs meant to improve learner performance while school ‘N’ had implemented only two of them.

3.7 SAMPLE STRUCTURE AND SIZE

The total number of the people from which data was collected is what is called a sample size (Kombo & Tromp, 2006: 78). To determine the sample size one can use the available rules of thumb or general guidelines. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 127) reported that general guidelines are used mostly in educational research. Therefore, the researcher decided to use the general guidelines in this educational research. One guideline about a purposeful sample size asserted by White (2005: 115) and McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 321) is that in qualitative research, a sample can range from 1 to 40 or more. The other is that the logic of the sample size is related to the following:

- Purpose of the study;
- The research problem;
- The major data collection techniques; and
- The availability of information.

In the light of the former guideline, the study had a total of 27 respondents. The other reason for choosing this sample size was due to the consideration of the type of data collection techniques. If the sample size was more than 27, data analysis would become too complicated and hence taxing. The breakdown of the sample size is shown in the table below.

Table 3.1 Sample structure and size

Respondent group	Total number
Senior Planning officer	1
District Education Board Secretary	2
Senior Education Standards officers	8
Head teachers	2
Subject Heads of Sections (HODs)	14
Total	27

3.8 DATA COLLECTION METHODOLOGIES

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006: 323), when the researcher begins to hear and see what is occurring about the phenomena being researched, then basic data collection begins. In order for data to be collected during the study, various techniques were employed. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 82) argued that data collection techniques allow the researcher to systematically collect information about objects under study. Therefore, the methods which were used for systematic collection of data in the study were:

- literature study;
- participant observation;
- interviews;
- focus group discussion; and
- document review.

Data can be either primary or secondary. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 100) and Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008: 344) maintained that primary data is information gathered directly from respondents while secondary information is directly collected by the user, but involves the collection of data that already has been collected by someone else. In this study, primary data was collected using interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions and observations, while content or document analysis provided secondary data.

The observation of things being studied in research is said to be well done when the researcher becomes fully involved in the setting being studied. This is known as participant observation (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006: 308).

3.8.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation involved the description of what was observed as the principals and teachers went about doing their work. According to Blumberg, *et al.* (2008: 344), Participant observation can be used when devices for accurate recording such as observation schedules are available, and where natural settings are imperative. Therefore, since an observation schedule was devised to see what goes on every day naturally in the schools to identify underlying factors, this method was adopted. Participant observation allows for listening and observing (Kane, 1995: 177), and also allows for understanding (Kane, 1995: 176; Bell, 2005: 17; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 346). The other advantages are pointed out below.

3.8.1.1 Advantages of participant observation

Terre Blanche, *et al.* (2006: 309) pointed out the following as advantages of participant observation:

- It takes place while things are actually happening hence fulfilling the quality of qualitative research which is that it takes place in a natural setting;
- It does not require intrusiveness (such as taking note of something without attracting much attention); and
- It is highly reflexive.

Blumberg, *et al.* (2008: 344) also noted that observation helps to secure information from the environment's context to optimise the naturalness of the research setting.

3.8.1.2 Types of participant observation

Terre Blanche, *et al.* (2006: 309) and Blumberg, *et al.* (2008: 344) further distinguished between three (3) types of observations:

- Descriptive observation where the researcher asks general questions such as 'what is going on here?' In terms of exploratory approach, the researcher describes in detail everything he sees, such as how leaders check to ensure the teachers are in class teaching;
- Focused observation where more particular questions are asked about an event or looking out for particular behaviour such as conducting management meetings; and
- Selective observations where questions are only asked about a particular event that the researcher has specific questions about.

In this study, descriptive observation was employed when observing what was discussed in meetings, how meetings were conducted, the attitudes of principals and staff in the meetings, relationships or rapport (climate) between the principals and the teachers, and the culture of doing things. This is because, according to Deventer and Kruger (2003: 14), the school culture and climate affect success in the school. Focused observation is selective observation that excludes peripheral factors that might also be present within the research environment (see Appendix VIII for the observation schedule). Observations were also meant to check whether the strategies outlined in the SSPs were a concern in what participants were doing at school.

3.8.2 Interviews

Kombo and Tromp (2006: 92) noted that interviews involve questions asked orally. White (2005: 141) stated that this is what differentiates them from a questionnaire where data is collected by making respondents write answers to written questions. The study adopted what McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 350) call “in-depth interviews” where open-ended questions are used. Informal semi- and unstructured interviews lasting about 45 minutes to 1 hour each were conducted to get data from the PEO, DEBS and principals.

The interviews which were conducted used structured, semi-structured and unstructured questions. Structured questions provide a set of choices from which a respondent is required to select one choice as the answer. Semi-structured questions are open-ended but fairly specific in intent, while unstructured questions allow the interviewer great latitude in asking broad questions in whatever order seems appropriate (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 204).

3.8.3 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

In order to get a variety of views about the topic, it is advisable to put individual participants together to gain their views and experiences of a topic. This allows for the collection of several perspectives about the same topic. White (2005: 146) described a focus group as a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on the topic that is the subject of research from personal experience. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 360) pointed out that these discussions are held by participant observers using in-depth interviews as a confirmation technique. White (2006: 147) asserted that, normally, FGDs consist of between 6-12 people with not more than 12 questions. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 95) maintained that a minimum of 6 participants should be involved in FGDs, while

McMillan and Schumacher suggested that a minimum of 8 participants should be interviewed in FGDs.

The HODs were purposefully selected in the two schools to participate in a 45-minute group discussion guided by 7 open-ended questions. A total of 14 out of 27 participants participated in the FGDs.

3.8.4 Document Analysis/Review

Documents can also be used to collect data for research. McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 426) asserted that documents are records of past events. They noted that documents may be written and printed material, official or unofficial, public or private. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 120) also referred to document analysis as content analysis. They contended that document analysis examines the intensity with which certain words have been used and systematically describe the form or content of written and/or spoken material. This is a quantitative technique, which further supports the mixed methods design adopted in this study.

This assertion is in line with the interpretivist research paradigm where it is believed that reality only lies in words. This implies that the researcher should analyse the written words in documents.

3.8.4.1 How content analysis works

In this process it is required that firstly, the data source to be studied should be selected and then a classification system to record information should be developed. It is also required that each data source be analysed along a number of dimensions inductively (by identifying themes and patterns) or deductively (quantifying frequencies of data). Kombo and Tromp (2006: 120) further indicated that content analysis follows an interpretivist approach in the sense that when interpreting the results, the frequency with which a symbol or idea appears may be interpreted as a measure of importance, attention and emphasis. Kombo and Tromp (2006: 120) asserted that content analysis may be:

- Pragmatic (classifying signs according to their probable cause):
- Systematic (classifying signs according to meanings):
- Designatory (determines the frequency with which certain objects, persons, institutions or concepts are mentioned):

- Attributive (examines the frequency with which certain characterisation or descriptors are used with emphasis on the adjectives, verbs, and descriptive phrase qualifiers); or
- Assertive (provides the frequency with which certain objects [persons or institutions] are characterised in a particular way).

In this study, designation, attribution and assertion were applied. Designation came in where the frequency with which persons such as HODs, and concepts such as ‘monitoring teaching’ and ‘assessment’ were used in documents. Their use indicated what was emphasised concerning strategies outlined in the SSPs. Attribution came in where action verbs such as ‘urged,’ ‘shared’ ‘emphasise,’ ‘agreed.’ and descriptors such as ‘good,’ bad’ and ‘fair,’(to mention but a few) were used in SSP-related activities which were reported in the documents. Assertion was applied where characterisation such as ‘team work’ was used in documents to characterise how a particular SSP-related activity was being done in the school.

It is argued that this type of analysis is usually aimed at public documents (Mouton, 2006: 166). It has further been argued that using documentary sources to collect data is much easier than doing interviews or participant observation. Sometimes documentary sources can even be more extensive than interviews. The documents which can be studied include personal and official documents. Examples of personal documents that can be studied include diaries and letters while those of official documents include memos, minutes of meetings and working papers (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006: 316). The study, therefore, included the study of the following documents:

- Office diary for the principal (with his consent);
- SSPs documents;
- Teacher on duty book;
- Prep attendance register;
- Departmental files;
- Minutes of meetings such as staff meetings, finance committee minutes, management meetings, parent-teacher meetings and others;
- Assembly book; and
- Logbooks and others whose content could give a clue to the attention given to SI to improve learner performance.

Other documents such as books and journals were also studied for the following reasons:

- To get background information;
- To avoid duplicating previous studies (White, 2005: 253); and
- To discover recent theories about the study.

These documents were used to get additional evidence on the prevalence of causal factors identified because documentary evidence is used to supplement information (Odhiambo, 2005: 406). McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 357) contended that these documents can:

- show the official chain of command;
- show clues about leadership style and values; and
- suggest the official perspective on a topic or issues.

Mouton (2001: 188) added that data from documents can add other nuances that might reside in data or can be compared with other data already collected.

3.9 ETHICAL MEASURES

For McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 117), ethics are concerned with beliefs about what is right or wrong from a moral perspective.

When research is allowed to be conducted, the researcher should maintain integrity (Kombo & Tromp, 2006: 132). For this reason, it is now a requirement in some countries like South Africa that all social sciences research involving human participants be reviewed by an independent research ethics committee (REC) before data collection can commence (Terre Blanche, *et al.*, 2006: 61). This suggests that there are research ethics which the researcher is expected to adhere to. Ethics, according to White (2005: 210), is a set of widely accepted moral principles which are suggested by an individual or group to offer guidelines and behavioural expectations about the most appropriate conduct towards those involved in the research.

White (2005: 210) asserts that ethics deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong. Research ethics largely focuses on the welfare of research participants (Terre Blanche, *et al.* 2006: 61). The ethics which were considered and how they were observed are outlined below: The ethics which were observed were adopted from Mouton (2001: 238). They included:

- Details of theories, methods and research designs relevant to the study have been given;
- The highest possible technical standards in research were adhered to;

- Plagiarism was avoided by acknowledging all authors of publications used and the participants' verbatim counts;
- No simultaneous submission of scripts to more than one publisher was done. Only UNISA received this research report. If other authorities in Zambia require the full report, permission will have to be sought from UNISA before releasing it;
- The study was not secretly conducted. It was openly conducted in the schools with the full knowledge of concerned stakeholders;
- An obligation to the free and open dissemination of research results was observed by disseminating results to all participants;
- The subjects' right to privacy was observed by asking participants to choose a place where they would feel safe to be interviewed and also to choose whether their interview should be video or tape recorded;
- The participants' rights (such as a right to refuse to be interviewed or to answer a question and others) were read out to the participants before involving them;
- Anonymity was ensured by coding the Provincial Education Officer as leader 'T' while schools, principals and DEBS were coded as school 'F' and 'N'. HODs chose to be coded as 'A/B' and so on. A tape recorder was used instead of a video recorder during interviews. Interviewees were asked to choose what they would like to be called. They chose to be called Mr A, B and so on;
- Confidentiality was ensured by making sure that the information collected was only handled by the researcher including tedious tasks such as transcribing. The notebook where the field notes were taken was labelled as 'RS' for 'R' to mean Research Study for researcher. Transcribing was done in a secluded place.
- Disclosure of the theory/ies and methods that were used in the study. The expectancy-value theory that was chosen has been discussed in Chapter 2, the methods are detailed in Chapter 3 and the requirements on referencing were adhered to;
- Avoiding fabrication by differentiating between my views and what was contained in my field notes;
- Observation of the ethics required by UNISA such as correct referencing.

