

b149 946 89.

UV - UFS  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
BIBLIOTEK

University Free State



34300003178278

Universiteit Vrystaat

**A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE  
DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE  
MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION**

**by**

**DAWN THERESA DENISE VAN GENSEN**

**Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree**

**Philosophiae Doctor in Higher Education Studies**

**in the**

**Centre for Higher Education Studies and Development  
Faculty of Humanities  
at the University of the Free State**

**November 2004**

**Promoter: Prof. H.R. Hay**

**Co-promoter: Prof. J.F. Hay**

## DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work which is submitted here is the result of my own independent investigation. Where help was sought, it was acknowledged. I further declare that this work is submitted for the first time at this university/faculty towards the Ph.D. degree in Higher Education Studies and that it has never been submitted by me to any other university/faculty for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

*D. T. D. van Gensen*

.....  
D.T.D. VAN GENSEN

*2004-11-30*

.....  
DATE

I hereby cede copyright of this product in favour of the University of the Free State.

*D. T. D. van Gensen*

.....  
D.T.D. VAN GENSEN

*2004-11-30*

.....  
DATE

2004-11-30

Bloemen

Universiteit van die  
Vrystaat  
BLOEMFONTEIN  
2 - MAY 2006  
11-2004  
UV SASOL BIBLIOTEEK

Bloemen

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- I am extremely grateful to my promoter, Prof. H.R. Hay, for her capable and skilful study leadership, her invaluable and expert advice, as well as her feedback with regard to the project.
- A sincere word of thanks to the respondents to my study, who made valuable inputs and without whom this result would not have been possible.
- A profound word of thanks to Sonja Liebenberg for the language editing of my thesis; for her input, as well as her assistance when needed.
- I am also particularly grateful for the unwavering support of my husband, Garth, and for his understanding at times when I needed it the most.
- A special "Thank you" to my children, Gareth and Megan, for tolerating neglect on my part and for always trying to be understanding.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

## CHAPTER 1:

### ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

1.1	INTRODUCTION	1
1.2	THE NEED FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS	4
1.3	POLICY AND LEGISLATION	6
1.4	PROBLEM ORIENTATION	10
1.5	PROBLEM STATEMENT	13
1.6	PURPOSE OF THE STUDY	16
1.6.1	Aims	16
1.6.2	Objectives	16
1.7	RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES	17
1.7.1	Research techniques	18
1.7.2	Sampling	19
1.8	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	19
1.9	DEFINITION OF TERMS	20
1.9.1	Middle management/leadership	20
1.9.2	Empowerment/development/enablement	20
1.9.3	External customer	20
1.9.4	Internal customer	21
1.9.5	Customer value management	21
1.9.6	Quality	21
1.9.7	Enabling environment	21
1.9.8	Diversity	22
1.9.9	Equity/affirmative action	22
1.9.10	Ethics	22
1.9.11	Workforce development	22

1.9.12	Management training/development	23
1.10	PLANNING OF RESEARCH REPORT	23
1.11	SUMMARY	24

## CHAPTER 2:

### INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

2.1	INTRODUCTION	25
2.2	INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION	27
2.2.1	Higher education institutions as professional bureaucracies	27
2.2.2	Globalisation	29
2.2.3	Massification	32
2.2.4	Information and communication technology	35
2.2.5	Competition and cooperation	39
2.2.6	Academic staff versus administrative staff	41
2.2.7	Ethics in higher education institutions	42
2.3	NATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION	44
2.3.1	The changing role of government	45
2.3.1.1	<i>Policy and legislation</i>	45
2.3.1.2	<i>Funding</i>	53
2.3.2	The glass ceiling syndrome	54
2.3.3	The emphasis on quality assurance	55
2.3.3.1	<i>Policy and legislation related to quality assurance</i>	57
2.3.3.2	<i>Defining quality</i>	59
2.3.3.3	<i>The role of the middle manager in quality assurance</i>	59
2.4	CONCLUSION	61

CHAPTER 3:  
COMPETENCE PROFILE AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS  
REQUIRED BY MIDDLE MANAGERS IN THE  
ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE OF HIGHER EDUCATION  
INSTITUTIONS

3.1	INTRODUCTION	63
3.2	THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON THE WORK OF MIDDLE MANAGERS	64
3.2.1	Changing customer expectations	65
3.3	THE STRUCTURAL AND DEVELOPMENT FACET OF MIDDLE MANAGERS	66
3.4	THE NATURE OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS	67
3.5	COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS	70
3.5.1	Interpersonal competence	70
3.5.1.1	<i>Creating an enabling environment</i>	72
3.5.1.2	<i>Promoting a people-centred approach</i>	73
3.5.1.3	<i>Managing conflict</i>	74
3.5.1.4	<i>Managing diversity</i>	76
3.5.1.5	<i>Effective communication</i>	77
3.5.2	Conceptual competence	80
3.5.2.1	<i>Planning</i>	80
3.5.2.1.1	<i>Strategic versus operational planning</i>	81
3.5.2.1.2	<i>Setting goals</i>	82
3.5.2.1.3	<i>Scenario planning</i>	83
3.5.2.2	<i>Organising</i>	84
3.5.2.2.1	<i>Job design</i>	84
3.5.2.2.2	<i>Delegation</i>	86
3.5.2.2.3	<i>Participatory work</i>	87
3.5.2.2.4	<i>Performance management</i>	88
3.5.2.2.5	<i>Managing of meetings</i>	90



3.5.2.3	<i>Controlling</i>	91
3.5.3	Technical competence	92
3.5.4	Political competence	93
3.6	ADDED PERSPECTIVES WITH REGARD TO MANAGERIAL WORK	93
3.7	CONCLUSION	94

## CHAPTER 4:

### EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS

4.1	INTRODUCTION	96
4.2	QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	97
4.2.1	Defining qualitative research	97
4.3	QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH	100
4.4	DEBATE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES	101
4.4.1	Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research	104
4.4.2	Differences between qualitative and quantitative research	104
4.4.3	Combining qualitative and quantitative research	106
4.5	WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?	108
4.6	SAMPLING	109
4.7	ETHICAL ISSUES OF THE RESEARCH	110
4.8	METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION	112
4.8.1	Documentation	114
4.8.2	Semi-structured interviews	115
4.8.3	Responses via electronic mail	118
4.8.4	Participant observation	119
4.9	VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA	120
4.10	METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS	121
4.11	CONCLUSION	122

## CHAPTER 5:

### RESEARCH FINDINGS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND NEEDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

5.1	INTRODUCTION	124
5.2	BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED	125
5.3	BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS	126
5.4	REPORT OF RESEARCH FINDINGS	129
5.4.1	The existence of a policy for the development of managers within the four institutions	129
5.4.2	The role of the Skills Development Strategy in development activities	131
5.4.3	The priority given to management development by creating sufficient opportunities to develop	132
5.4.4	Selection of management development on the basis of function and level	134
5.4.5	The prerequisites for middle management development	135
5.4.5.1	<i>Newly appointed middle managers in administrative positions with regard to requirements to undergo a formal induction programme in the relevant management areas</i>	135
5.4.5.2	<i>Requirement of middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development</i>	137
5.4.6	Linking development with performance appraisal, in other words alignment with other institutional objectives	138
5.4.7	Value of the development activities in supporting management performance	139
5.4.8	The influence of academic work and staff on administrative middle managers	141
5.4.8.1	<i>The impact of academic work and policies/development on the work of administrative middle level managers</i>	141

5.4.8.2	<i>The influence of the "divide" between administrative and academic staff on middle managers in the administrative cadre's work</i>	143
5.4.9	Essential requirements of administrative middle managers	145
5.4.9.1	<i>Key competencies and skills that are imperative to operate effectively within the middle management role</i>	146
5.4.9.2	<i>Barriers to operate effectively within the middle management role</i>	148
5.4.9.3	<i>Most critical challenges currently facing middle managers in administrative positions in higher education</i>	149
5.4.10	Dilemmas facing middle managers and possible solutions	151
5.4.10.1	<i>Dilemmas middle management are currently facing in performing their tasks as middle managers</i>	151
5.4.10.2	<i>Specific actions that need to be taken to address the dilemmas/problems middle managers have identified in 5.4.10.1</i>	153
5.4.11	Opinions on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a recognised qualification	155
5.4.12	Critical issues in a model for middle management development in administrative positions	156
5.4.13	Attributes, skills and knowledge that should be developed in a model for middle management development in administrative positions	158
5.4.14	Participant observation	160
5.5	CONCLUSION	162

## CHAPTER 6:

### PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

6.1	INTRODUCTION	163
6.2	CRITICISM AGAINST THE NOTION OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT	164

6.3	PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MODEL	165
6.3.1	Strategic objectives of institution	168
6.3.1.1	<i>Integration with institutional plans</i>	168
6.3.1.2	<i>Institutional policy on management development</i>	169
6.3.1.3	<i>Quality, relevance and practicability</i>	172
6.3.2	Processes	174
6.3.2.1	<i>Planning</i>	174
6.3.2.2	<i>Implementation</i>	182
6.3.3	Structures	184
6.3.4	Incentives	185
6.3.5	Content of development activities	185
6.3.5.1	<i>A macro-scenario of higher education</i>	186
6.3.5.2	<i>A focus on key institutional needs and priorities</i>	186
6.3.5.3	<i>General/generic development</i>	187
6.3.5.4	<i>Specialised development of middle managers</i>	188
6.3.5.5	<i>Development for improvement in internal customers' relationships</i>	188
6.4	CONCLUSION	190

## CHAPTER 7:

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

7.1	INTRODUCTION	191
7.1.1	Aims	191
7.1.2	Objectives	192
7.2	MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH	193
7.2.1	Main findings of the literature study	193
7.2.1.1	<i>The findings of Chapter 2</i>	193
7.2.1.2	<i>The findings of Chapter 3</i>	194

7.2.2	Main research findings of the empirical investigation	197
7.2.2.1	<i>Participant observation</i>	200
7.2.3	Proposed model for administrative middle management development	200
7.3	LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY	201
7.4	RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH	201
7.5	CONCLUSION	201
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	203

## LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix A: Letter of request
- Appendix B: Form of consent
- Appendix C: Letter to the interviewees
- Appendix D: Form of consent
- Appendix E: Interview Guide

## LYS VAN BYLAES

- Bylae A: Brief van versoek
- Bylae B: Toestemmingsvorm
- Bylae C: Brief aan persone met wie onderhoude gevoer is
- Bylae D: Toestemmingsvorm
- Bylae E: Onderhoudsgids

## LIST OF TABLES

TABLE 3.1	Administrative work in higher education	67
TABLE 4.1	Differences between qualitative and quantitative research	105
TABLE 5.1	Biographic information of participants	127

## LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE 6.1	Proposed model for middle management development	167
FIGURE 6.2	The cyclical nature of action learning	177

## ABSTRACT/SUMMARY

### KEY WORDS/PHRASES:

- management processes, techniques and technology
- "managerial revolution"
- "new managerial cultures"
- integrated and interdependent activities
- key competencies and skills
- internal and external customers
- rapidly changing circumstances in higher education
- training and development
- "progressively enabling" acts and policies
- qualitative research approach
- model for the development of middle managers
- quality services

Currently higher education in particular is characterised by rapid change and transformation, globally as well as in South Africa. For administrative staff there are equally rapid changes in management processes, techniques and technology. In addition, there is no doubt that distinctive challenges are facing administrative middle managers. In this regard a "managerial revolution" is taking place in higher education and "new managerial cultures" are urgently needed. Many middle managers are insufficiently equipped to deal with this revolution or to adopt a "new managerial culture" to unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles and to learn and relearn new skills. This "revolution" requires middle managers who are able to contribute meaningfully to their institutions.

Middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions - whether they are for example in finances, student services, library and information services, marketing, quality assurance and ICT among other things - all need to manage and interpret information, control and manage funds as well as staff. They also need to plan, organise, lead and control integrated and interdependent activities and apply their specialised knowledge not only to their units, but also in



a multi- and interdisciplinary manner. Continually improving the productivity in both internal and external service delivery in a constantly changing landscape requires key competencies and skills. The wide range of competencies and skills that were identified in the study, are testimony to the complexity of the middle management functions in higher education institutions.

Middle managers also have a vital part to play in higher education institutions' quality assurance processes and the promotion thereof. They need to facilitate quality awareness among administrative staff and promote the implementation of quality in their administrative processes and customer services. It is expected from institutions to become more client-focused and to deliver excellent services, similar to those expected in the corporate world. However, higher education institutions are not well known for delivering satisfactory levels of service to their internal and external customers. Middle management in administrative positions is at the heart of influencing as well as contributing to a new higher education landscape where quality service delivery to all customers is vital. It is therefore crucial for middle managers to be empowered and stay empowered in pursuing the objectives of their institutions.

Adequate development of middle managers is essential to ensure that middle managers as well as the higher education institutions are sufficiently equipped to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances in higher education. This implies that middle managers in administrative positions need to be supported by means of training and development to adjust to the demands of their new roles. Staff development is a key activity in higher education institutions and is central to their quality. The quality of middle managers in higher education institutions is central to their effectiveness. To emphasise the importance of quality service to customers, middle management skills and competencies need to be continually strengthened and enhanced through development.

Fortunately, the South African government - the primary funder of higher education in the country as is the case with governments elsewhere in the world – realised this fundamental requirement of management development by putting into place

several "progressively enabling" acts and policies to underline the importance of transformation and development of higher education staff, which is accordingly also applicable to middle managers in administrative positions in higher education. But, at the institutional level, there is a large gap between the crucial need for middle management development and the low level of activity.

A thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on middle management development was undertaken, after which a mainly qualitative research approach was followed through semi-structured interviews and responses via e-mail from administrative middle managers. Participant observation in the workplace relating to middle management development in higher education also took place. The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to capture recurring patterns and themes during the research process.

The primary purpose of the study was to create a model for the development of middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions in order to become more service- and client-orientated through enhancing their services and customer care. This model could ultimately lead to the empowerment of middle managers to render quality services to all their customers which, in turn, could also enhance their competitive edge and contribute meaningfully to their higher education institutions.

## ABSTRAK/OPSOMMING

### SLEUTELWOORDE/-TERME:

- bestuursprosesse, tegnieke en tegnologie
- "bestuursrevolusie"
- "nuwe bestuurskulture"
- geïntegreerde en interafhanklike aktiwiteite
- sleutelbekwaamhede en -vaardighede
- interne en eksterne kliënte
- snelle veranderende omstandighede in hoër onderwys
- opleiding en ontwikkeling
- verskeie wette en beleide
- kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering
- model vir die ontwikkeling van middelbestuurders
- gehaltdiens

Veral hoër onderwys word tans gekenmerk deur snelle veranderinge, wêreldwyd sowel as in Suid-Afrika. Wat administratiewe personeel betref, is daar in 'n soortgelyke mate snelle veranderinge in bestuursprosesse, tegnieke en tegnologie en daar bestaan geen twyfel dat definitiewe uitdagings administratiewe middelbestuurders in die gesig staar nie. In hierdie verband is 'n "bestuursrevolusie" besig om in hoër onderwys plaas te vind en "nuwe bestuurskulture" word dringend benodig. Baie middelbestuurders is onvoldoende toegerus om hierdie revolusie te hanteer of om 'n "nuwe bestuurskulture" aan te neem met die oog daarop om rigiede en oneffektiewe bestuurstyle af te leer, asook om nuwe vaardighede aan te leer/herhaaldelik aan te leer. Hierdie "revolusie" vereis middelbestuurders wat daartoe in staat is om 'n betekenisvolle bydrae tot hul instellings te lewer.

Middelbestuurders in die administratiewe kader van hoëronderrysinstellings - hetsy hulle byvoorbeeld in finansies, studentedienste, biblioteek- en inligtingsdienste, bemarking, gehalteversekering, IKT of 'n ander afdeling is - het almal die behoefte daaraan om inligting te interpreteer en te bemeester; om fondse te kontroleer;

asook om personeel te beheer. Dit is ook vir hulle nodig om geïntegreerde en interafhanklike aktiwiteite te beplan, te organiseer, te lei en te kontroleer, nie net in hul eenhede nie, maar ook op 'n multi- en interdissiplinêre wyse. Om voortdurend die produktiwiteit in beide interne en eksterne dienslewering in 'n landskap wat voortdurend verander, te verbeter, vereis sleutelbekwaamhede en -vaardighede. Die wye reeks vaardighede en bekwaamhede wat in hierdie studie geïdentifiseer is, is bewys van die kompleksiteit van middelbestuursfunksies in hoëronderrysinstellings.

Middelbestuurders speel ook 'n essensiële rol in hoëronderrysinstellings se gehalteversekeringsprosesse en die bevordering daarvan. Dit is nodig dat hulle 'n bewustheid van gehalte onder administratiewe personeel moet bevorder, asook die implementering van kwaliteit in hul administratiewe prosesse en kliëntediens.

Daar word van instellings verwag om meer op hul kliënte te fokus en om voortreflike dienste te lewer wat soortgelyk is aan die korporatiewe wêreld. Hoëronderrysinstellings is egter nie besonder bekend vir die lewering van bevredigende vlakke van diens aan hul interne en eksterne kliënte nie. Middelbestuur in administratiewe posisies vorm die middelpunt van die uitoefening van asook die lewering van 'n bydrae tot 'n nuwe hoëronderryslandskap waar gehalteslewing aan alle kliënte essensieel is. Dit is daarom uiters belangrik dat middelbestuurders bemagtig moet word en bemagtig moet bly in die nastrewe van die doelwitte van hul instellings.

Voldoende ontwikkeling van middelbestuurders is essensieel om te verseker dat middelbestuurders sowel as die hoëronderrysinstellings voldoende toegerus is om by die snelle veranderende omstandighede in hoër onderrys aan te pas. Dit impliseer dat middelbestuurders in administratiewe posisies ondersteun moet word deur middel van opleiding en ontwikkeling om by die nuwe eise wat hul rol stel, aan te pas. Personeelontwikkeling is 'n sleutelaktiwiteit in hoëronderrysinstellings en is sentraal wat betref hul kwaliteit. Dieselfde geld vir die kwaliteit van middelbestuurders in hoëronderrysinstellings. Om die belangrikheid van kwaliteitsdiens aan kliënte te beklemtoon, is dit nodig dat middelbestuursvaardighede en -bekwaamhede voortdurend deur middel van ontwikkeling versterk en verhoog moet word.

Gelukkig het die Suid-Afrikaanse regering, die belangrikste befondser van hoër onderwys in die land – net soos die geval elders in die wêreld is – die belangrikheid van hierdie fundamentele vereiste van bestuursontwikkeling besef deur verskeie wette en beleide daar te stel om die belangrikheid van transformasie en die ontwikkeling van hoëronderwyspersoneel te beklemtoon. Laasgenoemde is dienooreenkomstig ook van toepassing op middelbestuurders in administratiewe posisies in hoër onderwys. Op die institusionele vlak egter, bestaan daar 'n groot gaping tussen die essensiële behoefte aan middelbestuursontwikkeling en die geringe vlak van aktiwiteit.

'n Deeglike literatuurstudie wat geldige en relevante literatuur oor middelbestuursontwikkeling ingesluit het, is onderneem, waarna 'n hoofsaaklike kwalitatiewe navorsingsbenadering gevolg is deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude en response via e-pos van middelbestuurders. Deelnemerwaarneming in die werksplek wat betrekking het op middelbestuursontwikkeling het ook plaasgevind. Die konstante vergelykende metode van data-analise is gebruik om repeterende patrone en temas gedurende die navorsingsproses te bepaal.

Die hoofdoel van die studie was om 'n model te skep vir die ontwikkeling van middelbestuurders in administratiewe posisies in hoëronderwysinstellings met die oog daarop om meer diens- en kliëntgeöriënteerd te word deur hul dienste en kliëntediens te verhoog. Hierdie model kan uiteindelik tot die bemagtiging van middelbestuurders lei om gehaltdiens aan al hul kliënte te lewer, wat op sy beurt weer ook hul mededingende voordeel kan verhoog en op 'n betekenisvolle wyse tot hul hoëronderwysinstellings kan bydra.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

BC	Before Christ
CHE	Council on Higher Education
CVM	Customer Value Management
DoE	Department of Education
DoL	Department of Labour
ENQA	European Network for Quality Assurance
ETD	Education, training and development
ETDP	Education, Training and Development Practices
ETQAs	Education and Training Quality Assurance Bodies
HEFCE	Higher Education Funding Council for England
HEQC	Higher Education Quality Committee
HRDS	Human Resource Development Strategy
ICT	Information and communication technology
IQAM	Institutional quality assurance and management
IT	Information technology
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRF	National Research Foundation
NSBs	National Standards Bodies
PCA	People-centred approach
QPU	Quality Promotion Unit
RPL	Recognition of prior learning
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SADC	Southern African Development Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAUVCA	South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association
SDS	Skills Development Strategy

SETA	Sector and Training Authority
THRIP	Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme
TQM	Total quality management
TYRP	Three-year rolling plan
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
USA	United States of America
WHESDN/HESDA	Welsh Higher Education Staff Development Network/ Higher Education Staff Development Agency

# CHAPTER 1

## ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

Worldwide higher education institutions are under unprecedented pressure for change. This is caused by an array of forces such as globalisation and transformation-related issues. In the South African context change and transformation stem from a dual agenda: dealing with past inequalities and needs for globalisation (NCHE 1996:1). In the United Kingdom (UK), for example, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) (HEFCE 2002) maintains that all higher education systems across the world are restructuring or transforming because of the changes brought about by the revolution in information and communication technology (ICT), in addition to new demands for greater responsiveness and accountability to societal interests and needs.

Globalisation has also necessitated extreme adjustments to particularly the management of higher education institutions. In this regard Ilbury and Sunter (2001:65) refer to the metamorphosis of higher education which is not going to reverse itself soon, if ever. It is acknowledged that all the aspects mentioned above increasingly require new kinds of management and leadership approaches for the entire sector. Obviously all of these changes imply that the staff have to be retrained and continuously developed in order to stay competent and to meet the expectations of internal and external clients.

Cognisance should be taken of the fact that, throughout the world, higher education institutions experience progressively more competition in the sense that they can recruit students almost everywhere. Consequently higher education institutions need to deliver excellence in all their functions and activities.



