FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DRAFTING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING IN SCHOOLS IN THE MOTHEO DISTRICT

by

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Submitted for the partial fulfillment in accordance with the requirements for the degree

MASTER OF EDUCATION (COURSE WORK)

EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT

In

The Department of Post Graduate Studies: Education

In the

Faculty of Humanities

at the

Central University of Technology, Free State (Welkom Campus)

SUPERVISOR: Prof GJ Schlebusch

Date of submission: November 2013

DECLARATION WITH REGARD TO INDEPENDENT WORK

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I, Masese Bettie Mokhatle, student number: 205017509, do hereby declare that this mini-dissertation submitted to the Central University of Technology, Free State for the Degree: Master of Education (Coursework), is my own independent work; and complies with the Code of Academic Integrity, as well as other relevant policies, procedures, rules and regulations of the Central University of Technology, Free State; and has not been submitted before to any institution by myself or any other person in fulfillment (or partial fulfillment) of the requirements for the attainment of any qualification.

13 November 2013

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MOKHATLE, MB   **DATE**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

This mini-dissertation is dedicated to my:

- My late parents Bosiame Buffel (1995) and Magazi Maria Buffel (2011)

- My son Matshidiso Ignatius Mokhatle.

- My grandchildren Kamogelo, Golekane, Ofentse, Molebogeng Buffel.

- My colleagues Mr Wetes Zat and Ms NG Tshikida.

- Mr Manzine, Mr. Setouto, Mr Tebogo Buffel; and

- To all my friends who helped and assisted me.

ABSTRACT

The implementation of strategic planning in schools started in the United States of America (USA) in the 1980s. It is not clear when the concept was first used in South Africa, but its importance in the successful management of a school cannot be underestimated. Strategic planning basically includes a group of instruments, operations and concepts structured to help managers, leaders and planners to think and act strategically. The planning process comprises a definition of the goals, a valuation of the resources available for meeting the goals, and the definition of definite plans or initiatives that are intended to achieve the goals. The process usually includes a classification exercise that identifies the highest priority initiatives.

The study addresses the management process and indicates how strategic management fits into this process. Strategic planning is the process of deciding on an organisation's goals, determining the policies and programmes necessary to achieve all specific objectives, and establishing the methods essential to assure that the policies and strategic programmes are implemented. Strategic planning ensures that the school is associated with the changing internal and external environment. This planning is formulated by top management and focuses on the entire organisation.

A qualitative design was followed in which the opinions of principals and School Governing Body chairpersons were sought through the use of open-ended questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Method triangulation was incorporated by the use of afore-mentioned data collection methods. Another form of triangulation employed in this study is data source triangulation. This entails making use of more than one group of participants to gather data. This study obtained data from various groups of people as described in the sample.

The findings of the study indicate that strategic planning does not occur in many schools in the Motheo district. If a form of strategic planning does occur, SGB chairpersons are often excluded in the drafting and implementation of these plans. Collaboration between School Management Teams and School

Governing Bodies is needed to ensure the successful drafting and implementation of strategic plans.

Key words: School management; strategic planning

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CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

From the viewpoint of theory and practice, strategy is directly related to the management of the business or school. Strategic management is a comparatively recent discipline without a unified theory supporting its growing practice. Indeed, strategic management is as difficult to define as strategy is. According to French (2009:8), strategy management was first proposed in early 80s with the specific purpose of defining a new paradigm for business policy. The concept of business policy was then rearticulated as strategic management and defined as:

> *"…a process that deals with the entrepreneurial work of the organisation, with organisational renewal and growth, and more particularly, with developing and utilising strategy, which is a guide to the organisation's operations."*

This somewhat abstract definition states that as a discipline, strategic management suggests both the development and implementation of strategies. Since the word strategy is often employed as a synonym of plan, it should not be a surprise to know that strategic management is commonly used in a similar comparison of strategic planning, and to some extent of strategic thinking.

The South African Schools Act (SASA) (Act No 84 of 1996) prioritises the role of the principal as an academic leader. In accordance with the SASA, the role of school principals is to be part of the process of strategic management and strategic thinking, which are derived from the process of strategic planning. The purpose of strategic planning for the school is to ensure that the school can face the challenges of a changing environment (both internal and

external). According to Dimitriou and Thompson (2007:96), principals need the tool of strategic planning to assist them to ensure that their schools survive in the changing environment they operate in.

Strategic planning intends to effect changes and innovation for school improvement and is therefore a comprehensive long-term planning process (Doherty & Andrews, 2010:120). According to Grunig and Kuhn (2008:102), the purpose of strategic planning is to assist school principals to introduce changes successfully so that the quality of teaching and learning should be improved. Davis, Bankes and Egner (2007:96) assert that not all strategic plans lead to school improvement. Improvement is based on how strategic plans are formulated and implemented. Strategic planning therefore is at the heart of the management process and it moves management away from a response-based approach into a more value driven approach which is needed if a school aims to be successful (Doherty & Andrews, 2010:67). Strategic planning informs all management processes and outcomes.

The SASA (Act No 84 of 1996) requires from the principal to work in a democratic and participatory way to build relationships and ensure efficient and effective service delivery. The strategic planning process needs working groups to be engaged with potential stakeholders, staff and representatives of the wider community in order to identify or participate in the external opportunities, threats and weaknesses of the school.

1.2   PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the current study is to determine the factors influencing the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in schools in the Motheo District. The study will make school management teams (SMTs) and School Governing Bodies aware of changes, new opportunities and possible threats that they will come across during the development and implementation of school strategic plans. These stakeholders play a significant role in determining the functionality of schools academically. Strategic planning and

the implementation of such plans, as will be discussed in this study, must assist these stakeholders to ensure such functionality.

1.3 THE STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

An important task of the contemporary school is to stay ahead of change. Education in South Africa has and is still undergoing many changes with regard to curricula, decentralised financial management and administrative aspects. The managerial tasks of principals have also changed significantly. Universally, schools are increasingly being managed like businesses. For this reason aspects such as marketing, cost-effectiveness, and the needs of the client should receive attention. Strategic planning is a means for establishing and maintaining a sense of direction when the future has become more and more difficult to predict. The question that immediately presents itself is: What role can strategic planning play in the radical educational changes that have already taken place and in those that can be envisaged for South African schools? A major problem that exists is that without having learnt the skills of strategic management and operational planning, principals are liable to find themselves involved in crisis-management.

The role of the school principal has changed overnight to that of manager and business administrator. Principals have to find new ways of increasing productivity in their schools. Obviously, this places tremendous pressure on principals. Many principals have already become proficient in dealing with the most urgent of problems, such as the loss of personnel, affirmative action and redeployment of personnel. More effective and comprehensive ways of managing schools should therefore be found. This implies a new way of looking at education management which involves inter alia, strategic planning.

1.3.1 Research questions

The problem statement leads to the following research questions to be answered by this study:

- What is the essence of strategic planning within the management process?
- Which factors influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools?
- What recommendations can be put forward to assist in the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools?

1.4 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1.4.1 Aim

The study aims to investigate the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic plans of schools in the Motheo district.

1.4.2 Research objectives

The research questions relate to the following objectives of the of this study:

- To ascertain the essence of strategic planning within the management process;
- To determine the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools;
- To provide recommendations regarding the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools;

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The methodology employed in this study will be elaborated on in Chapter 3. Population and sampling will be discussed, as well as the instrumentation to collect the data.

1.6   DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

1.6.1   Strategic planning

Strategic planning is the process of defining an organisation's plans for achieving its mission. The creation of a strategic planning effort is normally a document (a strategic plan) that explains a high-level strategy and expresses the elements that influence it (Gates, 2010:3).

1.7   LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The possibility will be there that principals and School Governing Body (SGB) chairpersons may not want to provide information readily regarding strategic planning if they were not involved is such planning. All participants willingly provided the information needed.   No limitations to this study were experienced.

1.8   SUMMARY

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce the study and provide an overview of the research plan of the study. The purpose and significance of the study are provided. The problem is stated and research questions and objectives provided. Most of the methodology of this study will be provided in Chapter 3. Chapter two elaborates on strategic planning as the literature underpinning this study.

CHAPTER 2

STRATEGIC PLANNING

2.1   INTRODUCTION

The implementation of strategic planning in schools started in the United States of America (USA) in the 1980s (Yelken, Kilic & Ozdemir, 2012:268). It is not clear when the concept was first used in South Africa, but its importance in the successful management of a school cannot be underestimated. Strategic planning basically includes a group of instruments, operations and concepts structured to help managers, leaders and planners to think and act strategically. MacDonald (2007) defines strategic planning as a set of demarcated ventures that are entered into and completed to achieve a desired set of goals. The planning process comprises a definition of the goals, a valuation of the resources available for meeting the goals, and the definition of definite plans or initiatives that are intended to achieve the goals. The process usually includes a classification exercise that identifies the highest priority initiatives.

Education Impact (2010:4) states that a school strategic plan normally sets out the school's strategic direction for the next number of years. Included will be the school's purpose, its values and environmental context, as well as its goals, targets and key development strategies. Strategic planning contributes to the progress of the school as an organisation and the formation of operative strategies. Therefore, strategic planning is critically important for any organisation for its development. Implementers of strategic planning, or some of their representatives, should take part in the planning process to ensure continuity from design to implementation. This is because of the fact that there must be co-operation, agreement and communication in the context of

strategic planning. In a non-school related study, Sinha (2010:52) established some kind of a planning-performance linkage. In this study, he examined 1087 decisions made by 129 Fortune 500 firms between 1992 and 1996. The conclusion of the study is that characteristics of the decisions accounted for 15 percent of the variance in data and therefore should be regarded as important factors of the contribution strategic plans make to decision making.

The first section of the literature review of this study deals with management and also indicates where strategic planning fits into the management process.

2.2   MANAGEMENT PROCESS

According to Pillay (2011:178), management can be defined as the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the resources of the organisation to achieve its stated organisational goals.

2.2.1   Planning

Higgins (2012:54) states that planning is the management function that determines the organisation's mission and goals. It involves identifying ways of reaching the goals and finding the resources needed for such a task. It entails determining the future position of the organisation, and the strategic resources needed to reach that position. Setting goals is an invaluable task that must be done to establish order within an organisation. Planning is the base function of setting such goals, as well as the foundation for management (Vednere, 2009:37).