3.10 TRUSTWORTHINESS

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010: 104), validity refers to the degree to which scientific explanations of phenomena match reality. Reliability refers to the stability or

consistency of an instrument when used repeatedly. However, Schulze (2002: 79) noted that there are those researchers that suggest that validity and reliability relate to the quantitative research approach and that these terms are not appropriate for qualitative research. In the light of this view, the concept trustworthiness is rather preferred and is used hereafter in the place of validity and reliability.

I used Guba’s model for trustworthiness that addresses ways for warding off biases in the results of research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) cited in De Vos, Strydom, Fouché and Delpont (2005: 346) proposed four constructs that accurately reflect the assumptions of trustworthiness in the qualitative paradigm. These constructs are:

- Credibility: I explained what the situation was concerning the implementation of SSPs in the province;
- Transferability: My findings could be relevant to another similar context;
- Dependability: Findings would probably be similar if the inquiry were to be replicated; and
- Conformability: The research results are solely a function of the participants.

Trustworthiness was ensured through conformance with ways suggested by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 324), White (2005: 200) and Woods (2006: 22), namely: multi-method strategies, participant language/verbatim counts, low inference descriptions, mechanically-recorded data, participant researcher and member checking.

In order for the findings of this study to be trustworthy, strategies were employed as shown in the table below:

Table 3.2 Strategies used to enhance trustworthiness

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION IN THE STUDY
Multi method strategies	Allows triangulation of data collection and analysis methods time, persons and data.	Interviews, focus group discussions, observations, questions and document analysis methods were used to collect data. Distillation of responses from questionnaires into tabular presentations. segmentation coding category emerging patterns Observing the head teacher in meetings and as he went round to see lessons. Interviewing the PEO, DEBS head teachers and HODs.
Participant language/verbatim counts.	Attain literal statements of participants and quotations from documents.	Specific statements from participants were quoted.

STRATEGY	DESCRIPTION	APPLICATION IN THE STUDY
Low inference descriptions	Personal. Precise, almost literal and detailed descriptions of people and situations.	The management meeting which was held on Monday in the schools were conducted in a free and fair situation whereby, the head teachers allowed the HODs to guide him on issues such as whether to have morning 'prep' or not.
Mechanically-recorded data	Use of tape recorders, photographs and video recorders.	Meetings were tape recorded. Interviews were mostly tape recorded too as preferred by participants.
Participant researcher	Use of participant recorded perceptions in diaries or anecdotal records for corroboration.	Recorded interview responses.
Member checking	Checking informally with participants for accuracy during data collection.	There was a follow-up inquiry after the focus group discussion with boarding teachers in school 'F' on the relationship with the principal to corroborate what was registered in the interviews.

Source: McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 324), White (2005: 200) and Woods (2006: 22).

3.11 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter has highlighted various frameworks that guided the study. The paradigms and the views or assumptions that influenced the choice of research design and methodologies have been pointed out. Interpretivism was the major paradigm that guided the study.

Efforts to increase the trustworthiness of the research findings were made by way of varying the data collection methods suggested by researchers and using a variety of suitable tools. Research ethics were considered and the ways in which these were observed has been outlined, including the length of time spent on particular research activities. The next section explains how the collected data were analysed and interpreted.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter 3, the research methodology, sampling, data collection, data analysis techniques and research ethics were discussed. In this chapter, an explanation of how the collected data was analysed and interpreted is given. The responses of the participants are analysed and interpreted in view of the findings in the literature review. The findings in this section are presented for both qualitative and quantitative data analysis according to the four categories that emerged during data analysis. These categories are: management, teacher, learner and stakeholder categories. Each of them includes the related factors.

4.2 DATA ANALYSIS

The analysis of qualitative data was guided by documented conventional procedures suitable for qualitative data analysis. I made use of McMillan and Schumacher's (2006: 370) approach to analyse qualitative data. This approach is elucidated in this section. The analysis resulted in some factors being major, important and left over as posited by McMillan and Schumacher (2006: 370). Following this approach, the factors which were found in all data sets were labelled as 'major' ones while those which were found in most of the data sets were taken as 'important'. The rest of the factors were labelled as 'left over.'

Data which were captured during participant observation in each school were recorded on the observation schedule form. The observations were noted for each item on the schedule. Then influencing factors were teased out from the observations and comments noted down. Data which were captured from document analysis were recorded on the schedule and the documents which were studied were noted. Then data were fitted into a suitable category.

Data that were captured during individual interviews and focus group discussions were first transcribed, and then the large bodies of texts were broken down into smaller datasets according to particular themes identified in each set. The resultant specific themes were studied closely in order to classify the identified themes into categories. In this process, I considered practice, context, emphasis, frequency of comments and specificity. The findings

began to emerge right from the datasets formed in the first step up to the categories that were finally derived.

4.3 FACTORS THAT AFFECT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF SSPs

The findings from the participants' responses in both qualitative and quantitative data, my observations and document analysis showed that the factors that affect the implementation of SSPs related to school management, teachers, learners and other external stakeholders. The tables in this section show the findings from the responses on the questionnaires which were administered to the inspectors of schools at the Provincial Education Office. Some of the factors that are shown in the tables were also found after the analysis of interview data.

Of all the factors mentioned above, school management-related factors were cited by most of the respondents meaning that management was seen to be largely influencing the implementation of SSPs.

4.3.1 School Management Related Factors

The management factors identified as having an effect on the implementation of SSPs were largely to do with monitoring styles, the holding of meetings, resource availability and the review of the implementation progress among many others. Of the four factors mentioned above, monitoring and meetings were identified as 'major' factors because they were found in all data sets. Monitoring was mentioned 29 times in total by all the 27 respondents in interviews and questionnaires, while meetings were mentioned only 16 times by all 27 respondents,

Resources were identified as 'important' factors because they were not mentioned in all data sets. The two factors were only mentioned 11 times by 16 respondents while reviewing was also only mentioned 11 times by 13 respondents. Therefore, monitoring became the largest factor in SI.

4.3.1.1 Monitoring styles

Apart from being mentioned most frequently during interviews and during the answering of questionnaires, monitoring was also mentioned more frequently in each meeting I attended at School 'F' than in School 'N'. Document analysis showed that monitoring was done by school managers, such as the PEO, DEBS, SESOs, and cooperating partners like STEP-UP Zambia, the USAID funded project. Even though this was the case in both schools, I

observed that monitoring was more focused, frequent and vigilantly done in School 'F' than in School 'N'. Period registers to monitor teachers' attendance of classes for teaching were available in both schools but they were seen to be used on a daily basis by the HODs on duty only in School 'F' as opposed to School 'N' where they were used erratically. The strategy of using HODs to monitor others was suggested by Bryson (2004: 261), who said that there should be a special monitoring team. During the interview with the principal of School 'N', he said, *'Well, the plans are implemented in the sense that we strictly check... I became very vicious to monitor strictly until such [a] thing takes off'*. This is supported by the notion that a "good principal monitors implementation" (MOE, 2009: 16) (Section 2.7.1.7).

In School 'N', HODs were not seen to be active in monitoring the teachers and learners. The HODs in School 'F' were alert and the records for departmental meetings showed that most of them reminded their members that they would be monitored every period using the class attendance register that was agreed upon. Fiddler, *et al.* (1996: 132) (Section 2.7.1.4) contends that "responsibility should allow for monitoring the implementation". Both schools planned to use prefects to monitor the learners, but it was only in School 'F' where the prefects ensured that their colleagues were in classrooms during lesson time.

4.3.1.2 Holding meetings

Another way in which monitoring was done was through meetings. In both schools, staff meetings were held, although they were very rare in School 'N' due to meetings being called by the higher authorities in the Ministry of Education. When the principal for School 'N' was asked about what made implementation of SSPs difficult, he said: *'Ah the difficulty is, sometimes, when we plan to have a meeting, you are called to attend another meeting, so those meetings were not consistent, so we were not meeting regularly'*. This statement shows that the implementation of SSPs was hampered by overriding meetings called by the higher authorities in the Ministry of Education. Research has shown that meetings help teachers to be kept abreast of new ideas and information and be made to gain positive change in attitude towards the planned strategies (Mulundano, 2006: 45) (Section 2.7.1.12).

At School 'F', there were frequent meetings held. During fieldwork, I attended the management meetings which were held on Monday mornings in both schools. These meetings were attended by the principal, the deputy principal and the HODs. In both schools, I heard the principal reminding the HODs to ensure that teachers were teaching during these meetings. In School 'F', the minutes of the previous meetings held showed that they shared

ideas with teachers and consulted on what could be done on issues that were not being well implemented. In the meeting that I attended at School 'F', I observed that the principal was friendly during the meetings. That is why when he was asked on what makes the implementation of SSPs easy, he said; *'It's the creation of [a]good atmosphere at school'*.

In a similar meeting at School 'N', the principal dictated what should be done. From my observation of the records and interviews with teachers at School 'F', what was agreed upon in meetings was implemented. But this was not the case at School 'N'. During the meetings, the principal at School 'F' always emphasised that the homework for all teachers was to focus on activities that were in the SSPs to achieve improved academic learner performance. DEBS 'F' also indicated that meetings were held to check progress and countercheck submitted reports. Implementation was mainly checked through review meetings.

4.3.1.3 Reviewing

The findings showed that although the reviews of the implementation were held in both schools, they were more regular at School 'F' than at School 'N'. At School 'F', feedback was given during the meeting, from the principal to the teachers and vice versa. For example, the minutes of one management meeting showed that the principal in this meeting told the teachers that there were 12 successes in the previous term and two challenges, one of which was a deviation from strict adherence to deadlines agreed upon. Bryson (2004: 261) (Section 2.7.1.4) emphasised that feedback to implementers should be given after monitoring them. In both schools, feedback on learners' test results was given by HODs. At School 'F', resolutions were reached to implement what was not being done whereas at School 'N', this was not the case. Instead, the principal only commented to indicate where he was happy and where he was not happy with the given results. He urged those whose learners were not doing well to improve. No way forward was agreed on. Both DEBS repeatedly indicated that reviews were held at district level to enable the schools to review the implementation of their school strategic plans. They also indicated that resources affected the implementation.