However, higher education institutions, as institutions established for the sake of the academe, do not have a long-standing tradition of profound administrative and service delivery practices. Yet, as greater needs are expressed for accountability and requirements to show return on government's expenditure, the realisation is growing that much more attention should be paid to administrative processes. In the South African context this issue is addressed by the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) of the Council on Higher Education (CHE). The HEQC conducts quality audits where institutions are expected to provide evidence of the quality of all the internal and external services that they render to clients. Typical administrative services refer for example to the institutions' management information systems, the administration of academic programmes, processes for the approval of the design and approval of new programmes, student record-keeping, effectiveness of the certification processes, financial management, information technology management, etcetera.

According to HEFCE (2002), the increasing exposure of higher education institutions to national, international and even global influences and pressures consistently requires continuous improvement in productivity and quality. The implication of this improvement is clearly the need for even more effective management practices, particularly in middle management. Fielden (1998) reiterates this in noting that for administrative and support staff in middle management positions, there are equally rapid changes in management processes, techniques and technology. However, quite often the development of this level of managers is neglected and forgotten. A perception among middle management is that top management is in a position to push for their own development because of their decision-making powers. The academic component is also regarded by many staff members as the core of higher education and, because higher education is more academically orientated, the administrative cadre goes missing when it comes to development. Unfortunately, middle managers are often not fully equipped for this complex task due to the changing higher education landscape.

In practice, the middle managers develop departmental/unit plans, set goals and deadlines, implement procedures to improve productivity and customer service, as well as define the responsibilities of supervisory-level managers. They usually manage those services that allow the higher education institution to operate efficiently, such as – among others - secretarial and reception, administration, payroll, conference planning and travel, information and data processing, mail, material scheduling and distribution, printing and reproduction, records management, telecommunications management, security and parking.

Yet not all academic staff realise how important administrative support staff are in achieving their institutions' and units'/sections' goals. Often they [academics] blame administrative and support staff for being inefficient and for not delivering quality service to them as internal clients and to their external clients. Given the differentiated status levels of academic and administrative staff, it leads to tension and unsatisfactory relations in the workplace. It is nevertheless also known that the middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions play an imperative role in institutions' service delivery.

As a result of the changing nature of higher education, administrative staff also have a number of new competencies to acquire, among others the following:

- Information technology (IT) skills that are now taken for granted.
- Financial pressures for greater cost awareness and sensitivity to the need for value for money in all administrative processes.
- Customer sensitivity as a key skill, particularly now that budgets are increasingly being devolved to schools, units and divisions.
- Flexible working practices become essential as management costs are continually being cut.

One should also not forget that administrative staff are often expected to work in a less secure environment due to threats of outsourcing or contracting out of institutional services. As a reward for accepting this uncertainty, they are

sometimes brought more into decision-making and being asked to share in the corporate ethos of higher education institutions.

## **1.2 THE NEED FOR THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS**

The reality is that higher education needs middle management in administrative positions with the expertise and commitment to improve – and sustain – the performance of institutions in this increasingly transforming competitive environment. Middle management that is well-motivated, appropriately trained and developed and who performs effectively in pursuing the institution's objectives, is a prerequisite for success in the new higher education landscape (HEFCE 2002).

Adequate development of middle managers is essential to ensure that higher education institutions are sufficiently equipped to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances (identified as globalisation, ICT, massification, the changing role of government, competition and cooperation), which will be elaborated on in Chapter 2. In order to respond to these changing circumstances, middle managers have to be informed and critically aware of the changes and how these impact on their management styles. This implies that middle managers in administrative positions need to be supported through training and development to adjust to the role demands which considerably differ from the expectations of their predecessors (WHESDN/HESDA 2002). This rapid change and new complexities facing higher education create new demands, making traditional management styles, skills and responses inadequate. Middle management is ultimately responsible for the management of staff as well as problems and issues on ground level. Internal (staff and students) as well as external customers (prospective students, suppliers, world of work, etcetera) demand quality service delivery on a continuous basis, through which the image of a higher education institution becomes moulded.

Support for the development of middle management in higher education is confirmed by a recent document by the CHE (CHE 2002:2) stating that higher education has immense potential to contribute to the growth and development of the economy and the consolidation of democracy and social justice, through the production of high level person-power and knowledge. However, as is further stated in this document, compelling international evidence indicates that Africa, including South Africa, cannot generate sustainable socio-economic development without investment in human development. At the core of such development is the production of critical capabilities and well-trained graduates with a range of competencies and skills (CHE 2002:4). Unfortunately South African higher education does not have a good track record of development of staff, especially regarding management development. The mentioned range of competencies and skills in the changing higher education landscape is not adequately developed for management. It is just taken for granted that managers can manage people and units/sections in the current higher education landscape.

The investment in human development, in this case middle management in higher education, is backed up in the context of the words of the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, referring to "an ever deepening democracy and respect for human values that go with it" (Asmal 2001b). This perspective is further emphasised by the CHE. According to this Council (CHE 2002:1), human resource development (and more generally human development) is widely accepted as fundamental to the economic, political, social and cultural development and transformation of countries. The question of the development of middle management, of finding a suitable career or *growth path* (Mouton & Muller 1998:27) within the higher education context, becomes fundamental, because people have limitless potential and are constantly striving for upliftment. This potential is emphasised by the concept of humanism which, according to Allais (1990:157-158), "stresses the unique attributes of humans, and the basic potential that humans have to give meaning to, and shape their environment". They further elaborate that people are not merely viewed as products of social forces, but as shapers of social life, capable of creating social orders in which

everyone's potential can unfold. Obviously higher education institutions as institutions of learning need to be exemplars of this notion and develop their own human resources accordingly.

In a discussion of this nature it is imperative to revisit the impact of national policies on the transformation of the entire South African higher education system. It is important to scrutinise the impact of these national policies on the working conditions of administrative staff and to identify the professional development needs they create.

### **1.3 POLICY AND LEGISLATION**

One, if not the most important document, that has set the tone and laid the foundation of the transformation of the South African higher education landscape, is the Education White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997). Other documents, policies and acts that followed, reinforce and elaborate on the higher education issues identified in this paper.

The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998a) ensures that appropriate measures are taken by institutions to ensure that people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equally represented in all occupational categories and levels in the institutions. This redress of staff inequities at institutions can be realised through empowerment and does not only have implications for recruitment, selection and placement practices, but also particularly the development of human resources in the higher education sector.

Another progressive act is the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b) that requires human resource development opportunities in the workplace, including opportunities for middle management in higher education institutions. The Act has, among others, the objective of providing an institutional framework to implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workplace.

This Act provides the legislative framework for the Skills Development Strategy (SDS) (RSA DoL 2000) which is directed at the development of high-level skills for the formal economy. The vision of the SDS, namely "Skills for productive citizenship for all" is strengthened by – among other things - the promotion of equity, lifelong learning, demand-led skills development, efficiency and effectiveness. According to the Department of Labour (DoL) there are several reasons that justify the SDS. These reasons include "the structural rigidities and inequalities inherited from the apartheid era", the "dual challenges of social development" and global competitiveness, the need to transform the labour force from a low skills base to "one that is committed to high quality lifelong learning", making the labour market more responsive and better able to "improve the employability of the country's workforce" (CHE 2002:9).

In addition to the above-mentioned priorities, one of the priorities of the National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE) (RSA DoE 2001:31) is to increase the representation of previously designated people in administrative positions, especially at senior levels. This shift signifies the "endemic shortage of high-level professional and managerial skills" (CHE 2002:6), which can be overcome by the "creation of a learning society" (CHE 2002:2). This will hopefully provide middle managers in higher education with the opportunities to advance and develop themselves. In a desperate attempt to develop top management capacity, the South African Universities' Vice-Chancellors' Association (SAUVCA) started enhancing the prioritisation of top management.

Similarly, the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) regards the question of labour market trends and needs and related human resource development as important to social and economic development in a "knowledge driven world". Keeping in mind that the issue of quality is at the heart of the work of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), high quality is a critical part of the transformation path in higher education – a means to eradicate the inequalities among staff as well as higher education institutions.

The adoption of a Human Resource Development Strategy (HRDS) by government is perhaps one of the most important steps in the fight against the effects of underdevelopment of the most important resource of our country, our people. This statement was made by the former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, in 2001 at a Media Briefing of the Strategy (Asmal 2001a). Some of the strategic objectives of this Strategy are to improve the foundations for human development; to improve the supply of high quality skills, especially scarce skills, which are more responsive to social and economic needs; and to increase employer participation in lifelong learning (Mdladlana 2001). The skills of middle management in administrative positions need to be improved in order for them to develop and, in turn, manage development of their subordinates in encouraging lifelong learning. These objectives could be achieved through the empowerment of middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions.

In addition to the number of recent policy documents on human resource development, the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) also calls on higher education to contribute to its programmes and projects through knowledge production and the production of high level person-power (CHE 2002). One whole chapter of the NEPAD document is devoted to the strategy for achieving growth and development that is sustainable. Higher education has a vital contribution to make in this regard in giving effect to NEPAD. The role of ICT in particular has been identified as critical. In this regard the CHE (2002) alerts that the NEPAD plan can only work if there are human resources equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to drive the development and if it is supported by a dynamic ICT infrastructure. If the management skills of middle managers are improved, it would benefit not only middle managers, but also the people they manage. The more people are developed, the better able they will be in contributing to the NEPAD plan in terms of growth. The development of middle management in administrative positions in higher education can fulfil this aim.

Also of major importance in the empowerment of middle management in higher education, was the establishment of the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) Sector and Training Authority (SETA) in May 2000 with its mandate, derived from the Skills Development Act, to raise the levels of skills and qualifications of people employed or seeking work, in the Education, Training and Development (ETD) sector. Some of SETA's strategic objectives are to increase access to, and the provision of, high quality and relevant training of employed people across member organisations, as well as to describe and advocate appropriate career paths (Fourie 2003). According to Hay and Tisani (2002:19), the mission this ETDP SETA set for itself is to "promote and facilitate an increase in the skills profile of the sector's workforce to benefit employers, workers and employees in the sector – encourage partnerships and assure quality of provision". According to them, the ETDP SETA also advocates the establishment of learnerships in higher education and proposed learnerships for academic and laboratory staff, including one for administrative staff, of which middle management forms an integral part. These learnerships are aimed at addressing problematic occupational inequalities in the South African labour market. In order to identify where scarce but urgently needed skills, for example middle management in higher education, are in the economy, the ETDP SETA - together with the Department of Education (DoE) - will be tasked with an urgent responsibility to identify these scarce skills in higher education (Fourie 2003).

With the launch of the HEQC in May 2001, a permanent committee of the CHE, a fundamental component of the regulatory framework for higher education is now in place (CHE 2002). Hay (2001) states that the mandate the CHE provides the HEQC in the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) is to promote quality assurance among constituent providers in higher education, as well as to audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions (Scott 2003). The deduction can therefore be made that quality assurance in higher education is of vital importance and impinges on every aspect thereof, including middle management in administrative posts.



The objectives of the above-mentioned important initiatives and documents are all inextricably linked. All highlight the importance and centrality of the production of high level person-power, improving the supply of skills and increasing employer participation in lifelong learning and human development. Successful development in higher education in turn leads to prove and improve quality. This implies that the development/empowerment of middle management in higher education is non-negotiable. Having said this, the research problem of this study comes to the fore.

#### **1.4 PROBLEM ORIENTATION**

In order for middle management in administrative positions in higher education to unfold their potential, Andrews (in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 22 April 2001:16) advocates that the spiral that too often characterises the South African managerial mindset, should be broken. This mindset regarding the inability to change rigid management practices not relevant in the current higher education landscape remains an enormous problem in management positions in higher education. These rigid practices have to be seriously questioned in the current higher education context, because managers have a vital role to play in managing more diverse people.

Since people hold the key to more productive and efficient higher education institutions, the way in which they are managed and developed at work has major effects upon – among other things – quality and customer service. This serves to emphasise the importance of effective middle management within higher education institutions. Furthermore, as previously mentioned in 1.1, as the higher education landscape becomes more complex and fast moving, it demands innovative leadership and management skills of a higher order than ever before (WHESDN/HESDA 2002).

In order to meet these higher order leadership and management skills, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO)

(UNESCO 1994) emphasises that staff development has become a vital component of higher education institutional policy-making worldwide in order for education and training to be distinguished by quality and relevance. This view is also reiterated by Fielden (1998) in stating that staff development - a key activity in higher education institutions - is central to their quality. He further notes that higher education institutions are labour intensive organisations which depend on people for the delivery of their services. The quality of middle management in higher education institutions is thus central to their effectiveness, in the same way that it is to all people-centred organisations.

Middle managers in administrative positions are responsible for various tasks, roles and responsibilities, which include faculties, disciplines and units. These are, among other things, institutional management of information, implementation of quality assurance systems, examination systems, marketing, internal and external communication, finances, human resources, student services and administration, co-operative education, library and information services, quality assurance, and performance management (also see 1.1). Middle management also bridges the management ranks with higher/top management and the operating employees, which will be elaborated on in Chapter 3.

Effective middle managers in higher education will react to the demand by customers for the added value of excellent service, which has produced a new kind of management that Cheales (2000) refers to as "service-orientated management". This new management philosophy, rapidly on the increase in more successful businesses and institutions, encourages employees, which include middle management in higher education, to think more creatively about ways to deliver quality customer service. According to Cheales (2000), it also stresses the importance of a willingness to realign higher education institutions' structures to meet customers' needs more effectively.

To meet these customers' needs more effectively, middle management's role is also vital in the information systems of higher education institutions. Competition

in the current higher education landscape is enormous and students can make choices regarding where to study. This emphasises that quality service delivery is imperative. The need for professional managers is of the utmost importance in quality service delivery. McKinnon, Walker and Davis (2000) echo this view by emphasising that the management of a higher education institution is highly dependent on the capability of the information systems associated with administrative functions. They also state that the effectiveness of these systems is essential for the smooth day-to-day operations of the institution and for the provision of information to enable decision-making. It thus implies quality service from middle management in administrative positions to internal as well as external customers.

To emphasise the importance of quality service to customers, middle management's skills need to be continually strengthened and enhanced. Higher education customers are diverse people with different cultural backgrounds, which require more understanding and respect from higher education staff, in which middle managers should lead by example. This imperative of enhancing management's skills is widely recognised and promoted globally. In the face of challenges from national and international competitors higher education institutions should invest more resources in the continual training and re-training and development of middle management to ensure that they are well equipped for the increasing diversity in higher education.

Consequently, effective middle management demands new skills, for example information technology, management of diversity and conflict and changing policies within higher education institutions. These skills may not always be present among new middle management staff as well as traditional middle management staff. Fielden (1998) highlights "new managerial cultures" needed for effective middle management in the new higher education landscape. "New managerial cultures" also call into question some of the traditional management structures and job specifications, for example the overemphasis on task management and authoritarian management styles of middle management. This,

in turn, highlights the crucial requirement of middle management development support in higher education institutions.

Consequently, the South African government, the primary funder of higher education in the country - as is the case with governments elsewhere in the world - realised this fundamental requirement of management development by putting into place several "progressively enabling" (Asmal 2001b) acts and policies to underline the importance of transformation and development/empowerment of higher education staff, which is accordingly also applicable to middle management in administrative positions in higher education.

### **1.5 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

Asmal (2001b) indicates that the skills shortage in South Africa is well known and documented. Overall, the skills profile indicates a shortage of high-level skills, especially in management. This undoubtedly implicates middle management in administrative positions in higher education.

Most management books tell us that the most important asset any organisation has, is its people. Yet, Stamatis's (1996:138) view is that, in the real-world environment, we find that people are not given the opportunity to either grow or perform at their optimum level. This view is also held by the researcher that the ultimate resource of higher education institutions is its people, often not regarded as such, partly due to the lack of facilitating empowerment. The same lack of opportunity applies to middle management in the higher education environment.

Today's higher education environment calls for more deliberate middle management. In this regard Peeke (1994:125) refers to the "managerial revolution" taking place in higher education. This echoes the findings of Fielden (1998) who advocates "new managerial cultures" for higher education. A similar view is also held by Andrews (in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 22 April

2001:16) (see 1.4). Many middle managers are insufficiently equipped to deal with this revolution or to adopt a "new managerial culture" to unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles and to relearn new skills. The global trend of changing higher education institutions requires middle managers who are able to contribute meaningfully to their organisations.

The answer, of course, according to Stamatis (1996:138), lies in empowerment/development to provide middle management with the knowledge, resources and opportunities to achieve something, usually something new, in the higher education environment. This answer of Stamatis is also echoed by Ramsden (1998:117) who states that development/empowerment should always take place in an organisation whose fundamental purpose is learning.

Unfortunately there is currently a large gap between the massive need for middle management development and the present low level of activity in higher education institutions. In an organisation/institution such as higher education where training and development are the "core" business, higher education institutions should be examples to other institutions. There is also a large gap between academics and administrative personnel that requires middle management in administrative positions to narrow or close the gap. More emphasis is currently placed on academic development than that of the administrative staff. Fielden (1998) clearly indicates that much more has to be done if the human resource capacity of our higher education institutions is to be fully and effectively utilised, if middle management is to be equipped to deal with the "managerial revolution" (Peeke 1994) or the "new managerial culture" (Fielden 1998) of higher education. An integral part of this "managerial revolution" or "new management culture" in higher education is the increasing demand for higher quality and more accountability regarding financial realities. A commitment to customer services management is thus essential for middle management in administrative positions to be successful. It is clearly noticeable that a shift towards becoming client-driven has become increasingly visible in

higher education and the role of the middle manager in this regard cannot be overestimated.

A leading approach linking both internal and external customers of higher education institutions with customer services management is described by Thompson (2000:2) as "customer value management". The customer's view becomes an integral part of business design. According to Thompson (2000:2), successful customer value management (CVM) boils down to understanding the complex system wherein customer expectations are set and developing ways to meet those expectations consistently. It is consequently a continuous process of CVM that the middle manager in higher education institutions has to follow to improve quality.

In order to deliver this quality customer service, the middle manager also has to realise that the image the middle manager in higher education portrays to internal and external clients/customers, depends greatly on the facts, feelings and impressions that take place in the course of interaction through communication. Du Preez (2003) is of the opinion that this image is decisive for providing high quality and can be enhanced through effective development/empowerment.

According to the Welsh Higher Education Staff Development Network (WHESDN)/Higher Education Staff Development Agency (HESDA) (WHESDN/HESDA 2002), there is very little published information on management development in the higher education sector. WHESDN/HESDA (2002) further states that most of the available evidence points to an informal and relatively *ad hoc* approach and many middle managers seem to be coping with their managerial responsibilities rather than feeling on top of them. Thus middle management are in dire need of management development to cope with their responsibilities in the complex higher education environment.

The problem statement of this study is therefore the need for middle management development in administrative positions in South African higher education institutions with the aim of empowering them in order to render quality services to their internal as well as external customers. Subsequently, the purpose of this study comes to the fore.

## **1.6 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The primary purpose of this study is to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions in order to become more service- and client-orientated. This primary purpose is supplemented with the following aims:

### **1.6.1 Aims**

The study wishes to contribute towards the following aims:

- Middle management should unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles, but at the same time also relearn new skills (Andrews in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 22 April 2001:16) to contribute to a quality higher education system (see 1.4).
- In addition to the above aim, middle managers should adopt what Fielden (1998) refers to as a "new managerial culture" in order to be more successful and more client- and service-orientated (as outlined in Chapter 3 and throughout the thesis).
- Learning priorities and specific actions for the empowerment of middle management in administrative positions in higher education should be clearly set (as highlighted in 5.4.10.2; 5.4.12 and 6.3.2.1).

### **1.6.2 Objectives**

The study furthermore wishes to fulfil the following objectives through different methodological approaches that will be elaborated on in 1.7:

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs with regard to middle management development in higher education in order to address those needs (as highlighted throughout the thesis).
- A realisation by higher education institutions that it is crucial for middle management to be empowered and to stay empowered in pursuing the objectives of higher education, among other things, quality service-delivery and customer satisfaction for both external and internal customers in order to stay competitive (see 6.3.5).
- A critical reflection by middle management in administrative positions on the challenges facing them to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions (as indicated in 5.4.9.3).

In order to realise the above-mentioned aims and objectives, the researcher decided to use the following research methodology and procedures, which will subsequently be explained.

## **1.7 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

First of all a thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on staff development/empowerment, for example HEFCE (2002) and WHESDN/HESDA (2002), as well as on the nature of administrative middle management in higher education was done.

True to the philosophy of humanism and human rights, namely that every person has a right to dignity and respect - which is inextricably linked to the development of human resources (Mouton & Muller 1998:15-16) - the researcher felt it appropriate to follow the qualitative methodological approach.

The same writers add that international developments and trends, such as the rise of post-modernism and the decline of Marxism, have also affected South African theoretical debates on research methodology. The political discourse of empowerment, participation and transparency was reflected in a move towards



methodologies that were seen to symbolise these ideals. According to Mouton and Muller (1998:2), methodology is defined as the "logic of social enquiry".

Marshall and Rossman (in McKenzie, Powell & Usher 1997) characterise qualitative research as involving interest in the everyday life of the chosen setting for the study (in this case higher education); valuing participants' perspectives on their worlds (administrative processes by middle management); and seeking to discover those perspectives, viewing enquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participant, being primarily descriptive and relying on people's words as primary data.

### **1.7.1 Research techniques**

In this study qualitative research that is linked to the discourse of development (Mouton & Muller 1998:15-16), was conducted in semi-structured interviews as well as via e-mail responses with 20 percent of administrative staff in middle management positions at each of two Universities of Technology (incorporation/merging already completed) and two technikons (merging to take place in 2005). After the completion of the merging process, there will only be five Universities of Technology. This implies that two out of the current four (50 percent) Universities of Technology participated. Copies of questions that were posed during the semi-structured interviews were forwarded via e-mail well in advance in order for the respondents to have sufficient time to reflect on and be better prepared for the interviews and e-mail responses. Permission to interview respondents was obtained from the four higher education institutions and the middle managers who would be involved.

Participant observation in the workplace relating to middle management development was also used to generate ideas. By also being a participant observer, the researcher attempted to enter the lives of the administrative middle management staff. This is possible due to the researcher's main responsibilities at a University of Technology.

The constant comparative method of data analysis was used to capture recurring patterns as the basis for the creation of the model for middle management development in administrative posts in higher education institutions. In this regard the sampling of the research group was extremely important in order to obtain reliable and valid results.

### **1.7.2 Sampling**

"Purposeful" sampling of middle management in the administrative cadre would be done as "... a strategy to choose small groups or individuals likely to be knowledgeable and informative" (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:175) about higher education. Accordingly the researcher selected 20 percent of managers on the basis of function (administrative/support services) and level (middle management) at the four higher education institutions in South Africa. The names of the respondents as well as the names of the higher education institutions were not revealed because of ethical reasons.