According to Thomas and Ellis (2007:547), planning is a never-ending process. The moment planning ceases, the organisation will begin to deteriorate. Both internal and external factors must be considered when planning is to be done. There will be times in any organisation (such as a

school) where long-term planning must take a back seat when short-term planning, due to an emergency, becomes a necessity. Jackson (2007:88) states that planning is the management task which integrates active reflection upon the goals of the organisation. Planning is concerned with what is to be done and how it should be done. In order to plan effectively and accordingly, school principals need to have sound knowledge of the internal and external environment of the school, relevant skills and the right attitude to plan successfully. Principals need to bear certain principles in mind when planning is done, such as the following:

- The planning should not be left entirely in the hands of external consultants. The School Management Team (SMT) and School Governing Body (SGB) must initiate and direct a process of planning.
- All shareholders who will have to implement plans should also be involved in drawing it up.
- Effective planning is no guarantee for effective management on the school. The implementation of planning must be effectively managed.

According to Barnat (2005), planning encompasses four elements, namely:

- Evaluating environmental forces and organisational resources;
- Establishing a set of organisational goals;
- Developing strategies and plans to achieve the stated goals;
- Formulating a decision-making process.

These elements are concerned with organisational success in the near future as well as success in the more distant future. When planning to the future, the principal normally develops a strategy for getting there. This process is referred to as strategic planning. This aspect is discussed in more detail later on in this chapter. The second function of management to be discussed is organising.

2.2.2   Organising

Once plans have been made and are ready to be implemented, organising comes into play (Redman, Snape, Wass & Hamilton, 2007:1492). It is basically impossible to organise until plans have been set, but once plans are set, then organisation has purpose. Organising combines the resources available to the school as an organisation. These resources might include money, talent, technology, or tools. The compilation of these resources is the most efficient way of accomplishing organisational goals. Management will systemise the division of labour and resources, as well as determine where authority and responsibility lie once organisational efforts have been established. Organising is the next logical step when planning has reached a certain point. Being that planning never ceases, it can be logically be assumed that organising is an on-going task as well (Thomas & Ellis, 2007:548). Proper planning and organising is only possible when linked to a manager who leads.

2.2.3   Leading

Devitt (2009:31) states that after management have made a plan, created a structure, and hired the right personnel, someone must lead the process. Leading means communicating with and motivating the employees to accomplish the tasks necessary to attain the organisational goals within the context of a supporting organisational culture.

Once planning has been established and organisation has begun, leading becomes necessary to carry out said plans. Leading plays a significant part in prompting how each organisational goal is to be reached. Included in this process is open communication and supervision. Building relationships of trust and camaraderie will encourage the efforts of management in leading the organisation (such as a school) to success. This can be achieved through

proper and regular communication, i.e. where the principal communicate daily with heads of department and staff (Pophaley & Vyas, 2010:55). All planning and organising must be controlled by the manager.

2.2.4   Controlling

Bredmar (2012:481-482) asserts that the final phase of the management process is controlling. Controlling means monitoring employees' activities and determining whether the organisation is on target toward its goals. Correction can be made as it becomes necessary. Controlling ensures that, through effective leading, what has been planned and organised to take place has in fact taken place. Three basic components create the control function, namely:

- elements of a control system;
- evaluating and rewarding employee performance; and
- controlling financial, informational, and physical resources.

Controlling is also an on-going process and is seen as an effective function to determine whether the school as an organisation is on target toward its goals, and also to make corrections as deemed necessary (Thomas & Ellis, 2007:548). These are all managerial functions and are related and interrelated to each other. Strategic planning flows from planning as a management function. Firstly, strategic planning is theorised through Mintzberg's theory of strategic planning.

2.3   MINTZBERG'S THEORY OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Management expert, Henry Mintzberg, maintained that it is very difficult to get strategy right. His convincing claim is that the notion of strategy cannot be summarised to a single definition (Rappaport, 2001:14-15). Since the word is used in different ways, people indirectly consent to various definitions. To

assist in this regard he developed 5 Ps of Strategy (plan, ploy, pattern, position, perspective) – five different definitions of (or approaches to) developing strategies (Mintzberg, 1992:12-19).

2.3.1   Strategy as a plan

Strategy is a unified plan and the outcome of a deliberate process - some sort of intentional course of action, a guideline (or set of guidelines) to deal with a situation. From reading this definition, strategies have two important features: they are made in advance of the actions to which they apply, and they are developed consciously and purposefully (Mintzberg, 1994:26).

Strategy as a plan provides overall direction and a course of action. From a planning perspective, strategic decision-making is seen as a proper, coherent, top-down organised process (Thompson & Martin 2005:25). Strategy is then implemented through the organisational structures (in a school context these structures include the SGB, principal and SMT, teachers and parents). Planning is an essential part of the strategy formulation process. The problem with planning, however, is that it is not enough on its own. This is where the other four Ps come into play.

2.3.2   Strategy as a ploy

Strategy as a ploy is a specific manoeuvre to outwit a competitor. Mintzberg (1994:27) says that getting the better of rivals, by manoeuvring to upset, discourage, or influence them, can be part of a strategy. In such a sense, strategy is seen as a ploy.

2.3.3   Strategy as a pattern

Louw and Venter (2006:16) state that if strategies can be envisioned (whether as general plans or specific ploys), they can also be realised. This implies that defining strategy as a plan may not be enough and that a definition that includes the subsequent behaviour may also be needed. Plans are envisioned strategy, whereas patterns are realised strategy; which allows for distinguishing between deliberate strategies, where aims that existed previously were realised, and emergent strategies where patterns developed in the absence of intentions, or even despite them.

Strategic plans and ploys are both deliberate exercises. It happens sometimes that strategy materialises from past organisational behaviour. This strategy may not be an intentional choice, but rather a consistent and successful action that leads or develops into a strategy (Thompson & Martin 2005:27). For instance, a principal who makes decisions that further enhance an already successful action may not deliberately choose to build a strategic advantage, but his/her pattern of actions nevertheless creates one.

2.3.4   Strategy as a position

Rappaport (2001:15) states that strategy is also a position, in the sense that a organisation uses this strategy to locate the organisation in a certain environment. By this definition strategy turns into the intervening force between the organisation and the environment - between the internal and the external context and it helps to develop a sustainable competitive advantage. For example, the strategy might include developing a niche area within the school (having a fully equipped gymnasium on the school grounds) to up the marketability of the school to enrol good sportsmen.

2.3.5 Strategy as a perspective

Louw and Venter (2006:16) assert that strategy is also a perspective, where the content of the strategy consist not only of a chosen position, but also of an embedded way of perceiving the world. Strategy in this respect is to the organisation what personality is to the individual (Mintzberg, 1994:28). What is of crucial significance is that strategy is a perspective common amongst members of an organisation, through their objectives and/or by their actions. The choices an organisation makes about its strategy depend greatly on its culture. Just as patterns of behaviour can become strategy, patterns of thinking will shape an organisation's perspective over time. For instance, a school that encourages risk-taking and innovation from its teachers and parent community might focus on coming up with innovative ideas as the main thrust behind its strategy.

The 5Ps discussed above need to be used by organisations for it to be helpful. The next sub-section looks into the uses of the 5Ps.

2.3.6 Using the 5 Ps

Instead of trying to use the 5 Ps as a process to follow while developing strategy, think of them as a variety of viewpoints that should be considered while developing a successful strategy. As such, there are three points in the strategic planning process where it's particularly helpful to use the 5 Ps:

- When gathering information and conducting the analysis needed for strategy development, as a way of ensuring that you've considered everything relevant.
- After providing initial ideas, as a way of testing that that they are realistic, practical and robust.
- As a final check on the strategy that was developed, to flush out inconsistencies and things that may not have been fully considered.

Using Mintzberg's 5 Ps thus highlights problems that would otherwise undermine the implementation of your strategy. It is much better to identify these problems at the planning stage of strategic planning than it is to find out about them after a few years (Mintzberg, 1994:28).

2.4 STRATEGIC PLANNING

Ozdem (2011:1890) states that strategic planning is the process of deciding on an organisation's goals, determining the policies and programmes necessary to achieve all specific objectives, and establishing the methods essential to assure that the policies and strategic programmes are implemented. A strategy is a plan of action to realise the set goal and objectives of the school regardless of the changing environment (Education Impact, 2010:2). It is a succession of interrelated tactics intentionally organised to be executed in a particular order for the purpose of achieving specific goals. Strategic planning is the process by which the school establishes its purpose, goals and objectives, where actions are formulated to achieve these in the desired time-frame and where monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are established to assess progress and results (Allison & Kaye, 2005:123).

According to Smit and Cronje (2004:29), strategic planning ensures that the organisation is associated with the changing internal and external environment. This planning is formulated by top management and focus on the entire organisation. Planning at strategic level includes:

- creating a vision (dream) of the future for the entire organisation;
- translating the vision into a realistic mission statement;
- translating the mission statement into measurable long-term goals; and
- choosing a strategy to attain the above

Rossouw, Groenewald and Le Roux (2003:3) express that strategic planning is the decision and action arising from the devising and interpretation of

strategies with the aim of realising the school's objectives. It is the process whereby all the organisation's functions and resources are combined and coordinated to implement formulated strategies, which are aligned with the environment in order to achieve the long-term objectives of the school and therefore improve service delivery to all stakeholders.

All staff members in a school form part of the strategic planning process, since all of them, although working at different levels, are contributing towards achieving a school vision, mission and strategic values. Rossouw *et al* (2003:3-5) state that strategic planning processes occur at the following three levels:

- Strategic level
- Tactical level
- Operational level

The contribution of different people at different managerial levels towards strategic planning can be illustrated best in the next Table.