4.3.1.4 Resources

Resources include not only personnel and equipment, but also technology, time and funds (Ranzik & Swanson, 2010: 360). (Section 2.7.1.1). Observations, records and interviews showed that the offices and both public schools which were studied had limited equipment, technology, time and also funds. Of all these resources, funds were among the major

hindrances to implementation according to the principal, and the HODs as well. At School 'N', one HOD confirmed this thus: *'What we asking for is proper funding so that we do not lag behind'*. The principal at the same school corroborated that availability of financial resources makes implementation easy. Likewise, Thompson, Strickland and Gamble (2010: 42) (Section 2.7.1.3) noted that in the strategy execution process, there should be allocation of ample funds and other resources to activities critical to the strategic process. When it comes to incentives, at School 'N', HODs complained that the principal allocated minimal funds to academic activities compared to non-academic activities such as sports.

Supervisory personnel such as the standards officers or inspectors of schools were found to be inadequate. Leader T and DEBS 'F' noted that the limited number of officers hindered them from going to go to all schools, yet they were the key engines of effective running of schools and improved academic outcomes. In interview responses, infrastructure in terms of classroom space and boarding places for learners was another resource that was noted as a hindrance to the implementation of plans such as learner preparation commonly known as 'prep' which was held in the afternoon and at night in schools. Chanda (2009: 94) (Section 2.7.1.18) noted that facilities should be key factors of consideration in managing performance. Edgeron, Kristonic and Herrington (2006: 3) (Section 2.7.1.2) confirmed that inadequate or inappropriate space can seriously undermine the quality of implementation.

Although resources were inadequate, both schools had acquired risograph machines from user fees to help in material production such as syllabi duplication to equip all teachers. This was necessary because lack of material resources hinders implementation (Section 2.7.1.1).

4.3.1.5 Leadership style

It has been argued that good leadership is basic to excellence in schools (Phiri, 2007: 7). The type of leadership which was needed in the two schools was transformational leadership (Ranzik & Swanson, 2010: 92) (Section 2.7.1.3) which is defined as the ability of leaders to shape and elevate followers' motives and goals to achieve significant change through common interests and energies. The results of this study showed that DEBS 'F' and principal 'F' practised transformational leadership. It was observed and heard that the principal of School 'F' was democratic, charismatic and tactful. He emphasised that sharing ideas with teachers was one way which made it possible for him to implement the SSPs. He said; *'I think it is better to be sharing ideas on the strategic plan... This is what we are doing in this school.'* This indicates that he involved teachers in his leadership Steyn (2005: 48) (Section

2.7.1.14) notes that sharing stimulates teachers' reflections and broadens their perspectives. The principal's charisma was also seen in his response; *'I tell teachers not to fail'*. Ranzik and Swanson (2010: 83) (Section 2.7.1.3) maintained that charismatic power is the leader's power to identify followers' needs and values and thereby motivate commitment.

It could be deduced from the results of the interviews with the HODs and minutes in the minute books that the principal of School 'N' was something of a dictator. I observed that teachers were scared of him and this had demotivated them. During break time, I heard the teachers remind each other not to do anything the principal had not told them to do because they would just be wasting their time. In staff meetings, he imposed what to do on teachers, which somehow confirmed a dictatorship type of leadership.

Controlling staff is likely to cause tension, and by the same token, the tendency of School 'N' principal to control staff in the implementation of policies and overall management of the school could be counterproductive and stifle creativity and innovation. In this regard, Mosley, Megginson and Pietri (2001: 308) (Section 2.7.1.6) advised that controls must be accepted by the people they affect. One HOD at School 'N' said: *'the only thing that we need now is actually to get involved: we must bridge the gap between the stakeholders involved in the strategic plan itself. Once that is done, I think implementation will be done'*. These sentiments showed that teachers' involvement was lacking in School 'N'. In a way, this indicated an element of rigidity in the principal of School 'N'.

In contrast, the principal of School 'F' was flexible and exercised contingent leadership (Section 2.7.1.3) because he knew when to push and when to back off, when to give a strong lead and when to support. This is how he described his leadership: *'I monitor the situation. The other thing I do is to make sure I tell my teachers not to fail. I smile, I talk to them in a friendly way, but when implementing I become very vicious to monitor strictly until that thing takes off. When it takes off, I relax because everyone participates effectively'*. By so doing, principal 'F' was "thinking and acting in an integrated, systematic and spiritual way" recommended for leaders by Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009: 61) (Section 2.7.1.3). This indicates that as a strategic leader, he was "a person of thought and action" (Mulambya, 1996: 13) (Section 2.7.1.3). This behaviour where one adjusts words and actions to suit the situation is also a charisma element (Capon, 2008: 187) (Section 2.7.1.3).

4.3.1.6 Motivation

In School 'F' where the principal had several ways of motivating teachers which is in line with Phiri (2007: 39) (Section 2.4). These included sponsoring the snacks at tea break for all teachers (This was done at School 'N' as well), always providing cold water for drinking, giving incentives or awards (suits or bicycles) to teachers who performed well in general, and the outstanding ones whose learners attained six points or the pass rate agreed upon in the SSPs, travelling to schools of excellence with teachers to learn lessons, recommending hardworking teachers for promotions, facilitating a shopping trip for teachers at the end of the month to famous border towns, praising hardworking teachers and others. The principal in school 'F' also used inspirational sayings like: *'the greatest glory of living lies not in never failing, but in rising every time you fall'*. This saying was recorded in minutes of meetings he held with HODs.

I observed that the above-mentioned strategies had motivated the HODs, teachers and learners such that everyone did his or her tasks with minimal supervision. Cunningham and Cordeiro (2009: 62) (Section 2.7.1.3) also noted that "when teachers perceive instructional leadership behaviours to be appropriate, supportive and responsive with regard to student achievement, they grow in commitment, professional involvement and willingness to innovate". When the HODs at School 'F' were asked to describe their principal, they said that he had empowered everyone and did not run the school alone.

For them, he had instilled a sense of leadership in the HODs. One HOD stated, *'leadership is devolved.... that way, that devolution, I think it just made us to realize that, I think we have to tick, whenever we have our HODs meetings; it has been emphasised that wherever you are, you are a head teacher; teachers are looking to us and if we fail, then the whole school will fail.'* Another HOD said, *'he seems to be an action-oriented manager, he calls us trained managers'*. By being active and instilling a sense of leadership in the HODs, principal 'F' had built confidence and zeal in HODs. As a result, I noted that there was more vigilance and teamwork in School 'F' than in School 'N'. In School 'N', the minutes of one meeting held previously showed that incentives were only planned, but no record of their fulfilment was found in the school. The minutes showed that in one meeting, teachers requested the head teacher to improve the incentives, but he rejected their request.

4.3.1.7 Understanding the SSPs

Both schools reported that they had sensitised the parents, learners and teachers on the importance of the SSPs to improve learner performance. Although this was the case in both schools there was more demand and emphasis during interviews with HODs of School 'N' to have the teachers, learners and parents sensitised in order to make them understand the importance of the SSP system. Presumably, this was due to the negative response from these stakeholders towards the implementation of SSPs.

One HOD (Mr F) said, *'I think the administration should sensitize the members on the importance of this document'* (referring to the SSP document). The other HOD (Miss B) from the same school added: *'we should also see to it that the learners are oriented [on SSPs] and they understand the strategic plan'*. Mr G from the same school even suggested that sensitisation needs to be done frequently, at least every term, so that teachers and students could be aware of what was going on in the strategic plans. Ranzik and Swanson (2010: 363) (Section 2.7.2.2) contended that when implementing educational change, activities to assist staff in understanding change should be undertaken.

David (2009: 228) (Section 2.7.2.7) also argued that without understanding and commitment, strategy implementation faces major problems. Therefore the confession by one HOD at School 'N' that there is a gap in understanding on the side of pupils may indicate the reason why the school was struggling in implementing its SSPs.

4.3.1.8 School culture and climate

The type of culture and climate that prevail in the school can also affect the implementation. The force of culture can neutralise and emasculate strategy change (David, 2009: 250) (Section 2.7.1.16). Based on the understanding that culture is a way of doing things, my observation was that at School 'N', there was a culture of casualness and laxity in the way things were done. This observation was backed by the suggestion of one HOD at the school that *'teachers should have the practising license system as it is with nurses, so that they can do their tasks seriously.'* In School 'F', the principal learnt from the successful schools he visited that there was a culture of hard work.

When he returned, he ensured that the same culture was cultivated in his school. From my observations, it was discovered that there was a system of teachers assisting each other to accomplish assigned tasks. If, for example, a teacher was going out to town to collect his or

her salary, the HODs would stand in for that teacher and take his or her lessons to avoid learners idling and thereby lagging behind in planned topics. There was also a culture whereby the principal, deputy principal, HODs and teachers responsible for various activities in the school notified their members about the latest information by writing it on the notice board in the staff room. I saw that every teacher who entered the staffroom at tea break first checked what was on the notice board.

The climate as earlier discussed under leadership was healthier and more cordial in School 'F' than in School 'N' due to the different ways in which the principal related with staff. The results from the observation schedule showed that there was more unity, teamwork and mutual respect in school 'F' than in School 'N'. Perhaps, that was why the school was doing better in the implementation of SSPs. Phiri (2007: v), maintained that "the success of a school like any other institution rests primarily on the dynamics of inspiration, collaboration and teamwork between the school manager and other members of staff". In my observation, I also noted that in School 'F' there was free and friendly interaction among teachers, school leaders and learners. In School 'N', the principal was not friendly to teachers. I observed that teachers were apprehensive, and not very zealous in carrying out SSP-related issues. Steins (2005: 48) (Section 2.6) maintained that, although it is accepted that leadership is key to any school reform, little change is possible without the active role of teachers. One way in which teachers could have been made active was through shared rules.

4.3.1.9 Inspiration

The principal at School 'F' inspired teachers and HODs by telling teachers not to fail, and having period registers to monitor teacher and learner attendance of lessons. He also inspired them by calling them 'managers' and using inspirational sayings (Section 4.3.1.6 above). By being strict, the principal was overseeing the implementation in order to ensure its success.

4.3.2 Teacher-Related Factors

Apart from the management-related factors, there were also teacher-related factors that affected implementation. The factors that are pointed out below were abstracted from the responses of the principal and HODs. They concern the teachers' attitudes towards and behaviours in the implementation of SSPs, their involvement in the formulation and implementation of SSPs, and their discipline and commitment with respect to implementation of SSPs.

