

**STAKEHOLDERS' PERCEPTIONS OF FACTORS THAT AFFECT
THE PERFORMANCE OF OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL
CLASSES: A CASE STUDY OF ONE OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL
CENTRE IN MAZABUKA, ZAMBIA**

BY

MAURICE MULOPO

Thesis

MLA C

ML

2009

...

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA IN
PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION IN ADULT EDUCATION.**



THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAMBIA

2009

DECLARATION

I Maurice Mulopo solemnly declare that this dissertation is my own work and that it has never been previously submitted for a degree at this or any other university.

Signed 11/10 Date 12/01/2010 0279682

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

This dissertation of Maurice Mulopo is approved or fulfilling the award of Master of Education (in Adult Education) of the University of Zambia.

Signed: Mulopo Date: 25 JAN 2010

Signed: Phungala Date: 04/02/10

Signed: Date:

Signed: Date:

ABSTRACT

This research study aimed at identifying factors affecting performance of learners in open secondary school centres. The concern was the prevailing poor performance of learners at an open secondary school centre in Mazabuka district pseudo named Mazabuka Open Secondary School centre in contrast to the good performance of learners at the regular school pseudo named Frost Secondary School where the teachers at this centre are also teaching.

The methodology used in this study was a case study. In this study the researcher investigated the factors affecting the performance of open secondary learners from the stakeholders' point of view. He compared the teaching and learning at the regular school (where the performance is good) to that at the open secondary school centre (where the performance is poor) to show the gap in performance. This comparison was also intended to bring out the difference in the operations of the two institutions which in turn helped to explain the differences in performance. The respondents in this study were administrators who included the head teachers of the regular and the two basic schools from where the centre operates, the deputy head teachers for the regular school and one of the basic schools and the open secondary school centre committee; the teachers teaching at both the regular school and the open secondary school centre; grade 10,11 and 12 learners at the open secondary school centre and parents and guardians of learners at the open secondary school centre. Some teachers in this study were observed teaching from both the regular school and the open secondary school centre and then interviewed while others were involved in a Focus Group Discussion. The interview method was used to

obtain data from head and deputy head teachers while Focus Group Discussions were *used to get data from Open Secondary School Committee, teachers and learners.*

The findings of this study revealed that the open secondary school centre learners that sit for the same examinations with those from the regular school perform poorly because they are greatly disadvantaged in terms of the teaching and learning environment. Factors that negatively affect performance of learners in open secondary schools include over enrolment; lack of teaching and learning materials; teachers that absent themselves from lessons, are tired and uncommitted; poor timing of sessions and poor assessment. These factors eventually lead to learner absenteeism that affects performance of learners. The identified factors seemed to result mostly from lack of strict monitoring and supervision.

The suggested solution to the problem was providing facilities and factors that tend to enhance the performance of learners at the regular school like a strict supervisor, laboratories, a library, textbooks and extended learning time.

DEDICATION

The research report is dedicated to all the Directorate of Open and Distance Education staff in Zambia who will gain insights on the operation of Open Secondary School Centres that they might find it helpful in their quest to address problems facing this form of alternative education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

This study would have never been a reality without the support rendered by various people and organisations that I feel indebted to thank. I begin by thanking my supervisor Dr Emmy Mbozi, hard working and ever dedicated to see others succeed academically. May GOD give you the desires of your heart.

I equally thank all the staff in the Department of Adult Education and Extension Studies and Post Graduate Studies lecturers in the School of Education for the knowledge and services rendered during my studies at the University of Zambia (UNZA). The District Education Board Secretary and staff, Mazabuka District, for their financial and moral support during the period I was studying.

I also thank administrators, teachers, learners and parents and guardians for learners at Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre whose support, cooperation and tolerance enabled me to carry out this research study. You really went out of your way in most cases to accommodate me. I am sorry for the inconvenience I might have caused you. Finally I thank my wife for her tolerance and support during this research undertaking. To all of you I say GOD, the ALMIGHTY richly bless you in all your endeavours.

AMEN.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE
Title Page.....	i
Declaration	ii
Certificate of Approval.....	iii
Abstract	iv
Dedication	vi
Acknowledgement	vii
Table of Contents.....	viii
Chapter One: Introduction	1
1.1. Background of the Problem	1
1.2. Statement of the Problem	4
1.3. Purpose of the Study	5
1.4. Research Objectives	5
1.5. Research Questions	5
1.6. Significance of the Study.....	5
1.7. Operational Definitions.....	6
1.8. Limitations of the Study	7
Chapter Two: Literature Review.....	8
2.1. The Concept of Open Secondary School	8
2.2. Performance of Learners in Open Secondary School Centres.....	10
2.3. The Humanistic Approach to Education.....	15
2.4. Issues Emerging from Reviewed Literature.....	17
Chapter Three: Methodology.....	18
3.1. Research Design	18
3.2. Sources of Data.....	19
3.3. Target Population	19
3.4. Sample Population.....	20
3.5. Data Collection Techniques and Instruments.....	21
3.5.1. One to One to Interviews.....	21
3.5.2. Focus Group Discussion.....	21
3.5.3. Document Review.....	22
3.5.4. Observations	22
3.6. Data Collection	22
3.6.1. Table on the Summary of Data Collected, their Sources and Techniques and Instruments used.....	23
3.7. Data Preparation	24
3.8. Data Analysis	24

Chapter Four: Research Findings	25
4.1. Factors Affecting Performance of Learners at the Open Secondary School Centre.....	26
4.1.1. Teaching and Learning Factors.....	26
4.1.2. Teacher Related Factors.....	36
4.1.3. Learner Related Factors.....	40
4.1.4. Socio-Economic Factors.....	43
4.1.5. Administrative Factors.....	44
4.2. Factors Enhancing Teaching and Learning at the Regular School.....	49
4.3. Measures to Improve Performance of Open Secondary School Learners	52
4.4. Summary of Findings	53
Chapter Five: Discussion of Findings.....	56
5.1. Factors Affecting Performance of Learners at the Open Secondary School Centre.....	56
5.1.1. Teaching and Learning Factors.....	56
5.1.2. Teacher Related Factors.....	60
5.1.3. Learner Related Factors.....	63
5.1.4. Socio-Economic Factors.....	65
5.1.5. Administrative Factors.....	66
5.2. Factors Enhancing Teaching and Learning at the Regular School.....	69
5.3. Measures that can help Bridge the Gap in Performance between Open Secondary and Regular School Learners.....	71
Chapter Six: Conclusion and Recommendations.....	73
6.1. Conclusion	73
6.2. Recommendations	74
References	77
Appendix 1-Research Budget	80
Appendix 2-Research Work Plan.....	81
Appendix 3-Interview Guide for Heads, Deputy Headteachers and Open Learning Committee Members.....	82
Appendix 4-Focus Group Discussion Guide for Teachers	83
Appendix 5-Focus Group Discussion Guide for Learners.....	84
Appendix 6- Focus Group Discussion Guide for Parents and Guardians.....	85
Appendix 7-Interview Guides for Teachers Observed.....	86
Appendix 8-Document Review Guide.....	87
Appendix 9-Observation Schedule.....	88

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the background of the problem, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research objectives and questions, significance of the study, operational definitions and limitations of the study.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE PROBLEM

The government has taken education as a pre-requisite for human as well as economic development. It places people at the centre stage of all development. The development of people not things is considered to be of prime importance. The knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that people acquire through education or training are considered to be equipping citizens in their own right as autonomous participants in the process of socio-economic change and improvement. These attributes also enable people to make a positive impact on the development of non-human resources, thereby leading to increases in the country's wealth (MOE, 1992: xxii; MOE 1996:2). It is for this reason that upon attainment of independence in 1964, the government has strived to put up schools to provide education opportunities to as many citizens as possible. In line with this the government put up programmes and policies that were eventually incorporated in the national development plans that in turn prompted the mobilization of resources for the expansion of the education sector. This helped to increase access to education throughout the country particularly in basic education, grades 1 to 7.

However, whilst the enrolment increased for children from grades 1 to 7, the progression from grades 7 to 8 (form one (1) then) and 9 to 10 (form 3 to 4 then) was still very low with a transition rate being at about 38%. This is because of limited school places in the regular school system. It led to the introduction of cut off points to justify the limited number of learners progressing from one level of education to another, particularly from grade 9 to 10. This move made learners drop out of the education system (Musonda, 2001:56; Ndoeye, 2007:104,106). This prompted the government to seek alternative forms of education. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has made provision for individuals that fall out of the regular school system to continue with their formal education under the Directorate of Open and Distance Education (DODE). This directorate provides alternative forms of education to cater for out of school children, youths and adults. The alternative forms of education offered by this directorate are Interactive Radio Instruction (IRI)

commonly known as learning at Taonga Market, evening classes, adult literacy classes and open secondary classes.

If we use Tuckett's definition of the term Adult Education, then it is evident that the programmes offered under DODE are adult education programmes in that the majority of the learners attending them are adults and that they are designed to cater not only for children and youths but also adults. This is more so for individuals attending grades 10 to 12 for which this study is concerned (MOE, 1996:79-81). Tuckett (2007) defines Adult Education as any organized and sustained learning programme designed for and appropriate to the needs of adults. It covers all types of education and trainings for adults, formal and informal whether offered by schools, colleges, universities, voluntary organisations, industry or public service bodies.

Of the Adult Education programmes under the Directorate of Open and Distance Education, the Open Secondary Centres were first introduced at grade 8 (form 1 then) level where they were initially called Grade 7 Leavers' Schemes in 1968 as a pilot project by Henry Beckley. These used the face-to-face mode of instruction. The economic reason for their establishment was to provide junior secondary school education at a lower cost than that of the regular secondary school. The educational development objective was that the learners in open secondary classes would receive good education comparable to any in the country.

In 1972 they were reorganised and renamed Supervised Study Groups. These study groups were supplied with study modules by Luanshya Correspondence College. They still catered for the junior secondary section only. They were later called Open Secondary Centres at grade 8 and 9 in 1987. At this time the modules were no longer supplied to centres and the centres resorted to face-to-face mode of instruction.

The introduction of open secondary school classes at senior secondary level has its roots in the afternoon senior secondary school classes introduced by the Adult Education Association of Zambia (AEAZ) in 1985 at selected secondary schools including the association's own centre, Chuundu Secondary School in Choma District, Southern Province. In this case the hosting schools collected fees from learners on behalf of the association, paid the part time teachers consisting of teachers from the hosting schools, used some of the money for administration and sent the remainder of the proceeds to the association.

Face-to-face was used as the mode of instruction. The teachers used the teaching and learning materials from the hosting schools. The head teachers of the hosting schools later in the early 1990s found this arrangement unfavorable. This prompted them to organize meetings that enabled them to initiate their own senior secondary learning centres that they termed Academic Production Units (APU). Under this new arrangement the centres operated as did those run by the Adult Education Association of Zambia only that the hosting schools retained and used all the monies collected from the learners (Mwiinga, 1989: 3-4).

In Southern Province the centres are called Open Secondary Centres at both basic and high schools. As for Mazabuka District the current Open Secondary School Centres operating in regular schools cater for most of the learners from grade 10 to 12. In 2006 a total of 4521 grade 9 sat for the grade 9 examinations in Mazabuka District. Out of the 1573 that proceeded to grade 10 only 1130 were placed in regular boarding and day schools while a total of 443 were admitted in open secondary school centres. This is a clear indicator of the significant role these types of adult education centres are playing in the district and country as a whole. Hence, the concern to carry out this study.

The ideal situation is that high school open secondary centres operate from the regular school at which the teachers are teaching so that the open secondary school learners use the same infrastructure (classrooms, laboratories, libraries and toilets), textbooks and teachers as the regular school learners. The teachers teaching at the regular school where these open secondary centres exist are the ones that teach the open secondary classes as well. However, among the Open Secondary Centres set up in Mazabuka District is the centre run by the teachers from one grant-aided school, Frost Secondary School, called Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre. Since proprietors for this regular school do not allow Open Secondary School Centres in their school this centre is run from two different basic schools.

Whilst the cited adult education programmes are contributing to the increase in enrolment in the district the performance of their learners is low when compared to those in regular schools. This is evident from Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre whose performance has been poor since its inception in 1998. To that effect the factors causing the poor performance of the learners at this open secondary centre were not known. The research study therefore intended to

investigate the factors that may be affecting the performance of learners at this centre from the stakeholders' point of view.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statistics in open secondary school centres show that their learners' performance is poor. In Mazabuka District, this is more apparent at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre where the results when compared to those of the regular high school are poor.

The statistics show that when compared, the results for the past three (3) years (2004,2005 and 2006) show that the pass percentages at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre have never gone over 48 percent while those at the regular school,Frost,have never fallen below 83.2 percent as shown in the table:

TABLE 1: Performance of Regular and Open School Learners

YEAR	PASS PERCENTAGES PER SCHOOL/CENTRE	
	FROST HIGH %	MAZABUKA SECONDARY % OPEN
2004	92.2	48
2005	89.2	32.09
2006	83.2	42.26

SOURCE: Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre 2004, 2005 and 2006
Grade 12 Final Results Analysis

The factors causing poor performance of the learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre need to be explored from the stakeholders' view points to establish their opinions on what they believe is the cause and what are possible solutions. There has been no research to establish the causes of this poor performance. This research study therefore sought to establish the factors that are affecting the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre so as to come up with measures that may help address the problem from the perspective of stakeholders (learners, teachers, head teachers, deputy head teachers and parents or guardians).

1.3 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that affect the performance of the learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre from the stakeholders' perspective. This information can contribute to developing measures to enhance the performance of the learners at the centre.

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- a) To identify factors that affect performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre from the stakeholders' perspectives.
- b) To identify factors enhancing learner performance that exist in the regular school and not in the open secondary centre from the stakeholders' perspectives.
- c) To identify measures that can help enhance the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre from the stakeholders' perspectives.
- d) To identify measures that can help bridge the gap in performance between regular schools and open secondary centres from the stakeholders' perspectives.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) What factors do stakeholders say affect performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre?
- b) What factors enhancing performance do stakeholders say exist in the regular school and not in the open secondary centre?
- c) What measures do stakeholders suggest can help enhance the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre?
- d) What measures do stakeholders suggest can help bridge the gap in performance between regular schools and open secondary centres

1.6 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research was significant in that it would enable the researcher and the researched develop measures to enhance the performance of learners at this centre and other open secondary centres

in Mazabuka District where applicable. It would also reveal insights on the operations of open secondary centres that might help supervising officers at the centre and researcher (from the district office) to come up with measures to address problems that the open secondary centres may be facing.

The information obtained will be vital as an entry point for researchers intending to pursue further the topic of factors affecting learner performance. The Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) like the Adult Education Association of Zambia (AEAZ), agencies like the United Nations Children's Education Fund (UNICEF) and religious organisations will find the data vital as they design programmes and advise governments on issues of alternative education.

In addition, it would also help in refining the policy on the administration of open secondary centres to make the learning environment for learners in those centres more conducive to enhance their performance. The results would equally add to the body of knowledge on the performance of learners in alternative education.

1.7 OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS

This section defined terms as used in this research study:

Alternative Education: This referred to the education introduced to help increase education access in the wake of the government's inability to put up the entire required infrastructure to cater for all would be learners. It runs parallel to the regular school system and alternative education learners write the same examinations as the regular school ones (Researcher' own definition).

Open Secondary School Classes: These referred to alternative education centres established by government usually in regular schools (grade 8 and 9 in basic schools and grades 10 to 12 in high schools) to offer education from grades 8 to 12. Learners at these centres pay tuition fees that are used for paying the teachers and general running of the centres. The teachers at the regular school are the ones that teach at these centres (Researcher' own definition).

Passing: It referred to obtaining a full certificate in grade 12. That entails obtaining at least 5 subjects (including English) with at least credit in two of them (E.C.Z Grade 12 Certificate Overleaf).

Regular School: This referred to any school operating within the conventional or traditional education system in Zambia. The classes in such a school run from grade 1 to 12 (Researcher's own definition).