## **1.8 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following aspects are indicators of the demarcations of this research:

- Only acts and policies in terms of the South African context were regarded as directive, although the international tendencies that pertained to the South African context could not be ignored. The South African higher education system and context also differ from the First-World countries. South African higher education has a unique and diverse staff composition which forces one not to be solely led by overseas higher education institutions.
- The target group was only limited to four higher education institutions (two Universities of Technology and two technikons) in the current higher education landscape in South Africa. It is nonetheless representative of the technikon and the University of Technology sector.
- The focus of the research was limited only to middle managers in the administrative cadre of South African higher education institutions.

## **1.9 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

The following terms are explained in order to ensure clarity and provide a better understanding of their contextual use:

### **1.9.1 Middle management/leadership**

Middle management/leadership bridges the management ranks with the higher/top management and the operating administrative staff in their respective units/divisions (see 3.4). Although there are many different views on the definitions of management/leadership [for example, according to Nevins and Stumpf (1999), managers plan, organise staff and solve problems, while leadership is about movement and change], the researcher upholds the view that administrative middle management and leadership are intertwined and complementary to each other. The researcher's view is further emphasised by WHESDN/HESDA (2002) in that executive jobs involve both transformational and transactional activities. It is also realised that both are crucial in higher education to respond successfully to the challenges within the new higher education landscape.

### **1.9.2 Empowerment/development/enablement**

To "empower" or "develop" or "enable" is to provide people with the knowledge, resources and opportunities to achieve something, usually something new (Stamatis 1996:138).

### **1.9.3 External customer**

The external customer may be the person or organisation that is at the point of interaction with the product, service, or process and possibly the ultimate end user (Thompson 2000:42), for example prospective students, alumni, policy-makers, the community, parents, private sector donors and the world of work.

#### **1.9.4 Internal customer**

Thompson (2000:42) views the internal customer as part of a company's value-add chain of processes that provides products or services to external customers. The researcher would definitely include the provision of services among internal customers as well, arguing that it is a vital part of providing service as well as essential for CVM. The internal customers include students, academic and administrative staff and management.

#### **1.9.5 Customer value management**

Thompson (2000) defines customer value management (CVM) as the understanding of the complex system wherein customer expectations are set and devising ways to meet those expectations consistently.

#### **1.9.6 Quality**

Quality is a multifaceted concept that impinges on every aspect of higher education. Pace (1999:4) defines quality as doing the right thing in the right way the first time and every time. The "right thing" must be understood from both the internal and external perspectives. This means that the product or service meets customer requirements and performs as stated. The "right way" is the most effective, most efficient, lowest cost, fastest and highest value approach to producing the right outcome the first time and every time.

#### **1.9.7 Enabling environment**

To create an environment where middle management has the opportunity to generate new solutions and take calculated risks is essential for success. The emphasis from a focus of controlling staff shifts to one of creating the conditions in which they can be successful (Ramsden 1998). This will be an environment

based on motivation and enhanced performance; in other words, inducing people to develop.

### **1.9.8 Diversity**

According to McNamara (1999), diversity is much more than the colour of people's skin – it is acknowledging different values and perspectives. It requires recognising and applying diverse values and perspectives in an institution.

### **1.9.9 Equity/affirmative action**

The implementation of measures for the removal of barriers to the selection, hiring, promotion and training of previously designated groups, for example Blacks, women and the disabled, will realise equity. Affirmative action, on the other hand, refers to the implementation of measures for the removal of barriers to the selection, hiring, promotion and training of specifically Blacks as a previously designated group.

### **1.9.10 Ethics**

Ethics is primarily about promoting the well-being of individuals and institutions. It is about personal participation in a moral community and commitment to or ownership of the policies it develops. What is of critical importance in defining ethics, is to take account of the institutional context and the way power and responsibility are articulated and shared in an institution (Cotter 1999).

### **1.9.11 Workforce development**

Workforce development is a national-wide system of education and training that prepares people for high-skills jobs and assures employers of a skilled flexible workforce in the future. It consists of activities that increase the capacity of

individuals to participate effectively in the workplace, thereby improving their productivity and employability (Mandew 2003).

#### **1.9.12 Management training/development**

McGill and Beaty (1995) envisage management training as an emphasis upon the acquisition of individuals of specific, identifiable skills, adding to or extending existing skills. Management development is more open-ended and there are no "right" answers, though there will be exercise of judgement, wisdom and raising of more questions. Jeffery (2002) maintains that most staff development activities are a combination of both training and development. He further states that "training" focuses on skills and knowledge directly connected to a particular position or occupation, whereas "development" refers to learning or the acquisition of skills that may or may not be related specifically to current duties.

### **1.10 PLANNING OF RESEARCH REPORT**

In this chapter an introductory perspective and a problem orientation on the complexity of higher education are provided that requires middle managers in the administrative cadre who ought to be equipped for their task in providing quality service to internal and external customers. Chapter 2 captures the international and national trends impacting on higher education, more particularly on middle management. In Chapter 3 a comprehensive profile of middle management in administrative positions in higher education is presented. Chapter 4 focuses on the research component, namely the empirical investigation used for the study. Staff development practices at the selected four higher education institutions that were researched, will be discussed in Chapter 5. Chapter 6 contains the proposed model for the development of middle management in administrative posts in higher education. In Chapter 7 conclusions and recommendations regarding the development of administrative middle managers will be discussed.

## **1.11 SUMMARY**

This chapter provides a broad and introductory perspective and orientation of the research problem; applicable policy and legislation of higher education in South Africa; as well as the aims and objectives set for the study. The problem orientation, namely that middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions are not sufficiently equipped to deal with the current complex and changing higher education landscape to cope and deliver quality service to customers, are also outlined in this chapter. The chapter includes a range of concepts that are defined in order to ensure clarity and better understanding of how they are used in this context. The planning of the research report is also included.

The following chapter explains the international and national trends that have a major impact on higher education and, more particularly, on middle management in the administrative cadre.

## CHAPTER 2

# INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE LEVEL MANAGERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

As already implied in Chapter 1, worldwide there is a rapid pace of social, technological, cultural, economical, legal and educational changes combined with the increasing global connectedness of many societies and economies (Walters, Kamwengo, Taruvinga & Munro 2001). This trend emphasises the need for people who are adaptable, multi-skilled, resourceful and responsive; people who are positive towards continuing lifelong learning. In response to the demands and challenges of the factors mentioned, Thompson (2000) advocates that most higher education institutions have to confront changes that have altered the shape and nature of higher education. He continues by saying that the pressures to massify and broaden access, to be "socially relevant" for greater responsiveness and becoming self-sustaining, have forced higher education institutions to change. However, their full impact and consequences were impossible to anticipate or measure at the time of implementation of restructuring.

Fielden (1998) has no doubt that for administrative and support staff there are equally rapid changes in management processes, techniques and technology. These changes invariably require continuous improvement in productivity and quality. The implication here is clearly the need for increasing the number of more effective managers in higher education. Walters *et al.* (2001) elaborate by stating that the manner in which the institutions are effectively and efficiently administered, is central to whether lifelong learning higher education institutions



can exist. Internal administration systems have to be in place to allow flexible access that relates to admissions, financing and teaching and learning strategies. A necessity exists for close planning among the academics, administrators and finance people. Surely the institution should recognise this and have a strategy for enabling each individual to confront this task. However, the pace of change is likely to create new demands which make traditional management skills inadequate. A need to change the thrust of training and development (WHESDN/HESDA 2002) is suggested for these new demands.

Although the need for restructuring is not unique to South African higher education, higher education in South Africa is confronted with challenges which are the product of a particular history and context. These challenges are related to the systematic flaws in the system of higher education inherited by South Africa's first democratic government. The legacy of apartheid resulted in a failure to develop human resources within higher education institutions (Asmal 2001a). Within the higher education environment there are particular problems that have a direct influence on management capacity.

This confirms the statement of HEFCE (2002) that higher education needs people with the expertise and commitment to sustain – and improve – the performance of institutions in an increasingly competitive environment. Higher education institutions need to create and maintain a workforce that is well motivated, appropriately trained and which performs effectively in line with the institution's objectives. This also necessitates the development of staff, in particular middle management, to be at the centre of higher education institutional practice.

In response to this necessity are the broad international trends of transformation in higher education which are found in all five of the following global regions, namely the United States of America (USA), Western Europe, Asia, Latin America and Africa, offered by the literature perspectives of Austin (1998), Postiglione (1997), Levy (1997), Gellert (1997), Hayward (1997) and Clark (1998). The development and empowerment of staff are very high on the agenda of higher

education institutions. In addition to this, great emphasis is placed on skills development and competence of staff in the higher education workplace. At the heart of such development is the production of critical capabilities and well-trained management staff with a range of competencies and skills (CHE 2002:4).

The aim of this chapter is to critically discuss and elaborate on the international and national trends that influence specifically middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions. These trends are crucial for middle managers against the background of quality customer service delivery.

## **2.2 INTERNATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

Strasheim (2001) states that around the world, national higher education systems are being challenged to play new roles in response to the knowledge and human resource needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century in the context of rapid globalisation. These challenges are confirmed by Van der Merwe (2002) who notes that higher education features prominently in any globalisation strategy, because by its very nature, it functions in a global context. Campbell and Van der Wende (2000) link up with this perspective that the internationalisation of higher education is currently undergoing new and dramatic changes, enhancing its role as one of the major features of higher education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. International trends have a major impact on the South African higher education landscape as well.

### **2.2.1 Higher education institutions as professional bureaucracies**

Ever since their inception, higher education institutions have been among the most complex forms of organisations and the level of complexity increases as the size of the institutions grows and the scope of their functions expands. This results in the need to add specialised and differentiated units. Hartman and Scott (1990:2) maintain that the very nature of the work of higher education

(producing, conserving and distributing knowledge) contributes to this complexity, because of the "fundamental tensions between the need to create conditions that foster the development of knowledge in its various divisions and the demands of managing the institution as a coherent entity". Because of their unique nature and mission, higher education institutions are characterised by the notion that certain prerogatives are reserved for academics only, for example – among others - decisions on admissions, academic standards, and curricula, while other decision-making entities concern themselves with non-academic institutional affairs.

Focusing on different aspects of the university, organisation theorists have described such an institution as a collegium (highlighting community, self-governance and consensus decision-making); as a bureaucracy (emphasising defined roles and formal command structures); as a political entity (noting differences of powers and values, competition and conflict); and as a cybernetic system (pointing to loose-couples units and to self-correcting mechanisms) (Blackwell & Blackmore 2003). Recently an entrepreneurial image has been added which depicts the university as holding company for a number of semi-autonomous satellite units.

In order to accommodate professional organisations like higher education institutions, Mintzberg developed the model of professional bureaucracy in which the professional and bureaucrat co-exist (Peterson 1991). In the professional bureaucracy allegiance is to the profession or discipline rather than to the organisation, and adherence to professional values rather than to organisation goals that bind members together. Another characteristic of the professional bureaucracy is the decentralisation of power and responsibility. The existence of professional values which guide, motivate and control members, makes this self-government possible. According to Peterson (1991), in the professional bureaucracy, professionals at the basis of the organisation derive their power from the fact that their work is too specialised and complex to be supervised by managers.

The professional bureaucracy hires duly trained and indoctrinated specialists and professionals for the operating core and then gives them considerable control over their own work. In effect, the work is highly specialised in the horizontal dimension, but enlarged in the vertical one. Control over work means that the professional works relatively independently of his colleagues, but closely with the clients they serve. [Please note that, for the sake of ease of reading and consistency, the researcher uses "he", "him", "his", etcetera. These words denote both the male and the female gender, however.] Another characteristic of the professional bureaucracy is that the operating core is the key part of the institution – the only part that is fully elaborated is the support staff, but that the support staff focuses much on serving the operating core. It is thus a highly decentralised structure, in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions. A great deal of the power over the operating work rests at the bottom of the structure with the professionals of the operating core (Peterson 1991).

Such organisations are often called collegial organisations. Some professionals like to describe them as inverse pyramids, with the professional operators at the top and the administrators down below to serve them. These professional bureaucracies also have major implications for middle management to improve their services to internal as well as external customers.

### **2.2.2 Globalisation**

Globalisation has necessitated extreme adjustments to institutions and societies alike. These adjustments include workers with multiple, transferable skills that enable them to deal flexibly with challenges of the new higher education landscape.

From the literature perspectives of Ludeman (in Ludeman, Turner & Kaunda 2001), and Campbell and Van der Wende (2000), it is clear that, when referring to higher education, the term "internationalisation" is being preferred to "globalisation". These terms are often tossed around inconsistently and are

defined in many ways. According to Anderson and Maharasoa (2002), internationalisation is the conscious and voluntary collaboration among higher education institutions with a view to enhancing efficiency in their core functions. A "working definition" of internationalisation at the national sector/institutional levels is proposed by Knight (2004:11), namely the "process of integrating an international, intercultural or global dimension into the purpose, functions or delivery" of higher education. Ludeman (in Ludeman *et al.* 2001) refers to the term "internationalisation" as the process of developing an international spirit and ethos, advocating for a community of interests among nations, and the condition or quality of being international in character, principles, concern, or attitudes. According to the same writer, Dr Maurice Harari, former Secretary General of the International Association of University Presidents, clearly favours the use of internationalisation when it comes to higher education. Turner (in Ludeman *et al.* 2001) however, suggests that the terms should be used interchangeably as each affects the other, but the researcher prefers the term "internationalisation". Higher education has an obligation to develop a globally literate workforce through, among others, internationalising curricula, expanding exchange programmes for students, staff development, creating an international ethos of higher education institutions and through development and cooperative programmes with institutions abroad.

The motivation to promote internationalisation of higher education can be twofold. Ludeman (in Ludeman *et al.* 2001) argues that the recruitment of international students provides extensive revenue for higher education institutions and is therefore vital to helping sustain the feasibility of the institutions. The same writer adds that internationalisation of higher education institutions can also be supported for humanistic reasons, contributing to strategies aimed to equipping the capacity of people in the South to compete more favourably with the North.

According to Van der Merwe (2002), internationalisation also provides us with the competitive advantage so vital to educational well-being. But, according to

Ludeman *et al.* (2001), the services currently offered in many South African higher education institutions are not designed to cope with internationalisation. If the system is to promote internationalisation, it will need to pay serious attention to the quality and capacity of support services. Higher education institutions in South Africa are admitting more international students, because students have become more mobile. International offices at higher education institutions are becoming well established. Recruitment agencies are recruiting international students for higher education institutions and it is becoming a successful business for these agencies.

Kaunda (in Ludeman *et al.* 2001) outlines some of the challenges facing support services in responding to internationalisation within the context of South Africa's changed role in Africa. Previously many African countries sent their scholars to the UK, the USA, Europe and other parts of the world. However, escalating exchange rates, political and economic instability in many African countries and the consequential collapse of educational systems, have led to a shift to the South, making South Africa a sought after destination and provider of educational opportunities. This shift is in line with the protocol of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) that promises cooperation among countries in the Southern African region. Challenges with regard to adequacy of support services relate to accommodation, funding, recruitment and admissions, student well-being and counselling services, as well as orientation programmes.

The emergence of the concept "internationalisation at home" (Knight 2004:17) is increasingly gaining ground in higher education. As Wachter (in Knight 2004:17) delineates, this concept has been developed to accentuate the aspects of internationalisation that would happen on a home campus, for example the intercultural and international dimension in the teaching and learning process, the extracurricular activities, and the relationships with local, cultural and ethnic groups.

The role of the middle manager in administrative positions to facilitate internationalisation is therefore important. The middle manager should be developed to be able to accommodate the changes brought about by increased internationalisation. If the higher education institution has taken an integrative and sustainable approach to internationalisation, a very broad range of policy and procedure statements would be implicated, ranging from quality assurance, planning, finances, staffing, curriculum, student support, research, and so forth (Knight 2004:16). Middle management skills for ICT as well as for service delivery are imperative in this regard. Badat (1999) adds to this view that people have to be trained, while higher education services and the infrastructure have to be strengthened. He states that this requires the development of professionals and knowledge workers, particularly middle management, not only with skills, but also middle managers who are socially responsible and conscious of their role in contributing to national development and social transformation.

Since higher education is a global activity, the global trends impact on every country in the world. This is no less the case with the massification of higher education.

### **2.2.3 Massification**

The imperative worldwide to make higher education more accessible to greater sections of all societies, has been necessitated by the shift from élite to "massified" higher education systems. In addition, more so-called "non-traditional" students (regarding age, gender and race) engaged with lifelong learning, are entering the higher education system. Older, more mature students, students with physical disabilities and different cultural and language backgrounds, imply that middle managers in administrative positions should be sensitive to their needs and cater for them. Increasing enrolments in many developing countries have led to poor managerial effectiveness and an accompanying decline in quality. Maassen and Cloete (2002:28) state that with massification the central administration in higher education became more

complex, which has led to the professionalisation of administration. The increasing student numbers and the varying needs of the "non-traditional" students make major demands on staff. According to Whyley and Callender (1997), this increase was one of the biggest changes experienced by administrative staff. The entering of these "non-traditional" students automatically leads to a more diverse student population, which in turn leads to debates regarding access leading to a dropping of standards among staff of higher education institutions worldwide, particularly in South Africa.

There is, however, a different view on this. From a post-modernistic viewpoint, quality is increased through increased access. Perry (in Bergquist, Arburua, Bishop & Smith 1995) notes that a successful education of the highest quality requires that students be exposed to many different aspects of the world around them. We are all part of a complex and turbulent world, regardless of our class, economic status, upbringing, nationality, race, or gender. He furthermore states that students and staff must be exposed to diversity and complexity if – for no other reason – than to move beyond a simplistic, dualistic frame of reference to a more complex and relativistic one. Diversity and complexity are achieved by increasing access – by opening the doors of higher education institutions to differing perspectives and value systems.

Mandew (2000) reiterates that increasing access for all students requires more than the simple disbanding of legal barriers that previously denied entry to higher education institutions based on discriminatory criteria. He further states that academic as well as administrative staff, especially management, have an obligation to create campus environments conducive to students' successful completion of their educational goals. This statement underlines the importance of "access with success", not just "access with participation".

Middle management also has an obligation to create campus environments to the differing perspectives and value systems conducive to internal and external customers of higher education. As the higher education populations become



more diverse, so do needs and expectations of higher education. According to Kraak (1999), higher education institutions are rapidly changing to cater for this diverse population by new delivery modes, including weekend and evening classes, as well as a significant growth in distance education programming. The researcher would add that higher education institutions should also cater for the psychological well-being of these diverse customers, because they need to be supported during the changes taking place in order to adapt to these changes.

Fehnel (2002) adds that growth in the numbers of students in higher education has led to government policies that have supported the diversification and differentiation of higher education landscapes worldwide. The report of the NCHE (1996:5), for example, states that: "A key feature of the new framework [for transformation] is a policy of growth: that is, an expansion of student enrolments ...Greater numbers of students will be recruited from a broader distribution of social groups and classes". In addition, the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) reaffirms the recommendations of the NCHE (1996) in calling for increased diversity of providers and greater differentiation of academic programmes.

It is important to note that in South Africa the expected massification did not materialise in higher education institutions. This view is confirmed by Strasheim (2001), who indicates that an alarming issue is the declining rate of participation in higher education, which has dropped to levels equivalent to those of the least developed countries. This alarming issue of the declining rate of participation in South African higher education is further highlighted by the recent notion in 2004 of enrolment capping as proposed by the DoE that is forcing institutions to be much more precise and alert with regard to management information systems, enrolment planning and merging. Enrolment capping entails the making of projections in quotas as well as diversity in enrolment planning. Strasheim (2001) also states that in South Africa, only 15% of the relevant age group is enrolled in the higher education system, while numbers are continuing to decline. This percentage compares unfavourably with the 51% average

participation rate for member states of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. The comparative figure for the USA is 71%.

A report by HEFCE (2002) indicates that the success of government policies to increase the number of students in higher education will depend on raising the aspirations of young people from lower socio-economic groups. Achieving the previously set targets will bring enormous educational, economic and social benefits to nations. Obviously students from disadvantaged backgrounds, part-time students and mature students – diverse groups – will make up the most significant pool of potential demand.

The role of ICT that offers more educational opportunity is also vital to increase student numbers.

#### **2.2.4 Information and communication technology**

Fisser (2002) advocates that worldwide the use of ICT in education is seen as a major response to changes in the context of higher education. Cloete (1997) adds his opinion to the aforementioned statements by stating that advancements in ICT have dramatically affected how and where knowledge generation takes place. The increasing generation and accessing of knowledge has led to what is often referred to as the "knowledge society", promoted mainly by higher education institutions.

The advancements and growing usage of ICT in higher education not only impacted on IT staff, but had involved all administrative staff in a wider range and a higher level of functions. Szucs (2002) identifies three levels of integration of technology in higher education institutions: a low profile approach, where individual lecturers use the technology for enhancing effectiveness of their education (for example information searches on the Internet); a higher profile approach includes systematic integration of the technology in the life of the institution; and a high profile approach is the implementation of the virtual

university concept, for example e-learning and computer-assisted learning. In this regard Hohnbaum (2002) refers to strategic blended e-learning to utilise the "power" of technology for real social and educational change bringing benefits to all its users, which include users beyond higher education institutions' national borders, by creating so-called "virtual universities" (Van der Merwe 2002).

The previously mentioned levels of integration have a major impact on middle management, because opportunities for middle managers to revolutionise the way that they manage their administrative processes, is consequently created by ICT. Van Niekerk (in *Volksblad* of 16 October 2001:12) confirms that the value of ICT has increased drastically over the past few years. This view is also underscored and elaborated on by Butcher (2000) in stating that the increasing value lies not only in possessing information, but rather in developing the skills and capacity to manipulate it effectively for new applications. The importance of developing management information systems is clearly indicated in applying new applications. New technology makes it possible for companies to improve management and thereby to streamline and simplify their activities. Management can be improved because information regarding management issues is readily available. The value of ICT in, for example, financial management cannot be overestimated due to the accounting software that is available on the market and which makes every conceivable section of financial management more accurate and efficient. Thus ICT is vital for administrative purposes in higher education. Fehnel (2002) elaborates by saying that ICT is used in student services; where electronic admission forms are replacing paper to reduce the cost and time required to maintaining files; and where a better collection of administrative data can be done with a reduced number of errors. The same writer further adds that the career counsellor is aided by software programmes that can provide up-to-date career outlooks, vocational interest inventories and personality tests. Administration in higher education has moved to computerised records and systems for information-sharing among different sections of higher education institutions.