Table: 2.1   Contribution towards strategic planning at different managerial levels

Strategic level Senior management, i.e. Principal	Tactical level Middle management, i.e. Deputy principal	Operational level First line management, i.e. HODs
• Develop a mission statement • Determine values • Perform SWOT analysis • Formulate strategic goals • Undertake a GAP analysis • Identify generic and	• Develop mission statement • Perform swot analysis • Formulate tactical obstacles • Undertake a GAP analysis • Formulate strategic goals	• Formulate operational objectives • Formulate operational strategic goals • Do tactical control • Lead the team regarding implementation

school strategic • Evaluate and select school strategies • Review structure, leadership and culture • Formulate policies • Do strategic control	• Review structure, leadership and culture • Formulate policies • Do tactical control	

Source: Rossouw *et al* (2003:4-5)

Much of the above forms part of the strategic planning process. In this instance it must be kept in mind that strategic planning is a cyclic process and never static. Although every strategic planning process is uniquely designed to fit the specific needs of a particular organisation, every successful model includes steps or phases that need to be included. The next sub-sections briefly review steps essential to the success of any strategic planning process.

2.4.1   The strategic planning process: Mission statement

A mission statement describes what business you are in and who the 'customer' is. As such, it captures the very core of the organisation – which is its association with its customer (Birnbaum, 2004:189). Developing a mission statement is the phase which moves the strategic planning process from the present to the future. That is why, in Figure 2.1, the arrow depicting the mission statement connects 'today' with the 'future.' A mission statement must be applicable not only today, but for the anticipated life of the strategic plan of which the mission statement is a part. If the school develops a five year strategic plan, for example, the school must develop a mission statement which they believe will be relevant for the next five years.

Figure 2.1:   Mission and Vision Statements
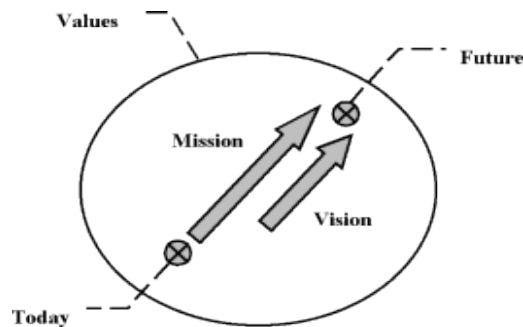
Source: Birnbaum (2004:192)

The function of mission statements is to direct the whole process of strategic planning. A mission states what the organisation wants to be and whom it serves. Ozdem (2011:1888-1889) asserts that mission statements express the motivation for existence of an organisation, and aim to bring together several components of the organisation around a mutual cause, to provide a strategic positioning for the organisation, and to validate that resources are used within this framework. When an organisation formulates strategies or makes choices between different alternatives, a mission statement guides such strategies. Haberberg and Rieple (2008:156) state that a well-prepared mission statement needs to recognise the specific purpose of the organisation and its field of activity, and thus distinguish the organisation from others. Mission statements should be clear, concise, and intense.

According to Gabriel and Farmer (2009:34), the mission statement of a school should incorporate the values of the staff, the actions that the school will take, and the areas it will address (e.g., curriculum, assessments, data) to realise its vision. The mission statement would normally be longer than the vision statement because it is a definite plan for driving the school to fulfill its potential. The mission statement is a more detailed than the vision, but it is still not measurable. It covers those areas of a school that will differentiate it from other schools and defines the purpose that differentiates it from other schools.

2.4.2   The strategic planning process: Vision statement

Note the arrow (in Figure 2.1) which depicts the vision statement. This arrow starts not at 'today', but at some point in the future. That is because a vision is not true in the present, but only in the future (Birnbaum, 2004:190). A vision statement is occasionally called a representation of your organisation in the future, but it is so much more than that. A vision statement is the stimulus and the context for all the strategic planning of an organisation. The vision statement answers the question, "Where do we want to go?" Gabriël and Farmer (2009:35) assert that a vision statement does not notify an organisation how they are going to get there, but it does set the direction for organisational strategic planning.

Unlike the mission statement, a vision statement is for the organisation within, not for customers or clients of the organisation. Harshman (2006) states that when writing a vision statement, the mission statement and the core abilities can be a valuable starting point for pronouncing your values. When forming a vision statement, ensure not to only think ahead for a year or two, because once an organisation has one, the vision statement will have an enormous effect on decision making and the way resources are apportioned. The following quote from Day (1999) emphasises amongst others, the significance of common goals, reviving values and articulating vision as important parts of successful schools.

> *Schools in many countries have experienced a 'breakdown period' because of imposed structural and curriculum reform efforts. By contrast, it is those schools that have shared goals, a sense of responsibility for making a difference, collegiality, a culture of continuous improvement, a belief that learning is for everyone and never stops, a willingness to take risks, a sense of interdependency in support and care, mutual respect, openness, and that celebrate personal and organisational achievement by building rather than undermining self-confidence, which have been able to rediscover values rather than be content with survival. However, even in those moving schools where continuous learning is an organic part of school culture, change is not always easy and must be led by*

*principals who are clear in their vision and committed to promoting
learning for teachers as well as students* (Day, 1999, p. 82).

The researcher agrees with the above and argues that principals who engage
teachers in professional learning processes that allow teachers to explore and
discuss the real meanings of a vision and a mission, can use such processes
to enable teachers to derive greater significance from their work and increase
motivation and improve school outcomes. In doing so it will emphasise the
standing of the processes associated with the development of such
statements, the leader's role, the impact of the processes on teacher
motivation, the building of trust, social and human capital (Jones, 2007).

2.4.3   The strategic planning process: Organisational values

Birnbaum (2004:190) asserts that both the mission and vision statements
reside in a sea of values (Figure 2.1). That is because the values of an
organisation impact on everything else. For example, for any statement,
whether mission or vision, to be embraced and acted upon, it must mirror the
values of the organisation. According to Sheikh (2012), the core values of an
organisation are those values which form the basis on which people perform
their work and conduct themselves. Core values are not explanations of the
work that is done or the strategies employed to realise the mission. The
values inspire the work and how interaction takes place, and which strategies
are employed to fulfill the mission. The core values are the basic elements of
how people go about their work and the practices they use (or should be
using) every day in everything they do.

Regan (2012) states that core values act as roots for organisations, because
without this, organisations and people are inclined to lose sight of the mission
and vision. Their choices are then directed by external influences rather than
an internal compass. Vibrant and agreed-upon values can keep an
organisation and its people on a positive pathway. Values offer guidelines for
the process of strategic planning, decision-making and conduct, and answer

questions like, "What do I want to live my life by and how?" The values need to be clearly pronounced and constantly acted upon to be valuable. They also must echo the personal values of those working in the organisation, and they must support the organisation's purpose in order to be relevant.

2.4.4   The strategic planning process: SWOT analysis

When the vision and mission are identified, the school must analyse its external and internal environment. The environmental scan, as it is called, performed within the framework of a SWOT analyses, scrutinises information about an organisation's external environment (i.e. economic, social, political, legal, technological factors) and internal organisational factors (i.e. mission, vision, values, leader's management style, school culture and climate) (Le Roux, 2002:60-61).

In practical terms a swot-analysis is conducted to examine the strengths and weaknesses of, opportunities for and threats to the school. The strengths and weaknesses that are identified relate to the internal environment and opportunities and threats to the external environment of the school.

Table 2.2:   External and internal environment of the school

External environment: opportunities and threats	Internal environment: strengths and weaknesses
Socio-economic circumstances: Through urbanisation, well qualified educators may find employment in urban areas, which leaves the rural areas with a scarcity of educators in the so-called 'scarce subjects'.	**Mission, vision, goals and values:** Effectiveness of the above and the 'buy-in' of all staff will determine whether this internal factor is a strength or a weakness.
Policy and legal aspects: The impact on the school can be as a result of policies such as affirmative action, introduction of an amended curriculum or amended staffing ratio's for the allocation of posts at a school.	**Leader's style and experience of managers:** A task-only orientated management team may result in higher levels of staff dissatisfaction which may render the school weak. The opposite is also true with a more people-orientated management team.
Technological developments: Computerisation may allow for new subjects to be introduced in the syllabus.	**School culture and climate:** The way things are done at a school (culture) and the general atmosphere prevailing at the school (climate) may strengthen or weaken a school internally.
Competitive organisations: In a unified education system, schools now compete for the best learners and educators.	

Source: Le Roux (2002:58-61)

2.4.4.1 Steps in undertaking a SWOT analysis

The following steps in the application of the SWOT analysis are essential (Nelson, 2008:178):

- **Step 1:** This is seen as the here and now where ideas are generated and information is collected.

This is where all strengths that exist now should be listed, followed by a list of all weaknesses that exist now. It is important to be realistic during this stage. A brainstorming session can be conducted or individuals can be interviewed to get all opinions on the current situation regarding strengths and weaknesses of the school. When facilitating a SWOT analyses, search for understanding and awareness through clever questioning and probing.

- **Step 2:** This is the step where the 'What might be…' is brought forward.

The information gathered should link to all opportunities that exist in the future. Such opportunities are potential future strengths. This step is concluded when all threats that exist in the future are listed. Again, threats can become potential future weaknesses.

- **Step 3:** This last step deals with the plan of action.

The importance of each factor needs to be evaluated with a view to create an action plan to address each of the four areas constituting the internal and external environments of the school (Nelson, 2008:179).

After a SWOT analysis was done it should be kept in mind that:

- Strengths need to be retained and built upon;
- Weaknesses need to be alleviated, improved or stopped;
- Opportunities need to be highlighted, built on and enhanced.
- Threats need to be counteracted or reduced and managed.

The strategic planning process discussed in the previous section can provide the school with certain advantages or benefits.

2.4.5 Advantages of strategic planning

Education in general and schools in particular have been and will continue to be affected by continual changes. The opportunities and the challenges of an environment characterised by increasing competition require that schools successfully position themselves to build a sustainable, competitive advantage. Through strategic planning, schools must establish high aspirations for themselves and focus intensely on the execution of such plans. The strategic planning process offers a setting where all issues affecting the school can be thoughtfully addressed (University of Illinois, 2012).

According to Rossouw *et al* (2003:3), the following advantages of strategic planning highlight its importance:

- it provides direction to the whole school and more specifically what the school aims to achieve;
- it makes management more aware of its external opportunities and possible threats, as well as internal strengths and weaknesses;
- it serves as a rational basis for managing the allocation of resources;
- it provides a sense of direction, continuity, and effective staffing and leadership;
- it assists management with coordination of various strategically related decisions; and
- it promotes a proactive management style.