1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study was limited to Mazabuka Open Secondary Centre due to limited financial resources and time to cater for all the 16 centres in the district. This centre was also chosen because the gap in performance between the learners at this centre and those at the regular school, Frost Secondary School, where the same teachers teach is very wide. Selecting one centre equally helped to give an in-depth study of an open secondary centre.

At this centre only 46 out of the 364 learners were used in the research due to limited time. The 10 learners who were previously at the regular school that participated in the Focus Group Discussion were only boys because the regular school is a boys school.

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter discusses the concept of open secondary, performance of learners in open secondary centres and open secondary as a humanistic approach to education.

2.1 The Concept of Open Secondary

Alternative education, also known as non-traditional education or educational alternative, includes a number of approaches to teaching and learning other than traditional or regular education. In Zambia it constitutes community schools, evening classes, literacy classes and open secondary classes. Alternative education is run by the Directorate of Open and Distance Education (DODE) formerly known as the Department of Continued Education, under the Ministry of Education. The mode of instruction in alternative education is mainly face-to-face contact between the learner and the teacher (MOE, 1996:79).

At present the open secondary classes are the most prominent form of alternative education in Zambia. Though concentrated in urban areas, open secondary centres are widespread throughout the country. These open secondary centres rely on the face-to-face medium of instruction. In an ideal situation, they use classrooms at the regular school hosting them that are free in the afternoon. They operate under the open learning model of education provision coordinated by an open learning centre, in the Zambian case the open secondary centre. The Open Learning Centre (OLC) is a venue where the learner can be guided, educated and perhaps tested. 'Open learning' means one studies in his or her own time. The individual reads the course material, work on course activities, and write assignments. Open learning is supposed to admit pupils who are self-determined, independent and interest-guided. It is characterized by the removal of restrictions, exclusions and privileges; by the accreditation of students' previous experience; by the management of the time variable and by changes in the relationship between tutors and learners. However, the 'openness' of the open secondary centres in Zambia to me, seem to be limited to the admission of school going learners that pass but fail to get places in grade 8 and 10 due to the limited number of school places in the regular school system. Openness should instead, entail more than just accessibility.

Mumba (1989:2), Paul (1990:50) and Race (1989:19) agree that it is the extent to which a learner controls the educational process-its content, how it is learnt (organisation of material, various media and teaching methods), venue for learning it (home, regional or localized centre, in a library, at one's workplace, at an institution's campus or anywhere else), when it is learnt (session dates-self or institutionally paced or imposed time slots-daytime or night time) and whether and how it is assessed.

In developed countries, educational alternatives that include charter schools, alternative schools, independent schools, and home-based learning vary widely, but often emphasise the value of small class size, close relationships between students and teachers (<http://www.eric.ed.gov>). The United States of America (USA) in particular put in place a secondary school programme known as the Adult Secondary Education Programme (ASE). This is meant to enable adults that were unable to complete their education through the regular school system which they call Traditional or Public School System. It is also intended to respond to the current educational expectations of the American society. In this country, completion of high school education is viewed as a vital indicator of attainment in the American Education System. Just as it is the case also in Canada, the high school diploma in USA has become a symbol that its holder possesses knowledge, skills, social values and attitudes espoused by the larger American and Canadian societies as cardinal for employment in the labour markets requiring minimal skills or for pursuit of further education (Fisher and Martin, 1989:478-480).

“Alternative education” presupposes some kind of orthodoxy which the alternative is in opposition to. I view this as being in contrast to the Zambian case where alternative education has been introduced in the wake of limited existing regular school places and the assumption of the lower cost of alternative education provision when compared to the regular education system. However, in the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom some alternative education centres have sprung up as a result of dissatisfaction in the public school system and are thus more dependable. The alternative schools and programmes there exist mainly to serve students who are at risk for failure within the traditional or regular school system. They have specific and transitional goals and educational programmes that focus on academic skills, social services and/or community work-based learning. In this case, while their short-term goal is to meet the needs of the targeted learners, the long-term goal remains that of identifying successful

alternative education strategies and implementing them to improve opportunities for all learners (<http://www.nesl.org>). This is also unlike our situation where our open secondary centres are the last resort for learners that fail to obtain places in the regular school system. They lack clear policy guidelines and goals. What is vivid about their establishment is the need to increase access to education.

Open secondary centres in Zambia and Mazabuka District in particular, play a very vital role in increasing access, progression and completion rates in junior secondary and high schools. As the records show, the enrolment in open secondary centres at junior secondary, grades 8 and 9, in Mazabuka District stands at 546 males and 493 females giving a total of 1039 learners. At high school, grades 10 to 12, there are 941 males and 811 females giving a total of 1752 learners (Mazabuka District Education Board, 2007). This is a clear indication that open secondary centres are greatly contributing to education access in the district and eventually making the country move closer to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals on education, of Education for All by 2015.

2.2 Performance of Learners in Open Secondary Centres

While the establishment of open secondary centres is a positive move by the Ministry of Education to increase access to education in the country the performance of learners in these centres is a source of concern. The poor performance of learners in open secondary centres is contrary to the initial objective for the establishment of these centres. As Mwiinga (1989:2) states “the educational objective is that learners of open secondary classes should receive good education comparable to any in the country ...”. This is contrary to what is obtaining today. The poor performance of learners in open secondary centres in the country has been a trend for some time. Siaciwena (1994:104-112) is in agreement when he reveals that the performance of open secondary centres nationwide during the years 1984,1987,1988 and 1989 were 22,29.5,49 and 38 percentages respectively. This gave an average pass percentage of 34.6, less than 50 percent as is the case for Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre.

The poor performance of learners in alternative education is worrisome not only to Zambia but also other countries. For instance in South Africa, the South African Distance Education institutions had to introduce learner support programmes to help curb learner drop out as well as

improve the performance of learners in alternative education. Though details on how the learners in their alternative institutions perform are not outlined the measures taken highlight that the performance of the learners is not good.

On the other hand, while alternative education in Zambia and elsewhere performs poorly, it is not the case in some countries. In Botswana, the Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) is on record that their learners are doing well (BOCODOL, 2005: 4). The United Kingdom also indicate that regular schools are adopting teaching methods employed in alternative education centres to optimize the performance of their learners and that alternative education is preferred to the regular school system. This, the researcher presumes, is a clear indication that the alternative school system there is performing better than the regular school system unlike the case in Zambia. In view of this, the researcher is in agreement with Paul (1990:51) who states that 'it is one thing to adopt a policy of openness and quite another to carry it out successfully.' This is because the introduction of open secondary centres in Zambia was well intended but the resulting poor performance is an indicator that something might be going wrong.

Despite the periodic assessment of pupils' performance in Zambia being at middle basic (grade 5) level, "Learning Achievement at the Middle Level", the findings are applicable to all levels of education in that they border on teaching and learning. These assessments reveal that the performance of learners at the middle basic level (grade 5 and 6) is poor in all the nine provinces of Zambia. Among the factors that these studies cited as affecting performance of learners are availability and use of textbooks, written exercises and home work, supervision, teacher absenteeism and late coming, learner absenteeism and late coming, sitting arrangement, school facilities and manual work (Kelly and Kasanda, 2000:37-84; Musonda, 2001:13-77 and Kasanda, 2003:25-74).

Textbooks

Researches done in Uganda and Ghana found significant effects leading the researchers to conclude that improving the availability of textbooks is of the cost effective methods for improving learning achievement. While these findings cannot be disputed the findings in Zambia slightly differ. In Zambia it was discovered that simply raising the number of books does not

automatically improve learning outcomes and that teacher training must be improved in order to ensure effective teaching and use of textbooks (IOB, 2008:144). In addition, the findings at middle basic level revealed that performance improves when books are available but improvement only occurs when they are shared and the highest achievement was when one book was shared between two learners. However, while this was the case in other subjects, achievement in Mathematics was found to be at its best when there was complete absence of textbooks. It was suggested in that study that it could be so because the teacher was the only resource that was there for the learners making him or her actively endeavour to instill the necessary comprehension and elicit the desired procedures. This was said not to be the case when books were available in that the teacher no longer sensed the need for vigorous teaching and simply allowed learners to make their way through texts, exercises and examples given in books. This led the researchers to conclude that:

“Pupil learning will not occur merely by distributing books to pupils. Teachers must also learn how to incorporate these additional resources (textbooks) in their teaching strategies in such a way that they do not abdicate their teaching functions to ‘the book’ but actively seek to enable pupils to understand the contents of the books and how to derive maximum profit from it.” (Kelly and Kanyika, 2000:54-57; Kasanda, 2003:105).

Mbozi (2008:127) in his study of quality education in selected schools in Livingstone and Kazungula Districts in Zambia also found limited textbooks as a factor affecting performance of learners. In his case four (4) classes of about 60 learners shared four (4) textbooks. This made it difficult for teachers to effectively use the books. Since the teachers did not even have teachers’ guides they found it difficult to prepare for their lessons.

Written Exercises

Kelly and Kanyika (2000:50-60) reveal that there is a positive relationship between learning achievement and frequency of homework. The duo’s study showed that for the best results to be achieved the amount of homework given should neither be too much nor too little. In this study the highest achievers were those learners given homework not more than two (2) to three (3) times a week. This is in line with the Ministry of Education policy that insists on homework

being given to learners twice a week in all subjects. It is in the view of the fact that written tests and homework are very important in monitoring learner performance (Kasanda, 2001:35). In this case it is surprising to note that performance tended to improve when homework and extra work are given sometimes and not always in that as a teacher I have always believed that the more the practice the better the performance.

School Facilities

School facilities can also affect the performance of learners. The study carried out in Ghana indicated that a good learning environment has a significant impact on school attendance and learning outcomes. While many details are not given about the meaning of a good learning environment, the study alluded to the fact that the absence of adequate school facilities like desks, blackboards, electricity and water sanitation has a negative effect on pupil attendance and in turn learning achievement (IOB, 2008:145).

Sitting and Writing Conditions

Another factor that can have an effect on performance of learners is the sitting and writing condition. Kelly and Kanyika (2000:61) in their study discovered that better learning occurred when learners were seated comfortably on either a chair or desk and when they had sufficient writing room at a stable facility (a table or desk). They stated that there were no beneficial benefits if learners were crowded. For Kelly and Kanyika not more than two learners should be seated at a desk to have the best results. My experience in the classroom makes me agree with this revelation. Kasanda (2001:25) also got similar results in his study prompting him to state that when four or more shared a sitting facility less achievement was realised.

Supervision

Lack of effective supervision can also affect performance of learners. Ndoeye (2007:3) cautions that while it is prudent to invest in books, classrooms, teachers and teacher training it is imperative to ensure that the school is well managed and that investment is done in quality management training to establish an effective support structure at the district level and inspection system. These findings suggest that improving the school management system is key to improving the overall quality of education.

Absenteeism and Late Coming of both Teachers and Learners

The National Assessment Surveys carried out in Zambia in 1999 and 2003 reveal that staff and learner absenteeism, late coming and knocking off early have negative bearings on learning achievement (Kasanda,2003:31,52). I agree with these findings because they border on reducing the teaching and learning time.

Over enrolment

Most schools in Zambia are characterized by large enrolments which have a negative impact on the quality of education. This in turn results in higher pupil-teacher ratios, pupil-classroom ratios, pupil-book ratios and pupil-desk ratios that eventually affect performance of learners. These factors make teachers unable to have individual attention for learners, particularly slow learners. Learners also crowd on desks making learning unpleasant. This promotes absenteeism and eventually dropping out of school (Ndoye, 2007:3). Mbozi (2008:127) adds that over enrolment of about 60 in class made learners fail to concentrate while teachers failed to mark learners' work and avoided using the group work mode of teaching.

Distance to School

Studies done by Kelly and Kanyika (2000:51) in 1999 revealed that there was no correlation between distance to school and learner performance. However, they indicated that the time that learners take to get to school lowers the mean scores of learners. This is because such learners are likely to have less time to study than their classmates and may arrive late and fail to study and do their homework when they get home. This situation was also revealed by Mbozi in his findings. He states that some learners covered up to 10 kilometres as they walked to school. This made them too tired to concentrate in class. They equally learnt fewer subjects each day in that they always reach school late. Hence, their poor performance at school. Even though their actual performance was not given in the study (Mbozi, 2008:127).

Manual Work and Sport

Kelly and Kanyika (2000:103) also allude to manual work and sport as factors affecting performance of learners. They reveal that when these are done everyday at school and at home

they lower the performance of learners concerned compared to those that do them less frequently.

Poor Teacher/Pupil Interaction

Mbozi (2008:164) cited poor teacher/pupil interaction as another factor that affects the performance of learners. He found out that there were situations that made learners feel threatened by the teacher. These were incidents when the teacher used bad and threatening language or shouting at them for various reasons. In such cases learners become inactive in class and eventually performed poorly.

Negative Attitudes of Parents and Community Members

In his findings Mbozi (2008:128) also alludes to the attitude of parents and community members as another factor affecting performance. He reveals that it is what prompts them to prefer sending them to sell vegetables at the market than to school.

For sure these factors can affect performance because they limit the time learners commit themselves to school work. Some discourage learners from participating as well as attending lessons. In my view the school must be more attractive to learners more than home and all other activities learners may engage in outside school.

2.3 The Humanistic Approach to Education

Quality is key in every form of education system. In the Zambian case, the Ministry of Education (MOE) aims at ensuring that learners attain the highest standards of learning through teaching of excellent quality. In MOE's view quality emanates from maximising the efforts of those responsible for the education of learners at all levels of the education system so that centres of education (learning institutions) from pre-school to university become places of effective teaching and learning to enhance highest standards of achievement, in accordance with ability, for every learner (MOE, 1996:4). In other words, the government, through MOE, has an outline on how it intends to provide an enabling environment for quality education to be attained in the country. In the researcher's view this approach to education provision is in line with the humanist stance on individual development or learning. In this approach, it is believed that individuals have inherent potentials to develop or learn but the unleashing of such potentiality is

dependant to a large extent on how enabling the environment is. As Finger and Asun (2001: 71) point out, the human motivation to learn is related to satisfaction of an individual's needs whose ultimate goal was self-actualisation. The researcher views this as MOE's aspiration to enhance the teaching and learning environment's potential to promote quality education.

The humanistic approach to development or learning takes an individual to be central to his or her own learning. The proponents of the humanistic paradigm state that an individual has freedom and ability to attain self-development or self-learning and is capable of directing his or her own learning as long as the environment is enabling. They further argue that individuals have control over their own destiny and are free to act and choose a course of action and are also responsible for the development of their full potential to learn.

The MOE's approach in education provision in the researcher's view subscribes to the above assertion of the humanist theorists. This is because the MOE also makes the learner central to the entire education process which it takes to exist solely for the sake of the same learner. It equally recognises that each learner is unique, with individual and personal attributes, wrought by the family as well as the society backgrounds which also differ one from another (MOE, 1996:28). In view of this, West-Burnham and Carr-Bowling (1999:14, 15) add that learning is regulated by the learner. They state that effective learning entails "enabling students to become life-long, self starting and self sustaining learners." This is in contrast to our open secondary school learners who are never 'weaned' from their dependence on the teacher, a situation that the education system seems to encourage.

The above mentioned stance therefore makes the responsibility of a learning institution like an open secondary school centre a mammoth one. This occurs in the light of it being tasked just like any other learning institution to create an enabling teaching and learning environment capable of fostering and nurturing the cultivation and development of each learner's full educational potential. The fact that learners at the open secondary school centre are selected mostly from among those that do not qualify to boarding schools entails that they are of average performance thereby making teaching them more challenging.

In view of the environment being vital to enhancing or inhibiting teaching and learning in a classroom, the teacher is a key figure in creating an enabling environment. It is the researcher's

view that teachers, as custodians of the teaching and learning take time to learn how their learners learn best if they are to be good teachers. In line with this Carl Rogers states that, “I know I cannot teach any one anything, I can only provide an environment in which he can learn,” (Brandes and Ginns, 1986: v). Since the learner is the main focus in our education system it is vital that teachers take keen interest in him or her. To achieve quality education there is need for teachers to centre their teaching plans and every other activity on the learner.