4.3.2.1 Teachers' attitudes and behaviour

Apart from the problem of teachers in need of on-going orientation in School 'N' to understand the SSPs, the other factor was the negative attitudes of teachers recorded in the interviews and observed during fieldwork. At School 'N', the HOD, Mr A, confirmed that the attitudes of teachers were negative when he complained that they were not adhering to the planned strategies such as the use of period registers. Another HOD, Mr F, complained that it was unfortunate that some programmes could not be implemented because of their negative attitudes as teachers. This problem of negative teacher attitudes was not evident in School 'F': instead, all teachers were zealous. One HOD in School 'N' Mr A, said, '*we are motivated to work hard so that they (the teachers) don't see us fail in the position that we have been given.*'

4.3.2.2 Teacher involvement in SSP formulation and implementation

In both schools, teachers were involved in the formulation of the SSPs. When it came to the levels of involvement in the implementation, teachers in School 'F' participated more in strategizing for the achievement of set goals. This was observed when I attended staff meetings where all teachers were urged by the principal not to fail. One HOD, referring to the principal, said, '*He does not run the school alone; he involves others to run the school.*'

4.3.2.3 Teachers' discipline and commitment

The discipline level for teachers was also noted to be a factor in the implementation of SSPs. In both schools, most of the teachers were always punctual for lessons, they signed in the login and out register which was in the deputy principal's office. The teachers of School 'F' were more disciplined than those of School 'N', where teachers even quarrelled during tea time. When I studied the login and out register at School 'N', I noticed that two teachers had been absent from the school for some days and the principal said he was waiting for them to appear so that they could tell him where they had been. When referring to the principal, one HOD, Mr B, at School 'F' said, '*Whatever goal is set, we have to struggle and achieve within the specified time.*' This showed that the teachers were disciplined and committed to duty in School 'F'. Mr G, an HOD in School 'N', emphasised that the principal ought to ensure that discipline prevailed at school because sometimes both teachers and pupils were not disciplined. This indicated that there were learner-related factors.

4.3.3 Learner-Related Factors

Learner-related factors were largely mentioned by HODs. These factors were mostly to do with learners' awareness, understanding of discipline and also the use of learner leaders in ensuring that SSPs were being implemented.

4.3.3.1 Learners' awareness, understanding and appreciation of SSPs

In both schools, learners were aware of the existence of the SSPs in the school. When I chatted with learners informally as I taught them, the learners in School 'F' were aware of the target overall pass percentage set by the school and the rewards promised for the learners who would obtain 6 points in Grade 12. In School 'N', most of the learners were aware of the promised rewards and not the target overall pass rate. In both schools, learners understood the importance of the SSPs as the instruments intended to improve their academic performance.

Based on the complaints from the HODs during the interviews, the learners in School 'N' neither understood nor appreciated the SSPs. One of the HODs, Mr F, said, *'most of them (learners), have not really come to appreciate the essence of certain things that have been set up.... So, all those things are posing.... they are negating the efforts of the school to implement the strategic plan'*.

4.3.3.2 Learner discipline

There were a lot of complaints from teachers concerning the indiscipline of learners. Apart from the complaints from the teachers in School 'N' concerning learners' indiscipline, I also observed this during my one week stay in that school. Some HODs attributed this to lack of proper boarding facilities in the school, which was exacerbated by the social facilities that were near the school such as the local shabeens, which had an impact on the day scholars' behaviour. Other HODs said learners were not disciplined because they did not understand the importance of coming to school. During the focus group discussion, one HOD, Mr F, said, *'It's just a problem of them understanding really what was the essence of being educated.'*

One time during my stay at School 'N', there was a case where two Grade 12 learners almost beat up a teacher when he attempted to punish them for being absent from his lessons during the previous days. At School 'F', there was order and calm most of the times. This could have been due to the principal's 'management by walking around' strategy (Thompson, *et al.*,

2010: 44 (Section 2.7.1.13). as he monitored the HODs and teachers on duty (TOD) to ensure that that lessons were going on. The problem of learners missing learner preparation (prep) sessions was rampant in School 'N', which indicated indiscipline too. Both schools engaged learner leaders to curtail such behaviours.

4.3.3.3 Utilisation of learner leaders

In both schools, prefects were assigned the task of ensuring that there was learner discipline and order in the school. To this end, the learner leaders helped to check teachers' attendance of lessons and also syllabus coverage. Teachers gave their schemes of work to the class monitors so that they could help to check if teachers covered their planned work. Prefects also helped to maintain order and cleanliness in both schools. I observed that the learner leaders in School 'F' were more vigilant than those in School 'N'.

4.3.4 External Stakeholder-Related Factors

The external stakeholders included officers from provincial and district education offices, cooperating partners from the USAID-funded project, Strengthening Education Performance-Up (STEP-UP) Zambia, parents and others in the community.

4.3.4.1 Follow-up visits

The records in the school logbook where visitors wrote down messages about their visits showed that external monitors from the provincial education offices visited the two schools at least once per term. This matched with the responses from the HODs concerning the frequency of visits from the external monitors. The rest of the visits were left to be made by the officers from the district education office. In both schools, there were records of positive and negative issues noted during the visits with suggestions on how to improve the negative aspects. However, there were very few follow-up visits from the monitors to check whether the individual negative issues noted in the previous visit had been worked on or not. MOE (2009: 16) (Section 2.7.1.11) advised that leaders should have good follow-up strategies. Lack of follow-up on particular issues noted in earlier visits allowed schools to ignore the implementation of suggested ways for improvement in the logbook.

4.3.4.2 Vigilance

Some external stakeholders were vigilant in ensuring that SSPs were implemented. Of the two DEBS, DEBS 'F' was much keener on ensuring that the SSPs were implemented. She

was at least aware of the implementation progress that was occurring in the nearby schools. She said, *'I am very positive that two of my schools in the district are actually implementing the strategic plans well'*. The DEBS had even identified the things which were problematic in the SSPs implementation, such as record keeping and supervision by the school administration in some schools. DEBS 'F' was so strict that she could even call meetings for principal and standards officers at her office to compare the reports received from the schools about the implementation with the findings emanating from the monitoring visits of her team. During the interview she said, *'in the last meeting that we had with the principal, it was very interesting because there were differences in the reports between the standards section and the head teachers' reports....'* *The standards section said to the head teachers, 'but sir, we were at your school..... what has been reported was not what we found'*.

DEBS 'N' was noted as not being very vigilant. For him, the results of the district monitoring team were compiled and sent back to the school as a report to the school. He said, *'when we come back, we sit down, review and write a report, then make recommendations and a report to the schools'*. This suggested a cause for the casualness that was noted at School 'N'. DEBS 'F' employed 'strategic thinking' (Mulambya, 1996: 47) (Section 2). A strategy of zoning the schools was an appropriate system to coordinate efforts and guide individual activity (Steiner, 1979: 260) (Section 2.7.1.5), and facilitated monitoring and exchange of ideas pertaining to the SSP implementation.

4.3.4.3 Lack of strategy implementation guidelines and skills

It was noticeable in the analysis of documents and interviews with the provincial and district leaders that there were no implementation guidelines which was identified as a problem by Cole (2004: 138) (Section 2.7.2.2). Lack of guidelines is one of the factors that negatively affect the implementation of SSPs in most schools. Nowhere in the interview with the higher authorities was there a mention of training the implementers on effective strategy implementation skills. There was, instead, overdependence on content driven sensitisation as could be seen from the findings of the interview with the education authorities in higher offices.

4.3.4.4 Content-based sensitisation

While it is important that stakeholders be oriented and reoriented (Mate, 2006: 67) (Section 2.7.2.4) sensitisation meetings were not enough to sharpen the skills of implementers of

SSPs. A survey of reports or minutes of the sensitisation meetings showed that when implementers were being sensitised, the focus was on the problems identified to improve learner performance and the importance of implementing the SSPs. There was no information from the interviews or documents that indicated that the implementers of SSPs were empowered with skills and knowledge for effective implementation of the SSPs. Perhaps, it was taken for granted that the principal understood how to implement. But the skills for strategy implementation were required. One HOD, Miss B, cautioned education authorities not to take it for granted that when teachers are sensitised, they immediately understand what they are sensitised on. Instead, she advocated for orientation to be on-going.

4.3.4.5 Support

The research results showed that the support given by stakeholders was mostly by way of monitoring visits. This included the visits by the ruling party's district leadership to School 'F'. David (2009: 255) (Section 2.7.2.7) emphasised that government leaders too must be committed and express commitment in highly visible ways. The logbook records showed that the ruling party's leadership had visited the school to register their satisfaction with the way the principal was running the school. The technical support offered by STEP-UP Zambia, an agency of USAID based at the provincial office was by way of sponsoring monitoring visits to schools and sharing ideas that could enhance the effective implementation of SSPs. Chang 2008: 6) (Section 2.7.1.3) advised that consultations and negotiations with development partners can be used to mobilise support for the implementation of strategies. This method used by STEP-UP Zambia of not giving funds to schools directly, but paying for the needed assistance is advisable.

Although technical support was offered to all secondary schools, only a few, such as School 'F', were able to adopt the ideas and use them to implement their SSPs. There was no direct financial support from any source meant for strategy implementation in any school. Seen through the lens of Fowler (2009) (Section 2.7.1.9), this practice was not correct. Fowler (2009: 296) argued that the practice of authorities at central offices only to show the school leaders the new policy and leave them alone to struggle to survive, is neither an effective way to induct the implementers nor an effective way to manage the implementation. This is an important argument because if the implementers are not helped on how to manage the implementation strategically, implementation is likely to fail.

4.3.4.6 Level of understanding of strategic management

From the leaders' responses on the meaning of strategic planning, strategy implementation and strategic management, it could be seen that the leaders from the provincial, district and school levels understood what the concepts mean. The responses from the two principal on the meaning of strategic management showed that principal 'F' understood strategic management more clearly than principal 'N'. When explaining this concept, principal 'F' said, '*strategic management is where we, ah, make a plan and keep strategising and in order to improve (and) develop in areas of teaching....*' On the other hand, principal 'N' stated, '*strategic management is the focus the school has in order to help the learners do better in their academic work*'. Strategic management was defined in Section 2.2 as a set of decisions and actions that result in the formulation and implementation of plans designed to achieve the organisation's objectives. Since the principals were not trained on how to implement SSPs effectively, this was clearly problematic.

4.4 FINDINGS FROM QUANTITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

While the findings presented below are from the questionnaire responses, it is important to note that some of them which recorded the largest percentages are the same as those reported in the qualitative data discussed above. Most of them are also management factors.

Table 4.1 Responses on whether the SSPs were being implemented

Responses	Score	Percentage
Yes	0	0
No	8	100
Total	8	100

On the question of whether the implementation of SSPs was going on well, Table 4.1 shows that 8 (100%) respondents stated that it was not being done well. The reasons for this overwhelming response are provided in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Reasons for saying the implementation of SSPs was not going on well

Responses	Score	Percentage
No evidence	2	20
Inactive SSP committee	1	10
No sensitisation	1	10
No support	1	10
Lack of commitment	1	10
No funds	3	30
No Guidelines	1	10
Total	10	100

As Table 4.2 reflects, 30% of the responses pointed to lack of funds as a major reason. Some 20% of the responses indicated that there was no evidence to prove that implementation was taking place. Other reasons constituted 10% each. These were inactive SSP committees and lack of sensitisation, support and guidelines.