Van Eldik (2000:131) is of the opinion that higher education institutions in South Africa need to revise their strategies in order to exploit their opportunities and challenges in technological innovation. This includes, among others, educational programmes for high-level technologically skilled human resources; in addition to research and development programmes which address the development, adaptation and distribution of technology. The middle manager in administrative positions in higher education can be instrumental in exploiting these opportunities and challenges in ICT.

Woods (2002) adds that by using Portal and Web Platform infrastructure solutions, higher education institutions can now provide access to systems and services to students, staff, alumni and prospective students in a way never before thought possible, by creating a unified digital campus. He continues that the unified digital campus can be accessed by using a single password and a central browser-like interface, enabling students, faculty and staff to easily and reliably access campus information and services, including registration, student records, e-mail, course resources, portals, targeted news, as well as many other Web services. This leads to the development and maintenance of a digital campus environment that delivers personalised and relevant information and resources to each member of the higher education community.

Fehnel (2002) maintains that innovations are also taking place at national system levels, through the introduction of sophisticated networking that allows the enrolment status, financial status and human resource status of an entire system to be monitored on a regular basis. Reporting by higher education institutions to government agencies is increasingly done electronically.

There is therefore no doubt that the management of a higher education institution is highly dependent on the capability of the corporate information systems associated with administrative functions, as delineated by McKinnon, Walker and Davis (2000). The effectiveness of these systems is essential for the smooth day-to-day operations of the institution and for the provision of

information to enable decision-making. The Management Information Systems of higher education institutions are also highlighted in the HEQC's Institutional Audit Manual (CHE HEQC 2003). Student access, assessment, throughput, retention and completion rates as well as the profiles of programmes will be addressed during the HEQC audits at higher education institutions. Therefore it is imperative to make optimal use of ICT. Video conferencing is becoming increasingly vital with regard to the merged and incorporated institutions. Satellite campuses of the main campuses need to be informed and to participate in discussions and meetings simultaneously in order to render quality services.

The communication channel strategies of higher education institutions have also become even more prominent with the emergence of ICT as customers' expectations are dynamically reset and increased almost daily (Thompson 2000). Middle managers will experience relentless pressure to understand and meet their customers' rapidly changing needs. An interesting perspective is gained from Lester Wunderman (in Centre-ing Services 2002:2), the mail order and direct marketing pioneer. He states: "History tells us that no medium destroys another. Every medium we've ever had still exists." In the service business face-to-face, letter, fax, phone, sms, e-mail and web channels have the ability to co-exist and complement one another. Middle management have to realise this, without losing perspective of the critical role of ICT in the current higher education landscape.

ICT could also be of great benefit in the training and development of middle management due to the potential advantages of flexibility in time and place of use, which means that training and development are easier to combine with the middle manager's working obligations. The most limiting factor in this scenario could remain the unwillingness by middle management to become familiar with the new high technology solutions, but surely this should be addressed in the development of middle management.

ICT has an enormous influence on competition as well as cooperation, which is also one of the national needs and imperatives to respond to. There is an outcry in South Africa from governmental sources for inter-institutional as well as regional cooperation and collaboration.

### 2.2.5 Competition and cooperation

Strasheim (2001) cautions that it is essential to understand the process whereby the student makes a choice of institution. Price is regarded as less important, and customers actively seek the opinion of others when they evaluate knowledge products. Very often the opinions of current internal and external customers are required, and good relations with current customers are therefore of the utmost importance. With the increasing need for continuous education, higher education has to ensure that customers will be able to return frequently. In this way, current customers can be transformed to lifelong customers (Strasheim 2001). Of the utmost importance is to bear in mind that Pitman (2000) warns that part of the customer's positive memories and future recommendations of a higher education institution would include the quality service provided by its administrative staff. Good administration is also dependent on developing strong working relationships with customers on and off campus (Barr 1993).

According to Strasheim (2001), middle management in higher education has a responsibility to manage customer expectations, keep pace with customer needs, and find better and innovative ways of serving its customers. Baker (1990) emphasises that internal customers are seen to be just as important as external customers. He argues that, unless internal customers are treated well and treat one another well, it is impossible to develop an effective service orientation towards external customers. Middle management should acknowledge that the customer chain is constantly changing and a continuous campaign to make service delivery more service-oriented and in line with the requirements of the time should be striven after. Constant renewal, training and development of

middle management in higher education should be a priority in order to be at the forefront of service-orientated management in this competitive environment.

Kraak (1999) advocates that, ironically in an era of high competition, higher education institutions seek cooperation with other national and international institutions in an environment characterised by restructuring and transforming of higher education. This seemingly contradictory condition of simultaneously cooperating and competing with other higher education institutions, has, according to Fehnel (2002), been demanded by governments and other funders of higher education due to unnecessary duplication or redundancy. Funders are unwilling to support continuation of these activities. The same writer adds that the rise in competition has been advanced by pressures for growth caused by increases in demand for higher education services, coupled with declining budgets available to higher education institutions. The rise in cooperation has been brought about by necessity; necessity to share expenses as a better way to find adequate funds to support required investments in expensive new facilities, new ICT, new research programmes, and even new staff. Walters *et al.* (2001) emphasise that collaborations and alliances should be based on common interest, mutual respect and a desire to attain social justice. Social justice also implies complying with legislation, while the division of legal services/labour relations at higher education institutions has a major role to play in this regard.

The paradox of competition and collaboration should be seen as the way for higher education institutions to break out of existing hierarchies and position themselves for the future. This perspective should also be realised by middle management in higher education, with the emphasis that service delivery remains at the heart of competition as well as collaboration, because internal and external customers demand quality service.

The relationship between the internal customers, specifically between the academic staff and administrative staff, quite often leads to tension/conflict.

### 2.2.6 Academic staff versus administrative staff

Apart from the conflict that can occur due to other internal and external customers concerning the service delivery of administrative staff, conflict between academic and administrative staff members is currently prevalent in higher education institutions.

Bladerston (in Pitman 2000) puts it bluntly that academic staff create a value system in which administrative staff – even those at senior levels – cannot share. He continues by stating that administrative staff are sometimes the victims of academic snobbery, which leads to many administrative staff retreating into bureaucracy as a defence mechanism. According to Pitman (2000), the challenge for middle management is to allow their subordinates to develop personal relationships with academic staff, while at the same time encouraging that quality service standards are not overlooked.

The WHESDN/HESDA (2002), however, describes the conflict between academic and administrative staff more mildly as a lack of a "collegiate mindset", stating that academics and support staff are absorbed in and focus exclusively on their own spheres of interest. But the problematic nature with regard to the immense tension and the related rift between academic and administrative staff in higher education institutions is a cause for great conflict. Although the contributions of both academic as well as administrative staff to the success of higher education are imperative, academic staff members do not regard administrative staff as equal members and valuable partners. What aggravates the rift between these partners, is that administrative staff have to deal with pressures from both top management – who have lost touch with the real problems on ground level – and academic staff – who have requests and sometimes unrealistic expectations from administrative staff, who have to adhere to certain policies and procedures. Academic staff thus see the administrative staff as the "spanner in their wheel". Academic staff also regard themselves as the core of higher education institutions without realising that the institutions would not be able to function



effectively without administrative staff. This conflict has a major impact on the morale of administrative staff, because if something goes wrong, they are blamed. They are also considered as less intellectual by their academic counterparts. It is thus vital that the middle manager in the administrative cadre be orientated and empowered to handle and manage this destructive conflict that has such a negative impact on morale and service delivery. Middle managers face a dilemma in building high morale among administrative staff in the current higher education landscape to sustain and improve quality service delivery.

According to Ramsden (1998), academic staff report a decline in the amount of time allocated to research and an increase in time allocated to administrative work that contributes to dissatisfaction among academics. Negative attitudes and refusal to participate in support activities (Ramsden 1998:19) are the results thereof. Channel Consulting (2003) also reports on new tasks in higher education institutions that are blurring old distinctions between categories of staff. Ongoing pressures to find more time to accommodate the multitude of expectations that are placed upon them are experienced by academic staff. A majority now believe that their administrative load has increased substantially in recent years and this apparently causes the greatest dissatisfaction among academic staff members. This great dissatisfaction again impacts negatively on administrative staff.

In a higher education landscape where diversity and conflict are major issues to deal with, it is also expected of management and staff to adhere to ethical standards.

### **2.2.7 Ethics in higher education institutions**

According to Pace (1999:1), the domain of ethics includes moral judgements as to what is right and what is wrong. Properly understood, ethics is the study of right and wrong, while morality is the degree to which one behaves in an ethical

way. Ethical judgements affect and are affected by beliefs, assumptions, individual and corporate/cultural values.

Managers are the people primarily responsible for managing ethics in the workplace. Managing ethics holds tremendous benefit for middle managers; both moral and practical benefits. This is particularly true today when it is critical to understand and manage highly diverse values in the higher education environment.

Hunsaker (2001:98) maintains that the middle manager's decisions set the standard for subordinates and help create a tone for the higher education unit and the institution as a whole. Because the behaviour of management is under increasing scrutiny, middle management behaving ethically could improve the quality of work life for the employees in their units, which, in turn, could lead to quality service delivery to all customers.

Middle managers should thus consider the ethics of total quality management (TQM) in their efforts to attain managerial and employee commitment and supportive behaviours. Pace (1999) is of the opinion that adding ethical considerations to training and communication could be beneficial in gaining managerial and employee commitment to TQM.

There is a growing body of research that shows that sound ethics contributes directly to sound and profitable business, affecting not only staff morale, performance and efficiency, but even profits and market leadership (Cotter 1999). Ethics should thus play a central role in every administrative unit of a higher education institution in providing normative guidance, standards for behaviour, and goals for policy and practice. The primary task of middle management in administrative units should focus on skills in creating learning environments that encourage continuous improvement in service delivery.

Hunsaker (2001:103) emphasises that ethical behaviour can be encouraged by

developing a code of ethics which should be communicated often and well by the middle manager. According to the same writer, the behaviour of management is the strongest single influence on an individual's ethical or unethical behaviour, so middle management in administrative units of higher education institutions should lead by example.

The aforementioned international trends of higher education have a direct and major impact on the national trends of higher education institutions in South Africa.

### **2.3 NATIONAL TRENDS IMPACTING ON MIDDLE MANAGEMENT IN HIGHER EDUCATION**

The importance of political decision-making and the central role of government in higher education cannot be denied. This is especially true in South Africa where its higher education system is fundamentally flawed by inequities, imbalances and distortions deriving from its history and present structure (NCHE 1996:1). According to Maassen and Cloete (2002), the NCHE has two central tasks, namely to rid higher education of apartheid and to modernise higher education with international experiences and exposure.

What is often said is that – in the South African higher education context – we are experiencing two transformation processes simultaneously, namely the “general” (political) transformation of the entire South African society, as well as the transformation of higher education in order to stay in line and competitive within a global higher education environment. This transformation process of higher education was spearheaded by the government, thus the role of the government needs further elaboration.

### 2.3.1 The changing role of government

The trend in many countries appears to be that the government's role is becoming more indirect, more supervisory and more incentives-based. In South Africa the emphasis of the government's role falls on coordination, regulation and the provision of incentives for both public and private higher education institutions to assist them in meeting national training, research and service needs. Fehnel (2002) confirms this perspective by stating that there has been a decided shift away from central control and management of higher education systems by national governments towards a model of shared or cooperative governance. But the same writer also emphasises that this model of cooperative governance was only briefly implemented in South Africa between 1994 and 1998. He continues his argument by stating that by 1999, the government's higher education policy changed, with the result that South Africa has clearly moved towards state control of higher education. According to him, South Africa is pursuing mergers of higher education institutions with different missions and different histories and limiting the growth of private providers (Fehnel 2002).

Government has also recognised the skills shortage in the country, which is well known and documented. Overall, according to Asmal (2001b), the skills profile indicates a shortage of high-level skills, especially in management. This shortage is equally applicable to middle management in higher education institutions. Consequently, the South African government has put into place several "progressively enabling" (Asmal 2001b) acts and policies to emphasise the crucial necessity of empowerment of middle management in higher education institutions.

#### 2.3.1.1 *Policy and legislation*

Although many acts, policies and legislation have an impact on the higher education system, the researcher will concentrate on those directly related to staff development. Already in Chapter 1, acts and policies that underline the

importance of the development/empowerment of higher education staff – applicable to middle management in administrative positions – were briefly discussed. These acts and policies will consequently be further discussed and elaborated on. Policy and legislation pertaining to quality assurance and how they impact on middle managers, are discussed in 2.3.3.1.

Most higher education institutions have restructured their primary governance structures to be in line with the requirements of the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) by paying particular attention to creating roles for those who have been previously disempowered. The implementation of measures for the removal of barriers to the selection and training of previously disempowered groups will realise equity. In order to ensure real redress/equity, opportunities should be created to empower the previously disempowered groups.

In August 1997, the government published the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997) which aimed to change fundamentally the internal environment of the higher education institutions. The higher education system must be transformed to redress the past inequalities, to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities. This Paper laid the foundation for all other policies/acts and initiatives. It set the tone and also laid the foundation for the transformation of the South African higher education landscape. Other documents, policies and acts that followed, reinforce and elaborate on the higher education issues identified in this Paper, among others, the needs in terms of human resource development.

The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998a) (see 1.3) implies the redress of staff inequities in institutions, with major implications for human resource development of middle management. This Act recognises that, as a result of apartheid and other discriminatory laws and practices, there are disparities in – among others – employment and income within the national labour market. These disparities create explicit disadvantages for certain categories of people and cannot simply be redressed by repealing discriminatory laws. Therefore,

unfair discrimination in employment should be eliminated; the implementation of employment equity to address discrimination should be ensured; and a diverse workforce, broadly representative of the South African nation, should be achieved. The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998a:8) also ensures that appropriate affirmative action measures are taken by the institutions. This, according to the Act, is to ensure that qualified people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equally represented in all occupational categories and levels in the institutions.

Lange (2002) furthermore adds that equality also implies giving people opportunities, but institutional cultures are not facilitative. Although the ultimate resource of higher education is its people, there is still a persistence of inequalities in higher education institutions, especially in middle management. The achievement of equity is crucially linked to higher education institutions' capacity to mobilise human resources of a quality that meets development needs in an increasingly competitive global environment. However, increased equity is meaningless if people do not succeed in their jobs. The development of people, including middle managers in higher education institutions, is therefore imperative.

It is important to note that a high premium is placed on equity and efficiency in higher education. Finding an effective balance between these often competing imperatives has been a major challenge to South African higher education (Scott 2003). Development is therefore essential in achieving success in middle management in higher education.

The Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b) has, among others, the objective of providing an institutional framework to implement national, sectoral and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workplace. The Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b), like the Skills Development Levies Act (RSA 1999), also has important benefits for middle managers in higher education, among others, to equip them with the skills needed for

employment growth and development. This can be done through development and training.

The Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b) also provides the legislative framework for the national SDS (RSA DoL 2000). The SDS is directed at the development of high-level skills for the formal economy, applicable to middle management in higher education institutions. The vision "Skills for productive citizenship for all" of the SDS is underpinned by guiding principles, namely lifelong learning, the promotion of equity, demand-led skills development, efficiency and effectiveness (Mandew 2003). These are vital in the development of middle management in higher education. Justifications for the SDS include "the structural rigidities and inequalities inherited from the apartheid era"; the "dual challenges of social development" and global competitiveness; the need to transform the labour force from a low skills base to "one that is committed to high quality lifelong learning"; making the labour market more responsive and better able to "improve the employability of the country's workforce" (CHE 2002:9).

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) regards the question of labour market trends and needs and related human resource development as important to social and economic development in "a knowledge driven world". Walters *et al.* (2001) confirm that the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) focuses quite extensively on the development of key skills and competencies, including management skills. This signifies the recognition by government of the shortage of high-level and management skills in higher education.

One of the priorities of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is to increase the representation of designated groups in administrative positions, especially at senior levels, which include middle management. Taking into account that the issue of quality is at the heart of the work of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), the "creation of a learning society", as well as creating the "opportunity to advance and develop", is critical. Tensions between achievement on the one hand, and

efficiency on the other, make this a complex and difficult task. The development of middle managers could certainly relieve these tensions.

The adoption of a HRDS (RSA DoL 2001) by the government recently is perhaps one of the most important steps in South Africa's fight against the effects of underdevelopment (Asmal 2001a). The underdevelopment of the most important resource of South Africa, its people, is one of the major characteristics of the past. The national HRDS (RSA DoL 2001) takes as its point of departure the country's Constitution, according to which "everyone has inherent dignity and the right to have their dignity respected and protected" (CHE 2002:7). The HRDS has two roles, namely to ensure that those people who suffered from discrimination as a result of apartheid are put at the front of the queue in terms of identified national priorities, and to ensure that the various components of the public and private sector work together in a co-ordinated way to deliver opportunities for human development. Linked to these roles are the strategic objectives of the HRDS which are, among others, to improve the foundations for human development; to improve the supply of high quality skills, especially scarce skills which are more responsive to social and economic needs; and to increase employer participation in lifelong learning (Asmal 2001a). These objectives are equally applicable and relevant to the development of middle managers in higher education.

In South Africa as a whole there is a relatively weak tradition of human resource development and Fourie (2003) maintains that even in the education sector the human resource development function is often low and poorly resourced. This is particularly true of higher education as well. Consequently, the South African government also realised the need for the development of policies that would specifically look into issues relating to the welfare of staff in higher education institutions.

Of major importance in this regard was the establishment of the ETDPS SETA in May 2002. Two of the SETA's first strategic objectives are to increase access to,



and the provision of, high quality and relevant training of employed people across member organisations, as well as to describe and advocate appropriate career paths (Fourie 2003).

The mission this ETDP SETA set for itself is to promote and facilitate an increase in the skills profile of the higher education sector's workforce to benefit employers, workers and employees and to encourage partnerships and assure quality of provision. The ETDP SETA also advocates the establishment of learnerships in higher education and has proposed three learnerships, namely for academic, administrative and laboratory staff (Hay & Tisani 2002). Learnerships are viewed as sets of tools aimed at addressing problematic occupational inequities of the South African labour market. Du Pré (2003) adds that learnerships were introduced to provide for a combination of work and study to address the lack of skills. He continues by saying that the higher education sector is crucial in assisting in the designing of learnership programmes and providing the teaching of these programmes. According to Du Pré (2003:5), there is ample opportunity for persons to add value to their skills through a "constant process of upskilling, reskilling and multiskilling". Fourie (2003) adds that a crucial part of the skills development process is to identify urgently needed skills. Middle management skills in higher education can certainly be identified as urgently needed skills.

There have been several important recent initiatives within South Africa and on the African continent with regard to the development of high level person-power or with major implications for the development of high level person-power (CHE 2002:1). In a recent publication, the CHE (2002) refers to gripping international evidence that Africa cannot generate sustainable socio-economic development without investment in human development. NEPAD relies on and will call on higher education to contribute to its programmes and projects through knowledge production and the production of high level person-power (CHE 2002:5). Thus higher education has a vital contribution to make in giving effect to NEPAD. But, as Asmal (2001b) cautions, the NEPAD plan can only work if

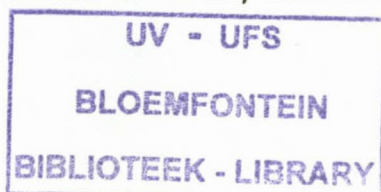
there are human resources equipped with the appropriate knowledge and skills necessary to drive the development.

The restructuring of the higher education system saw the institution of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which was jointly established by the Departments of Education and Labour with inputs from organised business and labour. The aim of SAQA is to oversee the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF), including the registration of national standards and qualifications; ensuring compliance with provisions for accreditation; and ensuring that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable (RSA 1995). SAQA has the responsibility for establishing two subsidiary sets of institutions; National Standards Bodies (NSBs) which register the national standards and qualifications, and Education and Training Quality Assurance bodies (ETQAs) which ensure that the standards set are achieved (in *Skilling South Africa* of February 2001:2).

The objective of the NQF is to "create a national framework for learning achievements; facilitate access to and mobility within education and training; and enhance the quality of education and training". A regulatory framework will be established under the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997), to ensure that only private institutions with the necessary infrastructure and resources to provide and sustain quality higher education programmes will be registered. Such programmes will need to be accredited through procedures established by SAQA as part of the NQF.

The HEQC was also established by the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) through the CHE. The promotion of quality assurance in higher education institutions is highlighted by the HEQC, which will be elaborated on in 2.3.3.1.

The higher education landscape in South Africa is currently being transformed and restructured into institutional mergers of which originally 36 higher education institutions will be reduced to 22, consisting of 11 universities, five



universities of technology and six comprehensive institutions. In November 2003, the Cabinet approved proposals for the restructuring of the higher education landscape in South Africa through mergers and incorporations. Mergers and incorporations of certain higher education institutions were approved as from 1 January 2004, while mergers and incorporations of other higher education institutions were approved for implementation on 1 January 2005 (RSA DoE 2003). These incorporations and mergers also have psychological effects on higher education staff regarding a fear of losing their jobs and increasing workloads. More effective middle management is also needed for the administrative processes to function effectively during and directly after these mergers and incorporations. The former Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, also announced that all Technikons be called Universities of Technology. This announcement has major implications for previously called Technikons. Not only does it imply a new status for these institutions, but also new skills needed for staff and management – including middle management in administrative positions – to contribute to an improved higher education landscape.

The important acts and policies that have been discussed in the preceding paragraphs, all highlight the importance and centrality of the production of high level person-power for economic growth and development and for more general social development and transformation in South Africa. All point to the challenge of human resource development and the production of high level person-power (CHE 2002:13). Producing high quality graduates with the knowledge, competencies, skills and attitudes that are necessary to economic and social development is the central task of higher education.

The deduction can therefore be made that currently a variety of acts and policies exist which impact on higher education institutions and play a vital role to ensure that training and development in higher education contribute to the socio-economic and personal growth that needs to take place.

In addition, these acts and policies aim to encourage employers and employees, including middle management in the administrative cadre in higher education institutions, to turn the workplace into a learning environment.

With government being the largest and most important funder of higher education, the funding system will consequently be elaborated on.

#### 2.3.1.2 *Funding*

According to Fehnel (2002), one of the most significant new global realities of higher education is the extent to which public institutions are finding their dependence on governmental funding lessening. For decades higher education institutions relied on subsidy from national government, but in the current scenario of declining resources and changing funding formulae, it is inevitable that higher education institutions should diversify their funding base. The same writer continues to say that the results of this trend had both positive and negative effects on institutions. For many, planning in general and strategic planning in particular has become a more serious activity to position themselves for continued growth and financial stability. For others, it has been creating major financial problems.