2.4 Issues Emanating from Reviewed Literature

The literature review shows that learners in open secondary school centres in Zambia and other forms of alternative education in some countries are not doing well. However, the fact that the learners are performing well in some countries tend to suggest that even learners in our open secondary school centres in Zambia have the potential to perform well. It is equally evident from the literature reviewed that the Zambian model of alternative education, particularly open secondary school education differs much in its mission, goals and implementation strategies. It plays no other role apart from increasing access to learners that are less achievers in the education system. The resulting poor performance in these centres can be a manifestation of what could have gone wrong in the operations of our alternative education system. It is for this reason that this research study set out to identify factors affecting the performance of learners at one open secondary school centre from the stakeholders’ point of view so as to try and find a lasting solution to the problem.

CHAPTER 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This chapter highlights the research design, sources of data and methods used in collecting and analysing the data in this research study.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed the case study research design. This is where the researcher chose one open secondary school centre to represent the other open secondary school centres in the district in that they bear similar characteristics. The case study seemed to be more appropriate to help obtain in-depth opinions, explanations and possible solutions to the poor performance of learners in open secondary school centres.

In this research study the aim was to obtain a detailed account of factors negatively influencing the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre from the administrators, teachers, parents and learners and then identifying possible solutions from their point of view to address the problem. The study was not set up as an experimental design that would scientifically test the causes of poor performance at the open secondary school. Rather, it was structured to elicit views of affected stakeholders on what they felt was influencing performance at these schools. This is in line with the Freirian approach in Adult Education that asserts that the affected are better placed to take action against elements that hinder their development because they understand their situation better. As such no meaningful solution can result except if the affected are involved in not only identifying problems affecting them but also searching for solutions to those problems. Freire argues that the affected should get involved in dialogue and become part of the process of changing their world or situation (<http://www.marxist.org>). Hence, in this case, the researcher did not have predetermined variables that influence performance but, as per adult education perspective, viewed the respondents as being better placed to understand and find solutions to their problems.

3.2 SOURCES OF DATA

The data in this research study were collected from the head teachers and deputy head teachers of Frost Secondary School and the two basic schools where the open secondary centre operates from, Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre Committee members, teachers teaching at both the regular school and the open secondary school centre, learners from Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre as well as their parents and guardians. The 2008 End of Term one (1) results for grades 11 and 12, teachers' preparation files, teachers' class allocations, class registers, learners' exercise books and class time tables at both at both Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre were another source of data.

The head teachers, deputy head teachers and the open secondary school committee were used because they are the administrators of the open secondary school centre. The teachers were also included in the study because they are the ones teaching the learners at both Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre. Learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre were incorporated as the individuals whose performance is affected.

The results were a useful source of data for selecting learners for the study and comparing the performance of the learners, those at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre to those at Frost Secondary School.

Teachers' preparation files, teachers' class allocations, class registers, learners' exercise books and class time tables at both Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre were used to compare the teaching and learning at the two learning institutions.

3.3 TARGET POPULATION

Mazabuka District has 126 schools of which 71 are basic, 13 private, 33 community, four (4) high schools, four (4) secondary schools and one (1) skills training centre. It has six (6) Open Secondary School Centres offering grades 10 to 12. One (1) is run by a high school, three (3) by secondary schools and two (2) by basic schools. This study only focused on Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre, one of the six (6) centres offering grades 10 to 12. Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre is run by Frost Secondary School which is grant aided. It has a total of 489 learners.

Since the managing agency does not allow open secondary school classes at the school, this centre is run from two basic schools situated about four (4) kilometres away from the regular school. The teachers at Frost Secondary School are the ones that teach at the centre. This means they always have to rush to attend to the learners at the open secondary school centre. This centre was selected because the gap in performance between its learners and those of the regular school that operates it is very wide when compared to other centres.

3.4 SAMPLE POPULATION

The research made use of four types of informants namely; the administrators, teachers, learners and parents and guardians. Under the administrators all the three (3) head teachers for Frost Secondary and the two basic schools where Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre operates from and the three (3) open secondary school centre committee members for Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre were involved in one-to-one interviews and a Focus Group Discussion respectively. Two deputy head teachers, one from the regular secondary school and the other from the basic school with most of the open secondary classes were also involved in one-to-one interviews.

The teachers at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre who are also teaching at Frost Secondary School is another group of informants that were observed whilst teaching in class from both Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre and later interviewed. Out of the 23 teachers, 10 (4 males and 6 females) were observed and interviewed while another eight (8) (4 males and 4 females) participated in a Focus Group Discussion.

The other set of informants were 60 learners from Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre who were interviewed in six (6) Focus Group Discussions, two per grade. There were nine (9) learners (five (5) females and four (4) males) in one focus group and vice versa in the other for grades 10 to 12. Each of the two focus groups for grades 11 consisted of 12 learners (six (6) males and six (6) females). These learners were purposively selected using performance. The 2007 End of Term 3 results were used to select grade 11s and 12s learners while the 2007 grade 9 final examination results were used for selecting the grade 10 respondents. This consisted of one best, average and least performing learner according to sex to give each performing category a representation of a male and female in the discussions.

Another group of 10 learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre who previously learnt at Frost Secondary School in grade 8 and 9 consisting of five (5) grade 11 male learners and five (5) grade 12 male learners were purposively selected for a Focus Group Discussion because they were in a better position to compare the teaching and learning environments prevailing at Frost Secondary School to that at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre.

Some of the responses from the learners particularly about parents and guardians refusing to pay for their fees as a result of the centre not availing report forms on their performance to them prompted the researcher to conduct one (1) Focus Group Discussion with a group of six (6) parents and five (5) guardians consisting of two (2) parents and two (2) guardians with children in grade 11 and three (3) parents and two (2) guardians with children in grade 12 classes at the basic school where most of the classes are situated and one (1) parent and one (1) guardian whose children attend the grade 11 class isolated at the other basic school.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS

3.5.1 One to One Interviews

One to One Interviews were conducted with the three (3) head teachers for Frost Secondary and the two basic schools where Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre operates. These were also conducted with two deputy head teachers, one from the regular secondary school and the other from the basic school with most of the open secondary classes. Each of the 10 teachers observed whilst teaching at the regular school and the open secondary school centre were also involved in one-to-one interviews.

In line with this, interview guides were used to solicit data on factors that affect the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre and suggestions on what measures need to be taken to enhance the performance of learners in open secondary school centres.

3.5.2 Focus Group Discussion

One Focus Group Discussion was conducted with eight (8) teachers, four (4) males and four (4) females, who teach at both Frost Secondary and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre. Six (6) other Focus Group Discussions were also conducted with 60 learners from the Open Secondary School Centre. Another Focus Group Discussion was held with 10 learners that went

to the regular secondary school for their grade 8 and 9 to compare the teaching and learning environments prevailing at Frost Secondary School to that at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre. The other Focus Group Discussion was held with parents and guardians to the learners at the Open Secondary School Centre.

Focus Group Discussion Guides were used to collect data from these respondents on the factors that affect the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre, the differences that exist in the teaching and learning environments in the regular school and that in the open secondary school centre and suggestions on what measures need to be taken to enhance the performance of learners in open secondary school centres.

3.5.3 Documentary Review

In this research, a Documentary Review Guide was used to review the grade 12 final results for the past three (3) years for Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre and those for Frost Secondary School. This helped to highlight the gap that exists in the performance of learners in the two institutions. In the same vein the 2008 End of Term One (1) results for the learners at the two institutions were also compared to show the current progression since the learners write the same end of term examinations.

Teachers' preparation files, teachers' class allocations, class registers, learners' exercise books and class time tables at both Frost Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre were used to compare the teaching and learning at the two learning institutions.

3.5.4 Observations

An observation schedule was used to collect data on the teaching methods, use of learning and teaching materials, desks available, teachers' lesson preparations, learners' work in exercise books and teacher-to-learner interactions and learner-to-learner interactions.

3.6 DATA COLLECTION

The researcher used one-to-one interviews, Focus Group Discussions, observations and document reviews to collect data from the informants. During this time a pen and note book were used to collect the field notes.

3.6.1 TABLE 2: SUMMARY ON DATA COLLECTED, THERE SOURCES AND TECHNIQUES AND INSTRUMENTS USED TO COLLECT THEM.

TECHNIQUE	INSTRUMENT	SOURCE OF DATA	DATA TO BE COLLECTED
Interview	Semi-structured Interview Guide	Head teachers	Factors that affect the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre and suggestions on what measures need to be taken to enhance the performance of learners in open secondary school centres.
Interview	Unstructured Interview Guide	Classroom teachers	
Focus Group Discussion	Semi-structured Focus Group Discussion Guide 1	Open Secondary School Committee and Teachers	
Focus Group Discussion	Semi-structured Focus Group Discussion Guide 2	Learners	Factors that affect the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre, the differences that exist in the teaching and learning environments in the regular secondary school and that at the open secondary school centre and suggestions on what measures need to be taken to enhance the performance of learners in open secondary school centres.
Observations	Observation Schedule	Teachers, learners	The teaching methods, use of learning and teaching materials, desks available, teachers' lesson preparations, learners' work in exercise books and teacher-to-learner interactions and learner-to-learner interactions
Document Review	Documentary Review Guide	2005,2006 and 2007 grade 12 final results, 2007 End of Term 3 results for grade 10 and 11 and 2008 End of Term 1 and 2 results for grades 10,11 and 12,learners' exercise books, class registers,class allocations, class time tables	Learners' results, work given and marked by teachers, classes taught by teachers, teacher-learner contact time

3.7 DATA PREPARATION

The field notes were organized into write-ups and then tabulated on contact summary sheets for easy analysis.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected was analysed manually, quantitatively and qualitatively. The researcher used percentages and narrations to compare the results from the regular secondary school to those at the open secondary school centre. Narratives were also used in the analysis after categorising the data into themes.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

This chapter outlines the findings on the factors affecting the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre, factors enhancing teaching and learning at the regular school and measures that can help bridge the gap in performance between learners at the regular school and those at the open secondary school centre. The findings resulted from comparing teaching and learning activities at the open secondary school centre to those obtaining at the regular school.

The data on factors causing poor performance at the open secondary school centre were gathered through classroom observations, review of teachers and learners' attendance registers, teachers' preparation files, 2008 class allocations, 2008 End of Term 1 results Schedules, learners' exercise books and interviews with administrators, teachers, learners and parents and guardians.

The other data on factors enhancing teaching and learning at the regular school came from institutional and classroom observations, learners and teachers' attendance registers, learners' exercise books, 2008 class allocations, teachers' preparation files and interviews with administrators, teachers and learners at the open secondary school centre that were at the regular secondary school for their grade 8 and 9. Where as the data on measures that can help bridge the gap in performance existing between the open secondary school centre and the regular secondary school learners came from interviews with administrators, teachers and learners.

This research study aimed at identifying factors affecting the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre and then coming up with measures that are likely to address the problem. In view of this the findings in this study were classified under three (3) categories, namely;

- ❖ Factors affecting the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre
- ❖ Factors enhancing teaching and learning at the regular school
- ❖ Measures that can help bridge the gap in performance existing between the open secondary school centre and the regular secondary school learners

4.1 FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE OF LEARNERS AT THE OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL CENTRES

The factors cited in this category comprised; teaching and learning factors, teacher related factors, learner related factors, socio-economic factors and administrative factors.

4.1.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING FACTORS

The factors cited under this category were Over Enrolment in Open Secondary Classes, Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials.

Over Enrolment in Open Secondary Classes

The first factor cited as affecting the performance of open secondary learners in this category was over enrolment in classes at the open secondary centre. Apart from parents all the respondents mentioned over enrolment as a factor affecting performance of learners. True to these respondents’ sentiments the enrolment records at the two institutions when compared showed that the enrolment of the open secondary school centre was alarmingly high.

The enrolment records collected from the two institutions were as follows:

Table 3: Enrolment at Frost Regular Secondary School and Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre

CLASS		NUMBER OF LEARNERS		AVERAGE LEARNERS PER CLASS	
		Regular School	Open Secondary	Regular School	Open Secondary
10	A	45	75	45	74
	B	44	75		
	C	44	70		
11	A	48	84	48	86
	B	47	94		
	C	48	78		
12	A	49	75	48	76
	B	46	74		
	C	47	77		

SOURCE: 2007 Regular school registers and Open Secondary School Centre End of Term One (1)

Examination Mark Sheets

*The letters ('A, B and C') used are not for ranking but simply for distinguishing one class from another.

One of the effects that over enrolment has on the open secondary learners as outlined by the respondents was that teachers had a problem in marking learners' exercise books. During one open secondary school class observation, the researcher found that the learners were using exercise books for other subjects. When asked why they claimed that the teacher had not yet given them back their exercise books for Chitonga after collecting them to mark the previous class exercise. The teacher confirmed this in his caution to the learners as the lesson ended. Since he had just marked a few of the learners' books he instructed two learners to collect the rest of the exercise books while telling the learners that "I hope these books are not for the subjects coming next." During the interview the teacher further revealed that he was still keeping the learners' books. He said "I am still keeping their books because these learners are too many. I usually take two (2) to three (3) days to mark all the exercise books."

Of the 19 lessons observed only five (5) teachers gave exercises during the lesson in class, three (3) of whom were at the regular school and two (2) at the open secondary centre. All the three (3) teachers at the regular school gave the exercises just when the siren to mark the end of their periods sounded and all told their learners to do the exercises during the time for supervised study (prep) and there after the monitors were to hand in the books. As for those at the open secondary centre both marked only a quarter of the books and then asked the rest of the learners to hand in their books. While the three teachers at the regular school gave five or more problems in the class exercises those at the open secondary centre gave an average of only three (3) problems per exercise and never prepared any extra work for fast learners but just kept telling those that had finished writing the given exercises to keep quite when they made noise.

During interviews, the teachers said that over enrolment made individual attention for learners difficult. They said that as a result they were unable to offer remedial work. They equally stated that an attempt to attend to all the learners' questions at the centre contributed to them failing to complete the syllabi in most subjects.

The learners added that as a result of over enrolment they failed to concentrate when they sat three (3) on each of the desks that were small and that they felt uncomfortable in that there was limited writing space and poor ventilation. The learners stated that they also failed to concentrate because the classes were noisy. As a result they were unable to study whenever teachers were absent from class. These findings are in line with what Mbozi (2008:127) discovered. If in Mbozi's case the maximum number of learners was 60 but depicting the similar effects on learning what more of this situation where the minimum number of learners was 74. The effects were more apparent.

The cited implications of over enrolment were also seen during classroom observations at both the regular school and the open secondary centre. To begin with only the teachers at the open secondary centre where the classes were big had problems in controlling noise either from the class they were teaching at that particular time or the next class that had no teacher. Each of the learners at the regular school were on a single seater desk while those at the open secondary centre sat three (3) on each two seater small desk, meant for younger children, making it difficult for them to write well.

While seated at the back of the classroom with some learners at the open secondary school centre there were many occasions when the researcher could miss out on the lesson because of chatting amongst the learners, sudden outbursts by teachers as they tried to correct a wrong doing or noise from a class next door that had no teacher. This clearly revealed that over enrolment has an effect on teaching and learning which can in turn affect the performance of learners.

The Open Secondary School Centre Committee comprising the coordinator, the secretary and the treasurer is in charge of enrolling learners at the Open Secondary School Centre. They are therefore responsible for controlling class sizes. The teachers confirmed this when they stated that they were never consulted on which or how many learners to enroll. They said it was the committee that used its own criteria to recruit learners at the centre leading to over enrolment most of the time. They were however quick to point out that the transitory nature of the learners made the control of enrolment problematic. They said that the learners were fond of enrolling from one open secondary school centre to another to evade paying tuition fees arrears that they may have.

The teachers and learners also said over enrolment compounded the problem of textbooks. They gave an example of Literature in English which they said needed few learners for the few available books to go round. They stated that contrary to that, in the case of the open secondary school centre, only learners in front and those with their own copies were able to follow the teacher closely because classes were over enrolled.