Table 4.3 Factors that influence the implementation of SSPs

Responses	Score	Percentage
Inadequate management and supervision	3	11.1
Lack of community participation	1	4
Lack of understanding of SSPs	1	4
Lack of financial support from administration	6	22.4
Lack of ownership	1	4
Negative attitude	1	4
Low qualification for Head teachers	1	4
Not forming committees for SSP issues	1	4
DEBS and PEO proactive/inactive	3	11.1
Flows in curriculum and assessment	1	4
Low commitment of DEBS and PEO	1	4
Wrong prioritising	2	7.4
Lack of sufficient information on SSPs	1	4
Not completing SSP documents	1	4
No written guidelines	1	4
School managers not rolling out to teachers	1	4
Total	25	100

As reflected in Table 4.3, funds management and the activeness of the DEBS and PEO were rated at 22.4%, 11.1% and 11.1% respectively as the top factors that influence the implementation of SSPs.

Table 4.4 Actions taken by SESOs to address the factors that negatively affect SSPs

Responses	Score	Percentage	Key themes
Telling head teachers to sensitise teachers	1	5.2	Sensitising
Sensitising school administration	2	10.4	
Planning for more sensitisations	1	5.2	
Advising head teacher to monitor the implementation	2	10.4	Monitoring
Intensifying monitoring	2	10.4	
Conducting post monitoring meetings with observed teachers	1	5.2	
Motivating schools to own the SSPs	2	5.2	Motivating
Motivating schools to come up with monthly plans	1	5.2	
Motivating schools to bring on board all stakeholders in the school	2	10.4	
Recommending to orient Head teachers	1	5.2	
Tabling issues of SSP suggest remedies	1	5.2	
Ensuring community participation	1	5.2	
Lobbying for more funds	1	5.2	
Demanding analysed examination and test results	1	5.2	
Total	19	100	

Table 4.4 above shows that monitoring by SESOs to address the factors that hindered the implementation of SSPs was mentioned by 5 out of 8 respondents. Monitoring carried a total of 26% of responses although one respondent mentioned it in relation to meetings held after monitoring has been conducted. In the same table, sensitisation and motivating were each mentioned by 4 respondents (20.8%) as an action taken by SESOs to address hindrances to SSP implementation.

Table 4.5 Support given by SESOs for the implementation of SSPs

Responses	Score	Percentage
Sensitisation	1	7.6
Encouragement	1	7.6
Formulating guidelines on formulation of SSPs	6	46.2
Giving professional advice	4	30.8
Monitoring	1	7.6
Total	13	100

Table 4.5 reflects that 46.2% of the responses revealed that education officers supported the introduction of SSPs by formulating guidelines on how to formulate SSPs. The focus here was on supporting the formulation of strategic plans and not on their implementation. Some 30.8% of the responses showed that the other type of support needed was that of giving professional advice. The other form of support given included: conducting sensitisations, encouraging schools and monitoring which scored only 7.6% each.

Table 4.6 Measures which SESOs had put mechanisms in place to ensure that SSPs were implemented

Responses	Score	Percentage
Monitoring	3	27
Formulation of guidelines	3	27
Organising meetings	1	9
Asking school to work through committees	4	36.4
Total	11	100

Table 4.6 shows that 36.4% of the SESOs responses focused on requiring schools to work through committees. The formulation of guidelines and monitoring each comprised 27% of the responses.

Table 4.7 Strategies for improving the implementation of SSPs

Responses	Score	Percentage
Give written guidelines	2	11.8
Intensify monitoring	5	29.4
Correct negative working culture	1	5.9
Attach penalties for failure to implement	2	11.8
Enhance	1	5.9
Change attitude	1	5.9
DEBS to be in forefront in SSP implementation	2	11.8
Held reviews	1	5.9
More sensitisations	1	5.9
Give SSP implementation first priority	1	5.9
Total	17	100

As can be seen in Table 4.7, 29.4% of the responses identified intensified monitoring as one way in which the implementation of SSPs can be improved while giving guidelines and the

activeness of the DEBS were also indicated as to be strategies that can make the SSPs to be implemented (11.8% each). This supports the findings on Table 4.5.

4.5 INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

Since all the respondents said the implementation of SSPs was not proceeding well, the need to carry out this study was thus imperative.

The findings from Table 4.2 above indicate that when funds are not available for the implementation of SSPs, implementation fails. Therefore, issues to do with funds need to be addressed to enhance effective SSP implementation. It is also clear from the findings in Table 4.2 that main reason why the SSPs were not implemented was lack of funds. In Table 4.3, lack of adequate funds scored the highest percentage from the responses on factors that influence implementation. This confirms Billi's claim (2011: 110) (Section 2.7.1.1) that inadequate and erratic funding from the treasury militates against successful execution of the institution's strategic plans.

The reasons given by SESOs in Table 4.3 that lack of evidence was proof that the implementation of SSPs did not occur in schools suggests that the implementation of SSPs can be seen from available evidence. That is why the findings from qualitative data discussed earlier in chapter 4 have verbatim quotes and observed practices as evidence. The concern for evidence by the inspectors of schools also indicates that monitors from the provincial office believed that where implementation was taking place, there should be visible evidence. For the SESOs to say having inactive committees was the reason why the schools were not implementing SSPs implies that when schools have SSP-related committees which are active, implementation occurs more easily. Therefore, having active committees for SSPs is also a factor that enables strategy implementation in schools. Apart from the issue of having committees, the rest of the factors pointed out in Table 4.4 above were also noted in the qualitative data, and this adds to the trustworthiness of the results.

Since working through committees, supervision, activeness of leaders and provision of funds are management functions, these findings match the results from qualitative data where all the major and important factors (monitoring, meetings, reviews and resources) are largely management issues. This confirms that management is a major factor in the implementation of SSPs. Therefore, school leaders should exercise leadership needed to drive implementation forward, and keep improving the strategy execution in process (Thompson, *et al.*, 2010: 42)

(Section 2.7.1.3). The selection of education managers at provincial, district and school level in the sample is therefore justified.

It is important to note that monitoring, sensitisation and motivation came out more prominently in this quantitative data analysis just as they were seen to be prominent in the qualitative data analysis above. This indicates that these three factors are crucial in the implementation of SSPs.

It is interesting that there is a match between the findings in the quantitative data above and those from qualitative data concerning the guidelines. Table 4.5 shows that only guidelines on the formulation of SSPs were given from the provincial office. There were no guidelines given on the implementation of SSPs which was also found in the qualitative data analysis. This gap between formulation and implementation of SSPs contributed to the hindrance in the implementation of SSPs.

Professional advice shown in Table 4.5 as support given by the SESOs was also noted in the qualitative datasets although it was identified as ‘technical assistance’ which was offered by STEP-UP Zambia. It is also important to note the recurrence of monitoring and sensitisation as factors in the implementation of SSPs, although at a lower frequency this time. This indicates that these are indeed crucial factors.

The results from Table 4.6 indicate that most of the standards officers at the provincial office believed that the best measures to put in place to ensure that SSPs were implemented were working through committees, formulating guidelines and intensifying monitoring. This raises yet another enabling factor of working through committees. It could be that the purported committees should be formed based on laid-down strategy.

The results in Table 4.6 indicate that in most cases, SESOs ensure SSP implementation by intensifying monitoring, giving written guidelines, attaching penalties for failure to implement and having active DEBS. The SESOs’ restatement of the need to give guidelines strengthens the earlier finding in Table 4.5 where lack of guidelines was identified one of the reasons for failure to implement SSPs. This finding further strengthens similar findings that emerged from qualitative data. The desire to attach penalties to failure in the implementation of SSPs indicates that some SESOs were zealous in seeing to it that SSPs were implemented.

4.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The participants' responses indicated that they were willing to implement their SSPs. Their responses also show that the onus is largely on the school management to either enable or hinder the implementation of SSPs. It has been confirmed from the resultant data too, that the success or failure of the implementation of SSPs lies in the type of leadership which the principals apply in school.

It is evident that the relationship between the principal and the teachers determines whether the SSPs can be implemented or not. It has been discovered that, in most cases, when authorities assign tasks such as implementing SSPs to schools without empowering them with effective strategy implementation guidelines and skills, implementation fails. The discussions show that if there is no cooperation from the teachers, the implementation of SSPs suffers. Although the SSPs are meant to improve learners' academic performance, if learners do not cooperate too, it becomes difficult for the principal and teachers to implement the strategies designed to improve their performance. Concerning the external stakeholders, the more vigilant they are in monitoring the implementation, the more they enable implementation of SSPs to occur.

One thing that is evident is that most of the factors discussed above relate to management. This consistency of the results increases their trustworthiness.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The analysis and interpretation of the empirical data were provided in Chapter 4. This final chapter presents a summary of overall conclusions from the literature study and empirical research. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the enabling and constraining factors in the implementation of SSPs, in secondary schools. The conclusions drawn in this chapter are based on data from literature review, relevant documents pertaining to SSPs, observing how things were being done in relation to SSPs in selected secondary schools and interviewing the officers from the provincial and district education offices, principals and HODs in selected secondary schools.

5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM LITERATURE STUDY

In Chapter 2, I examined the relevant literature related to strategy implementation. The concepts of strategy, strategy implementation and strategic management, which are key to the study, were explained. The factors that affect strategy implementation were pointed out. The literature findings indicate that a strategy is a collection of decisions and actions on how to achieve set goals. Strategy implementation happens when plans are done in such a way that their objectives are achieved. Strategic management is when a set of decisions lead to formulation and implementation of plans (Section 2.2). Literature findings also showed that there are factors that enable and those that hinder strategy implementation.

The review of literature in section 2.2 and 2.3 also showed that the nature of strategy implementation involves a series of activities arranged to identify and address the organisational needs that are crucial to the success of the implementation. Literature findings revealed that strategy implementation requires support strategies in terms of capacity building, financing, practices, systems, rewards, culture and leadership. It was also clear from literature that top management in the organisation where strategy is being implemented should sponsor SI.

The findings from literature revealed that the expectancy-value theory (Section 2.4) points out the determinants of performance in those involved in a task such as teachers' involvement

in the task of implementing the SSP activities. It is clear that the more implementers value the outcome of their input in the implementation the more they perform better and vice versa.

The literature also showed that leadership is a critical determinant of the success or failure of SI (Section 2.5). It is evident that, generally, there has not been much attention given towards research on strategy implementation. It was also revealed that researchers have not agreed on the suitable theory and variables for SI. In section 2.6 of literature review it was revealed that in countries like New Zealand, the study of SI revealed that management activities such as planning, leading and supporting enable SI. Literature findings also showed that leadership, teachers, conditions (in and outside the school) and professional development were influencing factors in SI, while the way the effectiveness of strategic planning is perceived was also a factor.