The strategic planning process was elaborated on the section above. Once the strategic planning process has been concluded, such a strategic plan needs to be implemented.

2.5   VARIOUS ROLE PLAYERS IN STRATEGIC PLANNING

Various role players within the school environment are involved with planning and implementing the strategic plan of a school (MINEDUC, 2010:24). These role players are discussed in the next sub-sections.

2.5.1   School Governing Body

According to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (2012:18) and the Halton District School Board (2011:6), the SGB forms an important part of the governance structure of the school. The role of the SGB in this regard includes:

- the development of a long term understanding of the future of the school;
- contributing to the planning and drafting of the school strategic plan;
- providing comments on drafts of the school strategic plan, as well as signing the school strategic plan by the chairperson of the SGB;
- monitoring the progress made against the set objectives and targets; and
- assisting with the development and monitoring of any annual implementation plans.

Not only does the SGB have an important role to play, the principal and School Management Team (SMT) as the managers of a school have a leading role to play.

2.5.2   The principal and School Management Team (SMT)

The school principal plays a fundamental part in the strategic planning of a school (Education Improvement Commission, 2000:13). This role is often a dual role: their role as principals and as executive officers on the SGB. The

principal, reinforced by the SMT, is accountable for guiding the development and implementation of the school strategic plan. These roles include:

- updating the school community, including staff, learners, SGB and parents on the procedure for developing the school strategic plan;
- guaranteeing suitable opportunities for staff, learners, parents and the community to contribute to the planning process;
- ensuring that proper groundwork and consultation time has been provided in the planning programme;
- signing the school strategic plan;
- ensuring that the school community, including staff, learners, SGB and parents are informed of developments against the goals and targets in the school strategic plan. Prize giving ceremonies at the end of the year provides a valuable vehicle for this.
- developing and implementing annual implementation plans.

The principal and SMT plays a vital role in driving this process in order to achieve the school's goals, targets and key improvement strategies.

2.5.3   Staff involvement

According to the Halton District School Board (2011:5), staff at the school contributes to the strategic planning process through their daily engagement in their roles as staff members, as well as through their representation on the SGB. Staff performance and development plans will also be informed by school level planning. Staff are engaged in the strategic planning process through:

- their assignment to various roles and tasks in the implementation of the strategic plan;
- providing feedback on implementation of the school strategic plan in staff and SGB meetings.

2.5.4   Parent and learner involvement

Parents and learners contribute to the strategic planning process through (Education Improvement Commission, 2000:16; Department of Education Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2008:12-14):

- partaking in the development of the school strategic plan; for example, through participating in sub-committees of the SGB and Parents' Association;
- representation on the SGB and through learner representative councils.

2.5.5   Regional Department of Basic Education

Regional or district offices of the Department of Basic Education are accountable for the performance of schools within their region and should oversee an array of school support services. These district offices should (where needed) assist with (Education Improvement Commission, 2000:12):

- providing training, support and information to schools in the school strategic planning process;
- developing procedures to make sure that school strategic planning is consistent and in line with departmental policy;
- encouraging and supporting schools to commence their planning through co-operation and collaboration with other schools.

Once the various role players have developed a strategic plan, implementation of such a plan becomes essential.

2.6   IMPLEMENTATION OF STRATEGIC PLANNING

Steiner (2008:250) asserts that strategy implementation is the process of assigning resources to execute the selected strategies. This process embraces the numerous management activities necessary to get a strategy in motion, organise the strategic controls that will monitor the implementation progress to eventually achieve the organisational objectives. All the management functions - planning, organising, leading and controlling - are in some degree applied in the implementation process. Pearce and Robinson (2003:726) state that to effectively direct and control the use of an organisation's resources, certain areas such as organisational structure, leadership styles, tasking of key managers, budgeting and control systems are essential strategy implementation ingredients. The implementation actions are closely related to one another, and resolutions about each are typically made concurrently.

Ahoy (2008:212)) states that in many instances an organisation completes the strategic planning process, resulting in the design of a strategic plan. Everybody involved has the best intentions, but when they are back at their sections, offices and classrooms, they are often overwhelmed again with the details of their daily routine. Before long it is business as usual, the strategic plan is filed in a folder and soon another year has passed. However, this need not happen. According to Dimitriou and Thompson (2007:17), a strategic plan should be fully discussed and made available to all concerned before it is implemented. No strategic plan is completed just because it gets written. The hard work of implementation comes next.   Following are some important aspects to keep in mind when implementing the plan:

• Interpret each initiative in your strategic plan by affirming five critical points: who, what, why, when, and resources needed. Irwin (2011) asserts that this explained version of the strategic plan now becomes the implementation plan. When drafting it distinct tasks must be assigned to specific individuals or groups within your school, who must develop a good rationale for each initiative, set deadlines, and decide whether funding is needed. It may happen

in some cases that a new group (i.e. ad hoc working group or special committee) may be required to complete a certain initiative.

- Tie the strategic plan to the budgeting process of the school. Kennedy (2008) states that the resources and funds required to achieve all of the action steps in the strategic plan in order to implement the strategy need to be estimated. The resources normally include the people, facilities and equipment needed. The budgeting cycle of the school should thus follow the strategic developments planned for the school.

- The objectives of the strategic plan need to be prioritised and a realistic timetable must be set. Normally, strategic plans are drafted to cover a period of three to five years. Haines (2007:273) states that if this is the case with a school, it is not advisable to try and accomplish everything in the first year. The plan should be to address some of the initiatives in each of the years that it will be in effect, in order to elude being burdened or overwhelmed by all aspects of the plan. Being too determined to accomplish the plan right away may cause tension and frustration.

- Nelson (2008:180) asserts that the strategic plan must be communicated to all relevant parties (teachers, learners, parents) and these parties must be motivated to assist with its implementation. The plan must be shared within and outside of the school. The best is to make use of several formats, modified to the audience (the Web, memoranda to parents and detailed action plans). Quarterly updates to reflect headway and endeavours keeps all stakeholders abreast of the process.

- Haines (2007:274) states that it is important to recognise accomplishments as this can create new levels of energy to do more. Do not wait until all actions in the plan are completed to recognise and celebrate. Recognise past actions, and identify milestones during the implementation of such an initiative.

- It has to be decided how to measure progress and select a "benchmark target". This target helps to evaluate progress and report output. Olsen (2006:106) states that successful schools usually do the following:
  - Start with a smaller project that has a higher chance of success.
  - Manage the resources wisely and get most value for every cent spent.
  - Act responsibly so that supporters have confidence in the school ability to deliver the promised results.
  - Keep all stakeholders informed.
  - Set bench-marks to measure accomplishments.
  - Evaluate the progress regularly.
  - Feel confident to change the plans when the conditions change.

The successful implementation of a strategic plan depends on certain factors. These are discussed next.

2.6.1 Factors influencing the implementation of strategic planning at school

Wittmann and Reuter (2008:79) indicate that there is overwhelming support for the implementation of strategic planning in schools as it generates a new focus on the quality of education. Implementation of strategic planning at schools can however be influenced by certain factors. The following factors may influence the implementation of strategic plans at a school:

The vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school: Depending on the vision and mission of the school as put forward in the strategic planning, specific goals and objectives may be formulated to improve the effectiveness of the school. These goals and objectives will have an influence on the ability of the school to successfully implement the strategic plan (Le Roux, 2002:60). For instance, if it is the objective of the school to grow by enrolling more learners, then strategic plans must be in place to ensure that provision is

made for appointing suitably qualified additional educators to manage this growth.

Leadership of managers: The leadership style of the principal and other managers at the school (SMT) may have an influence on the success of the implementation of the strategic plan. The manner in which managers motivate, guide and handle staff members involved in the implementation of strategic planning may contribute to the success or failure of such an implementation.

School culture and climate: The unique culture and climate at the specific school may also impact on the success of implementing the strategic plan. A certain school culture (the way things are done at the school) and the related school climate (the general atmosphere prevalent at the school) may encourage or discourage stakeholders in the implementation of a strategic plan (Department of Education, 2007:13).

Socio-economic circumstances: According to Le Roux (2002:58), public organisations, such as schools, are dependent on government in terms of funding. Funding (be it through subsidy, school fees or fundraising) for schools has a direct bearing on successful implementation of strategic plans of schools.

New and amended policies and legislation: Policy changes and new or amended legislation on the national and provincial levels may have an effect on strategic plan implementation (Elmore 2004:38). Many policy changes in terms of curriculum, as well as decentralisation of management in schools may have an influence on how the implementation of strategic plans is influenced. A strategic plan in the process of implementation may therefore have to change to be in line with certain policy changes.

According to Tracy (2012), the essences to the successful implementation of a strategic plan are leadership, commitment, ownership, and accountability; belief in the plan; communication; monitoring progress; praise and recognition;

and patience. To avoid failure information should be gathered from all stakeholders, roles and responsibilities should be clearly defined, expectations must be communicated, interest must be maintained in the process and the progress and the process should continually be monitored.

2.7   SUMMARY

Strategic planning is a powerful instrument for school improvement and ensures that a coherent action-planning process for school renewal, innovation and change exists. Therefore, strategic planning in schools should aspire to introduce change and/or affect innovation and should thus be an exercise initiated by the school community (possibly through the SGB) in a quest for continuous improvement. Although strategic planning is at the heart of the management process there are certain factors affecting the implementation of strategic plans of GET schools in the Motheo district.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the methodology employed to conduct this study is discussed. The method and design are made clear, as well as the instrumentation used to collect data. The population and sampling are defined to provide clarity with regard to the participants from whom data was gathered.

3.2   RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Henning, Van Rensburg and Smit (2004:36) assert that methodology is more than an assembly of methods and the methodology chapter in dissertations is not only about locating methods, but also about thinking what their value in a study is and why they have been chosen. Leedy and Ormrod (2010:12) define research methodology as the common approach the researcher engages with in conducting the research project. Henning *et al* (2004:36) further state that the research methodology of a study can be termed the philosophical framework which directs the research activity. When a researcher has chosen a preferred method to use when collecting data, he or she must also plan how he or she will collect data from participants (Babbie, 2009:76). This plan is called a research design. The next section elaborates on this plan.