The findings were also in line with those for Munachonga (2003:31) whose study was on establishing the relationship between educational facilities and performance of Open Secondary School Centre learners that she referred to as Academic Production Unit (APU) pupils in high schools. She equally discovered that over enrolment affected performance of learners and that as a result of the large number of learners in these classes (as many as 100 learners per class at one centre in her case in 2001), teachers found it difficult to give individual attention and also gave limited exercises while the learners also stated that they lost concentration when it was hot.

Whilst the studies cited so far concur with my findings , the IOB (2008:23) to the contrary reveal that several studies done to measure the impact of the class size on learning achievement have indicated that there is no positive relationship between the two (class size and learning achievement). Despite this revelation, and the researcher not having measured the extent to which over enrolment affected performance of learners, what was observed in the classroom and the learners and teachers' own testimonies testify to the fact that in this case over enrolment affects learners' performance.

Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials

The other factor cited was lack of teaching and learning materials. The administrators, teachers and learners all mentioned this as another factor affecting performance of learners at the open secondary centre. While they all acknowledged that teaching and learning materials are not enough even at the regular school they were also in agreement that where textbooks were concerned the situation was worse at the open secondary centre in that usually only the teacher had a copy in each subject. They stated that, "the centre lacks learning and teaching aids to enhance teaching and learning. The learners have no access even to textbooks and just rely on the teachers. Even where they are available they are not enough because of the large number of learners in open secondary school centre classes."

The learners complained that they were much disadvantaged because unlike their friends at the regular school they had no library where they could research from. They said having no library meant having no access to what they termed 'rightful materials' to study thereby making it difficult for them to catch up. They stressed that, "not everything can be learnt in class. Yet we have no where to research from."

The teachers further added that textbooks at the open secondary centre when compared to those at the regular school were so limited that they made open secondary school learners entirely depend on teachers that were not always available for them. While acknowledging that the centre is supposed to buy textbooks, they alleged that the centre's inability to buy teaching and learning materials could be partly be blamed on learners whose payment of fees was erratic. They said most of them never paid in time while others completed payments when they came to collect their final grade 12 results.

In the classroom observations that the researcher made, only teachers used a copy of the textbooks at both the regular school and the open secondary centre except in Literature in English lessons. For Literature in English, at the open secondary centre the teacher had a copy and three learners had personal copies that they shared with other learners at three (3) different desks; one with six (6), another with five (5) and the other with four (4). The learners with novels and six (6) other learners without novels seated at desks near the teacher followed attentively with their eyes fixed on the teacher as she read through the story while the rest chatted amongst themselves in low voices as the teacher concentrated on reading to the learners herself.

It so happened that the teacher observed at the open secondary centre had no Literature in English at the regular school prompting the researcher to observe a different teacher who taught at the open secondary school centre the previous year to note the situation at the regular school also. At the regular school, the teacher had her own copy and the 42 learners present shared eight (8) other novels giving a learner-book ratio of six (6) to one (1). It was surprising during the observation that even those without novels were able to follow the lesson unlike at the open secondary centre. She revealed during the interview that they had 13 novels that were learnt out to learners according to the compounds where they resided to give them chance to read through the novels before they came for the lesson. During the lesson observations at both the regular

school and the open secondary centre none of the teachers used any teaching and learning material except the textbooks already allude to.

The non use of laboratories and laboratory equipment or apparatus at the open secondary school centre was also mentioned by teachers and learners as another aspect affecting performance of learners. The learners revealed that only grade 12s usually went to the laboratories at the regular school a few weeks before their final examinations. This, they said was just meant to orient them to the laboratory apparatus and rules. “Our teachers bring chemicals once in a while. Lack of laboratories denies us chance to carry out experiments like our friends at the regular school. We just learn of things like microscopes, beakers and so on but never see them. We just imagine how they look like,” they chuckled.

Mbozi (2008:129) in his findings also confirmed that limited teaching and learning materials affect learner performance. He revealed that the situation made teachers face difficulties in teaching as well as scheming in their preparations.

Limited Teacher-Learner Contact Time

Limited contact time between teachers and learners was another factor highlighted as affecting performance of learners at the open secondary school centre also. All the respondents agreed that the time that learners were with teachers at the centre when compared to that at the regular school was far less.

The teachers said as a result of the limited contact time they always failed to cover all the topics in the syllabi with open secondary school learners. “At the regular school where we have more time we struggle by using extra time in the afternoon to cover the syllabi. Imagine what becomes of the open secondary centre learners whose contact time is limited and fixed,” teachers lamented.

The learners at the open secondary centre said that they had friends and relatives at the regular school that they compare their work with. As a result they discovered that they had less work and notes in most subjects. They stated that despite a subject like Mathematics being difficult they only had it twice a week while their colleagues at the regular school had it everyday. They added that, “for instance this term ,in Mathematics we have only covered one topic, probability where

we are not yet even through, but the books of our friends at the regular school show that they have covered probability, vectors and statistics.”

They complained that this was worsened by teachers that always missed the first period everyday and the reduction of the length on the time table during the second term from 40 to 30 minutes. They explained that the periods were reduced to prevent them from knocking off when it was dark because at that time the sun set earlier than 17:30 hours.

The respondents’ sentiments are in line with the discrepancies noted from the comparison of timetables and data from learners’ exercise books from the regular school and the open secondary centre in tables 4, 5 and 6.

Table 4: Regular School Grade 12 Timetable Sample

PERIOD	1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8
DAY	07:20-08:00	08:00-08:40	08:40-09:20	09:20-10:00	10:00-10:40	10:20-11:00	11:00-11:40	11:40-12:20	12:20-13:00
MON	BIO	BIO	CHEM	ENG	B	P/ACC	R.E	MATHS	COMM
TUE	CHEM	CHEM	ENG	ENG	R	MATHS	MATHS	HIST	COMM
WED	P/ACC	P/ACC	BIO	BIO	E	HIST	ENG	MATHS	R.E
THU	MATHS	MATHS	P/ACC	PHY	A	HIST	R.E	ENG	ENG
FRI	PHY	PHY	MATHS	HIST	K	BIO	ENG	COMM	COMM

SOURCE: Regular School Master Timetable for 2008

Table 5: Open Secondary School Centre Grade 12 Timetable Sample

PERIOD	1	2	3	4		5	6
DAY	13:30-14:10	14:10-14:50	14:50-15:30	15:30-16:10	16:10-16:20	16:20-17:00	17:00-17:30
MON	GEO	GEO	R.E	BIO	B	BIO	LIT
TUE	CHEM	CHEM	LIT	LIT	R	MATHS	MATHS
WED	ENG	ENG	CHEM	PHY	E	PHY	COMM
THU	MATHS	MATHS	R.E	R.E	A	BIO	PHY
FRI	ENG	ENG	COMM	COMM	K	SPORTS	SPORTS

SOURCE: Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre Timetable for 2008

The timetables show that the regular school has eight (8) periods per day while the open secondary school centre has only six (6). They also reveal that lessons start at 07:20 hours and end at 13:00 hours (break inclusive) at the regular school and from 13:30 to 17:30 hours (break inclusive) at the open secondary school centre. This entails that leaving out 20 minutes for break the regular school learners have 5 hours 20 minutes contact time daily. As for the open secondary school centre learners, leaving out the 10 minutes for their break they remain with 3 hours 50 minutes contact time per day which is further reduced on Friday by 1 hour 20 minutes due to the periods dedicated to sports. The difference in contact time for learners at the regular school and those at the open secondary school centre is therefore 1 hour 30 minutes daily that adds to 6 hours 50 minutes accumulating to 8 hours 10 minutes on Friday (6 hours + 1 hour 20 minutes) in a week; thereby adding to about 32 hours 40 minutes in a month; approximately 98 hours in a term and 294 hours per year. This means that from grade 10 to examination time in October of their year in grade 12, grade 12s at the open secondary school centre when compared to those at the regular school would have been behind by 849 hours 20 minutes contact time. This translates into 35 days 9 hours 20 minutes or 1274 periods.

The implications of the gap in teacher-learner contact time were detected in the learners' exercise books checked. The findings were as indicated in table 6 below.

Table 6: Data from exercise books checked

SUBJECT	NUMBER OF PERIODS PER WEEK (CONTACT TIME)		NUMBER OF TOPIC COVERED		NUMBER OF EXERCISES					
					GIVEN		MARKED		UNMARKED	
	Regular	Open	Regular	Open	Regular	Open	Regular	Open	Regular	Open
Eng	7	4	-	-	34	26	30	24	4	2
Maths	7	4	36	13	72	32	52	26	20	7
Geo	4	2	22	12	6	3	3	2	3	1
Bio	5	3	20	18	5	0	4	0	1	0
Comm	4	3	11	9	1	0	1	0	0	0
Chem.	3	3	12	6	9	14	7	8	2	6

P/Acc	4	3	22	12	28	12	23	8	5	4
Chitonga	4	3	14	12	12	0	8	0	4	0
R.E	3	3	4	6	1	2	0	2	1	0
TOTAL	41	28								

SOURCE: Exercise books for 2008 learners at the regular and open secondary school centre

It is further revealed in table 6 that the open secondary learners that have less periods (contact time) are behind in the topics covered in all subjects except in Religious Education. This could be justified because the contact time in that subject at open secondary school is the same as that at the regular school.

The highlighted time loss only applies to a situation where teachers attend all lessons as timetabled. This indicates that with the cited absenteeism of teachers in this study the actual situation may be worse. The difference in contact time is so wide that it is apparent that less contact time between the learners and teachers affects the performance of the learners at the open secondary centre by the time they get to grade 12.

Poor Timing of Sessions

Another factor related to the teaching and learning cited was poor timing of the open secondary school sessions. The administrators and teachers stated that the time at which learners at the open secondary centre attended classes was contributing to their poor performance. They said that the timing was poor because the lessons came at a time when both the learners and teachers were tired. The learners confirmed that they did a lot of house chores before they came to school. Some said they drew water, cooked and swept houses and yards, worked in the gardens or maize fields. As a result most of them came to school tired and would doze and fail to concentrate when teachers were teaching. Some learners also said that because of learning in the afternoon they were usually given tasks of caring for their siblings or selling in the market and whenever their parents and guardians came late it made them either go to school late or completely miss lessons.

The Open Secondary School Committee added that due to the timing there were a lot of misgivings concerning the learning at the centre. They said the community and even parents to their learners considered them to be failures and therefore the support they tend to give to them

was less than what they gave to their other children attending similar regular school classes in the morning.

The learners said some of them were keeping themselves. That meant that during the morning they went round looking for 'piece works' to realise money for food, rentals for houses they were renting as well as school fees. They revealed that when they failed to find money particularly for food they never came to school. They narrated that even when they managed to come to school they were too tired to concentrate. At times they would be preoccupied with thinking of where they were to get their next meal, money for rentals and school fees from.

The teachers also said they were usually very tired by the time they finished teaching at the regular school to the extent that they fail to put up their best when they got to the open secondary centre. The learners confirmed this when they said it was clear that their teachers were usually tired in that at times even in class they showed signs of fatigue when instead of teaching they would ask a learner to write notes on their behalf while they sat down.

The learners also said as a result of learning in the afternoon they had no time to study in that in the morning they were given house chores to carry out and they were too tired to study when they got home in the evening. They stated that this was worsened by the fact that they had no supervised study time (prep) unlike the regular school learners that had it everyday.

From the given sentiments it is evident that the timing of the open secondary centre lessons (13:30 to 17:30 hours) affects the effectiveness of the teachers and the concentration of learners. The study carried out by Munachonga (2003:32) also revealed that the time of learning in open secondary centres was inappropriate in that "the learners were exposed to a lot of things in the morning before coming to school."

Limited and Poor Infrastructure

The learners that were once at the regular school, administrators and teachers revealed that the limited and in some cases poor and non availability of given infrastructure also affected the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre.

The Open Secondary School Committee said that the classrooms allocated to the centre were limited thereby making it difficult to decongest the over enrolled classes. They stated that this was in view of the high demand for grade 10 places.

The learners mentioned that having no classrooms of their own deprived them of adequate learning and studying time. They said they always had to wait till 13:30 hours when the owners (basic school learners) came out for them to learn only from 13:30 to 17:30 hours. They revealed that they were not able to study from school because the classrooms were occupied before 13:30 hours and were locked immediately at 17:30 hours.

Learners also mentioned poor water and toilet facilities as another factor affecting their performance. They complained that most of the time they never had any water to drink throughout their stay at the centre. They also said that the toilets were usually either dirty or locked most of the time. They said that this affected them in that it prompted most of them to dodge either to go and drink water or relieve themselves. They stated that in most occasions they never came back to learn because their homes were far from the open secondary centre.

As revealed limited and poor infrastructure affect teaching and learning and can therefore affect performance of learners at the open secondary school centre.

4.1.2 TEACHER RELATED FACTORS

There are various factors affecting performance of learners at the open secondary school centre that respondents mentioned that were more to do with teachers' activities. These were:

Lack of Teacher Preparations

One of the factors cited in this category was lack of teacher preparations. Teaching guidelines state that a high school teacher is supposed to prepare what he or she teaches. These preparations are in form of Schemes of Work, Records of Work and Lesson Plans to guide his or her teaching (MOE:2001).

None of the teachers observed had any teaching preparations for open secondary classes. When asked why they do not prepare any schemes of work, records of work and lesson plans for the open secondary school classes, teachers claimed that it was because they were teaching the same

grades and subjects at the regular school. They stated that, “we don’t see it necessary because we are teaching the same things at the regular school.” However, their teaching files revealed that they were not making adequate preparations even at the regular school. Of the 23 teachers under this study only 13 availed their teaching files for checking which were all for the regular school. The rest claimed that their files were not in order and needed more time to work on them. The files checked had preparations of some kind; six (6) teachers had schemes of work and records of work for all subjects they were teaching ; two (2) had schemed for only one (1) of the three (3) grades they were teaching; three (3) had schemes of work only and; one (1) had records of work but no schemes of work. Of all these teachers only one (1) teacher who happened to have come to the school in 2007 had lesson plans for the same year (2007) but not for 2008.

In addition, a comparison of the classes the teachers taught at the regular school to those they taught at the open secondary school centre showed that not all teachers taught the same grade and subjects at both institutions. The 2008 class allocations revealed that two (2) of the teachers are teaching subjects that they are not teaching at the regular school while four (4) of them are allocated senior classes (grades 10 to 12) at the open secondary centre when they only teach junior classes at the regular school. This revealed that these teachers do not prepare for the classes they teach at the open secondary school centre at all, a factor that can affect the performance of learners.

Teacher Absenteeism

The administrators, learners and parents mentioned teacher absenteeism as another factor affecting performance of learners at the open secondary school centre. They said that the teachers were absent from their classes most of the time. The researcher also noted that during the period of research at least one class each day was without a teacher in a given lesson.

Learners that were at the regular school for their grade 8 and 9 narrated that even at the regular school teachers would be absent but that was once in a while. They claimed that teachers had made absenteeism a trend at the open secondary school centre. They stated that when teachers were absent at the regular school they always left work but it was not always the case at the open secondary school centre. They added that when a teacher was absent the monitor at the regular school informed the deputy head teacher who ensured that teachers that might have been

lingering around were brought to class and if the teacher was out a replacement would be found. They said at the open secondary school centre the monitor also informed the open secondary school committee members that just told them to study. They complained that, “despite paying more money than the regular school learners, teachers never come to teach us in some subjects.” They said that they were behind in all subjects. They stated that most of the time the teachers just send notes that their fellow learners would write for them on the board. They said when teachers sent work they still insisted on signing in the teacher attendance registers that they were present. The learners claimed that using a learner to write notes was an indirect punishment on that learner in that after writing on the board he or she also had to later find time to copy notes in his or her exercise books. They revealed that most of them were usually behind where notes were concerned.

The learners further charged that the problem of teacher absenteeism was as a result of the coordinator and the other open learning committee members failing to control the other teachers because they were friends and play mates. They stated that it was evident from the way they addressed each other, “*mwanabaama* (my mother’s child), *mwanokwesu* (my brother or sister), *abena* (colleague), *boyi* (my friend).” The learners claimed that there was no way that friends could control or discipline each other.