Clark's (1997) viewpoint of funding in higher education is that financial resources can be grouped into three broad streams, namely mainline, standardised support from a government; research council support; and party support, for example industry, private giving, student fees. This view that higher education has three sources of income, is confirmed by Van der Merwe (2002).

South Africa has been no different from the rest of the world in searching for ways to diversify sources of funding for higher education. Some innovative ways have been found by agencies to assist institutions in diversifying their revenue base, for example the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b), since its accompanying levy calls for creative higher education providers to pursue new

revenues. The Technology and Human Resources for Industry Programme (THRIP) initiative of the National Research Foundation (NRF), has generated substantial new sources of revenue from the private sector (Fehnel 2002). With the current restructuring of the South African higher education system, funding of higher education remains a thorny issue. Strasheim (2001) suggests that the private sector has a great opportunity to influence the future of higher education. Internationally, many corporations, higher education institutions and governments are revisiting the relevance of the roles played by higher education systems in society.

It is clear that financial constraints cause higher education institutions to rethink the ways in which they allocate their resources. The implications are that middle management in administrative positions have to be more productive and there is an urgent need for middle management to be empowered with financial skills due to decentralising budgets. It is also expected that the way in which South African higher education institutions respond to national needs and imperatives, will - to a great extent - influence the funding of the higher education system.

Another national trend impacting on higher education in South Africa is the "glass ceiling syndrome".

### **2.3.2 The glass ceiling syndrome**

According to Gericke (in *Rapport/City Press* of 5 October 2003:1) the "glass ceiling" represents the unfulfilled needs and emotions of people in the workplace. Women already experienced this glass ceiling syndrome for many years due to discriminatory measures against them, but currently White males are increasingly starting to become the victims of this syndrome. When the chase to success is at an end - either due to a lack of self- and career development or affirmative action measures - their career suddenly becomes just another job. The results are despondency and a negative attitude towards their responsibilities at work, specifically managing their administrative units. These workers are inclined to be

less productive and they suffer from what Gericke calls the "victim mentality". Many of the current middle management positions in higher education are filled by people who have reached this glass ceiling, which has an extremely negative effect on their subordinates. This calls for extreme intervention. These middle managers have to be further developed in their current positions in an attempt to create meaning to their jobs again, which could ultimately have a positive impact on the employees of their higher education units. This will, in turn, lead to quality service delivery.

### 2.3.3 The emphasis on quality assurance

Worldwide quality assurance has gained great prominence over the past few years, especially in South Africa, with the vital importance of benchmarking South African higher education institutions against other European universities. The European Ministers of Education called upon universities, other higher education institutions, national agencies and the European Network for Quality Assurance (ENQA) to collaborate in establishing a common framework of reference and to disseminate good practice. This mandate has been taken up by the ENQA as a challenge to work even more actively in the process towards ensuring a credible European quality assurance environment (ENQA 2003). Although most countries already have formal quality assurance systems in place, Maassen (in Cloete 1997) interestingly notes that the UK is currently probably the only country in the world where institutional funding is directly linked to quality assessment.

Trow (in Cloete 1997) links the quality debate to a change in the relationship between higher education institutions and their communities. According to him, the change is most obviously reflected in the increased demand for accountability, accompanied by a decrease in trust. The fundamental questions about accountability revolve around *who* is to be held accountable. He categorises accountability into external - the obligation to supporters and society at large to provide assurance that they are pursuing their mission and using their

resources responsibly - and internal - the accountability of those within the institution to one another on how they are performing and whether they are trying to learn where improvement is needed. These categories could be kept in mind and practised by the middle manager in his quest for quality customer service.

Noruwana (1997) adds to Trow's (in Cloete 1997) perspective by expressing the viewpoint that quality assurance is necessary to redress the imbalances of the past as a result of the demands of transformation and internationalisation of higher education as well as demands for public accountability. This accountability to – among others – government, parents, students and the world of work, has led to more pressure on higher education institutions to prove quality. But, as Hay (2001) so accurately notes, South African higher education institutions will indeed have to overcome their past, transform their systems and adhere to the quality demands of a global higher education system.

According to Lenn (in Campbell & Van der Wende 2000), these demands for international quality assurance were motivated by both external (the globalisation of the professions, regional trade agreements, and international organisations) and internal (enhanced international mobility of students and the overseas marketing of higher education systems) pressures. These aforementioned pressures are based on the strong belief that internationalisation enhances the quality of higher education. Campbell and Van der Wende (2000) confirm that the ideal would be an approach to quality assurance that is international in scope (that is, taking the international aspects of higher education explicitly into account) and application (using comparable methods and mechanisms, foreign experts, and so forth) leading to internationally comparable outcomes, facilitating the recognition of qualifications and degrees.

A discussion of the most important bodies, policies and legislation that impact on the proposed quality assurance system in the South African higher education system will follow next.

### 2.3.3.1 *Policy and legislation related to quality assurance*

As far as the structured framework for quality and quality assurance is concerned, provision is made in the SAQA Act (RSA 1995) for two types of bodies, namely:

- Bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications.
- Bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications (Du Toit 1996). According to him, the Act therefore defines only broad parameters for the internal structure of the NQF as far as quality assurance is concerned.

Hay (2001) states that, through the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997), the HEQC was established through the CHE as a permanent committee. The HEQC, as an ETQA body, was registered with SAQA and its *modus operandi* was determined by the CHE within the framework and procedural guidelines developed by SAQA. Hay (2001) further depicts that the mandate the CHE provides the HEQC via the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997) is to:

- promote quality assurance among constituent providers in higher education in order to facilitate the development of quality awareness and quality responsiveness in public and private provision; and
- audit the quality assurance mechanisms of higher education institutions.

Middle management has a vital part to play in the quality assurance processes of higher education institutions and the promotion thereof. They need to facilitate quality awareness among administrative staff and promote the implementation of quality in their administrative processes and customer services.

The Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b) also impacts on the proposed quality assurance system, for example higher education staff's skills have to be developed to improve quality. Quality will only be realised when the development



of management of previously designated groups as well as of traditional staff skills are being prioritised in higher education.

According to Hay (2001), the Education White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997), *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, notes that the primary responsibility for quality assurance is invested within the higher education institutions themselves. In this regard Hay (2001) refers to institutional quality assurance and management (IQAM) and states that the accountability purposes and the improvement purposes of IQAM are regarded as of equal importance.

The whole transformation process of higher education was initiated by the NCHE. Hay (2001) states that the report of the NCHE, entitled *A Framework for Transformation* (NCHE 1996:109), maintains that a "comprehensive, development-orientated quality assurance system is central to the creation of a single co-ordinated higher education system" and views quality assurance mechanisms as essential when trying to eradicate the vast discrepancies among institutions and their programmes (Hay 2001).

Staff development policies, plans and practices are focused on in the HEQC Institutional Audit Manual (CHE HEQC 2003). The scope and focus of the HEQC audit will, among others, be the policies, plans and practices to support and enhance quality assurance in institutional planning and resource allocation. This audit system should also contribute to the development of a higher education sector that can meet the learning and development needs of South African society. This sector should effectively address equity and development needs while meeting high quality standards. Specific quality-related goals are, among others, the achievement of equity and development goals with respect to staffing.

Quite often the problem is that not all higher education institutions or middle managers share the same notion or definition of quality. Without a common understanding of quality, it is difficult to make the desired progress in higher

education.

### **2.3.3.2**      *Defining quality*

The perspective of the difficulty in defining quality, is shared by Barnett (in Maassen 1995:64). He states that the concept of quality is "multidimensional and subjective" and there are as many "qualities of higher education" as there are sets of objectives and criteria that can be related to higher education. Ratcliff (1997:28) in addition warns that, in the context of globalisation, the expansion of knowledge, massification and increased accountability, defining quality becomes difficult.

This difficulty will be partly solved in that the Quality Promotion Unit (QPU), which was established by SAUVCA, argues that there should rather be a notion of quality instead of a definition (Lategan 1997:82). According to Hay (2001), the notion which the HEQC attaches to quality, is based on the following:

- *Fitness for purpose* in relation to specified mission within a national framework that encompasses differentiation and diversity.
- *Value for money* judged in relation to the full range of higher education purposes as set out in the White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997).
- *Transformation* in the sense of developing the capabilities of individual learners for personal enrichment, as well as the requirements of social development and economic and employment growth.

This notion of quality also stresses the multi-faceted responsibility of higher education institutions in addressing the needs and expectations of a variety of internal and external customers. The middle manager has a vital role to play in the quality assurance process, which will subsequently be discussed.

### **2.3.3.3**      *The role of the middle manager in quality assurance*

The middle manager has a responsibility in contributing to institutional quality. In this regard SAUVCA, in its analysis of quality assurance at universities, identifies

the following issues which need to be addressed through capacity-building and which can be of value to middle managers to build capacity in the implementation of quality assurance:

- Sharing and discussing of quality assurance models for self-evaluation, institutional audits, programme accreditation and student evaluations, as well as the joint development of generic quality assurance procedures.
- Building a culture of continuous quality improvement and a holistic institutional quality assurance system (Hay 2001).

It is evident that quality will have to move much higher up the higher education agenda in future. This could be realised by the implementation of the HEQC's quality assurance system (Scott 2003) that will gradually be phased in with institutional audits that have begun in 2004, mainly due to the current fluid higher education quality landscape. The audit system must contribute to the development of a higher education sector that can meet the complex learning and knowledge development needs of South African society. The primary policy goal in this regard is the creation of a single, co-ordinated and differentiated system of higher education that can effectively address issues such as equity and development while meeting high standards quality.

This high standards quality is equally applicable to middle management in higher education, of which Cloete (1997) proposes a total quality approach that stresses broad participation, constant improvement in their administrative processes, organisational learning, and a focus on the needs of the internal and external customer. According to Van der Merwe (2002), customers demand proof of quality before choosing to study at a particular higher education institution. Employers, too, are no longer satisfied with the traditions and perceptions associated with higher education institutions, and demand proof of quality of their academic activities.

The solution to the customers' demands might be found in what Thompson (2000:2) refers to as CVM, a leading approach to attract customer loyalty by

making the customer's view an integral part of business design. Successful CVM entails an understanding of the complex higher education system wherein customer expectations are set and devising ways to meet those expectations consistently. In this regard Cheales (2000) refers to service-orientated management. This new management philosophy, rapidly on the rise in more progressive businesses, encourages employees at all levels to think more creatively about ways to deliver quality customer service. It also stresses the importance of a willingness to realign organisational structures to meet customer needs more effectively. Although these approaches are used mainly in industry, it is increasingly promoted as a model for higher education. It is also important to note that a noticeable shift towards becoming client-driven has become increasingly visible in higher education.

The middle manager in higher education needs to understand how he can add value through what Strasheim (2001) refers to as "continuous improvement" in the quality of what he does, the service that he provides, and the efficiency and cost-effectiveness in which he does it. The quality of middle management in higher education institutions is central to their effectiveness and thus development of middle management is imperative, because, according to Fielden (1998), their development is central to the quality of higher education.

## 2.4 CONCLUSION

The implications of the international and national trends in higher education for middle managers in administrative positions are enormous. Stevens (in Strasheim 2001) mentions that change is a powerful influence that must be anticipated and managed. The ability of higher education to cope with the significant changes occurring internationally as well as nationally in the social, political and economic environment is questioned by him. He blames leadership for not providing the proactive sustained leadership that would place them at the forefront of executive thinking and action. The researcher is of the opinion that blaming leadership would only exaggerate the dilemma higher education finds

itself in. Solutions should be found, and solutions are possible by placing a greater emphasis on enabling and developing middle management in the administrative cadre of higher education.

Adequate development of middle managers is essential to ensure that higher education institutions are sufficiently flexible to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Middle managers need to be supported through training and development to adjust to the role demands which are considerably removed from the expectations of their predecessors (WHESDN/HESDA 2002). Fielden (1998) agrees that effective management demands new skills within higher education institutions which may not always be present among those who traditionally lead, as well as the newly appointed middle manager. Therefore the skills needed by today's middle managers in higher education call into question some of the traditional management structures and job specifications. The changing world of higher education is the motivation behind the increased need for multiple competencies in middle management to make service delivery more service-orientated and in line with the requirements of the changing higher education landscape (Strasheim 2001). This challenge should be addressed through development of middle management in higher education.

The next chapter deals with the management skills and competence profile for the new "managerial culture" (Fielden 1998) needed so urgently by middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions.

## CHAPTER 3

# COMPETENCE PROFILE AND MANAGEMENT SKILLS REQUIRED BY MIDDLE MANAGERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE OF HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

As stated in Chapter 2, technological developments, financial constraints, globalisation, massification, quality assurance, competition and cooperation, as well as government legislation all put pressure on institutions to stay dynamic and competitive in the changing higher education landscape. According to Vanim (2001:8), the process of change is not easy and implementing it successfully in a higher education unit makes considerable demands on the middle managers involved. Middle managers must learn to adapt and survive in this dynamic and changing competitive environment.

The most important purpose of this chapter is to discuss the competencies and skills required by middle management in administrative positions in higher education. According to the *Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder* (Tulloch 1993:290), competencies are either abilities or being "properly qualified or skilled". Hunsaker (2001:4-5) states that skills are the abilities to perform activities proficiently. The *Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder* (Tulloch 1993:1451) defines "skills", among other things, as "expertise; practised ability; proficiency; accomplishment; capability". In the context of this thesis it has become clear that competencies encompass a great deal more than skills do.

The competencies and skills required by middle management are discussed

against the background of the impact of change - not only on higher education institutions but also on administrative middle managers - as well as the facets of managerial careers that must be managed in higher education. The nature of the administrative work within higher education institutions is also outlined in this chapter in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the requirements of middle managers to render quality services.

### **3.2 THE IMPACT OF CHANGE ON THE WORK OF MIDDLE MANAGERS**

Being able to manage change within what Peeke (1994:125) refers to as the "managerial revolution", is a key requirement for middle managers in higher education institutions. Change is an organisational reality and handling change is an integral part of every middle manager's job (Robbins & De Cenzo 2001:420). Middle managers have to take responsibility for overseeing the change process and act as "change agents", as referred to by Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:427), as well as Ricks, Ginn and Daughtrey (1995:230).

Unfortunately, many middle managers are not sufficiently equipped to act as "change agents" within this new "managerial culture" (Fielden 1998). Middle managers are expected to contribute meaningfully to higher education institutions within this new culture, which, according to WHESDN/HESDA (2002), demands management skills of a higher order than ever before. Carnall (1990) also emphasises that - without effective management of the change process, including careful planning and the sensitive handling of people involved - any innovation will fail to achieve its desired impact. A similar view is held by Cowan (1994:146), namely that an organisation that fails to develop systems to cope with change, will result in increasingly low morale among staff and a decline in standards at all levels, including service delivery.

### 3.2.1 Changing customer expectations

It is imperative that middle management in higher education institutions are continuously aware that the rules of higher education competition will continue to change in accordance with rising external (the policy-makers, the world of work, the community, alumni, private sector donors) and internal (the students, academic and administrative staff, management) customer expectations. Customers are increasingly demanding higher quality and it is crucial to establish a campus environment that contributes to customer well-being. A commitment to the management of customer services is thus essential. Customer focus underlines the growing awareness that institutions are accountable not only to the government which funds them, but also to all its customers, internal and external. The quality of institutions' service delivery is therefore extremely important.

Enrico (in Seymour 1993:42) comments: "If you are totally customer-focused and you deliver the services your customers want, everything else will follow." Consequently, inducing people to try a product or service is only the beginning. The more difficult task is keeping them as loyal and satisfied customers. Therefore, Seymour (1993:57) stresses that "one needs to engage in quality deeds, not just quality words". The dilemma facing middle management is maintaining quality of service delivery while resources are being reduced. This means institutions must do more with fewer resources. Seeing that middle managers have a responsibility in contributing to institutional quality, the constant improvement of productivity in customer services is one of the most important jobs of middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions.

Mills (1993) argues that middle management frequently have significant responsibility, but not final authority over matters concerning their respective units. They have to implement policy, but do not feel part of the decision-making process. But even with these limitations, the middle manager plays a vital role in



the higher education landscape, specifically regarding customer expectations. Middle managers from the different administrative sections, for example IT, library services, marketing, physical planning, student affairs, the examination section, finances, counselling, international affairs, and so forth, all need to manage information, manage funds and manage staff. Information management entails gathering and interpreting information and making decisions based on that interpretation, for example demographic data for admissions, student accounts, financial aid and physical planning. According to Mills (1993), managing funds requires an effective middle manager to have a contingency plan ready. Managing staff successfully, Moore (1993) states, is generally the determinant of success for middle managers.

### **3.3 THE STRUCTURAL AND DEVELOPMENT FACET OF MIDDLE MANAGERS**

In the corporate world, the training and development of managers - irrespective of middle or senior level - are built upon the employee's earlier foundations of management education and theories. However, in higher education managers usually come from a variety of career experiences (often predominantly professional rather than managerial) and it should not be assumed that all have a managerial foundation. This being the case, the implication is that there are usually two facets to managerial careers that must be managed in higher education, namely a structural and a developmental facet. Burgoyne (1988) refers to the structural facet as those aspects that include the pattern of managerial tasks, roles and activities that the person is engaged in over time, while the developmental facet encompasses the processes of change, learning and development that affect how the person shapes and performs these tasks, roles and activities. Both aspects need to be integrated into the management of managerial careers.

### 3.4 THE NATURE OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORK WITHIN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Middle management bridges the management ranks with the higher/top management and the operating administrative staff in their respective units/divisions. Most of these units/divisions, with a short description of the nature of their administrative work, are included as illustrated in Table 3.1:

**TABLE 3.1: Administrative work in higher education**

Division/Unit	Description of work/responsibilities
Finance	Focuses on expenditure control and provisioning administration; administration of financial aid and the promotion of efficiency; proactive reporting and promoting of financial awareness; as well as accountability within the higher education institution.
Student Administration/ Affairs	Responsible for the total administration of student application for admission, enrolments, students' contractual and biographical records. Also responsible for students' wellness, accommodation, cultural and sporting activities, etcetera.
Marketing	Responsible for marketing the institution, development of financial resources, communication and liaison. Builds sound relationships among stakeholders and other partners.

Library and Information Services	Manages resources, information and information literacy programmes to support teaching and learning. Plays an increasingly important role in the development of information skills and customised services to students, researchers and the higher education community.
Quality assurance	Responsible for effective quality assurance management systems, a comprehensive quality assurance policy framework and a system that fulfils the needs of all aspects of institutional practice.
ICT	Develops and maintains the administrative computer systems. Ensures sound IT utilisation and the development of effective and efficient systems to support the planning and decision-making processes. Co-ordinates the use of technology.
Human Resources	Provides support, advice and consultation regarding all aspects of human resources. Responsible for planning, recruiting and selecting, as well as developing staff. Industrial relations, employer and employee rights and social welfare of staff are also included in this section.
Projects and Maintenance	Mainly responsible for new capital projects, renovation/extensions to existing buildings and the maintenance and operation of all physical facilities.

Examinations	This division provides a service with regard to all evaluation administration. It is also responsible for the recognition of prior learning (RPL) processes and certification.
International Affairs	Maintains and enhances the provision of internationally recognised education. Co-ordinates all international activities.
Information Management	Responsible for the co-ordination and dissemination of statistical information, as well as submission of official statistics to the DoE.
Academic Planning	Responsible for the application of programmes for accreditation, enrolment planning, the quality assurance of academic programmes and short courses.

In addition to the above responsibilities, middle managers in administrative positions, irrespective of whether they are for example in finances, student services, marketing, library and information services, quality assurance, ICT or another division, all need to manage and interpret information, control and manage funds and manage staff. They also need to plan, organise, lead and control integrated and interdependent activities and apply their specialised knowledge not only in their units, but also in a multi- and interdisciplinary manner.

The wide range of competencies and skills to be discussed, are testimony to the complexity of the middle management functions in higher education institutions. The multiple tasks and conflicting demands (Dorfling 2003) the middle manager in the administrative cadre has to endure to continuously improve the productivity in both internal and external service delivery in a constantly changing landscape require key competencies and skills, which will subsequently be discussed.

### 3.5 COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS

Although there are important differences relating to their management level, authors such as Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:8-9), Hunsaker (2001:2), Dorfling (2003) and Ricks *et al.* (1995:14-16) agree that all managers should be able to perform the management functions such as planning, organising, leading and controlling. These functions should be considered as integrated and interdependent activities of the manager's day-to-day responsibilities and tasks. In order to perform these functions, Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:19) and Hunsaker (2001:4-5) identified the following four critical competencies: technical competence (the ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise); interpersonal competence (the ability to work well with people, understand their needs, communicate well, resolve conflicts and motivate others – both individually and in groups); conceptual competence (the mental ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations); and political competence (the ability to enhance one's position). Although Ricks *et al.* (1995:20) also link up with these competencies, they exclude the political one. It is important to note that the importance that each competency plays in any manager's job varies with the level on which the manager operates. Therefore the level of the middle manager in administrative positions in higher education will specifically be elaborated on.

The wide range of competencies and skills necessary for successful management imply the complexity of the middle management functions. Key competencies and skills that are particularly important and relevant to middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions will consequently be outlined.

#### 3.5.1 Interpersonal competence

According to Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:29), there is overwhelming evidence that interpersonal abilities are critical at all levels of management, because managers get things done through people. This view is confirmed by Hunsaker

(2001:3) by stating that increasing recognition is given to the importance of having managers with strong interpersonal skills, regardless of the manager's level in the organisation. Middle managers are particularly in need of interpersonal competencies because they spend most of their time in leading-function activities with people. These activities link up with the definition of management of Ricks *et al.* (1995:4) who note that management is the process of working with and through other people, in addition to using other available resources to meet the goals of the organisation and its people. People hold the key to more productive and efficient organisations. The way in which people are managed and developed at work has major effects upon, among other things, customer service and quality.

Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:11) maintain that the middle manager bridges the management ranks with the operating employees and must interact and reconcile the opposing forces and competing expectations from higher management and operating employees. To succeed in their jobs, they must be able to understand the varied needs of their staff and be able to listen, motivate and lead.