3.2.1   Research design

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20), a research design describes the procedures for conducting the study, including when, from whom, and under what conditions the data will be obtained. Niewenhuis (2007:70) indicates that a research design is a plan, which moves from the underlying philosophical assumptions to specifying the selection of

participants, the data gathering techniques to be used and the data analysis to be done. The purpose of a research design, according to McMillan and Schumacher (2010:20), is to specify a plan for generating empirical evidence that will be used to answer the research questions. The intent is to use a design that will result in drawing the most valid, credible conclusions from the answers to the research questions.

Qualitative research studies people by interrelating with and observing the participants in their natural environment and focusing on their meanings and interpretations (Nieuwenhuis 2007:51). Gray (2004:320) states that qualitative research goes beyond giving a mere picture of events and can show how and why things happen, also incorporating peoples' emotions and opinions. Snape and Spencer (2003:3) further explain that qualitative research involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. This study employs the qualitative design to determine the opinions of participants in their natural setting.

Sibanda (2009:2-3) explains that the quantitative approach emphasises the assignment of numbers or values to the perceived aspects of things to be measured. The researcher has a clearly defined research question or questions to which objective answers are sought and the project can be used to generalise concepts more widely, to predict future results or investigate causal relationships. When making use of this type of research design, the researcher distances him- or herself from the situation that is being researched. Data can be expressed numerically, or in the form of graphs and charts.

3.2.2 Research Method

The ethnographic approach is used for the qualitative part of this study. The rationale behind adopting this method is that it allows the researcher to study the behaviour of people and the way they perceive and do things. According to White (2005:104), ethnography can therefore be regarded as a description of behaviour of people. The ethnographic approach is characterised by obtaining data and the description of behaviour of a small number of cases.

In addition, Johnson and Christensen (2010:146) maintain that ethnography is one of the most popular approaches to qualitative research in education. The word ethnography literally means "writing about people". Ethnography is a form of qualitative research focused on describing the culture of a group of people. When ethnographers conduct research, they are interested in describing the culture of a group of people and learning what it is like to be a member of the group from the perspective of the members of that group. They are interested in documenting things like the shared attitude, values, norms, and practices, patterns of interaction, perspective and language of a group of people.

According to Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, Sorensen and Walker (2009:118), a survey is a study of a sample to investigate the incidence and distribution of variables. Mathiyazhagan and Nandan (2010:34) consider survey research as social scientific research and focuses on people, the vital facts of people, and their beliefs, opinions, attitudes, motivations and behaviour. The researcher chose this method as a survey can employ questionnaires and interviews to gather information from groups of people. The survey enabled the researcher to summarise the characteristics of different groups or to measure the attitude and the opinions towards some issues. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2003:83) state that survey gather data at a particular point of time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards, or determining the relationship that exist between specific events.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

David and Sutton (2004:68) define population as a group of individuals who share the same characteristics. The population in this study consists of all principals and School Governing Body (SGB) chairpersons of General Education and Training (GET) schools in Thaba 'Nchu in the Motheo District.

A sample is a subset of the population or a small group that is observed (Ary *et al* 2002:164-165). The purpose of sampling is to enable the researcher to obtain the required information in a reliable way, without involving the entire population. A sampling method is necessary for all research studies. *This study employs the purposive sampling method.* According to Cresswell (2003:596), purposive sampling is a qualitative sampling procedure in which researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn and understand the central phenomenon. White (2003:65) mentions that purposive sampling is based entirely on the judgement of the researcher, in that a sample is composed of elements which contain the most characteristics or representative of attributes of the population. In purposive sampling the researcher specifies the characteristics of a population of interest and then tries to locate individuals who have those characteristics.

The sample for this study consisted of 10 school principals and the SGB chairpersons of these schools. The total sample for this study was therefore 20 participants.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTATION

According to Ary *et al* (2002:569), a research instrument is a measuring device to evaluate more precisely the behaviour being studied. The data collection instruments used in this study to gather the data were questionnaires and interviews.

3.4.1   Questionnaires

The questionnaire is an instrument in which participants provide written responses to questions or mark items that indicate their responses (Punch, 2009:211). Newby (2009:67) states that questionnaires encourage greater honesty because they are anonymous and also economical in terms of time and money. The researcher used questionnaires in this study to firstly obtain biographical information from participants. This information is presented in graph format and constitutes the minor quantitative part of the study. The bulk of the data from questionnaires was obtained qualitatively through open-ended questions to which participants had to respond. Reja, Manfreda, Hlebec and Vehovar (2003:161) state that the advantages of open-ended questions include the chance of discovering the responses that individuals give spontaneously, and thus avoiding the bias that may result from suggesting responses to individuals, a bias which may occur in the case of close-ended questions.

The researcher distributed questionnaires to principals of 10 schools in the Motheo district. The researcher delivered the questionnaire personally to the schools and explained the procedures of completing the questionnaire to all the participants. Questionnaires have been presented to each participant to obtain the required information in a reliable way without involving the entire population. The researcher collected the questionnaires personally from the schools.   The information the researcher aimed to receive from the questionnaires was the principals' opinions regarding the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning.

Interviews were also conducted with the chairpersons of the SGB of each of the ten schools.

3.4.2   Interviews

The research interview is a two way conversation initiated by the researcher to search for relevant information. For the purpose of this study the researcher employed semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. The application of semi-structured interviews basically means clarification questions may emerge in the course of interviewing. In-depth interviews use key informants who are individuals with special knowledge, status, or communication skills that they are willing to share with the researcher. The researcher visited the participants at the school to conduct face-to-face interviews. A semi–structured interview involves asking some planned questions and then allowing participants to speak about related issues that are important to them (Hendricks, 2009:99). Semi-structured interviews allow the interviewer to use probes with a view to clearing up vague responses, or to ask for elaboration of incomplete answers. The information the researcher aimed to receive from the interviews was the SGB chairpesons' opinions regarding the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning.

The researcher presented herself to the participants and explained the purpose of the interviews. She also informed the participants that their names and that of the schools they are attached to, will not be made known. A permission letter from the Motheo education district to conduct the research was also shown to participants.

3.5   DATA ANALYSIS

Babbie and Mouton (2001:49) state that qualitative data analysis is referred to as all forms of data that was gathered using qualitative techniques. During the analysis stage several interrelated procedures are performed to summarise and rearrange the data. Ritchie, Spencer, William and O' Connor (2003:219) assert that data analysis is a continuous and interactive process, with two key stages characterising its course. The first necessitates managing the data and the second entails making sense of the evidence through descriptive or explanatory accounts. Qualitative data analysis is primarily an inductive process of

organizing the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationship) among the categories. Qualitative analysis is a systematic process of selecting categories, comparing synthesising and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest. In this study the data was organised into categories and reported in the narrative (as is characteristic of qualitative reporting of data).

3.6   TRIANGULATION

Triangulation may comprise the use of different methods, particularly observation, individual interviews and open-ended questionnaires, which form the foremost data collection strategies for qualitative research (Kennedy, 2009). This study uses both interviews and questionnaires to gather data from various groups of people.

Another form of triangulation may include making use of more than one group of participants to gather data. This is one way of triangulating through data sources. Hennik, Hutter and Bailey (2011:42) assert that individual opinions and experiences can be verified against others to ultimately provide a rich picture of the viewpoints of the participants. Data gathered from various groups of people that form part of the sample of a study will support the credibility of such data. Triangulation in this study was implemented by obtaining data from various groups of people as described in the sample.

3.7   SUMMARY

This chapter aimed to provide a complete plan on how the research is conducted in the study. The design was provided, population and sample explained and data collection instruments discussed. It also justifies the use of the chosen data collection techniques through triangulation. In the next chapter the findings of the study is reported on.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the findings of the study. In Chapter 3 information was gathered by the researcher through questionnaires and interviews. The data gathered was to ascertain which factors influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in schools in the Motheo district.

The questionnaires consist of the biographic details of principal participants, as well as open-ended questions regarding the drafting and implementation of strategic planning. The semi-structured interviews also consisted of questions regarding biographic data of the SGB chairpersons, as well as questions relating to the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in schools in the Motheo district.

4.2   THE PURPOSE OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The main objectives of the empirical investigations were:

- To obtain information regarding factors influencing strategic plans of schools in the Motheo district.
- To provide information of data collected by means of questionnaires and interviews.
- To interpret the data collected in the view of the literature study and to provide recommendations for the drafting and the implementations of strategic planning in schools in the Motheo district.

The research questions of this study are answered in the following manner:
Research question 1 is answered by the literature study done in Chapter 2.

Research question 2 is answered by the findings derived from the questionnaires and interviews.

Research question 3 is answered by the recommendations made in Chapter 5.

4.3   FINDINGS FROM QUESTIONNAIRES

The biographical details of the principals are provided in the next sub-section. The biographical information may not be directly related to the data provided, but are nonetheless provided.

Table 4.1:   Gender categories of principals

Gender	Number
Males	4
Females	6
Total	10

The distribution of male and females indicated that the number of females participated in this study was larger than male. This is in contrast to the trends in schools.

4.3.1   Responses from principals

This section provides the findings of the questionnaire questions to principals. The data is reported in the narrative as is the norm with qualitative reporting. Percentages are not mentioned, but phrases such as: All the participants, Most of the participants, A few participants, are used to provide a qualitative indication of responses.

Question 1: Does your school have a strategic plan in place? Please elaborate.

Most of the participants responded that they have a strategic plan in place. Some of these principals elaborated that they do not always get to implement the plans made as some factors hamper them to do that. One of these principals stated that it is the task of the SGB to ensure that strategic planning is done. They agreed on the issue that planning is one of the most important tasks of the principal as it forms the basis of all other management tasks. The following are types of responses received from the participants.

- Strategic plans are in place. It is important to have such plans as it gives direction to what must happen at the school.
- Strategic plans cannot always be implemented as other important day-to-day issues takes up our time and that of the teachers.
- The SGB must do strategic planning for the school. We as principals should assist with that.

A few principals stated that they have not updated their strategic planning in a number of years. They stated that they make plans on a yearly basis and try to execute these plans in that specific year.

- We have not done new strategic planning for the past few years. We make plans every year and then try to execute those plans in that specific year.