To stress the point one administrator recalled an incident when learners from the open secondary school centre almost rioted in protest because of teachers that were always absent. He said the learners matched to the regular school to register their plight. They complained that teachers never came for lessons and most of the time just sent notes for the learners to copy. He stated that despite that move teacher absenteeism still remained a problem at the open secondary school centre.

The records obtained from the teachers’ attendance registers for two classes at the regular school when compared to two others at the open secondary school centre in a period of two weeks confirmed that teachers absented themselves at both institutions. However, contrary to what the respondents said, more teachers were absent at the regular school than at open secondary school centre.

The results are shown in table 7 below:

Table 7: Teacher Absenteeism in two weeks for two classes

CLASS REGISTER CHECKED	TEACHER ABSENTEEISM	
	REGULAR	OPEN
10 A	37	11
11 A	48	34
TOTAL	85	45

SOURCE: 2008 Teachers’ attendance registers at the regular and open secondary school centre

*The letters (‘A’) used are not for ranking but simply for distinguishing one class from another.

The rest of the registers at open secondary school centre had been collected by the treasurer to determine the teachers’ wages for that month and was out of town during the time of data collection while monitors at the regular school had misplaced the other registers.

All the same the fact still remains that teachers absent themselves from lessons at the open secondary school centre as well and that can affect the performance of learners.

Uncommitted Teachers

Uncommitted teachers were also a factor that administrators and learners mentioned. They said that was characterized by teachers absenting themselves from lessons even when not committed. The learners said that such teachers; would be seen around seated outside chatting with friends and when told that it were their turn they would just promise that they would come and always came late for lessons. They said that in some instances such teachers just send notes and were very eager to sign in the teachers’ attendance registers to indicate that they had taught. The learners also said that the uncommitted teachers were fond of telling them that “here we just give you 10% of what you ought to learn. Read on your own if you don’t understand come and see me. But when we see them they tell us to pay extra money for private tuition.” They added that some of the alleged teachers were members of the open secondary school centre who never attended to their classes but simply concentrated on collecting tuition fees from learners.

The administrators and learners said such teachers contributed to the poor performance of learners at the open secondary school centre because learners were always very behind in their subjects.

Mobile Phone Disturbances

Another factor that learners mentioned was teachers’ mobile phone disturbances. The learners said that their lessons were on most occasions distracted by teachers’ mobile phones. They said the teachers at times stopped teaching to go and answer phone calls at times for five (5) or more minutes. They complained that this affected them because they lost learning time and that some of the teachers usually forgot what they were teaching and spent time trying to find out from the learners what they had been teaching before answering their phones. They added that at times these teachers left classes to go and attend to issues that came up from those phones. They said that the teachers would just say, “Sorry guys I have to attend to something very urgent. They would also say we will continue from here next time. A thing they never do. They just start new topics the next time they came.”

4.1.3 LEARNER RELATED FACTORS

Learner Absenteeism

One factor cited under learner related factors was learners’ absenteeism. The learners admitted that the allegation by teachers that absenteeism of learners was quite rampant and was also responsible for their poor performance at the open secondary school centre was true. They said learners that absent themselves from classes missed out on lessons and were usually behind in most of the subjects. However, the learners attributed learner absenteeism to a lot of reasons, one reason they advanced was that some learners just had a negative attitude towards education. Hence, them not caring to come for lessons. They also cited teacher absenteeism which they said made learners see no need to come for lessons at the centre where they would find no teachers. They also alleged that as a result of teacher absenteeism many learners opted to dodge from classes. They added that some learners missed lessons when they were chased by the open secondary school centre committee treasurer to go and bring tuition fees.

Another factor that learners cited was long distance from learners’ homes to the open secondary school centre. They said that some of them stayed as far as 20 kilometres away from the centre.

As such they decided to rest a day or two (2) in a week when they felt tired or their bicycles had faults. These learners were also said to be dodging the last period of the day to avoid reaching home at night fall. They equally came late and ended up missing some lessons. In addition, they said these learners usually got so tired that by the time they reached the open secondary school centre they ended up dosing in class thereby missing out when teachers were teaching in most subjects.

Another factor that the teachers said was promoting learner absenteeism was over age learners. They said they were unable to force such learners to attend classes the way they forced the boys at the regular school. They added that some of them were married with children and therefore had responsibilities that kept them from lessons most of the time.

The observations revealed the learner absenteeism as indicated in tables 8 and 9 below:

Table 8: Learner Absenteeism in Regular School Classes Observed

CLASS OBSERVED	NUMBER ENROLLED	NUMBER PRESENT ON DAY OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER ABSENT
10 A	45	32	13
10A	45	43	02
10C	44	43	01
11A	48	39	09
11B	47	41	06
11C	48	38	10
12A	49	36	13
12B	46	46	00
12C	47	41	06
12C	47	44	03
TOTAL	466	403	63

SOURCE: Regular School Registers and Classroom Observations

*The letters ('A, B and C') used are not for ranking but simply for distinguishing one class from another.

Table 9: Learner Absenteeism in Open Secondary Centre Classes Observed

CLASS OBSERVED	NUMBER ENROLLED	NUMBER PRESENT ON DAY OF OBSERVATION	NUMBER ABSENT
10 A	75	51	24
10B	75	55	20
11A	84	46	38
11A	84	49	35
11B	94	61	33
11C	78	39	39
12A	75	53	22
12B	74	48	26
12C	77	49	28
TOTAL	716	451	265

SOURCE: Open Secondary Centre End of Term 1 Examination Mark Sheets and Classroom Observations

*The letters (‘A, B and C’) used are not for ranking but simply for distinguishing one class from another.

Table 8 shows that a total of 63 learners at the regular school were absent from 10 classes compared to 265 learners at the open secondary centre from nine (9) classes. On average seven (7) learners were absent per each of the days during classroom observations at the regular school compared to 29 learners per day for the open secondary centre as shown in table 9.

Use of Vernacular Language

Another factor that teachers and learners cited was learners’ use of vernacular languages. They said the use of local languages like Chitonga and Chinyanja robbed the learners of an opportunity to practice in English, a language of instruction in which all the other subjects except Chitonga in the district are taught and examined (MOE, 1996:39).

The teachers said the effect of the use of the local language was vivid amongst the learners because most of them had poor sentence construction in both written and spoken English even in

grade 12 classes. They added that it also resulted in learners not actively participating during lessons.

During classroom observations in grade 12 classes the researcher noted that teachers concentrated on a few learners that seemed faster than others and when they tried to point at some other learners they remained mute and looked down in most instances but the same learners would be chatting in low voices with friends in the local language whilst the lessons went on. That in a way confirmed the teachers' allegations that some learners were not able to express themselves in English even at grade 12 level due to constant use of the vernacular languages.

4.1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Lack of Support for the Learners

One factor cited in this category was lack of support for open secondary learners. It came to light in this research study that some of the learners, particularly those from rural areas who had qualified to boarding schools but their parents and guardians failed to raise boarding school fees for them, rented some houses and fend for themselves.

The teachers and learners revealed that these learners faced a lot of problems in raising money for food, rentals and school fees through piece works in people's homes in the morning before going for lessons. They said that even those that were supported by their parents and guardians usually had to supplement equally through piece works. They added that as a result they got tired, doped and failed to concentrate during lessons.

The teachers stated that some of the female learners resorted to prostitution to make ends meet, a factor that all the learners interviewed disputed. The learners, however, agreed with teachers that most male learners in that category usually engaged in bad vices like beer drinking and smoking.

The administrators, learners and teachers said that such learners had less time to study in that some of the houses they rented had no electricity and because they spent most of the time doing piece works.

The learners also revealed that some of these learners that are supported by their parents or guardians often had to go out for several weeks to collect school fees or food for use in town.

The learners added that such learners were so much affected because teachers were fond of raising tuition fees without adequate notice to parents and guardians. They said that, “our friends would come with amounts that they paid the previous term only to be sent back to go and look for extra money.” The learners said as a result these learners were always behind and rarely did well in class.

The open secondary committee lamented that bursaries were offered to the learners at the regular school but not to those at the open secondary school centre that are more vulnerable. “Most of the learners at the open secondary school centre are orphans and vulnerable but the learners support bursary policies of the Ministry of Education (M.O.E), Forum for African Women Educationalists in Zambia (FAWEZA) do not support open secondary school learners. This worsens their plight.”

The teachers added that the open secondary school centres were not supported the way the regular secondary schools were. They said the centre was entirely dependent on tuition fees paid by learners which were not enough. They alleged that this greatly affected the operations of the centre. The teachers said lack of government funding made the open secondary school centres fail to buy teaching and learning materials.

The findings in this study reveal that lack of support has an adverse effect on the learning of open secondary school learners.

4.1.5 ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

Poor Monitoring and Supervision

The first factor cited in this category was poor monitoring and supervision. All the respondents linked the poor performance of open secondary school learners to lack of effective monitoring and supervision. The guidelines that the researcher availed to open secondary school centres in January 2007 outlined that in the case of the mission run centres, administrators at both the regular school and the host school were supposed to monitor and supervise activities at the open secondary school centres. They were supposed to work with the open secondary school centre committee.

However, all the head teachers and deputy head teachers admitted during interviews that they were not monitoring and supervising the activities at the open secondary school centre. They said that it was problematic because of the dual administration (administration at the regular school where the teachers are based and at the basic schools hosting the open secondary school centre).

The administration at the regular secondary school said they faced problems in monitoring and supervising the centre because it was located far from the regular school and that the managing agency did not want anything to do with the centre in that they were against its establishment from the onset. They said that the managing agency, however, left the day-to-day running of the school to the school administration entailing that monitoring and supervision by the regular school administration was possible.

The basic school administrators on the other hand said that the teachers at the open secondary school centre seemed not to be responsive to their demands for adherence to set teaching and learning standards. They said that was evident from the teachers' resistance to avail their teaching files and enrolment records for marking and verification respectively. Administrators at the host basic schools further added that they found it difficult to control enrolment in that even *when the open secondary school centre committee was told not to enrol learners they still* secretly went ahead to do so. Coincidentally, the open secondary school centre committee could not avail any registers to the researcher claiming that the class teachers were always saying they were still looking for them.

The administrators and learners said that the coordinator was unable to control other teachers because they were friends. The respondents said the coordinator lacked authority to control fellow teachers. "How can a class teacher control other teachers some of whom are senior to him or her in service or appointments as is the case for Heads of Departments engaged there," the administrators wondered. The learners that did their grade 8 and 9 at the regular secondary school and teachers revealed that the monitoring and supervision was very strict at the regular school but very poor at the open secondary school centre.

The administrators also mentioned poor class allocation as another factor affecting performance at the open secondary school centre. They said that the committee admitted any teacher without considering the qualifications and experience that they had. They said that in reference to

teachers teaching subjects that they were not teaching at the regular school and the involvement of teachers that were newly deployed.

The learners also complained of one trainee teacher assigned to teach them. It so happened that the same teacher was teaching whilst we had a Focus Group Discussion with the learners. They concluded that, “he just tells stories as usual. There is no way learners can make so much noise if a teacher is in class. How can they give us someone who is still learning how to teach?” they asked.

The class allocations showed that one (1) teacher was indeed a trainee teacher, three (3) were newly deployed and hardly a year in service, two (2) were teaching subjects they were not teaching at the regular secondary school while four (4) were allocated senior classes (grade 10 to 12) at the open secondary school centre when they only taught junior classes (grade 8 and 9) at the regular school.

From these revelations it was clear that the monitoring and supervision is poor at the open secondary school centre. That can affect the teaching and learning and eventually the performance of the open secondary learners at grade 12.

Lack of a Parent Teachers’ Association (PTA)

The administrators, parents and learners said apart from ineffective monitoring and supervision lack of a Parent Teachers’ Association (PTA) was also causing poor performance of learners at the open secondary school centre. They said this was because without a PTA, teachers are never accountable for the performance of the learners.

The parents and guardians complained that because there was no PTA in place they had no forum to enquire from teachers on the performance of their children at the open secondary school centre. They said they had neither a representation at the regular school nor at the host basic schools.

As revealed operating without a PTA is affecting the development of the centre and the performance of the learners in that the teachers are not accountable to teaching learners at the open secondary school centre.

Poor Learner Assessment

Another factor that came out distinctly was poor learner assessment. As observed in this study more exercises were given and marked at the regular school than at the open secondary school centre as indicated in table 6. The parents, learners and administrators added that the end of term examination results were always given to the learners very late. They said that the examination report forms were given so late that they were meaningless by the time parents and guardians received them. At the time of the interview in May, a month after the previous term's examinations had been written, the report forms were just being distributed to learners.

The learners added that the poor assessment at the centre made it difficult for them to monitor their performance. They also complained about having only one major assessment in a term (the end of term examinations). They said that as a result of the poor assessment they got into grade 12 without knowing formats on how examinations are set in various subjects. Eventually they failed to answer questions as expected and thus, leading to poor performance.

The End of Term One examination results for grades 11 and 12 in table 10 below generally show that the learners at both institutions did not do well but the performance of learners at the regular school is still far better than that of learners at the open secondary school centre. Critical analysis of the results shows that the number of subjects tends to increase the chances of learners performing well. As shown in table10, the class that performed very well was a grade 11 class at the regular school where 11 subjects were examined. The results show that where the number of subjects increased to more than six (6) subjects a class at the open secondary school centre was able to have at least one learner passing. In the table only two open secondary school classes were examined in all the nine (9) subjects. On the other hand only one class was examined in less than nine (9) subjects at the regular school. As such the passing percentage for all the regular school classes, though low, is far better than that for open secondary school classes. In fact the classes where nine (9) subjects were examined at the open secondary school centre recorded the highest percentages of four (4) and eight (8) though still very low. This therefore still reveals that open secondary school learners are usually examined in fewer subjects thereby reducing their chances of performing well. It also confirms that assessment at the open secondary school centre is poorly done.

Table 10: Performance of grade 11 and 12 Regular and Open Secondary School Learners in term one

GRADE		NUMBER OF SUBJECTS EXAMINED		NUMBER SAT		NUMBER PASSED		NUMBER FAILED			
		REG	OPEN	REG	OPEN	REG	OPEN	REG	OPEN	REG	OPEN
11	A	11	09	47	84	37	07	10	77	79	08
	B	07	06	48	94	03	00	45	94	06	00
	C	----	02	----	78	----	----	----	78	---	00
TOTAL				95	256	40	07	55	249	44	03
12	A	09	07	49	75	22	01	27	74	45	01
	B	09	09	46	74	21	03	25	71	46	04
	C	09	08	47	77	08	01	39	76	17	01
TOTAL				142	226	51	05	91	221	36	02

SOURCE: 2008 End of Term One Examination Results Schedules

Lack of Selection Criteria for Learners

The other factor mentioned was lack of selection criteria for learners admitted to the open secondary school centre. This factor was mentioned by administrators and teachers. They said that the fact that the centre admitted any grade 9 that got a school certificate from among those that were not selected by regular secondary and high schools meant that the learners picked were of what they term ‘low calibre.’ They therefore alleged that the resulting poor performance was not a surprise. According to the teachers, “the fact that they are not picked during the provincial and district selections for grade 10 learners entails that those we select are the worst learners. They are in short, ‘failures.’ The ‘material’ (learners) we have at the centre is of low quality.

This is evidence in that they grasp things differently from the ‘cream’ we have at the regular school. The centre is there to serve stranded individuals who have no boarding places.”

The teachers and administrators said that as a result of having no selection criteria at the centre there were cases where even those that did not get grade 9 certificates were admitted. This meant the learners rewriting grade 9 final examinations before they got to grade 12 in that the grade 9 certificate is a pre-requisite for one to write the grade 12 final examinations. They claimed that as a result of that the learners have low self esteem that in turn it made them feel inferior to compete favourably with regular school learners.