The literature and empirical findings confirm that management factors are the most crucial factors in SI. This conclusion is based on the fact that most of the individual enabling or constraining factors are those that leaders in school are responsible for. They entail management functions or activities such as guiding, and controlling, *inter alia*. It was also found from the literature review that the hindering factors are those that pertain to the behaviour, attitudes and mind sets of the key implementers such as teachers. This then leaves the responsibility for strategy implementation in the hands of the school managers and teachers as key players in the SI process.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM EMPIRICAL DATA

The discussion centres on key themes which were a result of predetermined and emergent categories stated below:

- School management related factors:
- Teacher related factors:
- Learner-related factors: and
- External stakeholder-related factors.

Attention was focused on the management factors because of the overwhelming management-related responses from interviewees, findings from document analysis and observations.

5.3.1 School Management Factors

Although there are several management related factors, the most frequently mentioned one was monitoring (Section 2.7.1.4). The findings here showed that when monitoring was focused, agreed upon, supported, frequent and vigilantly done (by the principal walking around), the implementation of SSPs was carried out and vice versa. It was also found that monitoring was done at provincial, district, school subject departmental and classroom levels. It was evident from observations that in the school where monitoring was scanty and not supported by the principal, implementation was problematic. Therefore, the findings suggested that the more the principal conducts monitoring, the easier the implementation.

It was also discovered that the management of meetings and the agenda items of meetings influence the implementation of SSP. Implementers become alert and perform according to what is agreed upon in the meetings. Further still, the findings indicated that the way meetings are managed also determined whether the teachers would be motivated towards implementing SSPs or not. For example, in the school where the principal was friendly during meetings, teachers were enthusiastic about and enjoyed implementing planned strategies. It was also discovered that meetings could be used to review the implementation (Section 2.7.1.12).

Another finding concerning the review of SSP implementation was that, in the school where teachers were given feedback on the success and challenges of the implementation and where the resolutions to challenges were agreed upon implementation was occurring as compared to the school where this was not the case (Section 2.7.1.4).

For the implementation of SSPs to be successful, some of the resources needed include, *inter alia*, human resources, material resources, time, technology, space, or physical infrastructure and finances (Section 2.7.1.1). Of all these, the most frequently cited by standards officers or inspectors of schools was finances followed by human resources. Even the interview data showed that funds affect SSP implementation. It was revealed that when officers from the district officers were passionate about ensuring that SSP implementation occurred, schools were steered to implement the SSPs. It was also became clear that when space is limited for learners in terms of boarding facilities and classrooms, it is difficult to implement the SSPs which are classroom-based, such as effective teaching and conducting learner preparation sessions (prep) for learners to study on their own (Section 2.7.1.2). The findings further

revealed that, where the school managers mobilised resources to support SSP, implementation occurred.

It was also found that in a school where leadership was autocratic, implementation suffered compared to a school where leadership was democratic or participative. The other type of leadership that seemed to favour SSP implementation was contingent leadership (Section 2.7.1.3). The findings suggested that the proactiveness and the vigilance of the principal contributed to successful strategy implementation especially when he motivated the teachers in various ways.

As for motivation, understanding culture (Section 2.7.1.15) and climate (Section 2.7.1.15), the findings showed that when teachers understand the essence of SSPs, work in a friendly climate and where the culture of hard work is cultivated and ensured, the implementation of SSPs was successful. Another factor which the findings from the study revealed was that there was a belief from the standards officers at the provincial office that when schools worked through SSP-related committees, the SSPs were implemented. The other belief was that if punitive measures were enforced on those failing to implement, implementation would improve. It was also established that when schools imitated schools of excellence, the implementers of SSPs were motivated and participated in the implementation.

5.3.2 Teacher Factors

The attitude (Section 2.7.2.4) and discipline of teachers were among the factors highlighted from the findings as negatively affecting the implementation of SSPs. Where teachers had a positive attitude towards the implementation of SSPs, implementation succeeded, but where the teachers were not disciplined enough to adhere to their tasks outlined in the SSPs, implementation floundered. When teachers were both involved (Section 2.7.1.17) in SSP formulation and adequately motivated to implement SSPs, they zealously implemented and met the set deadlines. This indicates that teacher involvement in SSP formulation alone does not guarantee teacher participation in strategy implementation. Another finding was that when teachers accept the SSPs as their own, the sense of ownership propelled them to active participation in the implementation.

5.3.3 Learner Factors

It was clear that making learners aware of SSPs without making them understand and appreciate them, did not motivate them to cooperate in the implementation of SSPs. Consequently, this caused the implementation of SSPs to flounder.

The other finding was that when learners were disciplined, they tended to cooperate in the implementation process. It was also evident that where the principal managed or supported SSP implementation by walking around, learners were disciplined and cooperated in the implementation of SSP activities.

With respect to learner leaders, in a school where the leaders were not motivated to ensure their colleagues were attending to SSP-related activities, implementation was not successful. This was also happening in a school where the principal was not monitoring the implementation by walking around.

5.3.4 External Stakeholder Factors

The findings here showed that the more the external stakeholders visited schools and noted success and challenges in the implementation, the more the implementers were alert to and implemented the SSPs.

The vigilance of the stakeholders, such as the PEO (Section 2.7.1.9) and DEBS, motivated the schools to implement their SSPs and vice versa. It is clear that when the province required a programme to be implemented without releasing the implementation guidelines, or empowering the implementers with skills needed for effective strategy implementation, implementation in schools suffered or failed.

In addition, no matter how often the sensitisation or orientations were held, if they were only content-based and did not address the implementation methodology aspects (Section 2.7.2.1) to empower teachers and other implementers with implementation skills, the implementation process tended to flounder.

The research findings showed that when stakeholders such as politicians join in supporting the implementation by giving the schools feedback on their performance (Section 2.7.1.4), the implementers were motivated to continue implementing. This indicated that the type of support needed for successful implementation of SSPs was not always financial, but political support was also crucial.

5.4 LIMITATION OF EMPIRICAL FINDINGS

The limitations of the findings were that the findings from participant observations could have been influenced by the fear which the principals and teachers could have developed due to awareness of the researcher being a senior officer in the MOEVSTEE in the province. This could have led to some elements of pretending in their daily routine activities. From my observation, this fear should have been minimal because participants in schools were assured that the researcher's stay for 5 days was not to police them but to experience what they go through in their routine duties in order to understand why the SI was succeeding or failing. They were urged to be natural because the researcher was their colleague aiming at improving learner performance which was a major concern in at the PEO's office and nothing else.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS

The researcher's conclusions below are presented as answers to the questions posed in Chapter 1 to guide the study. They are presented in the form of main and specific conclusions. These conclusions are drawn from the literature review findings and the empirical study.

5.5.1 Main Conclusion

In the light of the main research question, it can be concluded that the SSPs succeed if the school managers are strategically vigilant in ensuring the implementation of SSPs. Therefore, the relationship between the principal vigilance and the performance of teachers as key implementers of SSPs is like the 'thunder and lightning' relationship, whereby the stronger the lightning, the louder the thunder. In this case, lightning represents the principal's 'voice' while thunder represents the teachers' performance in SSP implementation.

5.5.2 Specific Conclusions

These conclusions are based on the research questions that guided the study.

5.5.2.1 What factors lead to successful SSP implementation?

The factors that lead to successful SSP implementation can be summarised as follows:

- Enabling factors from management

The factors that have been identified as enabling the implementation of SSP are planning, leading, supporting, professional development, good conditions (inside and outside) the school, monitoring which is focused, planned, supported, frequent and vigilantly done (by walking around), involving others especially teachers in the formulation and implementation of SSPs, democratic and contingent leadership, frequent and well-managed meetings, and sharing SSP issues in meetings.

They also include reviewing, giving feedback on successes and challenges in the implementation, cultivating a culture of hard work in the school, learning from schools of excellence, mobilisation and provision of relevant resources, proactive head teachers, using multiple motivation strategies for teachers and learners, passionate standards officers, having SSP-related committees, and applying punitive measures for those failing to implement SSPs.

- **Enabling factors from the teachers**

Under this category, the factors that enable the implementation were positive attitudes, having disciplined teachers, involving teachers in SSP formulation, motivating teachers for SSP implementation, and having teachers accept and own the SSP.

- **Enabling factors from the learners**

The learner factors that enable implementation to take place were making learners understand and appreciate the essence of SSPs, having disciplined and cooperating learners, motivating learner leaders to help in monitoring teacher, and regular learner attendance of lessons.

- **Enabling factors from external stakeholders**

With regard to external stakeholders, the enabling factors were found to be monitoring visits, having feedback and follow up meetings, vigilance, giving implementation guidelines, conducting sensitisation or orientation sessions based on content and methodology, empowering the implementers, having support from political leaders, and receiving technical support from cooperating partners in education.

5.5.2.2 Factors constraining the implementation of strategic plans in schools

- **Constraining factors from management**

The factors that hinder the implementation of SSPs from management were bad conditions (inside and outside the school), dictatorship type of leadership, scanty and unsupported

monitoring, lack of vigilance in most of the leaders at all levels, not involving teachers in agreeing upon what to do to address challenges in the implementation, lack of consultation, inadequate space and or infrastructure, lack of understanding of what strategic management entails, and bad rapport between principal and teachers.

- **Constraining factors from teachers**

The teacher-related factors that negatively influence strategy implementation included negative attitudes, indiscipline, demotivation, not being involved in decision making with regard to SSP issues, only involving the teachers in SSP formulation and not in strategising for implementation, not understanding the essence of SSPs, and not being committed to the implementation of SSPs.

- **Constraining factors from learners**

The factors from learners that hinder SSP implementation included not understanding and appreciating the essence of SSP, and undisciplined or demotivated learners.

- **Constraining factors from external stakeholders**

The implementation of SSPs is hindered by external stakeholders when education officers, for example, do not provide implementation guidelines, hold content-based sensitisation sessions, do not empower the implementers with strategy implementation skills, and when they are not vigilant and strategic in monitoring the implementation.

5.5.2.3 Factors that enable or constrain the implementation of SSPS

It is clear from the findings that the factors that affect SI are both internal and external. The internal factors relate to management, teachers, learners, climate and culture. The external factors relate to visits made by officers from education offices, cooperating partners and the ruling party officials in the district where the implementing schools are, and the social facilities located within the vicinity of the schools among others.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The recommendations below are motivated to give reasons for each:

5.6.1 Empowering Education Managers

The education managers at provincial and district levels and implementers should be empowered with managerial skills and knowledge on effective strategy implementation. Afterwards, the education managers at all levels should vigilantly keep a critical eye on preventing any ‘dissatisfiers’ that can harm the implementation. This will motivate the implementers of SSPs education managers and SSP implementers and give them direction in their tasks.

5.6.2 Provision of Strategy Implementation Guidelines

The provincial education office should formulate, and disseminate the implementation guidelines. Their use in schools should then be strictly monitored. Those who are involved in strategic management should establish policies that will guide the implementation of decisions. When implementers are guided, they will have a direction in what they will be doing and will not get lost on the way and stop the implementation of SSPs.