From the responses one could state that most schools do have a strategic plan in place. Principals also realise the importance of such plans to provide their schools with direction. It also seems as if not all principals ensure that strategic plans are implemented. Other work-related operational tasks take preference and the strategic plans are shifted to the side. The principal that indicated that strategic planning is the task of the SGB may not realise that he/she forms part of the SGB and has a responsibility to ensure that such planning is done in conjunction with the SGB. Literature states that strategic planning plays a major

role in the success of organisations such as schools. From the above data it seems as if many principals understand the importance of having a strategic plan for their school.

Question 2: Do you involve stakeholders in the strategic planning and if so, which stakeholders are involved during the drafting and formulation of the strategic plan?

Most of the principals stated that they involve other stakeholders, such as the full SGB and the School Management Team (SMT) during the drafting and formulation of the strategic plan. Some of these principals mentioned that some members of the SGB do not turn up for these sessions due to other commitments. The SMT members are teachers and are involved.

A few of the principals mentioned that they do not involve all members of the SGB as these members resist the changes that come along with strategic planning. In some cases these principals also do not involve the full SMT as they feel that too many people involved prolong the process (too many ideas thrown around). These principals have therefore decided only to involve those who are interested. Reasons provided by these principals are:

- SGB parents do not avail themselves for these sessions and in many cases do not even send an apology.
- Some SMT members complain about all the administrative work they are doing and do not want to be involved in more work.
- Support staff are also not included as they very seldom provide any inputs.

From the responses of the participants it becomes evident that principals do not always involve other stakeholders during the drafting and formulation of the strategic plan. Directing organisational activities towards the overall attainment of strategic objectives needs same form of institutional planning. From the onset of this process working groups needs to be engaged with current and potential stakeholders, such as the SGB, SMT, other staff members and representatives

of the wider community in order to identify or anticipate external expectations and match these to the internal expectations of the school.

Question 3: How often do you discuss and draft changes or new aspects of your strategic plan?

Most of the participants mentioned that although strategic plans are seen to be at the heart of the management process, they do not have a specific cycle in which strategic plans are drafted or amended. Strategic issues that may arise are discussed and a plan is drafted to implement such a decision. One of these principals said that if strategic planning cycles (say every three years) sessions are not minuted and executed, it normally is not done in a formal way. He mentioned that the planning of such sessions must be driven by either the principal or the SGB chairperson. A few of these principals mentioned that they do most of the planning on their own and merely inform the SGB and staff. The main reason provided is that their SGBs do not have the capacity to engage in strategic planning.

A small number of participants stated that they have not drafted or updated strategic planning at their schools for a number of years. They mention that they do not get any support from their SGB in this regard and that they do not have the time to do it on their own.

Some responses received:

- We do not have a specific cycle in years that we follow. When something very important must be done, then we plan for it and try to do it.
- If we do not plan to have strategic sessions and minute such decisions, then no formal strategic planning is done, we just make decisions as they arise.
- I do strategic planning on my own, because my SGB cannot help me. They do not know how to do strategic planning.

- We have not done strategic planning for long. My SGB says that anyone can come up with plans and must inform me, but no-one brings plans. I cannot do all of that on my own.

The responses indicate that schools do not have specific cycles in which they do strategic planning. No formal time frames are set in which strategic planning sessions are to be done. It seems as if strategic planning is done on an ad hoc basis. In some instances no strategic planning is done due to lack of knowledge capacity from the side of the SGB and time constraints from the side of the principals. Literature promotes the importance of wide participation when drafting strategic plans, which is in contrast with what seems to take place in many schools in the study.

Question 4: What type of assistance do you receive from the department in terms of drafting strategic plans (if any)?

Most of the participants mentioned that they were not properly trained by the department, but that they were given some written and verbal information by their School Management and Governance Developer (SMGD). They do not really consider this as appropriate assistance. One of these participants stated that they need training in order to ensure that they do proper strategic planning for their schools.

A few participants explained that because they were not trained to draft and implement strategic planning as a strategy to plan, they do not engage with strategic planning. One of these participants stated that she merely uses and adapts a few older plans that is still available from a previous planning session that was held at her school (prior to her appointment). A participant mentioned that the department must have formal training sessions for the SMT at all schools.

From the responses it appears that principals are of the opinion that training provided by the department is essential for them. Written or verbal information is

not what they want. They are in need of appropriate training sessions that include all aspects of strategic planning.

Question 5: What type of elements would you like to see in a training programme provided by the department?

The following aspects were mentioned by participants:

- Planning according to changes that occur in the school environment.
- Involvement of all stakeholders during the planning process (principals, SMT, SGB, other teachers, businesses and parents).
- An indication of all the types of resources that are needed to implement strategic planning.
- Financial aspects and how the budget could be planned to include strategic plans to be implemented.

Changes in the management processes of schools relate to new knowledge needed by principals to draft and implement strategic plans. As the school environment changes with regards to finances, curricula and involvement of parents, so the needs of schools change. Training for strategic planning should involve as many of these stakeholders as possible.

Question 6: Which factors influence the drafting and the implementation of strategic planning at your school?

Many factors were mentioned by participants. These factors include:

- Poor consultation between the principal and the SGB. Strategic planning is not seen as important by many SGBs. They consider normal planning for the year (operational planning) as the only planning that is needed for the school.
- Lack of monitoring /evaluating. Where strategic plans are in place, they are not really monitored or evaluated in terms of progress made. The effect of this lack of monitoring is that such plans are in the end not implemented.

- Policy overflow. New and amended policies in terms of curricula take up a lot of the time of the principal and teachers. They are so involved in these that strategic planning is not seen as a consideration. The principal has other important aspects to attend to such as finances, teacher:learner ratios, lack of commitment from teachers that strategic planning sessions are not at the forefront of his day-to-day management.

- Lack of skills among the SGB. Members of the SGB lack skills in the drafting and implementation of strategic plans. Many of these members are not highly schooled and feel that they have no input to make in this regard.

- Lack of resources for proper implementation. Whenever plans are made, the funding of projects and plans is always an important factor. In many cases, the school just does not have the funding to execute plans. Funding from the department is not always received in good time and this has an influence on payments that need to be made to implement possible plans.

- Lack of strategic planning skills: In some instances only the principal has the skill to engage with strategic planning (and this is also not always the case). If stakeholders do not have the ability to engage in strategic planning, the effect on the success of the school is jeopardised.

- The 'buying in' of all stakeholders. The drafting and implementation of a strategic plan should be a team effort. If the SMT, or teachers or parents do not assist and support such planning, then no success will be forthcoming.

- Support from the department. This aspect has been discussed in a prior question.

- A general unwillingness of the staff from the school to be part of the process, both at the drafting and implementation stages. Many staff members see strategic plans as an extra burden over and above their normal workload.

- A fear of failure. Stakeholders seem to rather not be involved because then they have to achieve something planned and measurable. They fear that they will not achieve what was planned and will seem like a failure.

- A general resistance to change. Many strategic plans put forward new ideas and plans. Many principals and teachers are so entrenched in their normal day to day activities that they do not want to engage in new endeavours. They

want to stay with what is known to them and therefore do not support strategic planning.

- Economic factors. Schools struggle with funding and therefore stakeholders feel that they will not be able to implement plans that require funding. Where schools are dependent on the department to provide them with resources, problems arise with receiving resources very late or not at all. Parents are mostly poor and cannot contribute to the school finances. This hampers the drafting of strategic ideas linked to funding.

- Lack of learning materials. Any strategic plan that includes the use of learning materials to improve the academic aspects in the school is not supported. Principals and teachers have a constant battle to ensure that teaching and learning materials are provided to the school. Principals mentioned a lack of trust that crept in with regards to proper delivery of teaching and learning material by the department.

The above-mentioned factors cover both internal and external aspects that influence strategic planning. A number of factors were mentioned that can be internally controlled and changed. The perceptions of internal staff can be changed positively if small successes with implementation of aspects of a plan can occur. Some external factors may not be so easy to control by principals. Departmental influences and the economic situation prevailing at the school are out of their hands.

Question 7: How do you determine whether the implementation of aspects of the strategic plan are successful?

Most of the participants mentioned that they make use of reports and feedback from meetings, workshops and activities performed. They expect people who are in charge of these activities to provide such reports to monitor whether these were implemented successfully. Some of these principals stated that they should also report to the SGB quarterly on aspects of the strategic plan.

Some participants stated that different committees should report their activities to them verbally or in writing, but that not all of them do that. In most of these cases they report problem areas and give up trying after a while. Parents committees are not really functional and the same parents are always involved. Such parents also become despondent and loose initiative.

The responses indicate that some form of monitoring exists. It seems as if the general trend is that when problems are encountered that are difficult to solve, the implementation of strategic plans are negated. The abandonment of sections of the strategic plan may become easier to do if motivation and support are not provided, or when stakeholders see that nobody really cares whether they continue with the implementation or not.

This brings to a close the findings of the questionnaires completed by principals. In the next section the interview responses from the SGB chairpersons are reported on.

4.4   FINDINGS FROM INTERVIEWS

4.4.1   Biographic information (SGB Chairpersons)

Table 4.2:   Gender of SGB chairpersons

Gender	Frequency
Male	6
Female	4
Total	10

Six of SGB chairpersons are males and 4 are females. The general trend is that more males are found to be selected as SGB chairpersons. The number of female chairpersons in the sample of this study is in fact relatively high. The gender of the SGB chairperson will not necessarily have an influence on the data presented, but is nonetheless and interesting factor.

Table 4.3:   Ages of SGB chairpersons

Years	Frequency
25-40	4
41-50	3
51-60	3
60+	0
Total	10

Four of SGB chairpersons are aged between 25 and 40 years, three between 41 and 50 years and three are between 51 and 60 years. The majority if the SGB chairpersons are between 25 and 50 years old. One would expect chairpersons in this age group, as they have to have school-going children to be eligible for the SGB.

Table 4.4:   Academic qualifications

Qualifications	Frequency
No matric	2
Matric	6
University	2
Other	_
Total	10

Two of the chairpersons did not complete secondary school, six have a matric qualification and two a university qualification. This provides information regarding the 'standing' of such a chairperson in terms of the role to be played as chairperson. Low or no qualifications may influence a chairperson not to feel confident to engage in high level strategic planning.

The next section deals with the interview responses of SGB chairpersons.