The teachers, however, stated that some of the learners performed very well. In line with this the teachers made mention of a former male student who was doing his second year at the University of Zambia in the school of Natural Sciences. In addition, the committee members and administrators cited five other cases where learners at the hosting basic schools that had obtained boarding school marks but opted to learn from the centre because their parents or guardians could not raise boarding school fees.

The study revealed that the criteria for selecting grade 10s changed year after year, from one Open Secondary School Committee to another. As revealed in this study, at this centre, teachers just take turns to be committee members every year and no regular school administrators are involved in the exercise. Whilst teachers that were former committee members (captured in this study) and the current committee said handovers were usually done from one committee to another the current committee’s ignorance on the existence of the open secondary school guidelines given to the previous committee in 2007 showed that the record keeping was problematic at the centre.

4.2 FACTORS ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE REGULAR SCHOOL

The factors discussed in this section are selection criteria for learners, availability of time for supervised study, availability of own infrastructure, availability of textbooks, strict monitoring and supervision and availability of a Parent Teachers’ Association (PTA).

4.2.1 Selection Criteria for Learners

Administrators and teachers revealed that the selection criteria available at the regular school enable the school to have high performing learners that testify to the prevailing good performance at grade 12. They said that at the regular school it was unlike at the open secondary school centre where learners were picked anyhow resulting in the centre selecting even learners that had failed in grade 9. The administrators stated that what seems to matter at the open secondary centre was the ability for the would be learners to pay the required tuition fees. The teachers added that there was no criterion and it all depended on the open secondary school centre committee in charge that particular year. The respondents said this was evident from the prevailing poor performance at the centre.

4.2.2 Availability of Time for Supervised Study (preparation time)

The regular school has designated 14:00 to 15:30 hours for supervised study (prep). Learners that were formerly at the regular school in their grade 8 and 9 said during supervised study time learners at the regular school had an opportunity to study in preparation for their examinations. These learners and teachers revealed that the supervised study (prep) time also enabled teachers to catch up with their classes on topics where they were behind. The learners said that the supervised study time gave an opportunity to regular school learners from homes without electricity to have more time to study from school.

The administrators and teachers said the story was different at the open secondary school centre. There was no time designated for supervised study (prep) time and as a result the learners had no teacher supervised study time to prepare for their examinations. They further said that, to make matters worse the learners at the open secondary school centre usually attended to house chores or engaged in piece works in the morning before going to school that made them too busy to have time to study at home during the day. They added that the open secondary school centre learners mostly lived in houses without electricity that made it difficult to study in the night.

4.2.3 Availability of own Infrastructure

The open secondary school learners mentioned that the regular school learners who had their own classrooms had an advantage over them in that it enabled them to have adequate time to

learn and study. They said for them they depended on the classrooms for the basic school learners and that as such they had to wait until the owners came out around 13:00 hours. They lamented that this left them with limited time to learn and study.

The administrators, teachers and learners also cited laboratories as a facility available that helped to enhance the performance of learners at the regular school. They said these enabled learners at the regular school to carry out experiments that helped them understand what they were learning. Learners at the open secondary school centre said when their friends used laboratories they were able to see and use chemicals and laboratory equipment that made them prepare adequately for the examinations. On the other hand, they said that lack of laboratories made their learning in science not effective in that they just learnt things theoretically without practice. As such they said understanding of concepts was difficult. Whilst their friends touched and used laboratory equipment and chemicals they only heard and imagined how they looked like.

The learners and teachers also mentioned that the availability of a library at the regular school made a difference for the learners at the regular school in that they were able to use it to research further on things they learnt in class. The open secondary school learners complained that in their case they had none and entirely depended on the teachers' notes or work taught in class. They said that worse still teachers mocked them that, "what we give you is only 10%, 90% should be your personal effort. Here we just give you guidelines."

It is clear from these revelations that the availability of own infrastructure helps the regular school learners to learn better than the open secondary school learners hence the difference in their performance.

4.2.4 Availability of Textbooks

The administrators, teachers and learners said that the regular school had textbooks while the open secondary school centre had none. They said textbooks enhanced the teaching and learning at the regular school in that the learners were able to borrow and use them during their lessons and studies. This made them read further and practice more exercises in most of the subjects thereby making the regular school learners more prepared for examinations than the open secondary school learners.

This indicates that at the open secondary school centre where only the teachers had copies of textbooks borrowed from the regular school learners have no further reading materials and are therefore poorly prepared for the examinations hence their poor performance.

4.2.5 Strict Monitoring and Supervision

The teachers and learners that were once at the regular school revealed that, unlike the open secondary school centre, the regular school had a strict head teacher and deputy head teacher that were able to monitor, supervise and control teachers. They said this prompted the teachers to avail themselves in classes. The learners said this was unlike at the open secondary school centre where most of the teachers absented themselves but the open secondary school centre committee did nothing to control the situation. The teachers confirmed that at the regular school the deputy head teacher put up notices of teachers that missed their periods on the notice board in the staffroom as a way of summoning them to his office where they were cautioned unlike at the open secondary school centre.

4.2.6 Availability of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA)

The administrators and parents also cited the existence of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) at the regular school as an additional institution that helped in keeping teachers' activities in check. They said through PTA meetings parents and guardians had an opportunity to raise their concerns about several issues about their children's education including performance. They revealed that the non existence of a PTA at the open secondary school centre made teachers not to mind about the performance of learners there. The administrators added that this situation made parents wonder among the regular school and the two basic schools to try and solve their children's problems, which they said was usually difficult.

4.3 MEASURES FOR IMPROVING PERFORMANCE IN OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL CENTRES

The respondents in this study agreed that while there are a lot of factors causing the difference in performance between learners at the regular school and the open secondary school centre measures can be put in place to bridge the gap. In view of this they suggested that factors that enhance performance at the regular school should be availed at the open secondary school centre.

To begin with they said strict monitoring and supervision should be put in place in form of appointing individuals that can be able to control fellow teachers. The learners in particular suggested the appointment of an individual they termed “a strong head teacher who would make sure that teachers came to class all the time.”

Administrators and teachers suggested that the government needs to put up laboratories and libraries for open secondary school centres running in basic schools. They said the laboratories would promote effective teaching and learning of sciences while libraries would give learners a chance to read further. In view of this they suggested that giving small grants to the centres would help in the purchase of chemicals and textbooks.

All the respondents suggested that the teacher-learner contact time needed to be increased though they could not agree on how it would be done looking at the available limited learning time. Another suggestion they gave was to have a selection criteria for learners so that those selected for open secondary school classes are not failures but learners that are able to compete favourably with the regular school learners. It was also suggested that a Parents Teachers’ Association be established so that the teachers are made accountable for teaching learners at the open secondary school centre.

4.4 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This research study has revealed that when compared to the regular school ones, the learners at the open secondary school centre are very much disadvantaged in terms of education provision. Hence, their poor performance at grade 12 level. The factors affecting the performance of the open secondary school learners noted include the poor teaching and learning environment, learners, teachers, socio-economic and administrative factors.

The findings are summarized in the table displayed below:

Table 11: Summary Table of Findings

SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT	REGULAR SCHOOL	OPEN SCHOOL	SECONDARY
Toilets	Clean and ever open	Dirty and usually locked	
Classrooms	Own classrooms and used all day	Rented, used for 4 hours only	

Library	Available and open to learners	None
Laboratories	Available and used by learners	None. Only used during final examinations
Textbooks	-Available to teachers and learners -Copies learnt to learners	-One copy of each available to each teacher -No copies learnt to learners
Monitoring and supervision	Strict	Not strict
Class sizes	Normal	Over enrolled
Parent Teachers' Association	In place	Not in place
Learner assessment	Good	Poor
Learner absenteeism	Low	High
Teacher absenteeism	High	Low
Teachers' teaching files	Incomplete	Non existent
Timing of sessions	Good	Poor
Teacher-learner contact time	6 hours daily	3 hours 50 minutes daily
Learner selection criteria	Centrally selected using boarding school cut off point	Depends on open secondary school committee in charge
Financiers	Government, learners	Learners
Supervised study time (prep)	Available	Not available
Language spoken by learners at school	English	Vernacular

The factors related to poor teaching and learning environment were cited as over enrolment, limited teacher-learner contact time, lack of teaching and learning materials and limited and poor infrastructure. The outlined factors were said to be making open secondary school learners lag behind and eventually fail to cover the syllabi by the time they write examinations in grade 12. The lack of these materials also made the learners entirely depend on the teacher.

The learner related factors had to do with learner absenteeism and use of vernacular language. These were said to be affecting performance of open secondary school learners because they made learners lag behind and not practice use of English, the language in which all subjects except local languages were taught and examined. The factors to do with the administration of

open secondary school centre included lack of monitoring and supervision, lack of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA), poor assessment and lack of learner selection criteria. These factors led to the poor performance of open secondary school learners in that they made teachers not to be committed to work as well as end up selecting learners of low calibre.

The teacher related factors mentioned included teacher absenteeism, lack of teacher preparations, uncommitted teachers and teachers' mobile phone disturbances. These factors made learners lose out on time and in the long run made them lag behind and also failed to complete the syllabi. These factors therefore disadvantage the learners and make them not ready to write the final examination in grade 12.

The socio-economic factors mentioned were lack of financial and material support for the learners and the open secondary school centre from government and parents and guardians that has led to learners keeping themselves as well as fending for themselves. In turn, this makes the learners miss lessons and become too tired to concentrate in class after doing piece works to get money for tuition fees, house rentals and food. It has also led to the open secondary school centre lacking textbooks, laboratories and a library to enhance teaching and learning.

The findings also revealed that the presence of a selection criteria for learners, supervised study time (prep), own infrastructure, textbooks, strict monitoring and supervision and a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) enhances teaching and learning at the regular school. It is further highlighted that extension of these factors to the open secondary school centre can help bridge the gap in performance between learners at the regular school and the open secondary school centre.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The discussions in this chapter centred on the factors affecting the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre, the factors enhancing the performance of learners in regular schools and measures that can help bridge the gap in performance between regular and open secondary school learners.

5.1 FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE IN OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The discussions are grouped under teaching and learning, teacher, learner, socio-economic and administration related factors.

5.1.1 TEACHING AND LEARNING FACTORS

Over enrolment

The recommended class size at high school (grade 10 to 12) is 40 (MOE: 1997:56). This clearly reveals that having an average enrolment of 78 learners per class, the classes at the open secondary school centre are over enrolled. It is almost double the recommended class size.

As revealed over enrolment affects the teaching and learning process that could in the long run affect the overall performance of learners at the open secondary school centre. Lemmer (2003:83) is in agreement that larger class sizes affect teaching and learning. He states that, "teachers believe that the quality of their interaction with learners decline with an increase in class size." This is true to what was observed in open secondary school classes. Teachers concentrated on fast learners and disregarded slow learners completely in some classes. The teachers' inability to master the learners' names can also be attributed to over enrolment and this affects how the teacher relates and eventually interacts with learners in class. This makes it difficult for the teacher to monitor the performance of the learners. It is also evident that the teachers do not offer individual help to learners.

The inability of teachers to give and mark more work entails that the learners have less practice in answering questions which is a means of preparing them to answer final examination

questions. This also reveals that most errors that learners tend to make are not corrected but carried with them to their final examinations in grade 12. Hence, the resulting poor results.

The lack of control on the enrolment is an indicator of poor monitoring and supervision by the regular school where the learners eventually write their grade 12 final examination as well as the basic schools that house the open secondary school centre. On the other hand, the fact that the enrolment records on the ground of 702 learners differs from the record of 600 learners submitted to the office reveals dishonestness on the part of the committee running the centre. The discrepancy on the enrolment which was alien even to the researcher who happens to be the custodian of open secondary school activities in the district reveals that the type of monitoring by the district is not effective to give a true picture of what is really obtaining on the ground in open secondary school centres.

It is apparent from the above arguments that over enrolment is a factor affecting the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre.

Lack of Teaching and Learning Materials

The findings revealed that the limited textbooks, none use of laboratories and teaching and learning aids affect the teaching and learning in open secondary school centres that eventually affect the performance of the learners in grade 12. According to MOE (1996:40) the poor performance at the open secondary school centre is the expected result in that lack of and non use of teaching and learning materials is associated with poor quality education. As stated:

Quality education requires the availability and use of textbooks and other materials. Without these aids to the learning process, effective teaching and learning in the modern sense cannot take place. Suitable materials enable pupils to acquire and apply knowledge, to learn at their own pace and access their own progress.

For sure lack of teaching and learning materials affects the performance of learners in the open secondary school classes in that it limits their sources of acquiring more knowledge on topics covered and the way they understand concepts during lessons. In view of this it is prudent to state that the non use of teaching and learning materials and equipment at the open secondary

school centre as discovered in this research study therefore justifies the resultant poor performance of the learners there.

Limited Teacher-Learner Contact Time

The fewer topics covered and exercises given to open secondary school centre learners when compared to those at the regular school also indicate that the limited contact time limits the amount of work that teachers cover with learners at the open secondary school centre in their quest to prepare them for examinations.

This is therefore an indicator that the teachers never cover the syllabi with these learners in that the time allocated is inadequate. Due to this limited time the open secondary school learners are never ready for the examinations by the time they get to grade 12. This eventually affects the learners' performance in the final examinations. This thereby leads to their poor performance.

In table 6 the learners at the open secondary school centre were behind in terms of topics covered but ahead in Religious Education where they had the same number of periods with their colleagues at the regular school. This is proof that given the same number of periods (teacher-learner contact time) per subject with their regular school counterparts open secondary school learners are likely to cover the same number or more topics and thereby increase their chances of performing well.

In support of these findings, the national policy on education in Zambia stipulates that the amount of time learners spent in organized learning activities has a strong bearing on how much is learnt and subsequently the ultimate academic performance. It adds that it is vital that the maximum amount of school time (in the case of senior classes 340 minutes or more per day) needs to be used for teaching and learning and that the classroom time needs to be used efficiently and effectively to result in good learner performance (MOE, 1996: 42). However, the policy guidelines according to MOE (1997:28) recommend that the time allocation of 240 minutes per day for open secondary classes is in conflict with the recommended time for senior classes of 340 minutes per day. In view of this limited time and the effects highlighted in this study this policy shows no regard for the plight of open secondary school learners.

Since the time limitation is a policy matter there is need to re-look at this policy so that it does not disadvantage but enhance teaching and learning in open secondary school centres.

Poor Timing of Sessions

It is clear from the findings that the timing of the open secondary school teaching and learning sessions is poor. This is in view of the effects that it has on the teachers as well as the learners.

While it may be argued that the regular school learners also do home chores the fact is that they do them after school while open secondary school learners perform theirs before they go to school. They therefore get to school tired and are unable to concentrate during lessons. In addition, the fact that these sessions start at 13:30 hours entail that the teachers also come tired, having had a full session at the regular school. This is evidence that no good performance can result either from the teachers or the learners.

Bearing in mind that open secondary school learners are of average performance, as revealed in this study, the researcher considers subjecting these learners to teachers that are already tired, cruel and inhuman.

There is no doubt that this situation is perpetuating teacher as well as learner absenteeism. The attendance for most learners may be for formality and may be for the sake of money on the part of teachers. Poor timing therefore affects teaching and learning which in turn affect the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre.

Limited and Poor Infrastructure

Whilst each of the open secondary school class is assigned a classroom at the basic schools, the classrooms are only used for four (4) hours. This is unlike at the regular school where the learners are assigned classrooms and use them the whole day. This situation affects open secondary school learners because it deprives them of adequate learning and study time.

The lack of laboratories at the open secondary school centre makes learners learn scientific concepts theoretically only. This makes it difficult for them to grasp the concepts. As a result they lack adequate preparations for examinations and end up performing poorly in examinations.

The fact that open secondary school learners have no access to library facilities entails that despite their limited contact time with the teachers and lack of textbooks they have no opportunity to read further to supplement the teachers' notes or study on topics that teachers may have no time to cover. This makes them be ill prepared to write examinations.

The erratic water supply and poor toilet facilities promote learner absenteeism in that learners have to go and fetch water and relieve themselves elsewhere. Apart from dodging these learners are likely to absent themselves even when they have minor ailments that require them to visit the toilet. This was evident from the high rate of learner absenteeism at the open secondary school centre.