By leading, managers try to create a climate in which workers will willingly perform their jobs and accept their share of responsibility for accomplishing the organisational goals. Leading means directing the work of people so that their tasks will be performed correctly, efficiently and on time. This function requires the middle manager to understand human behaviour. Ricks *et al.* (1995:21) elaborate on this in referring to human skills as the ability to understand, communicate with, work with, and interact harmoniously with people. Human skills enable middle managers to understand themselves as well as others. Norton (in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 13 July 2003a:2) prefers the term "emotional intelligence", of which empathy towards people is a component to manage relationships successfully in the workplace.

Certain key skills that form the interpersonal competency base for middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions, are the following:

#### 3.5.1.1 *Creating an enabling environment*

In many ways changes and uncertainty like in the current higher education environment offer real challenges, but they also create opportunity (Ilbury & Sunter 2001). To realise their potential people do not only need knowledge and skills, they also need these opportunities in which to apply their potential (CHE 2002:8). Young (in Lange 2002:5) notes that opportunity in this sense is a condition of enablement. Unfortunately, the internal obstacles, practices and mental structures in higher education institutions are still there and they work against what Young (in Lange 2002:8) calls "opportunity as a condition of enablement". The inability of certain individuals and groups in the higher education environment to accept the opinions and views of others and to examine long-held values and beliefs, can contribute to this situation referred to. Currently, the affirmative action scenario may be one of the biggest obstacles in higher education institutions. Mills (1993) is of the opinion that, although higher education institutions have carefully formulated affirmative action plans and the rationale supporting them, individuals and groups still maintain differing views on them.

Baldrige (1999) maintains that an organisation's efforts to build and maintain a work environment and an employee support climate conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organisational growth to realise its potential is central to middle management's tasks. The South African government has also realised the importance thereof, because the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) is incredibly aligned to capacity-building. The expectation is that an enabling environment, also referred to as a "micro-climate" of mutual support (CVCP/HEQE 1999), should be created in all areas of higher education, including administrative positions. Middle managers in administrative positions will

therefore need to listen to staff and create an environment in which they are supported and encouraged in their efforts, particularly as they move closer towards achieving the goals of the institution.

It is evident from the perspectives of administrative staff in higher education that an effective system shifts the emphasis from a focus on controlling staff to one of creating the conditions in which they can be successful. It is therefore primarily a means of enabling and acknowledging people. Koorts (2001) echoes this perspective to create an environment based on motivation and enhanced performance, thereby encouraging people to set their own objectives. According to him, an enriching and regenerative environment is needed in order to strengthen and empower staff to high quality service delivery.

The middle manager has an obligation to build and maintain a work environment and an employee support climate conducive to performance excellence, full participation, and personal and organisational growth (Baldrige 1999). Closely linked to this creation of an enabling environment by middle management, is the promotion of a people-centred approach to higher education.

#### **3.5.1.2      *Promoting a people-centred approach***

There is no doubt that the ultimate and most valuable resource of higher education institutions is its people. The theoretical basis for a people-centred approach (PCA) is that people have within themselves vast resources for and the natural tendency towards personal development and continual improvement (Meadows 2001). This approach is a management approach that is far more people- than process- and function-focused. Meadows (2001) stresses the need for a people-centred approach which is necessary to improve the quality and effectiveness of relationships at work. According to Meadows (2001), the ability to participate fully and productively in work relationships is the most important factor in the success of any organisation. Staff's working relationships improve which, in turn, could lead to better service delivery in the administrative sections



of higher education institutions. Blair (2001) shares the above views in that he also regards people as the most valuable resource. He states that it is this shift in perspective from the management to the workforce which is the most noteworthy outcome in the search for quality.

Thus it is clear that the middle manager has a vital role to play in promoting a people-centred approach. In this regard Oakley (2001) refers to "enlightened leadership", which means transforming organisations through people. Although the term "leadership" is perhaps the most widely used word in the literature dealing with the management and administration of organisations (Seagren, Creswell & Wheeler 1993:17), the researcher upholds the view that management and leadership are intertwined and complementary to each other. In addition, both are crucial in the higher education environment to respond successfully to the challenges within the higher education landscape. For the purpose of this study, the researcher will preferably use the term "management", but would also interchangeably refer to "leadership" when quoting literature perspectives as such.

If middle managers invest more time and effort in their respective units' people, the middle manager's role in facing potential obstacles and managing of conflict in the workplace would be more proactive than has conventionally been the case.

### **3.5.1.3      *Managing conflict***

According to Lebedun (1998:16), the constantly changing higher education environment and expanding diversity of the higher education workforce create an ideal environment for conflict. In Robbins and De Cenzo's (2001:391) view, conflict is a natural phenomenon of organisational life. All administrative staff sometimes encounter a situation where the policies which they administer cause customer dissatisfaction, for example examination policies (Pitman 2000), policies regarding class fees, student rules and regulations. These policies

sometimes lead to dissatisfied students. Administrative staff also sometimes encounter into conflict with one another, for example when not adhering to library rules and expecting to be treated differently when not complying with the rules.

Lebedun (1998:17) adds that conflict can also be a positive experience. According to the same writer, it is the middle manager's level of skill that makes the difference. Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:391) state that constructive conflict stimulates creativity, innovation and change – and only through change can an organisation adapt and survive. They further state that a positive level of conflict supports disagreements, the open questioning of others, and challenging the *status quo*. If higher education institutions were completely without conflict, they would become stagnant and unresponsive to change. The middle manager's goal should be to have enough conflict in his unit to keep the unit responsive to change, but not so much as to hinder employee performance. The middle manager can make a valuable contribution to managing conflict by open and honest discussion among the involved employees; intensive listening to understand differences and identify areas of mutual agreement; and careful deliberation over a full range of alternatives to find a solution that is advantageous to all (Robbins & De Cenzo 2001:395).

Lebedun (1998:36) advises middle management that long before conflict in the work environment ever occurs, they need to prepare for it, because conflict is not a matter of "if", but a matter of "when". Middle management should be empowered to manage conflict, because it surely is more difficult in dealing with conflict than has been stated so far.

Frank Clarke (in Lebedun 1998:88) leaves us with a more positive view of conflict resolution with the following words: "We find *comfort* among those who agree with us – *growth* among those who don't." But the reality still faces middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions, and that is that conflict is a part of higher education institutions and it needs to be managed

successfully. This reality of conflict is partly due to the controversial issue of increasing diversity in higher education institutions.

#### 3.5.1.4 *Managing diversity*

Diversity is still a burning issue in South African higher education institutions due to the perceptions of "conflicting cultures" and negative connotations attached to diversity, for example diversity resulting in a "lowering of standards" (see 2.2.3). The aforementioned negative attitudes of higher education staff regarding diversity can partly be attributed to comprehensive recruitment strategies that must be implemented in higher education institutions in order to ensure employment of previously designated individuals (see 1.9.9). It is expected of higher education institutions to develop employment equity plans with clear targets for correcting the race and gender inequities of the past. This, in turn, leads to an increasing fear of loss of job security and to uncertainties which, in turn, have a very negative effect on staff's attitude and productivity.

As the workforce continues to grow more diverse, those middle managers who are able to accept individual differences in the workplace and look at them as a source of productivity, will have access to a larger and more talented workforce, because a diverse workforce provides a "multiplicity of viewpoints" in an organisation (Lebedun 1998:9). Motivating and supervising a diverse workforce require an understanding of what motivates people from different cultures. Increased diversity in today's workforce requires middle managers to constantly be sensitive to differences. Being more flexible and more efficient will result in responding promptly and efficiently to customer needs.

Effective middle managers can actually make diversity a positive force that improves the productivity and morale of people (Florence 1996:54) in their units, resulting in more effective service delivery. The middle manager can enhance individual understanding in their diverse units/sections by encouraging acceptance of the diverse opinions and views of individuals and groups.

According to Ricks *et al.* (1995), diversity management also implies enabling every member of a workforce to perform to his potential. It means creating an environment in which everyone will do his best at work.

The deduction can be made that training programmes, called "awareness training", can be developed to enhance typical soft skills so that diversity can be managed effectively by middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions. Effective communication by middle managers is instrumental in this regard.

#### 3.5.1.5 *Effective communication*

Without effective communication no other challenge could be effectively addressed. Thus it is clear why Koehler (in Marais 1997) states that: "Communication is the mortar that holds organisational structures together. It provides the basis for co-ordinating the relationship between individuals to reach the ultimate organisational objectives." Stamatis (1996:34) delineates communication as being one of the most important "ingredients in the total quality service scheme". The same writer further adds that communication is especially important in the service industry, because communication is indeed the "lifblood of service". This echoes the viewpoint of Hunsaker (2001:6) that communication is the glue that holds an organisation together and allows a manager to co-ordinate all the activities of many different people to accomplish organisational objectives. The importance of effective communication for middle managers can never be over-emphasised, because almost everything a middle manager does, involves communicating. The greatest vision, the most creative suggestion, or the best plan will not make any difference in improving service delivery unless effectively communicated (Hunsaker 2001:57). This is ever so true in higher education, which is such a complex system. The system is unlikely to work efficiently without effective communication.

The reality in the complex and diverse higher education environment is that

administrative staff are often accused of not communicating well. In a "bureaucracy" of different lines of reporting many administrative staff sometimes did not receive the proper or complete information from top management. Hunsaker (2001) further states that administrative staff in, for example computer services, finances or physical planning, due to the nature of their work, could sometimes find it more difficult to communicate because of their types of personalities and jobs.

Constructive dialogue is especially critical for achieving the desired outcomes in an administrative unit. It requires excellent communication skills and well-developed strategies for preparation and follow-through. Du Preez (2003) maintains that the role and impact of communication on service delivery are critical, because they are a means of improving the effectiveness of service delivery and, in turn, can lead to the enhancement of customers' experience. The same writer adds that every contact a customer has with the administrative units, influences his perception of that unit as well as of the higher education institution. It is therefore obvious that effective communication must become a key strategy for the middle manager in administrative positions in higher education.

The image which the middle manager portrays to internal and external customers, depends greatly on the facts, feelings and impressions which take place in the course of interaction through communication. This image is decisive for and can be enhanced through effective development. Interestingly enough, Du Preez (2003) emphasises that non-verbal signs carry five times more weight than words and, when the two do not correspond, the customer would rather rely on the non-verbal message.

Middle managers interact not only with individuals, but also with groups. Ricks *et al.* (1995:340) maintain that communicating with a group requires skills different from those used when communicating with individuals on a one-to-one basis. The middle manager should be empowered for this challenge.

Higher education institutions are also increasingly using technology to communicate information more efficiently. Middle managers are required to understand and use the technology to enhance communication and to improve productivity. Ricks *et al.* (1995:350) caution that, when communicating in written form, clarity (easy to understand); conciseness (enough words to make meaning clear); completeness (no additional information is needed by the reader); correctness (facts are straight and no grammatical or spelling errors); and courtesy (information is conveyed in a way that creates goodwill) are sometimes neglected and that technological language has become impersonal.

Middle managers in administrative positions need also be aware of the most used and least taught of all communication skills, namely active listening. According to Vanim (2001:52), research shows that most of us are not skilled listeners. The good news for middle managers is that the skills and behaviours of good listeners can be practised and easily mastered. Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:347) note the four essential requirements for active listening, namely listening with intensity, empathy, acceptance and a willingness to take responsibility for completeness – all of these ensure active listening.

It is realistic to note that the normal chain of communication is always full of opportunities for errors and misunderstandings. Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:344) state that most barriers to effective communication can be overcome. The advice of Hunsaker (2001:59) to use multiple channels when communicating with internal as well as external customers, must be taken seriously, because the impact of a message can be increased by using more than one channel or mode of transmission. He continues by saying that caution needs also be taken when using more than one channel or mode of transmission. It can unfortunately happen that conflicting and ambiguous information can be communicated, which leads to even more confusion and conflict.

To encourage participation and resolve conflicts, Tucker (1984:175) suggests "*Performance counselling*", which entails regular formal and informal contact

between the middle manager and individual members to discuss successes and failures in completing assignments and duties. It offers the middle manager a valuable communication tool that can enhance relations with administrative staff and improve the administrative unit's chances for attaining quality service delivery. A two-way communications device in such demanding times is therefore vital.

### 3.5.2 Conceptual competence

As indicated in 3.5, conceptual competence is the mental ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations in the increasingly complex higher education environment. In order for the middle manager to have conceptual competence, the following key skills are imperative:

#### 3.5.2.1 *Planning*

Ricks *et al.* (1995:32) state that planning is the process of determining what the manager wishes to accomplish (goals and objectives) and how he is going to accomplish them (strategy). This statement is echoed by Hunsaker (2001:155) who notes that planning is concerned with both ends (what needs to be done) and means (how it is to be done). Planning provides direction; seeks to prevent problems; leads to better co-ordination of organisational efforts; leads to development of performance standards; as well as to more profitable organisational performance.

A middle manager in higher education who does not plan and thereby does not address time management, results in a disorganised middle manager as well as a disorganised unit. It leads to extreme difficulty in setting priorities and anticipating deadlines. The middle manager needs to be able not only to plan on an operational level in his unit, but also in the increasingly complex environment in which he manages, also on a strategic level.

### 3.5.2.1.1 *Strategic versus operational planning*

Depending on their level in the organisation, managers in higher education institutions are concerned with different types of planning. Strategic planning is done by top level management to determine the long-term focus and direction of the higher education institution. Middle management in administrative positions should integrate, link and co-ordinate the strategic planning with their own unit's strategic plan. Although middle managers are mostly concerned with operational plans, they should also be knowledgeable about how strategic plans fit into the planning process of their higher education unit.

Operational plans specify the details of how the overall objectives in the strategic plan are to be achieved. Operational plans are of a short-term nature, usually one year or less. They are formulated to achieve specific objectives assigned to middle managements' units' regarding their contribution to the organisation's strategic plan. In this regard the middle manager is concerned with the management of financial and physical resources, the management of information, quality, as well as human resources in his section/unit (Ricks *et al.* 1995).

From the perspective of Ricks *et al.* (1995:44), middle managers are charged with the responsibility for using the resources available to them in the most efficient way. They must plan for the effective use of their human, physical, financial, and time resources. To allocate human resources most efficiently, middle managers should plan for staffing needs, improvement in productivity and quality of work life, as well as total quality management. To make maximum use of both employees' and middle managers' time, planning and the setting of goals for an administrative unit are essential.



### 3.5.2.1.2 *Setting goals*

Goals which refer to the desired outcomes for the entire organisation, units, groups and individuals, are the foundation of all other planning activities (Hunsaker 2001). Goals provide the direction for all middle management decisions and form the criteria against which actual accomplishments can be measured. Employee participation in goal-setting is a key to getting goals accepted. Hunsaker (2001:166) argues that, to be effective, employees must perceive that managers are truly seeking and utilising their input. Ideally, ongoing feedback allows individuals to monitor and correct their own actions, which indicates the important role of the middle manager to give continuous feedback on progress towards achieving goals in his unit.

Du Preez (2003) suggests the drawing up of action plans to achieve the set goals in an administrative unit. These action plans can then be used as a mechanism to co-ordinate the tasks and all relevant parties can see how non-adherence to the deadlines will affect the other deliverables.

The constantly changing higher education environment requires middle management in higher education institutions to be easily adaptable to these changes. Hunsaker (2001:157) states that the middle manager can adapt easier and more effectively if he has anticipated and planned for possible changes. Anticipation means being proactive by continually scanning the external and internal environment for clues about potential developments. Ricks *et al.* (1995:37) refer in this regard to "forecasting", an attempt to look into the future and predict future needs. The middle manager's role in "forecasting" involves projecting the future needs of his unit and setting goals to achieve those needs.

An interesting dimension to planning in the current changing global world and which is equally applicable to higher education, is the initiative of scenario planning.

### 3.5.2.1.3 *Scenario planning*

Fehnel (2002) states that scenarios can be an instructive way to help people understand their assumptions about conditions and their linkages to actions. Scenarios stimulate middle management to think of new ways to look at a situation in order to influence outcomes that may be more to the advantage of the middle manager in administrative positions.

Ilbury and Sunter (2001) also believe in the power of scenario thinking to help open one's mind and then focus it more effectively, making it the most operative form of business strategising in the new economy. This operative form of strategising is equally important to middle management in higher education, who must have an open mind on quality external and internal customer service and then focus on it more effectively. According to Ilbury and Sunter (2001), middle management in administrative positions have to be adaptable and resourceful.

Gibbons (2001) elaborates that the resourcefulness of each higher education institution's staff and the quality of its internal management are imperative for success. Innovations will often mean internal changes: restructuring existing units and staff, as well as putting in place new administrative structures to provide quality customer service.

It is interesting to note that strategic and scenario planning at higher education institutions has to be transparent, not only to their internal customers, but also to the DoE, the HEQC, the public and all other stakeholders of higher education. This is the result of an outcry for more accountability on the side of higher education and because impact studies, benchmarking and satisfaction surveys in higher education are increasingly becoming more important.

The planning function is closely followed by the organising function, which sometimes overlaps in middle management positions.

### 3.5.2.2 *Organising*

Overall organisational design is usually handled by top management, as delineated by Ricks *et al.* (1995:92). Top management create the structure, determine the number and nature of management personnel, and establish the line of authority. However, middle managers also spend a large percentage of their time organising. To be effective members of the management team, middle managers must be aware of the overall picture.

In the higher education environment staff and middle management are advised to work smarter, not harder, when complaining about the administrative workloads they have. Hunsaker (2001:132) is of the opinion that this goal can be reached by organising the process of grouping activities to be performed into manageable components and assigning them in such a way as to achieve the organisation's objectives. To be both efficient and effective in service delivery, activities have to be prioritised depending on their urgency and importance.

The middle manager in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions has an imperative role to play in the job design of his subordinates in order to organise an effective and efficient administrative unit.

#### 3.5.2.2.1 *Job design*

According to Hunsaker (2001:241) and Ricks *et al.* (1995:93), effective job design involves trying to shape the right jobs to conform with the right people, taking into account both the organisations' goals and the employees' satisfaction. The more recent approaches to job design entails fitting jobs to people. Such methods assume that employees are often underutilised and that they desire more challenge and responsibility. The job enlargement approach attempts to expand a job by increasing the job scope – the number of different tasks required in a job and the frequency with which these tasks are repeated. Campion and McClelland (in Hunsaker 2001:243) emphasise that job

enlargement has been found to provide more job satisfaction, enhance customer service and generate fewer errors. These aspects are needed to provide quality service delivery. Hunsaker (2001:243) and Ricks *et al.* (1995:93) also link job design to job enrichment - any effort that makes work more meaningful or satisfying by adding variety or responsibility to a job, for example marketing of the unit, fund-raising, public relation tasks and community engagement. It may be accomplished by increasing the autonomy and responsibility of employees, especially where administrative staff have many routine tasks and have the potential to be highly successful when granted more responsibility with bigger tasks. It can be used to motivate and empower workers.

According to Ricks *et al.* (1995:94), the relationship of job design to motivation makes job design a common approach to the search for productivity improvement and quality service delivery. The middle manager is responsible for meeting certain quality standards in his unit. In the changing higher education environment the middle manager may participate in the analysis of existing jobs in his unit, a process that may result in the redesigning of jobs, which must be kept up to date. In large organisations, job analysis is usually a specialised function of the human resources department, but in higher education institutions middle managers should know what the jobs of their subordinates entail and have the biggest input in the redesigning process. The middle manager who promotes a PCA – an approach realising that subordinates have a natural tendency towards development and improvement in their work environment (see 3.5.1.2), will utilise them to their full ability. He will add more responsibility to his staff by delegating more tasks and involve them in decision-making.

A primary purpose of organising tasks and work units is to be able to take the next step – delegation of authority.

### 3.5.2.2.2 *Delegation*

Effective delegation requires that the authority granted to a person be sufficient to carry out the assigned responsibility. This is referred to by Ricks *et al.* (1995:102) as "authority and responsibility parity". Effective delegation gives the middle manager an opportunity to take on additional work and to relieve him of routine tasks that can probably be done just as effectively by others. Imperative in this regard is that the added work and responsibility should be meaningful to the subordinate. Delegation improves employee morale by giving them a feeling of shared responsibility.

There are middle managers in administrative positions who do not delegate due to lack of trust, and what Ricks *et al.* (1995:119) refer to as "aversity to risk", because the responsibility always finally rests with the manager, who will still be ultimately accountable. Middle management should keep in mind that delegation should be accomplished by defining the task, providing all the relevant and necessary information, assigning authority and responsibility, setting clear goals, following up progress, and giving credit for accomplishment.

Presently the relationship between managers and employees in higher education is undergoing dramatic change and the prevailing mode of work has shifted to empowerment, collaboration and teamwork. These changes mean that middle managers in administrative positions will serve in a new role. It requires a shift from "managing" people to *helping* people manage themselves and the institution. People will perform better if they have adequate direction and guidance and under the right conditions people will hold themselves accountable to do the work that is required. This echoes the findings of Ramsden (1998), whose viewpoint is that effective delegation demonstrates that you value your colleagues. If it is taken into account, it helps people to learn, developing their skills and self-assurance. It can also increase productivity, provide the middle

manager with more time to manage, and help develop other people's performance and skills.

It is also assumed that better decisions will be made when those who are closest to the situation and who must live with the decisions, are involved. Higher education institutions are constantly changing to more flexible, flatter, decentralised and smaller structures where roles are less clearly demarcated and where collaboration across functions is more common. The work itself will also increasingly demand the use of interdependent teams, as few individuals will be capable of knowing and doing it all. This dilemma is directly linked to staff development/empowerment. Whilst it is easy to talk about empowerment, the implementation thereof is not as easy (Florence 1996:90). Assigning bigger projects to employees, allowing more self-scheduling (more responsibility for scheduling what they do), and giving decision-making to the team are not as easy as it may sound. In response to the aforementioned, the concept of project management is becoming more popular and relevant in higher education institutions. Specific techniques and insights are required for projects management. Selecting, initiating, operating and controlling desirable projects make considerable demands on project managers.

From the perspective of Cloete (1997), administrative units in higher education institutions require greater flexibility to meet increasingly diverse global customer needs obtained by using the new computer-led technologies and employing more educated labour in more participatory forms of work organisation.

#### **3.5.2.2.3 *Participatory work***

According to Channel Consulting (2003), participation leads to great understanding and acceptance of decisions; greater identification with decisions and more intense commitment to their implementation; joint decision-making promoting cooperation; mutual understanding; and resolving potential conflict. Participation should also include teamwork and multi-skilling. The new

administrative staff should have multiple, transferable skills that enable them to deal flexibly with problems, tasks and new technologies.

It can therefore be concluded that participation by staff in decision-making processes is an essential element of administrative work and can be seen as an enhancement of their professional image. Imperative in the participatory work, transparency and democracy are regarded high on the agenda of participants in groupwork and decision-making.