5.6.3 Enhancing Effective School Strategy Management Skills

The MOESVTEE at national, provincial and district levels should devise ways of enhancing effective strategy management skills in all schools, and amplifying and maintaining these factors where they are already happening. This entails enhancing management skills. This can be done by avoiding situations where the enabling factors are hampered by managerial negligence. Good things should be preserved, while situations where there is so much dissatisfaction that the motivators become ineffective should be avoided.

5.6.4 Job Analysis and Cultivation of Goal and Implementation Intentions

The MOESVTEE at all levels should consider how to address the constraining factors at all levels. A job analysis may be one way (where the job is strategy implementation) because it can make explicit the behaviours necessary for attaining the goal of implementation. Another way involves cultivating ‘goal and implementation intentions’ which means consciously setting goals and having a mental link created between a specific future situation and the intended goal-directed response. If the constraining factors are left unchecked, the schools will continue to perform poorly.

5.6.5 Incorporating Strategy Implementation in Teacher Training

Both private and public teacher training colleges should include strategic management in their curriculum and make it compulsory for all trainees by making it compulsory subjects. ‘Strategy implementation for school improvement’ should be the major topic. MOESVTEE can task the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) to use research results from studies such as those from this study and others to determine the contents of topics in strategic management. Cooperating partners such as STEP-UP Zambia can help in funding material writing exercises for the new topics on strategic management. Unions may come in to reward the schools that perform the best in strategy implementation.

This will equip the teachers who are key implementers of SSPs. Since teachers often become principals as they progress through their careers, there will be continuity in the availability of skilled manpower in the area of strategy implementation. It will also make teachers cooperate in the implementation of the SSPs when they join the profession.

5.6.6 Establishing monitoring and support mechanisms

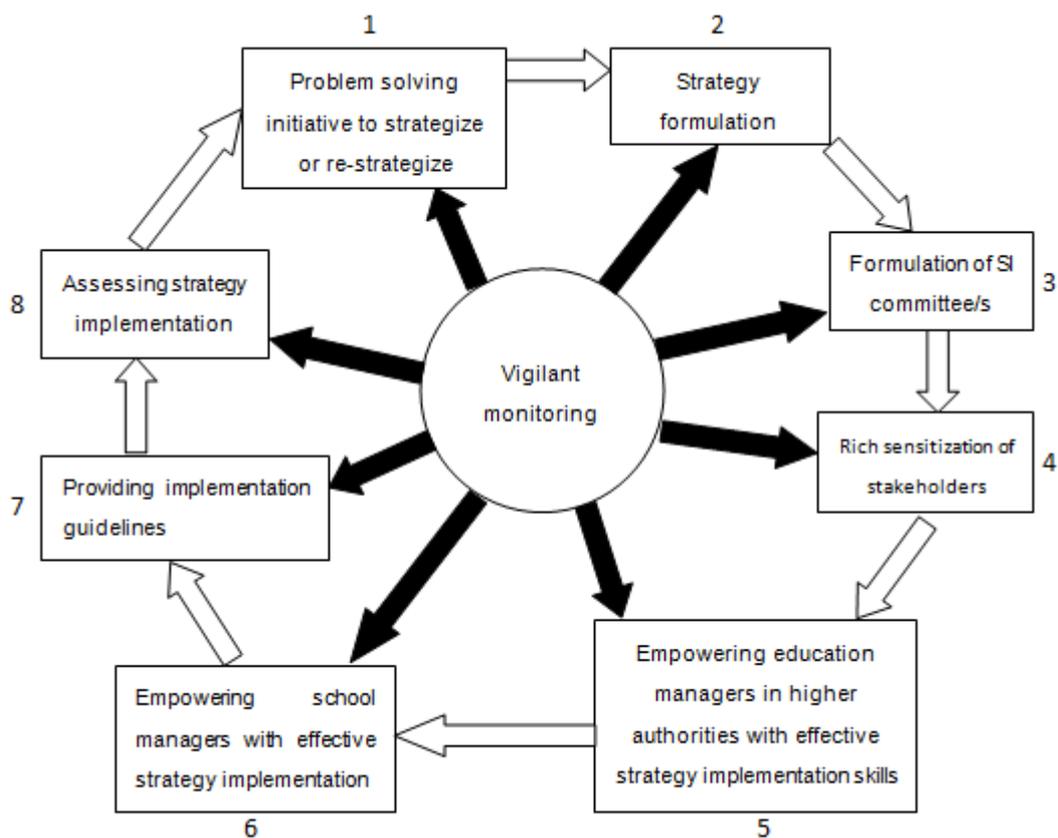
The Ministry of Education at national, provincial, and district levels should work with other stakeholders to come up with monitoring and support mechanisms such as school SSP implementation committees working in collaboration with the national, provincial, and district SSP implementation committee coordinators. The national, provincial, and district committees should provide terms of reference to the school committees who should report periodically to them on SSP implementation in their schools. This will create the missing link between the school and higher education authorities needed to ensure the SSPs are implemented. The steps that can be followed to ensure that SI is effective are explained below.

5.7 MODEL DEVELOPED FROM THE STUDY

Following the recommendations above, the model in Figure 5.1 below has been developed to guide the implementation of strategic plans in Zambian secondary schools.

The model shows that SI is effective when it is cyclical, following the steps in model. It should be noted that the type of monitoring that should motivate each step in this process is vigilant monitoring.

Figure 5.1 Model showing effective strategy implementation process



A brief explanation on each step is given below.

- **Problem solving initiative**

At this stage, the problem should first be identified. The initiative to solve that problem may come from the higher authorities in education.

- **Strategy formulation**

The formulation of strategies should involve those who will be involved in the implementation and other relevant stakeholders so that a sense of ownership is instilled and cooperation is won during implementation.

- **Formulation of SI committees**

This can be done in various ways. There can either be a steering committee made up of chairpersons of specific individual strategies. The other way is to have one committee overlooking the implementation of strategies in all schools which may not be as effective as the former way. The other way could be that of having standards officers in charge of

districts being in charge of the SI in their districts. Then they should meet regularly to give feedback to the main committee which should be chaired by the PEO.

- **Rich sensitisation**

The sensitisation about the formulated strategies should include information on problems identified and the benefits of solving that problem. This will increase the valence in the implementers. The sensitisation should also include strategies to avoid failure in the implementation.

- **Empowering managers in higher authorities with effective strategy implementation skills**

This step should involve experts in strategic management. A multi-sector approach may help whereby experts in business management are involved as trainers. Those in positions of authority at national, provincial and district levels in the Ministry of Education should be trained on how to manage SI effectively. This will make them skilled to empower the implementers in schools.

- **Empowering school managers with effective strategy implementation skills**

The principals and HODs should be empowered with skills in SI. This can be done by the provincial and district education managers since they will have been trained already in the same field.

- **Providing implementation guidelines**

The national, provincial and district education managers should give the school managers the guidelines to follow when implementing SSPs.

- **Assessing strategy implementation**

When the implementation begins, it should be assessed continuously to establish progress or problems and address them so that the intended goal for having the SSPs (or any other strategies at provincial or district level) is eventually achieved.

5.8 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the findings that the education officers did not empower the principals with strategy implementation guidelines and skills, and also that principals' leadership styles determine

whether strategies will be implemented or not, I suggest the following studies to be conducted at national or provincial level:

- Establishing the underlying factors that hinder education officers in higher authorities from empowering principals with skills for effective strategy implementation;
- Effects of leadership on strategy implementation in secondary schools;
- The role of different school level stakeholders in strategy implementation; and
- The feasibility of creating an evaluation and monitoring team to oversee strategy implementation in secondary schools.

5.9 CLOSING REMARKS

The major findings emanating from this study are that the implementation of SSPs is mostly affected negatively or positively by management styles, teachers' attitude, learners' cooperation and stakeholders' support. Monitoring has emerged as the most crucial factor in the implementation of SSPs (especially at school level).

These findings have made me realise the factors at play in the implementation of SSPs. This research has proved beyond doubt that the principal's role in the implementation of school strategic plans is the most crucial.

The study has sharpened my skills in analysing qualitative data which I did not have before. It has raised concern about the lack of SSP implementation guidelines and skills in schools. The other concern raised in this study is that of the education authorities requiring schools to implement their SSPs without empowering them with the necessary skills for effective strategy implementation. This surprising oversight needs to be addressed. All in all, since the study has all been on matters of managing an education phenomenon, it satisfies me that my Masters degree course has really been a course in education management.

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APPENDIX 1: LETTERS OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE STUDY

6th September 2013

The District Education Board Secretary
P.O.BOX 710093
MANSA



Permission granted.

*Mab
2013*

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a fourth year student at University of South Africa (UNISA). I write to request you to grant me permission to conduct a research at Mabumba secondary school in your district as part of my studies for Master of Education (M.ED) in Education Management.

As you are aware, there is a rising concern at the Provincial Education Office as to why there is continued poor learner performance in the province. I have, therefore, decided to conduct a study to establish research-based findings on the factors that enable and those that constrain the implementation of School Strategic Plans (SSPs) meant to improve learner performance in secondary schools.

The study will be conducted in Samfya and Mansa districts at Samfya and Mabumba secondary schools respectively. Data will be collected using one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation (1 week while teaching one class) and document analysis. The confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants who will be studied will be ensured by coding them and not mentioning their names. A tape recorder and not a video recorder will be used during interviews for anonymity purposes.

The information collected from the participants will not only be used for academic purpose only but also to improve education delivery in the province. It will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education to make informed decisions concerning strategy implementation for improved learner performance in schools.

For your reference, I have attached the data collection instruments to be used in the study.

Your positive response will be appreciated.

Grace Kandeke Sinkolongo (Mrs.)

Provincial Education Office
P.O Box 710196
Mansa

6th September 2013

The Headteacher
Mabumba Secondary School
P.O. Box 710191
MANSA



PERMITTED

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a fourth year student at University of South Africa (UNISA). I write to request you to grant me permission to conduct a research at Mabumba secondary school in your district as part of my studies for Master of Education (M.ED) in Education Management.

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The study will be conducted in Samfya and Mansa districts at Samfya and Mabumba secondary schools respectively. Data will be collected using one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation (1 week while teaching one class) and document analysis. The confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants who will be studied will be ensured by coding them and not mentioning their names. A tape recorder and not a video recorder will be used during interviews for anonymity purposes.

The information collected from the participants will not only be used for academic purpose only but also to improve education delivery in the province. It will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education to make informed decisions concerning strategy implementation for improved learner performance in schools.

For your reference, I have attached the data collection instruments to be used in the study and an introductory letter from my supervisor.

Your positive response will be appreciated

Grace Kandeke Sinkolongo (Mrs.)

Provincial Education Office
P.O Box 710196
Mansa

6th September 2013

The Head teacher
Samfya secondary school
P.O. BOX 720070
SAMFYA



Permitted
R.K.M. Sinkolongo
H.T.