The situation portrayed in this study reveals that the limited and poor infrastructure contributes to the poor performance of the learner at the open secondary school centre.

5.1.2 TEACHER RELATED FACTORS

Lack of Teacher Preparations

The schemes of work, records of work and lesson plans constitute very important working documents for the teacher. The policy guidelines consider them to be one of the learning and teaching resources. They are also listed as one of the teacher's performance Key Result Areas (KRA) in the teacher's job description (MOE, 1997: 72; MOE, 2001).

Preparation of the stated documents is a means of planning how to cover the syllabi in given subjects in that it involves dividing the work outlined in the syllabi into teachable topics that are then apportioned according to the available teaching time. It is also a means of outlining instructional objectives against which learners are to be assessed.

The lack of preparations of the given documents therefore entails that the teachers do not set any targets and prescribed measures of attaining them. It also indicates that completion of the syllabi in their teaching is not a priority. This therefore leaves no doubt that the type of teaching that

goes on at the centre that the researcher terms ‘teaching from without’ affects the performance of learners. In fact MOE (1997: 72) presents the preparations of the same documents as a means of ensuring the effective performance of the curriculum. As such lack of teacher preparations inhibits the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre.

In view of the importance of the documents in question, one wonders what teachers at Mazabuka open secondary school centre teach because even schemes that outline topics to be covered are not prepared. It then makes sense as to why one administrator referred to the activities taking place at the centre as “playing games.” This was also confirming the allegation by one teacher that, “at the centre it is free for all. Teachers there even opt to teach subjects they are not very conversant with. Such teachers do not dare to teach the same subjects at the regular school where there is strict scrutiny, monitoring and supervision.”

In the MOE administrative structure the Open Secondary School Centre Coordinator, the head teachers and deputy head teachers are supposed to check teachers’ preparation files fortnightly. Consequently, the fact that even teachers’ preparation files at the regular school, where the supervision was reported to be strict by teachers, were not up-to-date suggests that the lack of teacher preparations at the open secondary school centre is due to lack of monitoring and supervision at the regular school which is just a norm that repeats itself at the open secondary school centre. In the researcher’s view lack of teacher preparations is likely to affect the performance of the regular school in the long run.

Teacher Absenteeism

The findings also revealed that teacher absenteeism greatly affects the teaching and learning at the open secondary school centre. It is clear from the findings that teacher absenteeism further reduces the limited teacher-learner contact time. This subsequently makes the learners lag behind and the teachers end up failing to cover the syllabi by the time learners write examinations. The learners equally have fewer exercises that lead to them having less time to practice answering examination related questions and to correct mistakes and misconceptions they make or have as they learn. These factors are definitely able to lead to learners performing poorly in examinations.

The other revelation coming from this study is that teacher absenteeism is viewed differently by the learners, teachers and the open secondary school committee. This comes in the wake of teachers and the committee considering a teacher sending work as being present while learners viewed them as being absent. This probably explains why the learners complained so much about absenteeism when the records showed that the situation at the open secondary school centre was actually much better than that at the regular school. On the other hand the few absent teachers reflected and the resulting poor results highlights that the implications of teacher absenteeism no matter how insignificant they may appear to administrators are far devastating.

It is vital to note that the open secondary school committee, head teachers, deputy head teachers are responsible for supervising activities at the open secondary school centre. In view of this, the prevailing teacher absenteeism is an indicator of how poor the head teachers and deputy head teachers' monitoring and supervision of the open secondary school centre is.

The higher teacher absenteeism occurring at the regular school is also a reflection of the shortcomings in the monitoring and supervision at the regular school. It further highlights that the shortcomings in the monitoring and supervision at the regular school have an effect on the monitoring and supervision at open secondary school centre.

Uncommitted Teachers

The open secondary school committee as per open secondary guidelines in the district includes the deputy head teacher as an ex-officio so that he or she guides on, among other things, the appointment of coordinators and teachers to teach at the centre. It is therefore clear that the presence of uncommitted teachers at the centre is as a result of non inclusion of the deputy head teacher in the open secondary school committee.

The uncommitted teachers contribute to the poor performance of the learners at the open secondary school centre in that they do not put in their best and may just be there for money. As a result learners end up lagging behind in their subjects and never to catch up till they write examinations.

As already alluded to, these learners that are of average ability need the best teachers if they are to do well. The uncommitted teachers therefore also reduce the teacher-learner contact time

further leading to learners failing their examinations because these teachers never cover the syllabi in their subjects.

Furthermore, the researcher agrees with the respondents that uncommitted teachers are also responsible for the poor performance of open secondary school learners in that whilst the learners are behind in all subjects except Religious Education as per table 6 the learners are likely to lag far behind in their subjects by the time they write their grade 12 final examinations.

Mobile Phones Disturbances

The answering of mobile phones, trivial as it may seem, came out strongly from learners that it affected their learning and eventually their performance. The study revealed that this affected the teaching and learning in that learners lost concentration and teaching and learning time in the process. The loss of concentration means learners missed on understanding concepts being explained by teachers which they are never likely to learn again due to the limited teaching and learning time. On the other hand, leaving class to answer the phone outside and completely leaving class to attend to issues raised by a caller on the phone deprive learners of the valuable learning time. Once lost this time is never recovered. The syllabi are not covered and learners end up not being prepared to write examinations.

The use of mobile phones by teachers during lessons indicates that there is less control on teachers' activities in the classroom. It also reveals that not all classroom activities can be controlled by the administration. This therefore indicates that teachers for the open secondary school centre should not only qualify by academic and professional papers but also be those that are self motivated and dedicated to duty for effective teaching and learning.

5.1.3 LEARNER RELATED FACTORS

Learner Absenteeism

The findings reveal an alarming rate of learner absenteeism. It is clear from the findings that learner absenteeism affects teaching and learning and in the long run lead to poor performance of learners at the open secondary school centre. This is in view of the revelation that learners that absent themselves lag behind in most of the topics. With most teachers not checking learners' exercise books most of these learners may not even bother to copy notes from friends. On the

other hand even if they copied the notes there would be nobody to explain the notes to them. The learners are therefore behind in not only notes but also understanding of concepts on various topics in different subjects. Hence, the learners are likely to perform poorly in examinations.

It was interesting to note that the committee failed to avail any learner attendance register during the period of data collection. While the committee claimed that the class teachers were still looking for the registers throughout the data collection period, one wonders if the same registers were ever called out and checked. It further revealed that learner absenteeism was never checked. It also indicated that the open learning committee and teachers were not even aware of the figure of 29 learners being absent per day at the centre.

While the teachers at the open secondary school centre seemed not to value attendance registers they are very important tools for promoting teaching and learning. In support, Marland (1993:60-61) highlights that the formal attendance register is vital as a diagnostic tool, a legal document produced in case of attendance persecution and a statutory document used to provide attendance figures for individual parents and aggregation for school publication. He adds to say registers serve as tools for identifying who is and is not in school so that parents and guardians are informed to correct the situation.

Bearing in mind that most teachers did not call learners by name at the open secondary school centre it is prudent to conclude that teachers are not even aware of how many learners absent themselves in each class per day. It is further eminent that learners that absent themselves from lessons may be very behind that they end up performing poorly in the final grade 12 examinations.

Use of Vernacular Languages

The medium of instruction in Zambia is the English Language. This is the medium through which all the subjects except local Zambian languages are taught and examined at all levels of the Zambian education system (MOE, 1996: 39, 47). In view of this the use of vernacular languages even by grade 12 learners was surprising. This for sure affects the performance of learners.

The fact that the use of vernacular languages was observed even among grade 10s (the level at which the centre selects learners) revealed that the problem of learners not being able to express themselves in English is a carry over from the learners' previous schools where they attended their grade 9. However, despite this revelation as the old adage states, 'practice makes perfect.' The use of vernacular languages in grades 10 to 12 level inhibits the practice of speaking and even writing in the English Language. Lack of practice in speaking in English is likely to affect the performance of learners, for that matter, not only in English but also all the other subjects in which English is a medium of instruction. This is because such learners are likely to become incompetent in the language leading to them failing to express themselves in speech and written.

5.1.4 SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Lack of support for the learners

The study revealed that lack of support for the learners and the centre was affecting the performance of the learners. The findings show that as a result of lack of support from either their parents or guardians and the government the learners engage in temporal jobs they referred to as 'piece works' to raise money to pay for their tuition fees, rent houses and buy food. This greatly affects them in that they have divided attention. That is to look for money to sustain them and at the same time to concentrate on school. This situation results from parents or guardians not supporting or giving enough support to their children. It is also resulting from these learners being discriminated when it came to provision of bursaries by government and Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs). They are exclusively for regular school learners when open secondary school learners are even more vulnerable in some cases.

The lack of government financial and material support to the centre affects its operations. This open secondary school centre depends entirely on the tuition fees paid by learners to pay teachers, administrative costs and also buy textbooks and other teaching and learning materials. Due to the limited financial resources the centre is characterized by lack of textbooks, laboratories, libraries and other teaching and learning facilities that can help boost teaching and learning. The lack of support from both parents and guardians and government has made the learners the sole financiers of open secondary centres. This has adverse effects on the open secondary school learners. As they go round to get money to fend for themselves they miss

lessons, get tired and fail to concentrate during lessons. The limited funding therefore cripples the effective operations of the open secondary school centre and also the performance of learners.

5.1.5 ADMINISTRATIVE FACTORS

Poor Monitoring and Supervision

It is evident from the findings that the monitoring and supervision of activities at the open secondary school centre is poor to ensure effective teaching and learning. The head teachers and deputy head teachers admitted to this revelation.

The fact that teachers do not prepare schemes of work, records of work and lesson plans is a clear indication that the open secondary school centre committee does not carry out the routine monitoring and supervision of checking teachers' preparation files.

Equally, the absenteeism of teachers that learners complained about is an indicator that the open secondary school centre committee is unable to control the teachers assigned to teach at the centre. It is also a sign that the impressive record of fewer teachers absent compared to more at the regular school is not a true reflection of what is obtaining on the ground. This probably was because teachers sent work most of the time and still signed as alleged by the learners.

The lack of control of enrolment revealed that the committee is not concerned about the quality of education at the centre. This is also a revelation that the external monitoring by the district office was not effective.

The researcher agrees with the administrators and learners that a mere teacher cannot control fellow teachers some of whom are heads of departments that are senior to him or her. In view of this it was evident that the committee had no grip on the teachers when class teachers were not able to avail attendance registers to the committee even after several appeals to have them during the entire data collection period.

Lack of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA)

The Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) was formed by an act of parliament so as to give parents a say on the education of their children. Among other things, the PTA is the mouth piece

for parents and guardians to have a forum where they discuss the welfare of their children as regards issues like performance and discipline. Unfortunately, the open secondary school centre has no PTA (MOE, 2005:24-25; MOE, 1996: 19,135).

It was clear from the findings that lack of a PTA affected the performance of the learners in a way. This is because the absence of the PTA left the teachers unaccountable for their performance at the centre. For teachers to be effective there is need to make them accountable. One way of doing that is through the establishment of PTAs. In line with this Macbeth (1989:1, 6) states that parents are an integral part of schooling. He adds that parents are:

Inevitably, by both example and instruction, usually for good but sometimes for ill, teach their children and through that teaching they influence the extent to which we, as teachers can be effective. The parental dimension of schooling is central to our professional performance as teachers.

It was evident from the study that the parents may have complaints against the centre but the absence of a PTA makes them voiceless on issues pertaining to their children's education.

Poor Learner Assessment

The study has revealed that the assessment of learners at the centre is poor. As highlighted the limited number of exercises given to open secondary school learners when compared to those at the regular school shows that teachers do little to assess the progression of learners.

The lack of any other assessment other than class exercises and the End of Term Examinations shows that there is no effective assessment policy set by the open secondary school centre committee. In addition, the late release of the End of Term Examination results indicates that assessment at the centre is not a priority but just conducted because it is a requirement.

As a result of the poor assessment teachers are not able to effectively monitor the performance of the learners. Learners are equally unable to assess themselves and initiate measures to maintain or improve their performance. Parents on the other hand are unable to caution their children on their performance in time.

The assessment at the centre therefore does not portray the attributes of a diagnostic tool to help monitor teachers and learners' performance. This is contrary to what Gronlund (1976: 3, 6)

prescribes as an assessment or evaluation. He outlines an evaluation as a systematic process of determining the extent to which instructional objectives are being achieved by learners. In view of this assessment is far from being effective in that the teachers do not prepare anything as they teach these learners. Hence, there are no predetermined instructional objectives to be assessed in the learners. This is evident from the late release of the results. It suggests that the results are not meant to correct any mistakes the learners might have made in that by the time they are released the learners would have learnt other different concepts in the following term as was the case during the period of data collection. As a result, a revision done at that time has very little impact in that it was meaningless as the learners stated.

The assessment of learners in subjects that are fewer than those they are studying showed that it affected their performance. This defeats the purpose of assessment in that it does not reveal the true picture on learners' performance at the centre. This argument is in line with what Kelly and Kanyika (2000: 84) found in their study on assessment in Zambia. The duo revealed that learner assessment in form of homework and testing:

extends the time pupils actually spend in learning. It provides them with opportunities to practise their skills and display the extent to which they grasp concepts and procedures. It provides teachers with an insight into the understanding gained by pupils. It serves as the basis for reinforcing ideas and practices that are correct and for remedying those that are erroneous... Frequent pupil assessment is a sound pedagogical practice with a significant positive relationship to pupil achievement.

In line with the above arguments, it is evident that the limited exercises given and limited subjects examined termly at the open secondary school centre contributes to the poor performance of the learners there.

Lack of Selection Criteria for Learners

The guideline to admit learners at grade 10 is supposed to be based on performance in the terminal examinations that the learners sit for at the end of grade 9. This is in view of the limited grade 10 places (MOE, 1996:50). It should be noted that this guideline does not only apply to regular schools but also to every other form of education where places are limited including open secondary schools in this case.

Since the district usually selects only those learners who obtain boarding cut off point marks, which are high, to fill both boarding and day school places, the open secondary school centres usually have a pool of learners that qualify using the day school cut off point to choose from. The fact that some of the learners do very well from the same centre is testimony that if learners were carefully selected the performance at the open secondary school centre can improve.

The lack of a selection criterion stands out to be an administrative oversight on the part of the open secondary school centre committee that for sure affects the performance of learners at the centre. In the light of the given findings the indiscriminate selection of learners in the wake of a pool of learners that got high marks is unjustified and unnecessarily perpetuating the poor performance of the open secondary school learners.

5.2 FACTORS ENHANCING TEACHING AND LEARNING AT THE REGULAR SCHOOL

The factors discussed as enhancing teaching and learning at the regular school in this section are the use of a selection criteria, availability of supervised study time, own infrastructure, textbooks, strict monitoring and supervision and Parents Teachers' Association (PTA).

5.2.1 Selection Criteria for Learners

The learners at the regular school, though a day school, are selected using the boarding cut off point marks centrally at the provincial selection meeting. This is in line with the policy guideline which stipulates that in view of the limited grade 10 places a cut off point be used to select learners (MOE, 1996: 50-51).

From the findings it is evident that the use of a selection criterion to select learners at the regular school is a factor giving regular school learners an advantage to perform better than the open secondary school learners. This is because the selection criteria enables the regular school to enrol learners that are better performing than those at the open secondary school centre as reflected in the differences in learner performances at the two institutions.

5.2.2 Availability of Supervised Study Time (Preparation time)

The study also revealed that in contrast to the open secondary school learners the regular school learners have supervised study time (preparation time) from 14:00 to 15:30 hours that enable them to adequately study in preparation for the examinations. This time equally provides an opportunity for teachers to catch up on topics that they may be behind on and also enables regular school learners that stay in homes without electricity to study from school. The supervised study time therefore gives regular school learners an advantage to study and prepare for examinations than open secondary school learners.