As previously mentioned in 3.5.1.1, it is imperative for the middle manager to create an environment in which staff will want to identify with the directive of the institution and perform well. Another aspect which also focuses on creating conditions under which staff can perform well, is managing for performance.

#### 3.5.2.2.4 *Performance management*

Ricks *et al.* (1995:250) maintain that performance appraisal is the process of measuring and reporting employee behaviour and accomplishment during a given period for the purpose of improving job performance. Appraisals of employee performance provides the basis for administrative decisions about, among others, promotions, transfers and rewards. The same writers add that performance appraisal have two purposes – employee evaluation and employee development. The development purpose – to improve performance on the job – has generally been secondary. In the new changing higher education landscape, it is imperative that the development purpose becomes the primary goal and that it is an ongoing, continuous process.

Performance management systems recognise the link between the performance of the organisation and the effectiveness of each individual. Lonsdale (1996) substantiates Ramsden's (1998) view concerning this link. Lonsdale (1996:8) furthermore believes that performance management emphasises not only the work, performance and development of individual staff, but also of teams, as

well as of middle management's ability to enhance their higher education units' performance. Ramsden (1998) also notes that the problem of sustaining productivity and excellent service delivery in higher education must be addressed through, among others, reward and performance management systems.

At least three elements of human resource management strategies that should be supported by a performance review system, as suggested by Channel Consulting (2003), are the following: diagnostic (a comprehensive and systematic evaluation of current practice and performance to identify both where improvement is required); aspirational (a vision of effective human resource management practice aimed at specific outcomes that contribute towards the achievement of the institution's strategy); and developmental (a plan with a view to achieving progress and building greater capacity to bring about change in the future).

The potential problems regarding performance appraisals are well documented by authors such as Robbins and De Cenzo (2001) and Coens and Jenkins (2000). Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:248-250) maintain that potential problems regarding performance appraisals are, among others, the "leniency error" (giving an individual a higher or lower appraisal than deserved); the "halo error" (the tendency to rate an individual high or low on all factors due to the impression of a high or a low rating on some specific factor); the "recency error" (giving greater importance to employee job behaviours that have occurred near the end of the performance appraisal); and the "central tendency error" (assigning all ratings around the average range). In addition, Coens and Jenkins (2000), who have an interesting and dramatically opposing view to the traditional performance appraisal, views appraisal as a hopeless and futile exercise. The source of the problem is not the people involved – according to them, it lies in the appraisal system itself. They are of the opinion that no one system can address the complex goals of appraisal and that alternatives should be created that will really make a difference.



Coens and Jenkins (2000) further mention, among others, that the basic nature of performance appraisals is that the manager takes responsibility for the development of the subordinate. People with less than superior ratings are preoccupied with the numerical rating rather than the message. It sends a number of negative messages about the nature and potential of people. Coens and Jenkins (2000:20) furthermore advocate that there is no concrete evidence that performance appraisals motivate people or lead to meaningful improvement.

What motivates people and can lead to meaningful improvement in employees' work, is when they are clear about what they have to do and why, and receive feedback and recognition for what they have contributed through their jobs. One of the biggest ways to give employees a sense of accomplishment is to provide useful feedback about their performance at work (in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 5 October 2003b:1). This provision of useful feedback is also proposed by Coens and Jenkins (2000) and Hunsaker (2001:188).

In spite of managements' reluctance to give performance feedback, their employees still need it, so the solution is to train middle managers in how to conduct constructive feedback sessions. Constructive feedback sessions to especially teams can be given at meetings of the administrative unit.

#### **3.5.2.2.5 *Managing of meetings***

One of the biggest frustrations among staff in administrative units in higher education institutions currently is the constant meetings where many chairpersons do not conduct efficient and proper meetings and resolutions are taken, but very few resolutions are actually implemented. Hunsaker's (2001:303) viewpoint is that managers can employ a number of skills and procedures to improve the quality of their meetings by conducting effective meetings. It is essential for middle managers to be skilled at all phases of meeting management, for example planning activities, leadership activities to engage in

during a meeting, as well as action plans implemented to achieve expected results.

The foundation of middle management in higher education revolves not only around effective organising, leading and planning, but also lies in monitoring/controlling all activities in the unit.

### **3.5.2.3**      *Controlling*

Once goals are established in administrative units in higher education institutions, middle managers must design and implement controls that will ensure that goals are met. The control functions require a high level of problem-solving and decision-making skills.

The definition of control of Ricks *et al.* (1995:408) is the function of comparing actual performance with planned performance and taking corrective action where necessary. According to them, there are four steps in the control process, namely setting standards; observing and measuring performance; comparing performance with standards; and taking corrective action when necessary. This perspective is also maintained by Hunsaker (2001:180). Certain phases of control, as Ricks *et al.* (1995) state, for example preliminary controls (before service is performed); concurrent controls (when service is provided); and feedback controls (after service was provided), are essential for quality service delivery. Budget controls for effective financial management in the administration unit as well as quality controls to maintain high-quality output, are imperative in the administrative cadre of higher education.

Quality awareness must become part of the culture of administrative units to constantly improve the system of service delivery. The role of the middle manager in total quality management includes providing necessary quality education, implementing specific quality improvement programmes, empowering

employees to control quality, and providing appropriate recognition thereof (Ricks *et al.* 1995:460).

Subordinates reporting directly to the middle manager in his unit are called the middle manager's "span of control" (Ricks *et al.* 1995:103). There are, of course, employees in the "span of control" who regard control as negative by showing resistance and misdirection of employee effort (Robbins & De Cenzo 2001:164). The solution to this problem would be the advice of Florence (1996:46). In setting control measures in administrative units, the skills that distinguish between average and most highly successful middle managers is the art of giving effective guidance and feedback – being specific, placing emphasis on action, and being supportive. In following this advice, service delivery could be constantly improved. The middle managers in administrative units in higher education institutions can exercise effective controls by timeliness, flexibility, and setting reasonable criteria for controlling.

### **3.5.3 Technical competence**

As mentioned in 3.5, technical competence is the ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise. The middle manager's subordinates would like to know that he has the technical skills to give them advice and make recommendations regarding the work unit. Technical skills are those tools, procedures and techniques that are unique to a middle manager's specialised situation (Robbins & De Cenzo 2001:308). He needs to master his job to be viewed as an expert. By having the technical skills, the middle manager will be able to assist and give guidance to his subordinates.

Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:38) agree that ICT have permanently altered the middle manager's life in higher education. It significantly influences how, for example, information is created, stored and used to the advantage of the unit. The middle manager has to continuously learn new skills to survive and obtain information - which can also be communicated - almost instantaneously.

Undoubtedly, technology has had a positive effect on internal operations in units to provide quality service delivery, due to appropriate, timely and high quality information that can be distributed to stakeholders.

#### **3.5.4 Political competence**

Political competence is the middle manager's ability to enhance his power, build a power base, and establish the "right" connections in the institution (see 3.5). Middle managers engage in politics when they attempt to influence the advantages and disadvantages of a situation at an institution. This can also result in disharmony and conflict among different administrative units and be regarded as extremely negative. Although Moore (1993:152) also states that the term "politics" has negative connotations within institutions and too little inclined to a common group viewpoint, Robbins and De Cenzo (2001:19) stress that not all political behaviour is negative. The same writers delineate that it is a common fact that resources are limited, also in higher education institutions, and because of this limitation, not everyone's interests can be provided for. This, in turn, leads to competition among middle managers for limited resources, for example financial resources and space allocations. If the middle manager wants to be successful in allocating resources that are limited institutionally to his unit, he should be able to play the political game.

#### **3.6 ADDED PERSPECTIVES WITH REGARD TO MANAGERIAL WORK**

Hales (1999) tried to confront the variety inherent in management work. He suggests that general theories of management do not satisfactorily answer the question of what managers do. The classical managerial tasks like planning, organising, staffing, directing, co-ordinating, reporting and budgeting, seem to have become more vague and difficult in higher education (Clutterbuck & Crainer 1991). According to Hales (1999), it can currently be said that managerial work is characterised by fragmentation, reactivity, interruption, and a tendency for day-to-day problems to drive out work on longer-term projects and plans. The

same writer concludes that managers act in the way they do because their actions are constituted, defined, and legitimised by the resources and rules of the systems in which they are located, as actions which affirm the identity, responsibility and accountability of managers. The researcher contends that attitudes and motivation are also important factors influencing their actions within the higher education sector.

The diversity of managerial working methods makes it possible for managers with almost identical positions in the same organisation to tackle their jobs in very different ways, for example some managers perform as administrators according to prescribed functions, while others take risky decisions to improve services. Further variation is evident when one considers management activity according to the organisational type and the context within which the manager is working. Even more diversity can be found according to the different rules, resources and cultures that characterise institutions.

### **3.7 CONCLUSION**

Quality assurance experts agree that the most important factor in creating and maintaining a quality higher education institution where quality service delivery is provided to both internal and external customers, is the quality of its staff (human resources) (Strydom, Fourie & Van Niekerk 2003:9), which includes middle management in administrative positions, because they lead and manage the units.

There is no doubt that high quality middle management in the administrative cadre in higher education require multiple competencies and skills, of which the most pressing ones were discussed in this chapter. These multiple competencies and skills would not only equip them to meet their current needs, but also prepare them for future changes (HEFCE 2002:47). According to Stamatis (1996:138), the answer to these requirements of middle management lies, of

course, in the development/empowerment of middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions.

The next chapter focuses on the research component, namely the empirical investigation used for the study to focus on the development of administrative staff in middle management positions of higher education institutions.

## CHAPTER 4

# EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION INTO THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on the research component, namely the empirical investigation used for the study. According to Schwarz and Teichler (2000:14-15), higher education research tends to be classified according to disciplines, themes and institutional settings. They identify four "spheres of knowledge" structured according to the logic of themes and disciplines or related areas of expertise of higher education researchers. These spheres are identified as aspects of the institution's organisational governance; person- or teaching- and learning-related aspects; quantitative-structural aspects; knowledge- and subject-related aspects.

The empirical investigation by the researcher into administrative middle management development at higher education institutions, validates most of these spheres in the following ways: institutions' organisational governance approaches (for example staff development practices, challenges and needs at institutions); person-related aspects (for example needs and dilemmas of middle managers); quantitative aspects (for example assigning numbers to perceived qualities of responses); as well as knowledge-related aspects (for example multiple skills and competencies required by middle managers). As previously stated in 1.6, the primary purpose of this study is to create a model for the development of middle managers in administrative positions in higher education institutions in order to become more service- and client-orientated. Although this level of management plays an important role in the overall operationalising of

the institution and is at the forefront of delivering a variety of services to the institution's internal and external clients, the development needs of staff on this level are often neglected.

In order to achieve the aims and objectives already outlined in paragraphs 1.6.1 and 1.6.2, the researcher embarked on a primarily qualitative research methodology.

## 4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 4.2.1 Defining qualitative research

Qualitative research is difficult to define. This statement is motivated by Crowson (1987:3-4) who maintains that qualitative research methodology has many different viewpoints. He states that qualitative research ranges from a specific cultural understanding (ethnography) to the larger suggestion of an alternative philosophy paradigm (naturalistic), to the field of encircling assumptions and techniques. Crowson's viewpoint is elaborated on by O'Connor (2001), who mentions that qualitative research does not involve the same terminology as ordinary science. He continues by saying that qualitative research is *grounded theory*, built up from the ground. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:6-7) also agree that qualitative research is difficult to define clearly. It has no theory or paradigm that is distinctly its own. Qualitative research is used in many separate disciplines, it does not belong to a single discipline and does not have a distinct set of methods or practices that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use narrative, content, discourse, archival analysis, even statistics, tables, graphs and numbers. They also draw among others, upon and utilise the approaches, methods, and techniques of ethno-methodology, phenomenology, feminism, ethnography, interviews, cultural studies, survey research, and participant observation. All of this research can provide important insights and knowledge. Thus, no specific method or practice can be privileged over any other.



Separate and multiple uses and meanings of the methods of qualitative research make it difficult for researchers to agree to any essential definition of the field. Nelson, Treichler and Grossberg (in Denzin & Lincoln 2000:7) reaffirm that qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities and the social and physical sciences. Qualitative research is multi-paradigmatic in focus. Flick (in Denzin & Lincoln 2000) is of the opinion that the combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives, and observers in a single study is best understood then as a strategy that adds rigour, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to any inquiry. They further maintain that qualitative researchers are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multiple ethical and political positions.

Qualitative research can be interpreted in a number of ways, due to the reasonable degree of connotatively rich meaning it possesses. This is the viewpoint of Mouton and Marais (1996:160-170) and Conrad, Haworth and Lattuca (2001). The qualitative research individuals are making sense of realities that they encounter. It is a process of discovery, because there exists no clear-cut response sets to situations. Despite all these viewpoints, Cherry (2000) emphasises that qualitative research is a field of enquiry in its own right. It crosscuts disciplines, fields and subject-matters. The term "qualitative research" is surrounded by complex, interconnected terms, concepts and assumptions. There are separate and detailed literature on the many methods and approaches that fall under the category of qualitative research, such as case study, politics and ethics, participatory inquiry, interviewing, participant observation, visual methods and interpretive analysis.

Winburg (1997:3) oversimplifies the definition of qualitative research by defining it as research that produces descriptions of *how* and *why* people do certain things. According to the perspectives of Krathwohl (1998), Babbie and Mouton (2001), McMillan and Schumacher (2001), Denzin and Lincoln (2000), and

Maykut and Morehouse (1994), qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world, and involves an interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or to interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. Babbie and Mouton (2001:53) broaden this definition by adding that qualitative research takes its departure point as the insider perspective on social action. Qualitative researchers attempt always to study human action from the insider's perspective (also referred to as the "emic" perspective). Ratcliff (2002) and Krathwohl (1998:229) also echo the emic/insider perspective; to "get inside" others to view the world as they perceive it. But Krathwohl (1998:229) also refers to the emic view as the "phenomenological" point of view. Bogdan and Biklen (in Krathwohl 1998:235) call this *thinking naturalistically* and argue that through our experiences, we construct a view of the world that determines how we act. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:7) conclude that qualitative research, as a set of practices, embraces within its own multiple disciplinary history's constant tensions and contradictions over the project itself, including its methods and the forms its findings and interpretations take. The field lies between and includes all of the human disciplines, even in some cases, the physical sciences.

In the analysis of qualitative data, the emphasis is on grounded theory and other more inductive analytical strategies. Babbie and Mouton (2001:53) focus the attention on the different terms that are often used by different researchers as synonyms with qualitative research, namely ethnography (Agar, Lofland, Hammersly & Atkinson), field research (Burgess) and naturalistic research (Denzin, Schatzmann & Strauss).

In the current unpredictable higher education landscape, the whole practice/progression of qualitative research also becomes increasingly important. This statement is emphasised by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:18) realising that behind the theory, method, analysis and methodology of qualitative research stands the personal biography of the researcher, who speaks from a particular

class, gender, racial, cultural, and ethnic community perspective. The gendered, multiculturally situated researcher approaches the world with a set of ideas, a framework (theory, ontology) that specifies a set of questions (epistemology) that he then examines in specific ways (methodology, analysis). With this perspective in mind, the full impact of the researcher on the research is realised.

Subsequently, quantitative research is discussed to obtain a more balanced perspective on research methodology.

### 4.3 QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The quantitative paradigm includes an emphasis on the quantification of constructs. McMillan and Schumacher (2001), as well as Punch (2000) simplify the description of quantitative research as empirical research where the data is in the form of numbers. It is indirect and abstract and treats experiences as similar, adding or multiplying them together, or quantifying them. However, Cherry (2000:77), explains that in quantitative research statistical techniques have been developed so that quantitative methods can be applied using experimental approaches, cross-sectional/survey design and time series design. Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001) confirm that the quantitative researcher believes that the best way of measuring the properties of phenomena is through quantitative measurement, in other words assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. A related topic concerns the central role of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour, which has become known as "variable analysis". If properly designed, quantitative research can control certain kinds of error, such as selective and biased interpretation, more effectively.

By having a clearer indication of what qualitative and quantitative research entail, the researcher is of the opinion that the current debate on these research methodologies necessitates further elaboration.

#### 4.4 DEBATE ON RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Babbie and Mouton (2001:54-55) advocate that social science research in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was dominated by the positivist ideals of universal laws, objectivity, and quantification. The single most important period in the history of the qualitative paradigm is the period between 1915 and 1940. In addition to various empirical studies during this period, significant contributions to qualitative research methodology were also made. A legacy of pragmatism and a concern for concrete, empirical fieldwork was left behind. One of the main reasons for this is that it was realised how one could make use of personal documents (ranging from letters and life histories to newspaper reports) together with other methods (such as interviews). In these ways the perspective of the insider was captured, something that would become the trademark of the qualitative paradigm.

Currently there is a fierce research debate in higher education, which implies the tensions between the qualitative and the quantitative research paradigms, in other words, the dominant methodological approaches to social research. Denzin and Lincoln (2000:8) confirm these tensions by stating that the academic and disciplinary resistances to qualitative research illustrate the politics embedded in this field of discourse. Qualitative researchers are called journalists, or soft scientists. Their work is termed unscientific, exploratory, or subjective. Positivists further allege that so-called new experimental qualitative researchers write fiction, not science, and that they have no way of verifying the truth of their statements. But, as Babbie and Mouton (2001:16) reaffirm, the search for "truth" does not imply a search for certainty or absolute truths, but a search for the most valid or best approximation to the world.

Conrad *et al.* (2001) agree that qualitative research is often contrasted with quantitative research. The picture is complicated when it is considered that within each of these broad categories, there are "sub-schools of thought". Where a quantitative researcher might seek to know what percentage of people do one

thing or another, the qualitative researcher pays much greater attention to individual cases and the human understandings that feature in those cases. Nevertheless, one finds the latter using terms such as "frequently" and "the majority of people" and so on. Krathwohl (1998:232) reiterates that at one time, qualitative researchers were defensive of their method, and quantitative researchers were extremely critical of it. The same writer continues by saying that, unfortunately, there are still some quarters where this conflict between qualitative and quantitative research has not abated. Because qualitative methods possess less resemblance to those of the natural sciences, some quantitative researchers view them as unscientific and never as satisfactory as experimentation. Qualitative and quantitative research are labelled as two contrasting but equally important methods by Krathwohl (1998:5).

In this regard Pring (2000:43) refers to the "False Dualism" of educational research. He further maintains that the sharp distinction between qualitative and quantitative research is made on the basis not of "appropriateness to task" but of "epistemology" and even "ontology". Thus, the quantitative researchers are seen to have a distinctive view about the nature of knowledge about the physical and social world. The qualitative researchers question that view, and very often reject the whole quantitative enterprise as "epistemologically flawed". Researchers work within different paradigms and the differences are reflected in the respective languages of each and in the way in which key ideas or concepts take on a different logical character. These concepts link together in logically different ways and take on slightly different meanings. Such words as "objectivity" (and, by contrast "subjectivity"), "reality" (and "multiple realities"), "truth" and "verification", "knowledge" and "meaning" are interrelated and defined differently. It is further indicated by Cherry (2000) that the distinctions *within* the so-called paradigms are often as significant as the distinctions *between* them. Quantitative research will cover enquiries which range from the detailed measurement and correlation of performances within a strictly behaviourist tradition to the large-scale surveys of social trends. Qualitative research embraces symbolic interactionism, phenomenology, ethnography and

hermeneutics. Pring (2000:48) argues that it is this failure to recognise the complexity of enquiry, and of the nature of that which is being enquired into, which cause the blurring of the distinctions within the so-called paradigms and results in the sharp dichotomy between them, characterised by contrasting conceptions of "truth", "reality" and "objectivity".

These tensions are not only found between qualitative and quantitative researchers, but tensions within qualitative research also exist. Not all qualitative researchers share the same point of view regarding the differences between qualitative and quantitative research. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2000:10-11), realists and postpositivists criticise poststructuralists for taking the textual, narrative turn. Those who attempt to capture the point of view of the interacting subject in the world are accused of naïve humanism, while still others argue that lived experience is ignored by those who take the textual, performance view.

The debate has further led to the question of whether quantitative and qualitative methods should or could be combined effectively in one study. This has been debated in some detail in the philosophy and methodology of the social sciences, as highlighted by Babbie and Mouton (2001:368). These cases increasingly become the exception to the rule, because social researchers are much more pragmatic and eclectic in their selection of methodologies.

There are deep divisions between educational researchers based upon philosophical positions, which are rarely made explicit. Pring (2000:87) warns that such differences have a profound impact upon the conduct of research. The way in which we understand and explain the social world, and thus educational practice, is more complex and subtle than that.

Fortunately, there is more consensus in the literature regarding the similarities and differences between qualitative and quantitative research.

#### **4.4.1 Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research**

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers are concerned with the individual's point of view (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:10). However, qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the participant's perspective through detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture their subjects' perspectives because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical methods and materials. The empirical materials produced by interpretive methods are regarded by many quantitative researchers as unreliable, impressionistic, and not objective. Although many qualitative researchers will use statistical measures, methods, and documents as a way of locating groups of subjects within larger populations, they will seldom report their findings in terms of the kind of complex statistical measures or methods to which quantitative researchers are drawn.

Blaxter *et al.* (2001:65) note the similarities as follows: The underlying philosophical positions of qualitative and quantitative research are not necessarily as distinct as the stereotypes suggest; qualitative data often include quantification (for example statements such as more/less than, most, a few), whilst quantitative approaches can collect qualitative data (through open-ended questions). They continue that, while quantitative research may be used mostly for theory testing, it can also be used to generate hypotheses and theories. Similarly, qualitative research can be used for testing hypotheses and theories, even though it is mostly used for the generation of theory.

#### **4.4.2 Differences between qualitative and quantitative research**

The following differences are noted by Denzin and Lincoln (2000:10): Qualitative researchers are more likely to confront and come up against the constraints of the everyday social world. They see this world in action and embed their findings in it. Quantitative researchers abstract from this world and seldom study it directly. Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world

are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers are less concerned with such detail, because it interrupts the process of developing generalisations. Qualitative researchers use ethnographic prose, historical narratives, first-person accounts, still photographs, life histories, fictional "facts", and biographical and autobiographical materials, among others. Quantitative researchers use mathematical models, statistical tables, as well as graphs, and usually write about their research in impersonal, third-person prose.

Blaxter *et al.* (2001:85) add that an important difference is with regard to the structure and process aspects. Quantitative research is especially efficient at getting at the structural features of social life, while qualitative studies are usually stronger on process aspects.