4.4.2   Responses from SGB chairpersons

The data is reported in the narrative as is the norm with qualitative reporting. Percentages are not mentioned, but phrases such as: All the participants, Most of the participants, A few participants, are used to provide a qualitative indication of responses. Verbatim responses of participants are also provided.

Question 1: Does your school have a strategic plan in place? Please elaborate.

Most of the participants stated that they are aware of strategic plans, but that these plans are with the principal. Upon probing two of these participants stated that they have discussed the strategic plan with the principal and should implement some of the aspects thereof. The other participants stated that they have not discussed these plans with the principal.

A few participants commented that they do not know whether there is any strategic plan for the school. One of these participants said that they have a SGB plan that covers what they want to achieve in each specific year, but that they do not have any long-term plans in place.

Some responses:

"I have discussed the plan with the principal and we want to implement a few things on there."

"The plans are there at schools, but I do not know exactly that it is the strategic plan"

"This is the first time I hear about a strategic plan."

"We have a SGB plan and will work on it year by year."

Clear strategic planning is not done. Participants seemed to mostly shy away from their role in drafting and implementing such a strategic plan. It is disconcerting to see that in some instances, the SGB chairperson is not even aware that such planning exists.

Question 2: Were you involved in any strategic planning sessions for the school?

Various responses were given by the participants. Their verbatim responses are provided:

"No, I have just seen the strategic plan in my discussion with the principal, but it is not a new plan. There are some issues on the plan that we can implement in future" He then frowned and stated: "I think it is time that we get a new updated strategic plan that will address current problem areas."

"The principal only give us our SGB plan for the current year activities." Upon probing whether they provide inputs, she commented: "No, it seems as if the principal makes those decisions and provide us with some plans."

"No I am not involved. The principal told me that he will do all the planning for us at school."

"The principal as the manager at school do not need anyone to assist to do the planning, he does it alone." Upon probing whether this includes the strategic planning, she stated: "This is the first time I hear about such planning."

The responses indicate that chairpersons are not involved in strategic planning at their schools. Team work to draft and implement such plans does not exist. It

seems as if these chairpersons are not aware of the important role they need to play in this instance. This may have a very negative outcome for the schools as the SGB represents the parents, and they do not seem to have a voice in any planning at the school. The South African Schools Act (SASA) emphasises collaboration and collective decision making between school stakeholders. It is therefore crucial that these stakeholders start operating as a team. Teamwork is the golden thread through all systems in an effective school.

Question 3: How often do you discuss and draft changes or new aspects of your strategic plan?

At this stage almost all the participants clearly indicated that they have not been involved with any drafting or implementation of the strategic plan of their school. In probing the researcher asked whether they are aware what the mission and vision statement of their school is. They responded as follows:

Most participants stated that they know what these concepts mean, but that they are not certain what their school's vision and mission are.

"I know that the vision is where the school want to go in future and the mission statement is how the school will move to that end in future, but I do not know what these are for my school."

A participant stated that she saw the written vision and mission in the principal's office, but that she was not aware that she should know it.

"I have have seen it there in his office, but do I need to know it?" In probing, the researcher asked how the school aim to reach the statements made in the vision and mission. The response was:
"We will have to put some plans in place to get there."

From the responses it does not seem that clear communication on either strategic planning or the vision and mission of the schools is discussed with SGB chairpersons. One should not forget that such discussions can also originate

from the side of the chairperson. The researcher detected a general trend of ignorance with regard to the discussion of strategic planning from the side of SGB chairpersons.

Question 4: Did you attend or receive any training regarding the drafting and implementation of strategic planning at your school?

Most of the participants indicated that they did not receive any training regarding strategic planning. Most of these participants stated that the principal never mentioned anything about the possibility of training in strategic planning to them. Upon probing they mentioned that they would appreciate to receive training as they consider such planning to be important for the school. A few of these participants stated that such training should be done in their mother tongue, as they would then be able to engage fully in such training. They also added that the training material should be written in the language that all candidates will understand.

A few participants stated that they did receive some form of training in planning for the school, but that they are not sure whether it was training in strategic planning. Upon probing they stated that they received training on how to mostly plan the finances of the school, the drafting of a budget and how to ensure that spending is done within such a budget. Long-term planning did not form part of the training they received. A participant mentioned that not all SGB members attended the training they received, as some of them are not conversant in English and found the training to be inefficient as they could not understand.

Responses provided:

"No, nobody mentioned anything about training for strategic planning. *(Would you like to receive such training?)* Yes, I will like that…I think it is important if we want to achieve things here at the school."
'Yes, I received some training. I think that was more to plan for the budget and how to check the budget is spent right. I do not think one can say it was strategic planning."

From the responses the researcher derives that SGB members rarely receive any training in the drafting and implementation of strategic planning. One could argue that it is not the department or the school that should provide such training to SGBs, but if the school wishes to be successful, then some plan in this regard should be made. When such training does take place, the language and level of presentation should be in line with the education of the people receiving such training.

Question 5: What type of elements would you like to see in a training programme for strategic planning?

Participants indicated the following:

- A link must be made to where the school wants to go and what types of planning must be made to ensure the school reaches this target.
- Many things have changed with schools, such as the powers of parents in the decisions of the school, the role of the principal and the role of the SGB. SGBs must play a much bigger role, but in many instances the principals 'overpower' the meetings to push through what they want.
- All stakeholders must be involved and their voices must be heard. It is one thing to attend meetings, but if SGB members are merely a 'rubber stamp' for the decisions of the principal, then their role is undermined. The role of the SGB in strategic planning should therefore form part of such a programme.
- The knowledge of how to assign people to these plans and strategies to monitor the implementation of such a plan.
- The link between financing strategic aspects and the monitoring of such allocation of funds.

Some responses:

"I need to know how I link what we want to achieve to how to achieve it. *(Can you elaborate?)* If we want to get somewhere with the school, we need to know how to plan to get there."

"Many SGBs just attend meetings and listen to what the principal says. We need to make our voices heard; we need to start saying what we need and how to achieve it."

Participants want to learn about strategic planning. They have the urge to improve their schools, but do not seem to have the capacity to initiate such planning. They need clear guidelines regarding both drafting such a plan and implementing it. The aspects they need training on should be determined prior to such training taking place, in order for a proper aligned programme to be delivered.

Question 6: What do you consider to be the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning at your school?

Most of the participants provided some factors they consider to influence strategic planning. Some of these participants stated that they have to take a moment to think about the question. The researcher stated that they can take as long as they needed. They mentioned the following:

- The whole concept of strategic planning must first be discussed between the SMT and SGB. In many schools this is a 'foreign' concept and SGB members are not familiar with it.
- Principals must be aware that SGBs have a certain role to play, and part of this role is to determine how the schools must be governed. This implies also strategic planning for the school.
- Ignorance was another factor brought forward. Many SGB members just do not care for the well-being of the school and in many instances do not attend

meetings. SGB members that have the well-being of the school at heart should be elected on the SGB.

- Someone must take the initiative and be prepared to play a leading role. In this instance the principal and SGB chairperson should play these roles.
- Funding for schools is a significant factor to keep in mind. Without proper funds, many plans will never get off the ground.
- Lack of knowledge and skills to engage in strategic planning and bringing plans to fruition.
- Instability in leadership positions and infighting at schools. In many schools principals are worked out by parents and teachers. Infighting amongst principals and teachers makes it impossible for any plans to be implemented.

Some responses:

"I think we all should first know what strategic planning is and why it is important. We as SGB and the principal and his deputies, then only can we move forward."

"Someone must take the lead. The principal may think I must and I think she must. But in the end it will be both our responsibilities to make this happen."

"There are so many infighting in the schools. If the principal is not supported by his teachers, then we can make plans, but they will not work."

Some of the responses from participants overlap with those of the principals, but in many ways their responses are different from those of the principals. They have mentioned their lack of knowledge and skills in this regard, but have also expressed a willingness to learn. One participant stated a resolution that the discussion surrounding initiating strategic planning should be a collaboration between the principal and the SGB chairperson.

Question 7: How do you determine whether the implementation of aspects of the strategic plan is successful?

From the previous questions it became clear that not much engagement has taken place with strategic planning. Participants therefore mentioned that they do not know how to determine whether a strategic plan has been implemented successfully. It was however mentioned that training should take place in both what the benefits are of strategic planning and also how the process should be undertaken.

4.5   CONCLUSION

In this chapter the findings of the study were provided. The findings from questionnaires to principals were discussed first after which the findings from interviews with SGB chairpersons were discussed. Some responses were provided to strengthen the data provided by participants. Interpretation of the responses was also made by the researcher. This chapter therefore also answered research question 2. The next chapter deals with the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter five provides conclusions drawn from the literature, questionnaires and interviews.

5.2 SUMMARISED CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The conclusions are discussed in two fold. Conclusions from the literature study will be discussed first followed by the conclusions derived from the questionnaires completed by the principals and the interviews conducted with the chairpersons of the SGBs.

5.2.1 Conclusions from the literature study

These conclusions aim to answer the following research question:

What is the essence of strategic planning within the management process?

- Management is defined as the process of planning, organising, leading and controlling the resources of the organisation to achieve its stated organisational goals (cf. 2.2).
- Strategic planning cannot be summarised into a single definition, but can be made easier by using the 5 Ps of strategy created by Mintzberg, namely Strategy as plan, Strategy as ploy, Strategy as pattern, Strategy as position and Strategy as perspective (cf. 2.3).

- Strategic planning is the process of deciding on an organisation's goals, determining the policies and programmes necessary to achieve all specific objectives, and establishing the methods essential to assure that the policies and strategic programmes are implemented (cf. 2.4).

- The strategic planning process starts with a mission statement. A mission statement describes what business you are in and who the 'customer' is. As such, it captures the very core of the organisation – which is its association with its customer. Developing a mission statement is the phase which moves the strategic planning process from the present to the future (cf. 2.4.1).

- A vision statement is for the organisation within, not for customers or clients of the organisation. When writing a vision statement, the mission statement and the core abilities can be a valuable starting point for pronouncing the values of the school (cf. 2.4.2).

- Core values act as roots for organisations, because without this, organisations and people are inclined to lose sight of the mission and vision (cf. 2 4.3).