5.2.3 Availability of Own Infrastructure

It is clear from the revelations in this study that availability of own classrooms, laboratories and a library at the regular school enhances teaching and learning there. This is evident in that having own classrooms gives learners adequate time to learn (07:20 to 13:00 hours) and study under teacher supervision (14:00 to 15:30 hours). This makes teachers and learners to have adequate time to prepare for examinations.

The availability of laboratories is another factor that accords the learners a chance to carry out experiments so that they understand scientific concepts and procedures better well before they write examinations.

In addition, the library at the regular school also enhances teaching and learning in that it offers the regular school learners an opportunity to research and read further on what they learn in class. Hence, they better prepare for the examinations.

5.2.4 Availability of Textbooks

The availability of textbooks at the regular school is also another factor that enhances teaching and learning at the regular school in that it makes learners better placed than open secondary school learners in preparing for the examinations. The textbooks enable learners at the regular school to research and study further on topics covered in class. The learners are also able to attempt exercises and examination related questions that may be in the textbooks. The textbooks therefore enable the learners to have more understanding of what they learn, practice in

answering examination related questions and make corrections on exercises they might have got wrong.

5.2.5 Strict Monitoring and Supervision

The respondents in this study said that teaching and learning at the regular school is enhanced by the monitoring and supervision at the regular school that was stricter than that existing at the open secondary school centre.

While this was true to some extent facts on the ground revealed that the monitoring and supervision at the regular school was not very strict and that the resulting poor monitoring and supervision at the open secondary school centre tend to suggest that it was just a spill over effect of what was obtaining at the regular school. This was evident in the high teacher absenteeism and inadequate teacher preparations at the regular school.

5.2.6 Availability of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA)

It is clear from the findings that the availability of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) is another factor helping to enhance teaching and learning at the regular school. The revelations show that meetings for teachers and parents gave an opportunity to parents to learners at the regular school to make teachers and the school administration accountable over the learning of their children. This makes the school authorities mindful about the teaching and learning going on at the regular school.

5.3 MEASURES THAT CAN HELP IMPROVE PERFORMANCE AT OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL CENTRES

The revelations of this study are that the open secondary school centres are performing poorly. The big gap in performance existing between regular and open secondary school centre in the study makes the problem more apparent. It is equally evident from the findings that the gap in performance is as a result of the corresponding gap in the operations of the two institutions. However, the researcher agrees with the respondents that measures can be put in place to correct the situation. Whilst the researcher is for the idea that factors enhancing performance at the regular school be extended to the open secondary school centre to correct the situation as

suggested by the respondents he suggests that it should be done with some adjustment in that the environments in which the two institutions operate are different.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter gives the conclusion and recommendations about this research study.

6.1 CONCLUSION

The open secondary school centres, as an alternative form of education, greatly contribute to education access in Zambia. However, what matters is not only the quantity but quality of education provided. As revealed in this study, open secondary school centres face various challenges that have eventually led to learners there to perform poorly when compared to those in the regular schools.

Open secondary school centres were designed to operate within the premises of the regular school so that the open secondary school learners have the same teachers, facilities and teaching and learning materials. Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre presents a unique situation in that it operates contrary to this policy.

Where as the policy to introduce open secondary school centres was done in good faith to increase access to education as well as contribute to the possibility of attaining the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) of Education for All (EFA) by 2015, something seems to have gone a miss in the operations of open secondary school centres. This is in view of the aim being ‘to provide quality education just like any other form of education.’

The case of Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre reveals that the resulting open secondary school centres running in basic schools instead of the regular secondary school (that happens to be a mission school that is against open secondary school establishment criteria) where the teachers involved come from was an over sight in that there are no policy guidelines to be followed. On the other hand, the fact that the performance of open secondary school centre learners even at the open secondary school centres hosted at regular schools where the teachers involved come from in the district is poor when compared to regular school learners there entails that something is not right about the operations of open secondary school centres in the district and probably the whole country.

The findings in this research study revealed that open secondary school learners that sit for the same final examination at grade 12 with regular school learners are greatly disadvantaged in terms of teaching and learning environment characterized by over enrolled classes, less teacher-learner contact time, lack of teaching and learning materials, usually absent, exhausted and uncommitted teachers, poor timing of learning sessions and poor assessment. The findings indicate that these factors are triggered by ineffective monitoring and supervision as well as lack of support from government and parents and guardians as is the case for Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre.

The fact that the same teachers teach at both the regular school and the open secondary school centre and yet results are only poor at the open secondary school centre signifies that teachers alone can not create an enabling environment. Other factors like teaching and learning materials, effective administrators and supportive parents or guardians among others are paramount to establishing an environment that enhances good learner performance.

Since establishment of regular schools is expensive, open secondary school centres remain reliable alternative forms of education as long as factors cited as enhancing performance of learners at the regular school like strict monitoring and supervision , availing teaching and learning materials, libraries, laboratories and provision of bursaries for learners are provided.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the ever increasing demand for education and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) of Education for All (EFA) yet to be met there is need to maintain the existing open secondary school centres and even establish more to promote education access particularly at high school level. However, with the prevailing poor performance of learners in open secondary school centres, the researcher recommends the following to improve the situation:

1. There is need for the District Education Board to lobby government to make the position of the open secondary school centre coordinator salaried to make coordinators more responsible as well as have authority over other teachers. This is in view of the fact that at the time of research the coordinators were found to be unable to control their fellow teachers that usher them into office through elections. Some of whom are Heads of Departments that are senior to them.

2. The District Education Board should also lobby government to fully recognise the role played by teachers attached to open secondary school centres so that periods they teach at the centre are considered when creating staff establishments for schools. This can help limit the total number of periods for teachers attached to open secondary school centres. At the time of the research some teachers had as many as 42 periods that made them too tired to teach effectively at both the regular school and open secondary school centre.
3. The District Education Board should also lobby that government bursaries be extended to learners in open secondary school centres who are in most cases more vulnerable than those at regular school so that they concentrate on learning instead of fending for themselves. At the time of research it was established that most open secondary school learners from rural areas rented houses in shanty compounds and usually missed lessons or came to school tired because they had to do piece works in the morning to raise money for school fees and food before coming to school.
4. The District Education Board and well wishers need to put up boarding houses at the open secondary school centre for learners from rural areas that fail to raise money for boarding schools and opt to rent in town whilst attending open secondary school classes. This is necessary because the research revealed that the houses that open secondary school learners rented were in shanty compounds where learners learnt bad vices like beer drinking and smoking and also had no electricity for learners to study.
5. External monitoring of open secondary school centres should always be accompanied by learner interviews to confirm findings established. This is necessary because the research findings showed that the teachers give misleading data on open secondary school centres particularly when classes are over enrolled.
6. There is need for the open secondary school centre committee to facilitate the establishment of a Parent Teachers' Association (PTA) to enhance the monitoring of centre activities. This is necessary because the parents and guardians interviewed revealed that they needed to air their views on the operations of the open secondary school centre but had no forum for that.

7. The District Education Board should also establish facilities like laboratories, preparation time and libraries in the open secondary school centres to enhance teaching and learning there. This is necessary because the research established that lack of these facilities contributed to the poor performance of open secondary school learners.
8. The researcher equally recommends that the school calendar for open secondary schools be changed to include part of the regular school holidays so that learning time for open secondary school learners is increased when regular schools are in recess. At this time they can also learn from 07:00 to 13:00 hours. This is in line with the finding that the learning time for open secondary school learners is far less when compared to that of their regular school counterparts due to limited time from 13:00 to 17:30 hours.
9. Learners at the open secondary school centre have special needs and as such they cannot be handled by every teacher. This is in view of the finding in this research that the learners are of average performance, have no teaching and learning materials and have limited learning time. The teachers attached to the open secondary school centre should therefore be committed, experienced and qualified. They equally need special training to be effective open secondary school teachers.
10. There is need to carry out more researches to determine the extent to which each of the identified factors affect the performance of the learners in open secondary centres. This is because this research was limited to identifying factors affecting the performance of learners in open secondary school centres from the stakeholders' perspectives so as to find a way of improving the situation.

REFERENCES

- BODOCOL (2004/5) **Annual Report: Programmed Diversification for Future Prosperity**. Gaborone: BODOCOL.
- Bowring –Carr, C and West-Burnham (1999). **Managing Learning for Achievement: Strategies for Raising Achievement through Effective Learning**. London: Prentice Hall.
- Brandes and Ginns G (1986). **A Guide to Student-Centred Learning**. London: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- E.C.Z School Certificate, overleaf**
- Finger, M and Asum, M (2001). **Adult Education at the Crossroads: Learning our Way**. New York: Zed Books
- Frost Secondary and Mazabuka Open Secondary School 2004, 2005 and 2006 Final Grade 12 Results** (unpublished).
- Gronlund, N.E (1976). **Measurement and Evaluation in Teaching** (4th ed). Oxford: Heinemann
- <http://www.eric.ed.gov:8c/ERIC>*
- <http://www.ifed.org/lifelonglearning/b-adedgn.htm>*
- <http://www.marxists.org/subject/education/freire/pedagogy/ch03.htm>*
- <http://www.ncsl.org/programs/edn/ALTEREd.htm>*
- IOB (April, 2008). **Impact Evaluation: Primary Education in Zambia** (312), pp 17-26, 133-145.

- Kasanda, S.M (2003) (Ed). **Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level: Zambia's National Assessment Survey Report-2003**. Lusaka: M.O.E
- Kelly, M.J and Kanyika, J (2000). **Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level: Final Report on Zambia's National Assessment Project 1999**. Lusaka: M.O.E
- Lemmer, E (2003). **Contemporary Education: Global Issues**. Sandton: Heinemann Higher and Further Education (pty) Ltd.
- Macbeth,A (1989). **Involving Parents : Effective Parent-Teacher Relations**. Oxford: Heinemann
- Marland,M (1993). **The Craft of the Classroom: A Survival Guide to Classroom Management in the Secondary School**. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.
- Mazabuka District Education Board (2007). **Third Quarter Report** (unpublished).
- Mbozi, E.M (2008). **Classroom Factors that Affect the Quality of Education in Selected Basic Schools in Livingstone and Kazungula District in Southern Province of Zambia: A Doctorate Dissertation**. Lusaka: University of Zambia.
- M.O.E (1992). **Focus on Learning**. Lusaka: M.O.E
- M.O.E (1996). **Educating Our Future: Policy on Education**. Lusaka: Zambia Educational Publishing House
- M.O.E (1996). **Investing in Our People: Integrated Education Sector Investment Programme (ESIP)**. Lusaka: M.O.E
- M.O.E (1997). **Standards and Evaluation Guidelines**. Lusaka: M.O.E

- M.O.E (2001). **Job descriptions/Specifications**. Lusaka: M.O.E
- M.O.E (2005). **Principles of Education Boards Government and Management Manual**.
Lusaka: Education Board Services
- Mumba,E (1989). **Diversification of Adult Education Provision in Zambia**. [Adobe Reader-zambia_mumba.pdf]
- Munachonga,H (2003). **The Relationship between Educational Facilities and Performance of APU Pupils in High Schools: David Kaunda Technical and Kamwala High Schools**. Lusaka: UNZA (unpublished).
- Musonda,L.W (2001)(Ed). **Learning Achievement at the Middle Basic Level: Report on Zambia National Assessment Project-2001**. Lusaka: M.O.E.
- Ndoye, M (2007). Africa: Building the Foundation for Sustainable Development, in **IIEP Newsletter XXV**, (3), July-September, pp 3, 13.
- Paul, R.H (1990). **Open Learning and Open Management: Leadership and Integrity in Distance Education**. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Race, P (1989). **The Open Learning Handbook: Selecting, Designing, Supporting Open Learning Materials**. London: Kogan Page Ltd.
- Siaciwena,R (1994). "Zambia Open Secondary Classes." In Marnar,M and Phillips,S (eds **Open Schooling, Selected Experiences**,Vancouver,The Commonwealth,pp 104-112.
- Tuckett, A (2007). "Education, Adult." Microsoft ®Encarta®2007[DVD].Microsoft corporation, 2006.

APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH BUDGET

ITEMS	QUANTITY AND COST	AMOUNT
Paper	2 Reams X K 30 000	K 60 000
Typing and printing		
-Proposal		K 100 000
-Dissertation		K 300 000
Photocopying	400 Copies X K 300	K 120 000
Transport	4 Trips X K 65 000	K 260 000
Pens	10 Pens X K 500	K 5 000
Pencils	4 Pencils X K 250	K 1 000
Food	5 Days X K 50 000	K 250 000
Binding	5 Copies X K 50 000	K 250 000
Erasers	4 Erasers X K 1000	K 4 000
TOTAL		K 1 350 000
CONTIGENCY		K 150 000
GRAND TOTAL		K 1 500 000

APPENDIX 2

RESEARCH WORKPLAN

MONTH (S)	ACTIVITY
August 2007	Problem Identification
September 2007	Literature Review
October –December 2007	Literature Review and Research Proposal Writing
January-February 2008	Research Proposal Writing and Handing in
March –May 2008	Data Collection and Literature Review
June –July 2008	Data Analysis and Literature Review
August 2008	Literature Review and Research Report Writing
September 2008	Research Report Writing and Handing in

APPENDIX 3

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS DEPUTY HEAD TEACHERS AND OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL CENTRE COMMITTEE MEMBERS

1. How is the performance of learners at the open secondary school centre?
2. What factors can be affecting the performance of the learners?
3. What measures have you taken to address the situation?
4. What facilities enhancing teaching and learning exist at the regular school but not at the open secondary school centre?
5. What measures can help enhance the performance of learners at this open secondary school centre?
6. Suggest measures that can help bridge the gap in performance between open secondary school centre and regular school learners.

APPENDIX 4

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

1. How is the performance of your learners at this open secondary school centre in comparison to those at the regular school?
2. What factors can be affecting these learners' performance?
3. What facilities or factors enhancing teaching and learning exist at the regular school but not at the open secondary school centre?
4. What measures can help enhance the performance of learners at Mazabuka Open Secondary School Centre?
5. What measures can help bridge the gap in performance between regular schools and open secondary school centres?

APPENDIX 5

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

1. How is your performance at this centre compared to that of learners at the regular school?
2. What factors can be affecting your performance?
3. What facilities or factors enhancing teaching and learning exist at the regular school but not at your centre?
4. What measures can help enhance your performance at this centre?
5. Suggest measures that can make the performance at open secondary school centres as good as that at the regular school.

APPENDIX 6

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR PARENTS AND GUARDIANS OF OPEN SECONDARY SCHOOL CENTRE LEARNERS

1. How is the performance of your children at this open secondary school centre?
2. What factors can be affecting their performance?
3. What measures have you taken to improve the performance of your children at this open secondary school centre?
4. What measures can help improve the performance of your children at this centre?
5. Suggest measures that can bridge the gap in performance between open secondary school centre and regular school learners.

APPENDIX 7

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS OBSERVED

1. How is the performance of your learners at this learning centre?
2. What factors can be affecting their performance?
3. What facilities or factors enhancing teaching and learning exist at the regular school but not at your centre?
4. What measures can help improve the performance of your learners at this centre?
5. Suggest measures that can bridge the gap in performance between open secondary schools and regular schools.

APPENDIX 8

DOCUMENTARY REVIEW GUIDE

1. How is the enrolment at the open secondary school centre in comparison to that at the regular school?
2. How is the attendance of learners at the open secondary school centre in comparison to that of learners at the regular school?
3. Do teachers prepare schemes of work, Lesson plans and records of work?
4. How often do teachers give and mark exercises?
5. Do teachers teach the same classes at the regular school and the open secondary school centre?

APPENDIX 9

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

Name of Institution:.....

Grade :..... Class :.....

Sex of teacher :..... Number of desks:.....

Number of learners: (i) In register –Male:..... Female:..... Total :.....

(ii) Present in class on day of observation-Male :..... Female :..... Total:.....

Teaching method employed :.....
.....
.....

Use of teaching and learning aids :.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Interaction in class : (teacher to learner and learner to learner)
.....
.....
.....
.....

Exercises given and marked :.....
.....
.....
.....