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a fourth year student at University of South Africa (UNISA). I write to request you to grant me permission to conduct a research at Samfya secondary school in your district as part of my studies for Master of Education (M.ED) in Education Management.

As you are aware, there is a rising concern at the Provincial Education Office as to why there is continued poor learner performance in the province. I have, therefore, decided to conduct a study to establish research-based findings on the factors that enable and those that constrain the implementation of School Strategic Plans (SSPs) meant to improve learner performance in secondary schools.

The study will be conducted in Samfya and Mansa districts at Samfya and Mabumba secondary schools respectively. Data will be collected using one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation (1 week while teaching one class) and document analysis. The confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants who will be studied will be ensured by coding them and not mentioning their names. A tape recorder and not a video recorder will be used during interviews for anonymity purposes.

The information collected from the participants will not only be used for academic purpose only but also to improve education delivery in the province. It will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education to make informed decisions concerning strategy implementation for improved learner performance in schools.

For your reference, I have attached the data collection instruments to be used in the study.

Your positive response will be appreciated

Grace Kandeke Sinkolongo (Mrs.)

Provincial Education Office
P.O Box 710196
Mansa

Permitted
Hosco

6th September 2013

The District Education Board Secretary
P.O.BOX 720067
SAMFYA



RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a fourth year student at University of South Africa (UNISA). I write to request you to grant me permission to conduct a research at Samfya secondary school in your district as part of my studies for Master of Education (M.ED) in Education Management.

As you are aware, there is a rising concern at the Provincial Education Office as to why there is continued poor learner performance in the province. I have, therefore, decided to conduct a study to establish research-based findings on the factors that enable and those that constrain the implementation of School Strategic Plans (SSPs) meant to improve learner performance in secondary schools.

The study will be conducted in Samfya and Mansa districts at Samfya and Mabalimba secondary schools respectively. Data will be collected using one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation (1 week while teaching one class) and document analysis. The confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants who will be studied will be ensured by coding them and not mentioning their names. A tape recorder and not a video recorder will be used during interviews for anonymity purposes.

The information collected from the participants will not only be used for academic purpose only but also to improve education delivery in the province. It will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education to make informed decisions concerning strategy implementation for improved learner performance in schools.

For your reference, I have attached the data collection instruments to be used in the study.

Your positive response will be appreciated

Grace
Grace Kandeke Sinkolongo (Mrs.)

6th September 2013

The Provincial Education Officer
P.O Box 710196
Luapula province
Mansa



Provincial Education Office
P.O Box 710196
Mansa

*permitted Mrs Simstango
to carry out Research Study
in the province.*

*M. S.
SEO - SAC
Sv/PEO*

Dear Madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION

I am a fourth year student at University of South Africa (UNISA). I write to request you to grant me permission to carry out my research in two secondary schools in your province as part of my studies in Master of Education (M.ED) in Education Management.

As you are aware, there is a rising concern in the province as to why there is continued poor learner performance especially at grade 12 level. I have, therefore, decided to conduct a study to establish research-based findings on the factors that enable and those that constrain the implementation of School Strategic Plans meant to improve learner performance in secondary schools. The study will be conducted in Samfya and Mansa districts at Samfya and Mabumba secondary schools respectively.

Data will be collected using one-to-one interviews, questionnaires, focus group discussions, participant observation and document analysis methods. The confidentiality and anonymity of the schools and participants who will be studied will be ensured by coding them and not mentioning their names. A tape recorder and not a video recorder will be used during interviews for anonymity purposes.

The information collected from the participants will not only be used for academic purpose only but also to improve education delivery in the province. It will help the authorities in the Ministry of Education to make informed decisions concerning strategy implementation for improved learner performance in schools.

For your reference, I have attached the data collection instruments to be used.

Your positive response will be appreciated


Grace Kandeke Sinkolongo (Mrs)

APPENDIX 2: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE PEO

SECTION A – PRACTICE

1. What program have you put in place to monitor the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools?
2. What is your assessment on the implementation of the SSPs in secondary schools?
3. Why do you say so?
4. What action have you taken to address the findings on the implementation of the SSPs in secondary schools?
5. How do you ensure that the DEBS's see to it that SSPs are being implemented in secondary schools?
6. Since you work directly with secondary schools, what type of support do you give to help in the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools?
7. What have you put in place to ensure that all plans in the SSPs are implemented?

SECTION B – VIEWS

8. In your own view, do you think the implementation of SSPs in most of the secondary schools is going on very well?
9. Why do you say so?
10. What do you think should be done to make secondary schools implement their SSPs?

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PEO

Having understood the purpose of the research, the conditions for security, anonymity and confidentiality which have been assured as attached to this form, I agree to participate in this study.

NAME.....
DATE.....
SIGNATURE.....

APPENDIX 3: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE DEBS

SECTION A – KNOWLEDGE

1. What do you know about
 - a. Strategic planning?
 - b. Strategic management?
 - c. Strategy implementation?

SECTION B - PRACTICE

2. What program have you put in place to monitor the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools?
3. What action have you taken to address the findings on the implementation of the SSPs in secondary schools?
4. How do you ensure that the headteachers implement their SSPs in secondary schools?
5. What type of support do you give to help in the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools?

SECTION B – VIEWS

6. a. In your own view, do you think the implementation of SSPs in most of the secondary schools is going on very well?
b. Why do you say so?
7. What do you think should be done to make secondary schools implement their SSPs?

CONSENT FORM FOR THE DEBS

Having understood the purpose of the research, the conditions for security, anonymity and confidentiality which have been assured as attached to this form, I agree to participate in this study.

NAME.....
DATE.....
SIGNATURE.....

APPENDIX 4: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE HEAD TEACHERS

SECTION A – KNOWLEDGE

1. What do you know about
 - a. Strategic planning?
 - b. Strategic management?
 - c. Strategy implementation?

SECTION B – EXPERIENCE/PRACTICE

2. How did you develop your SSPs?
3. What have you put in place to ensure that the plans in your SSPs are implemented in your school?
4. What role do you play in ensuring that the planned strategies are implemented in your school?
5. How often do you receive external monitors to monitor the implementation of SSPs? Select your answer from the options below by ticking. (a) once a month [], (b) once a quarter [], (c) once a term [], (d) once a year [], (e) never receive monitors []
6. What type of support have you received from your supervisors to make you implement your SSPs?
7. From your experience, what things make the implementation of SSPs in your school:
 - a. Easy
 - b. Difficult?

SECTION C – OPINION

8. What do you think should be done to make sure that the plans in the SSPs are implemented effectively?

CONSENT FORM FOR HEAD TEACHERS

Having understood the purpose of the research, the conditions for security, anonymity and confidentiality which have been assured as attached to this form, I agree to participate in this study.

DATE	NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR THE FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION WITH HODs

SECTION A – KNOWLEDGE

1. What do you know about
 - a. Strategic planning?
 - b. Strategic management?
 - c. Strategy implementation?

SECTION B – EXPERIENCE/PRACTICE

2. How did you develop your SSPs?
3. What have you put in place in your department to ensure that the strategic plans are implemented?
4. What role do you play in ensuring that the planned strategies are implemented in the school?
5. How often do you receive external monitors to monitor the implementation of SSPs? Select your answer from the options below by ticking. (a) once a month [], (b) once a quarter [], (c) once a term [], (d) once a year [], (e) never receive monitors []
6. What type of support have you received from your supervisors to make you implement the SSPs in your departments?
7. From your experience, what things make the implementation of SSPs in your school:
 - a. Easy?
 - b. Difficult?

SECTION C – OPINION

8. What do you think should be done to make sure that the plans in the SSPs are implemented effectively?

CONSENT FORM FOR HODs

Having understood the purpose of the research, the conditions for security, anonymity and confidentiality which have been assured as attached to this form, I agree to participate in this study.

DATE	NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE

APPENDIX 6: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR THE SESOs

SECTION A – PRACTICE

1. When you go out to monitor schools, what do you identify as the major factors influencing the implementation of SSPs?
2. What action have you taken to address the findings on the implementation of the SSPs in secondary schools?
3. Since you work more directly with secondary schools, what type of support do you give to help the implementation of SSPs in secondary schools?
4. What have you put in place to ensure that all plans in the SSPs are implemented?

SECTION B – VIEWS

5. In your own view, do you think the implementation of SSPs in most of the secondary schools is going on very well?
6. Why do you say so?
7. What do you think should be done to make secondary schools implement their SSPs?

CONSENT FORM FOR THE PEO

Having understood the purpose of the research, the conditions for security, anonymity and confidentiality which have been assured as attached to this form, I agree to participate in this study.

DATE	NAME	POSITION	SIGNATURE

APPENDIX 7: DOCUMENT ANALYSIS SCHEDULE

AREAS OF FOCUS	OBSERVATION	COMMENT
Records on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SSP Document: To note SSP formulation process and planned strategies. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School assembly record book: To check focus in addresses, 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logbook: To check the entries pertaining to SSP issues. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support records such as accounting records: To check the support from other stakeholders towards the implementation of SSPs. 		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff meeting minutes: to check emphasis on SSPs. • Any other relevant documents. 		

APPENDIX 8: OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

S/NO	AREA OF FOCUS	OBSERVATION	COMMENT
1.	Management of human resources,	Teachers handled with <u>respect</u> even when a strong point was being emphasized to warn teachers. <u>Motivation</u> of teachers and other staff through tea with accompaniment at break.	
	Management of Material resources,	Duty report book opened for HOD on duty to give TOD 2 enter	
	Management of Time		
	Management of information		
2.	Leadership - Style	<u>Participatory Flexible</u> , <u>democratic</u> yet firm	
	- Skills such as decision making.	<u>Shared</u> decision making was practiced as seen when the head teacher asked the HODs what can be done about reintroducing morning prep	
	-Supervision distribution,	<u>Deputy head teacher also involved</u> as seen in his frequent visits to the classrooms when it was his turn to do so. <u>HODs</u> involved in supervising teachers and learners as seen when one HOD who came to bring a register for me to sign when he found me teaching the grade 10 learners	
	-Utilization of learner leaders and others.		
3.	School climate as seen in relationships;		
	- Among leaders		
	- Among teachers		
	- Between teachers and learners		
	- With the external stakeholders and others		
4.	Meetings:		
	- Their management		
	- Attendance		

	- Frequency		
	- Types		
	- Agendas		
5.	School culture as seen in -physical infrastructure such as classroom,	Cleanliness emphasised	
	offices (including departmental offices).		
	- staffroom situations,		
	- attending to tasks,		
	- helping each other,		
	- team work		
	- punctuality,		
	-adherence to SSPs and deadlines		
	- interactions,		
	- communication,		
	- What they talk about during informal discussions such as tea breaks and others.		

NB: The above areas will be observed because reflections on them can be quite telling as noted by Ledoux (2005: 238).