- A swot-analysis is conducted to examine the strengths and weaknesses of, opportunities for and threats to the school. The strengths and weaknesses that are identified relate to the internal environment and opportunities and threats to the external environment of the school (cf. 2.4.4).

- The engagement with strategic planning has clear advantages for a school (cf. 2.4.5).

- Various role-players within the school environment are involved with drafting the strategic plan of a school. These role-players are the School Governing Body, the principals and School Management Team, staff members of the school (teachers), parents, learners and the Department of Basic Education (cf. 2.5).

- Implementation of a strategic plan is the process of assigning resources to execute the selected strategies and a strategic plan should be fully discussed and made available to all concerned before it is implemented (cf. 2.6).

- Some factors that may influence the drafting and implementation of a strategic plan include: the vision, mission, goals and objectives of the school; leadership of principals; school culture and climate; socio-economic circumstances and new and amended policies and legislation (cf. 2.6.1)

5.2.2 Conclusions from the questionnaires to principals

The following research question is addressed by the conclusions drawn from questionnaires to principals:

Which factors influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools?

- The distribution of male and females indicated that the number of females participated in this study was larger than male. It shows the general trends of schools in the Motheo district (cf. 4.3).
- Most schools do have a strategic plan in place. Principals also realise the importance of such plans to provide their schools with direction. It also seems as if not all principals ensure that strategic plans are implemented. Other work-related operational tasks take preference and the strategic plans are shift to the side. The principal that indicated that strategic planning is the task of the SGB may not realise that he/she forms part of the SGB and has a responsibility to ensure that such planning is done in conjunction with the SGB (cf. 4.3.1).
- Principals do not always involve other stakeholders during the drafting and formulation of strategic planning (cf. 4.3.1).
- Schools do not have specific cycles in which they do strategic planning. No formal time frames are set in which strategic planning sessions are to be done. It seems as if strategic planning is done on an *ad hoc* basis. In some instances no strategic planning is done due to lack of knowledge

capacity from the side of the SGB and time constraints from the side of the principals (cf. 4.3.1).

- Principals are of the opinion that training provided by the department is essential for them. Written or verbal information is not what they want (cf. 4.3.1).

- Changes in the management processes of schools relate to new knowledge needed by principals to draft and implement strategic plans. As the school environment changes with regards to finances, curricula and involvement of parents, so the needs of schools change (cf. 4.3.1).

- The factors influencing strategic planning cover both internal and external aspects. A number of factors were mentioned that can be internally controlled and changed. The perceptions of internal staff can be changed positively if small successes with implementation of aspects of a plan can occur. Some external factors may not be so easy to control by principals. Departmental influences and the economic situation prevailing at the school are not within their control (cf. 4.3.1).

- Some form of monitoring exists with regards to the implementation of strategic plans. It seems as if the general trend is that when problems are encountered that are difficult to solve, the implementation of strategic plans are negated. The abandonment of sections of the strategic plan may become easier to do if motivation and support are not provided, or when stakeholders see that nobody really cares whether they continue with the implementation or not (cf. 4.3.1).

5.2.3   Conclusions from interviews with SGB chairpersons

The following research question is addressed by the conclusions drawn from interviews with SGB chairpersons:

Which factors influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools?

- The general trend is that more males are found to be selected as SGB chairpersons. The number of female chairpersons in the sample of this study is in fact relatively high. The gender of the SGB chairperson will not necessarily have an influence on the data presented, but is nonetheless and interesting factor (cf. 4.4.1).

- The majority of the SGB chairpersons are between 25 and 50 years old. One would expect chairpersons in this age group, as they have to have school-going children to be eligible for the SGB (cf. 4.4.1).

- Two of the chairpersons in this study did not complete secondary school, six have a matric qualification and two a university qualification. This provides information regarding the 'standing' of such a chairperson in terms of the role to be played as chairperson. Low or no qualifications may influence a chairperson not to feel confident to engage in high level strategic planning (cf. 4.4.1).

- Clear strategic planning is not done. SGB chairpersons seem mostly to shy away from their role in drafting and implementing strategic plans. It is disconcerting to see that is some instances, the SGB chairperson is not even aware that such planning exists (cf. 4.4.2).

- Chairpersons are not involved in strategic planning at their schools. Team work to draft and implement such plans does not exist. It seems as if these chairpersons are not aware of the important role they need to play in this instance. This may have a very negative outcome for the schools as the SGB represents the parents, and they do not seem to have a voice in any planning at the school (cf. 4.4.2).\

- Strategic planning and the vision and mission of the schools are not discussed with SGB chairpersons. One should not forget that such discussions can also originate from the side of the chairperson. The researcher detected a general trend of ignorance with regard to the discussion of strategic planning from the side of SGB chairpersons (cf. 4.4.2).

- SGB members rarely receive any training in the drafting and implementation of strategic planning. One could argue that it is not the department or the school that should provide such training to SGBs, but if

the school wishes to be successful, then some plan in this regard should be made (cf. 4.4.2).

- SGB chairpersons want to learn about strategic planning. They have the urge to improve their schools, but do not seem to have the capacity to initiate such planning (cf. 4.4.2).

- Some of the responses from SGB chairpersons regarding what influences strategic planning at the school overlap with those of the principals, but in many ways their responses are different from those of the principals. They have mentioned their lack of knowledge and skills in this regard, but have also expressed a willingness to learn (cf. 4.4.2).

- Not much engagement has taken place with strategic planning. SGB chairpersons do not know how to determine whether a strategic plan has been implemented successfully (cf. 4.4.2).

The above-mentioned conclusions were derived from literature, questionnaires and interviews. Clear conclusions were drawn. The next section provides the recommendations of the study.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

This section addresses the research question:

What recommendations can be put forward to assist in the drafting and implementation of strategic planning in Motheo schools?

- Both the principal and the SGB chairperson have a role to play in initiating strategic planning. They need to engage with the SGB and SMT to conceptualise strategic planning as a starting point for further discussion in this regard.

- Principals need to involve other stakeholders with the drafting of a strategic plan at the school. At the onset of this process working groups

need to be engaged with current and potential stakeholders, such as the SGB, SMT, other staff members and representatives of the wider community in order to identify or anticipate external expectations and match these to the internal expectations of the school.

- Strategic plans need to be formally drafted and should be planned in cycles. A three year or five year cycle should be used with monitoring and amendments to be made on a yearly basis.

- Principals and SMT members need to be formally trained by the Department of Basic Education to draft and implement strategic plans. This training can be extended to include SGB members. In such a case the learning material need to be available in the mother tongue of the SGB members. This will enable poorly educated SGB members to fully engage in the process.

- The following aspects should form part of strategic planning training:
  o Address changes that occur in the school environment. Many things have changed with schools, such as the powers of parents in the decisions of the school, the role of the principal and the role of the SGB.
  o Involvement of all stakeholders during the planning process (principals, SMT, SGB, other teachers, businesses and parents).
  o An indication of all the types of resources that are needed to implement strategic planning.
  o Financial aspects and how the budget could be planned to include strategic plans to be implemented.
  o A link must be made to where the school wants to go and what types of planning must be made to ensure the school reaches this target.
  o The knowledge of how to assign people to strategic plans and strategies to monitor the implementation of such a plan.
  o The link between financing strategic aspects and the monitoring of such allocation of funds.

- Strategic plans (once implemented) should be monitored by the SGB, of which the principal is a member.

- Drafting of strategic plans should take into account the resources available at the school. Strategic plans must be attainable with available resources.
- All stakeholders need to feel part of the process. Then they will need no convincing to participate. The must feel that they own the strategic plan.
- Support from the department is necessary. Funding to schools must be made on time to ensure that plans can be executed.
- Economic factors should be taken into consideration when planning strategically. The geographical area of the school and the availability of funds through the community is an important factor to consider.

These recommendations should be taken to heart by all principals, SGB chairpersons and departmental officials dealing with strategic planning, such as the School Management and Governance Developer (SMGD). Collaboration is needed for schools to strategically plan and successfully execute these plans.

5.4   AREAS OF FUTURE RESEARCH

Possible areas of future research may include:

- Strategic financial planning as part of strategic planning of a school
- The roles of principals and School Governing bodies in managing and governing schools

5.5   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided the conclusions and recommendations of the study. Strategic planning is necessary for schools to effectively function. All the stakeholders in the school need to collaboratively work together to draft and implement strategic plans of the school. In many schools this collaboration is not yet evident.

This study provided a literature review regarding strategic planning. Data was obtained from principals and SGB chairpersons to provide the finding of this study. The study concluded with the provision of conclusions and recommendations.

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QUESTIONNAIRE TO PRINCIPALS

Please complete the following questionnaire regarding strategic planning in your school.

All information regarding yourself and that of your school will be kept strictly confidential.

_____

Provide your gender by marking with an X:

Gender	
Male	
Female	

Please provide your opinion regarding the following questions.

Question 1: Does your school have a strategic plan in place? Please elaborate.

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Question 2: Do you involve stakeholders in the strategic planning and if so, which stakeholders are involved during the drafting and formulation of the strategic plan?

_____
_____

_____

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_____

Question 3: How often do you discuss and draft changes or new aspects of your strategic plan?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Question 4: What type of assistance do you receive from the department in terms of drafting strategic plans (if any)?

_____

_____

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Question 5: What type of elements would you like to see in a training programme provided by the department?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Question 6: Which factors influence the drafting and the implementation of strategic planning at your school?

_____

_____

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_____

Question 7: How do you determine whether the implementation of aspects of the strategic plan is successful?

_____

_____

_____

_____

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_____

Thank you for your participation

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: SGB CHAIPERSONS

All information will be handled in strict confidence.

Please answer the following questions as comprehensively as you can.

_____

Question 1: Does your school have a strategic plan in place? Please elaborate.

Question 2: Were you involved in any strategic planning sessions for the school?

Question 3: How often do you discuss and draft changes or new aspects of your strategic plan?

Question 4: Did you attend or receive any training regarding the drafting and implementation of strategic planning at your school?

Question 5: What type of elements would you like to see in a training programme for strategic planning?

Question 6: What do you consider to be the factors that influence the drafting and implementation of strategic planning at your school?

Question 7: How do you determine whether the implementation of aspects of the strategic plan is successful?

Thank you for participating in this study