From the literature perspectives of McMillan and Schumacher (2001:11-15), Cook and Reichardt (in Ratcliff 2002), Babbie and Mouton (2001:309), Blaxter *et al.* (2001:85), additional differences between qualitative and quantitative research are provided as illustrated in Table 4.1:

**TABLE 4.1: Differences between qualitative and quantitative research**

Qualitative research	Quantitative research
Phenomenological	Positivistic
Detailed description of phenomenon	Measurement and statistics
Extension of understanding by others	Results replicated by others
Holistic	Particularistic
Subjective/insider-centred	Objective/outsider-centred
Summary generalisations	Least complicated explanation preferred
Sources, evidence	Numerical data
Primarily inductive	Primarily deductive
Process-orientated	Outcome-orientated
Tentative summary interpretations	Statements of statistical probability



Multiple realities	A single reality
Anthropological worldview	Natural science worldview
Understanding a social situation from participants' perspectives	Establish relationships between measured variables
Relative lack of control	Attempt to control variables
Flexible changing strategies; design emerges as data being collected	Procedures are established before study begins
Ethnography using "disciplined subjectivity"	Experimental design to reduce error and bias
Goal: understand actor's view	Goal: find facts and causes
Prepared researcher becomes immersed in social situation	Researcher role: detached with use of instrument
Discovery-oriented	Verification-oriented
Goal of detailed context-bound generalisations	Goal of universal context-free generalisations
Explanatory	Confirmatory
Driven by subject's perspective	Driven by researcher's concerns

The fuller picture of the nuances of qualitative and quantitative research calls for detailed discussion on the use of both methodologies in research.

#### 4.4.3 Combining qualitative and quantitative research

As stated previously in 4.4 regarding the debate on qualitative and quantitative research, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) indicate that this debate/tension in educational research has become more diverse during the past few decades. They established that both quantitative and qualitative inquiry modes contribute significantly to our knowledge of education, a view that they have maintained in their balanced treatment of both approaches in research.

Blaxter *et al.* (2001:84) confirm that it is now common for researchers to use more than one method. The main method might, for example, be a set of

interviews or a series of observations, but this is likely to be complemented, at the very least, by some documentary analysis to enable the researcher to explore relevant literature or policy. Most research projects in the social sciences are, therefore, in a general sense of a multi-method nature. The researcher might complement interviews within an institution with the analysis of available documents, in order to compare written or spoken versions. Where two or more methods are used in this way to try to verify the validity of the information being collected, the process is referred to as triangulation.

The perspective of Blaxter *et al.* (2001) is complemented by Babbie and Mouton (2001:368) in realising that, although there is no question that certain types of questions necessitate certain types of research design, and therefore also specific methods, this does not in itself mean that a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods is not possible or desirable. Predominantly qualitative methods of data collection and analysis during the implementation evaluation study can be used. In the outcome evaluation study, a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods – both to collect and ultimately to analyse data - can be utilised. The researcher used predominantly qualitative methods of data collection and analysis and a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to analyse the data. Data that had been collected through more qualitative open-ended questions was transformed into more quantitative variables.

Both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection have strengths and weaknesses. The aim of any research study is to design and execute the project in such a manner that the eventual validity of the conclusions and results are optimised, as Babbie and Mouton (2001:368) reiterate. No amount of design can anticipate every possible source of error.

By combining qualitative and quantitative methods, the strengths of each method can be capitalised on and higher quality data can be ensured. The researcher's decision to make use of primarily qualitative research will consequently be motivated.

## 4.5 WHY QUALITATIVE RESEARCH?

The researcher decided on the use of a primarily qualitative method of research, due to the following reasons:

- The emphasis in qualitative research is on the "human-as-instrument" (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:43). This is of vital importance in times of change and transformation where it is expected of the "human" to contribute to meaningful adaptation and progress. This is equally applicable in the current South African higher education landscape which, in the last decade, experienced an unequal amount of change and transformation.
- According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:309), one of the main strengths of qualitative research is the comprehensiveness of perspective it gives researchers. By going directly to the social phenomenon under study and observing it as completely as possible, a deeper and fuller understanding of it can be developed.
- Qualitative methods allow for more probing and in-depth exploration. They are more suited to capture the "insider" perspective of those who are part of the investigation.
- Qualitative research is especially appropriate to the study of those attributes and behaviours best understood within their natural setting, which in this study is higher education institutions.
- Qualitative research is especially effective for studying the subtle nuances of attitudes and behaviours and for examining social processes over time.
- Babbie and Mouton (2001:309) state that the chief strength of this method lies in the depth of understanding it may permit.
- Qualitative research is extremely flexible. It allows the researcher to modify the research plan at any time and adapt the methodology, time frame, and other aspects of the study to suit the object of study.

In qualitative research the sampling of the research group (respondents) is also extremely important and needs to be done in a scientific way.

## 4.6 SAMPLING

Punch (2000:193) states that in qualitative research sampling is important, because everyone cannot be studied everywhere doing everything. Two ways of sampling is described by Cherry (2000:54), as well as by Babbie and Mouton (2001:287), namely the traditional social science approach where a representative sample of the population is studied, and the phenomenological approach where a sample technique is employed.

The researcher made use of "purposeful" sampling, also referred to as "purposive, judgment or judgmental" sampling (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:175) of middle managers in the administrative cadre of the four higher education institutions as a strategy to select small groups or individuals likely to be representative, knowledgeable and informative about higher education (see 1.7.2). Patton (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001:400) confirms that "information-rich cases for study in-depth" is selected in this way. Thus, using a purposeful sample is useful for obtaining the vital and most applicable information needed and the researcher was of the opinion that it would give a fairly representative view of the whole.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), such an approach to purposefully selecting people or settings for a study acknowledges the complexity that characterises human and social phenomena. The flux of current change in the South African higher education landscape, specifically the process of mergers and incorporations, had a tremendous effect on the sampling process. The initial focus was on Universities of Technology (of which there are currently four) for the sampling to be more homogenous. Unfortunately, access to only two (50 percent) of the Universities of Technology was gained. The researcher then focused on two technikons which were in the process of merging with other higher education institutions and from which very valuable contributions could also be delivered. In addition, the researcher is of the opinion that the percentages of the respondents/higher education institutions are not of the

utmost importance, but rather an in-depth description from people within a specific context. It is for these reasons that the researcher selected 20 percent (that is five middle managers per institution and 20 in total) on the basis of function (administrative cadre) and level (middle management) in the following sections/units: Human Resources; Student Services/Administration; Marketing; Examinations; Finances; Central/General Administration; ICT; Language Centre; Library and Information Services; Projects and Physical Planning; Counselling; and Co-operative Education at the above-mentioned four South African higher education institutions.

In the context of this research, a wider range of perspectives from middle managers from different units/sections was gained. It was argued that these middle managers from different units/sections at the four higher education institutions would contribute meaningfully to the complexity of the changing higher education landscape. These middle managers were also chosen because they had some insight to offer and were allowed to speak about their experiences. Their contribution was of crucial importance in endeavouring to find a solution to the problem, namely creating the model to enable middle managers to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions. Their experience and expert cooperation as middle managers contributed significantly towards the development of the model.

When deciding on the sample composition, size and representation of the research, the researcher had to ensure that research ethics was seriously considered and adhered to.

#### **4.7 ETHICAL ISSUES OF THE RESEARCH**

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), Blaxter *et al.* (2001) and Babbie and Mouton (2001), ethics is generally considered to deal with beliefs about what is right or wrong, proper or improper, good or bad. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:158) accurately note that the conduct of ethically informed social research

should be the goal of all social researchers. Although ethical issues arise predominantly with research that uses qualitative methods of data collection due to the closer relationship and interaction between the researcher and the participants of the research, all social research gives rise to a range of ethical issues. These issues include privacy, informed consent, anonymity and being truthful.

The primary investigator of this study was responsible for the ethical standards being adhered to. Certain procedures were followed to protect the rights of the researcher as well as those of the participants of the research. Before data was collected at the four higher education institutions by the researcher, letters of request (Appendix A) to participate in the research had been sent via e-mail to four previously identified staff members at these institutions. The previously identified staff members were part of the staff development units at their institutions. An accompanying form of consent (Appendix B) was also attached to the e-mail. Approval for conducting the interviews at the specific higher education institutions was then sought, among others, from the Central Research Committees, Institutional Research Offices and Survey Management Committees, as well as from the participating middle managers. It was mutually agreed upon that neither the name of the institution, nor the names of the participants taking part in the research, would be made available. It was also agreed with the participants that all information obtained would be treated as confidential. This meant that no one except the researcher would have access to individual data or the names of the participants. Confidentiality was also assured by the researcher by making certain that the data could not be linked to individual subjects by name.

The investigator was open and honest with the subjects by fully disclosing the purpose of the research, namely to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions by selecting two Universities of Technology and two technikons (which were in the process of merging), in order to enhance their services and customer care.

In addition, this model could enable middle management to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions. This model could also lead to the empowerment of middle management to render quality services that could enhance their competitive edge. Informed consent (via e-mail or telephonically) (see Appendix D) from the subjects was also secured before they participated in the research. Informed consent implies that the subjects had a choice about whether to participate or not. It should be noted that gaining access to people and institutions is not just a once-off exercise. As Blaxter *et al.* (2001:156) maintain, it is a continuous and potentially very demanding process. Just because the initial contact within an institution had given the go ahead, it did not mean that the data collection process would be without any problems.

In order to execute the research in a scientific way, the researcher embarked on the methods of data collection as will be explained in the next section.

#### 4.8 METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

Chenail (1995) states that in qualitative research the complexity lies in the collection and interpretation of the data. The main focus in qualitative research is the data itself; how well the researcher had collected quality data; and the interpretation thereof. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), the data of qualitative inquiry is most often people's words and actions. This therefore requires methods that allow the researcher to capture language and behaviour. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:200) add in this regard that data includes categories, where responses are coded or assigned a numerical value.

However, as the qualitative researcher very well knows, words carry meanings – even meanings that are not intended. Therefore, Maykut and Morehouse (1994:20) chose the word "perspectival" instead of "subjective" to refer to the way qualitative researchers see the world. "Perspectival" has the added advantage of being inclusive of differing perspectives, including but not limited to

the researcher's perspective. In this regard, Mouton and Marais (1996:160) indicate that qualitative research can be interpreted in a number of ways. Erikson (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001:16) advocates the term "disciplined subjectivity" and Mason "reflexivity" (in McMillan & Schumacher 2001:16), that is critical self-examination of the researcher's role throughout the entire research process.

While there are different qualitative techniques that can be used to provide verbal descriptions, the goal of each of the techniques is to capture the richness and complexity of behaviour that occurs in natural settings from the participants' perspective (McMillan & Schumacher 2001; Hutchins 1993). The goal of qualitative research is to discover patterns that emerge after close observation, careful documentation, and thoughtful analysis of the research topic.

The outcome of any qualitative research study is not the generalisation of results, but a deeper understanding of experience from the perspectives of the participants in the research selected for study. Therefore, qualitative researchers are interested in understanding people's experience in context. These statements again emphasise that percentages are not of primary importance, as already stated in 4.6. The contextual findings in the specific study that was undertaken are vital for the complex and changing higher education landscape in South Africa. The natural settings in this study, therefore, namely higher education institutions where middle managers in administrative positions play a vital role, were the places where the researcher was most likely to discover, or uncover, what is to be known about the phenomenon of interest, namely development of middle management in the administrative cadre of higher education.

It is imperative to note that the central consideration of validity concerning the process of data collection is that of reliability (Mouton & Marais 1996:79). According to these writers, the reliability of the data is influenced by the researcher, the participant, the measuring instrument (interview guide) (see Appendix E), and the research context or circumstances under which the



research is conducted. The inclusion of multiple sources of data collection is likely to increase the reliability of the observations. The same writers further elaborate that the assurance of the researcher not to identify the respondents in any manner, must be regarded as a further requirement for also establishing greater validity.

For the purpose of this research the researcher utilised four methods of data collection, namely relevant documentation, participant observation, in-depth semi-structured interviews, as well as responses via electronic mail. Relevant documentation was utilised first.

#### **4.8.1 Documentation**

Fink (in Blaxter *et al.* 2001:120) indicates that the literature review is a systematic, explicit and reproducible method for identifying, evaluating and interpreting existing recorded work. A competent literature review helps to place the researcher's work in context of what has already been researched, allowing comparisons to be made and providing a framework for further research. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:122) emphasise this view by stating that the purpose of the literature review is to locate the research project. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:109) agree that the knowledge of the literature is used in stating the significance of the problem, developing the research design and suggesting further research.

An in-depth literature study which is relevant to staff development - specifically management development in higher education globally and nationally; policy documents; the Internet and newspaper reports/articles – was undertaken during the first phase of the research. These documents provided valuable information and insights into the complexities of management development in administrative positions in the changing and transforming South African higher education context.

The second set of data was compiled by the researcher during and after the semi-structured interviews and responses via electronic mail. Notes which contained the recurring words or phrases and ideas of the participants as well as the researcher's understandings, questions, thoughts, concerns and decisions made during the research process, were prepared. A research diary was kept in order to refer back to important and relevant information during and after the semi-structured interviews, as well as the responses via e-mail.

#### 4.8.2 Semi-structured interviews

When qualitative data are collected, interviewing is particularly useful. The interviewer is in a good position to be able to judge the quality of responses of the respondents and to encourage the respondents to answer fully. According to Pring (2000:39), the semi-structured interview leaves scope for those interviewed to expand the full significance of their actions. Weis (in Mertus 2001) also favours the qualitative approach of interviewing, because he believes that it will give researchers a more complete picture of the perspectives of the subjects of the study. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:172) continue in this regard that it can be a very useful technique for collecting data, which would probably not be accessible if techniques such as observation or questionnaires were used.

Much preparation was done for the qualitative interview. An interview guide (see Appendix E) was also prepared, which was sent out to the participants well before the interviews were scheduled to take place. The questions of the interview guide were influenced by the literature study (see Chapters 1-3) and were directly related to the aims and objectives of the study (see 1.6.1 and 1.6.2). Intensive measuring with semi-structured interviews with respondents who had agreed to participate in the study, were done by the researcher. According to Oppenheim (1992:112), the use of semi-structured and open-ended questions where the respondent is required to give a free response, is very useful in qualitative research. Time was spent with the participants of three of the four higher education institutions to gain in-depth insights into their

views/perspectives of the role of the middle manager and middle management development practices in the changing higher education phenomena. As such, the focal point of the semi-structured interviews revolved around middle management development practices and challenges facing them.

Before the interviews participants were fully informed of the purpose of the study and the processes involved in the handling and use of the recorded data (see Appendices C, D and E). Anonymity and confidentiality were assured. The interviews were conducted in either Afrikaans or English, depending on the interviewees' language of preference.

The advantages of doing the interviews in this way, were the following:

- The interview technique was flexible. In terms of this study it was used with middle managers in administrative positions at three of the four higher education institutions.
- Defined answers to defined questions were given, while also leaving time for further development of these answers, including more open-ended questions.
- Responses were probed, followed up, clarified, and elaborated on to achieve specific, accurate responses.
- The accuracy of the interviews was increased in the sense that opportunity was provided for the interviewer to follow up perceptions.

The primary disadvantages of the interviews were:

- The interviewer's potential for subjectivity and bias.
- The interviewing entailed that the researcher not only needed to manage time, but also co-ordinate the research with the availability of/access to the subjects of the study. All these processes had to be scheduled and integrated appropriately into the progress of the research.
- The time-consuming nature of the interviews, especially the arrangements made to interview the respondents. Shifting times and allocating different times to interviewees due to other important unforeseen circumstances, were prevalent. But, it is noteworthy that this disadvantage also gave the

researcher an in-depth look at the manner in which the changes in higher education affect the day-to-day planning and activities of middle managers in administrative positions.

- The higher cost of conducting interviews at the selected higher education institutions.

The interview guide (see Appendix E) that was used for the semi-structured interviews was constructed in the following way: The guide listed all the questions that would be asked during the interviews, also giving space for the interviewer to write down answers. The questions were directly related to the aims and objectives of the study. They also followed a given sequence that was adhered to in each interview. No choices from which the respondent had to select an answer were given. Rather, the questions were phrased to allow for individual responses. It was open-ended questions, but they were fairly specific in their intent. They also allowed for probing and clarification.

After the purposive sample had been identified, the researcher electronically explained the aims and objectives of the interviews and asked the interviewees' permission to be interviewed. As mentioned in 1.7.2, the purposive sample was done on the basis of function (administrative/support services) and level (middle management) at the four higher education institutions. Middle managers in the following sections/units were targeted: Human Resources; Student Services/Administration; Marketing; Examinations; Finances; Central/General Administration; ICT; Information Management; Library and Information Services; Projects and Maintenance; and Quality Assurance. The researcher decided that the interviewees should have the questions beforehand in order not only to decide whether they wanted to participate, but also as a time-saving device for them to think about and reflect on the answers prior to the interview.

When the researcher started conducting the interviews with 15 of the 20 interviewees, the interviewer again briefly explained the purpose of the interview and asked whether the respondents had any questions or concerns. Permission

was also asked to tape-record the interviews. The questions were then addressed to the respondent in the exact words indicated on the interview guide. As the subjects responded to the questions, the interviewer recorded the answers. The interviewer allowed sufficient time for the respondent to answer and avoided anticipating and cuing a potential answer. The duration of the interviews ranged from 30 to 60 minutes. After all the questions had been answered, the interviewer thanked the respondents for participating and making time in their already extremely busy schedules.

#### **4.8.3 Responses via electronic mail**

One of the four higher education institutions' participants, which consisted of five out of 20, responded to the interview guide via e-mail. The primary reason why semi-structured interviews could not be conducted, was that the most participants who were available on a specific day amounted to only two. Dates for the interviews were scheduled and re-scheduled for almost one month. In the end, the researcher decided that the best way to receive responses from all five was via electronic mail. Much the same procedures as with the semi-structured interviews were followed (see 4.8.2) before the responses were received. The only difference was that instead of personally interviewing the respondents, the five responses were received via electronic mail.

These responses were also followed up electronically as well as telephonically. The respondents could furthermore be contacted and their responses could be followed up if there was a need for clarification. The primary advantages of these electronic responses were cost- and time-effectiveness, as well as the contribution to triangulation (see 4.9) to increase the validity and reliability of the data.

In addition to the semi-structured interviews and electronic responses, the researcher also engaged in participant observation.

#### 4.8.4 Participant observation

In order to fully comprehend what participant observation entails, it is necessary to explain the concept. That will subsequently take place.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:293-299), two types of observation are usually found in qualitative research, namely – in the first place - “simple observation” according to which the researcher remains an outside observer. In the second place there is “participant observation” according to which the researcher is simultaneously a member of the group he is studying as well as a researcher doing the study. Denzin and Lincoln (1994:248) refer to “participant observation” as observation carried out when the researcher is playing an established participant role in the scene that is being studied, which in this instance is a higher education environment. Hammersley and Atkinson (in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:249) argue that, in a sense, all social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it. From this point of view participant observation is not a particular research technique, but “a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic” of researchers [Hammersley and Atkinson (in Denzin & Lincoln 1994:249)]. Participant observation has been claimed to represent a uniquely humanistic, interpretive approach.

As participant observer, the researcher attempted to enter the lives of others; to “indwell” (Marton 1994; Maykut & Morehouse 1994:69); to suspend as much as possible the researcher’s own ways of viewing the administrative middle managers’ world of higher education. The researcher was present in the natural setting - in this case three of the four higher education institutions - where the phenomenon, the administrative manager under study, took place.

It is important to note that the observational method (McMillan & Schumacher 2001) relies on the researcher’s seeing and hearing things and recording observations, rather than simply relying on subjects’ self-reported responses to

questions and statements. The advantage thereof is that it quite often verifies/triangulates different findings, and generalisations are not made on only one source of data.

Owing to the researcher's job description and responsibilities at a higher education institution, some simple observations occurred many times during the research process (McMillan & Schumacher 2001). Although the subjects were unaware of being researched at that particular times, the observation was valuable in the sense that it contributed to recording the behaviour and inputs of administrative middle managers, as it occurred naturally in the higher education context. It mainly occurred during meetings and informal conversations with individuals and groups where middle managers were involved (see 5.4.14).

Denzin (in Babbie & Mouton 2001:293) mentions the following major types of observable data: expressive movement (for example eye movements, facial expressions, bodily movements, posture); physical location (the setting one is observing, people's personal space); language behaviour (slips of the tongue, topics of discussion); time duration (how long is the person one is observing engaged in what he is doing). All these aspects will be elaborated on in 5.4.14.

In order to complement the methods of data collection being used in this research, the validity and reliability of the data are extremely important.

#### **4.9 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY OF DATA**

According to Mouton and Marais (1996:79), the central consideration of validity concerning the process of data collection is that of reliability. The reliability of data or observations is influenced by the researcher, the participant, the measuring instrument (interview guide) (see Appendix E) and the research context (South African higher education landscape) under which the research is conducted. When enhancing validity and reliability in the qualitative paradigm, Babbie and Mouton (2001:275) warn that one should be more concerned with

triangulation, writing extensive field notes, reasoned consensus, etcetera to let respondents speak freely without distorting what they say while they are interviewed. Triangulation is defined by Denzin (in Babbie & Mouton 2001) as the use of multiple methods, a plan of action that will raise social science researchers above the personal biases that stem from single methodologies. By combining methods in the same study, observers can partially overcome the deficiencies that flow from one method. Triangulation can be done according to paradigms, methodologies, methods, and so forth.

Triangulation in this study involved using more than one method in the collection of data, namely at three institutions semi-structured interviews were conducted, whilst at another institution feedback via e-mail was received. A combination of the following sources of data, namely documentation (see 4.8.1), semi-structured interviews (see 4.8.2), electronic responses (see 4.8.3) and participant observation (see 4.8.4 and 5.4.14) during the research further enhanced triangulation. According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), triangulation is generally considered to be one of the best ways to enhance validity and reliability in qualitative research. This statement is confirmed by Punch (2000:247).

Although the researcher should strive with everything in his power to deliver truly valid, reliable, and objective studies, the reality is that this can never be attained completely. Rather, as Babbie and Mouton (2001:276) emphasise, it remains a goal, something to be striven towards.

Methods of analysing the data were also done in a scientific way.

#### **4.10 METHODS OF DATA ANALYSIS**

A qualitative analysis of data is a systematic process of selecting, categorising, comparing, synthesising, and interpreting to provide explanations of the single phenomenon of interest (McMillan & Schumacher 2001).



McMillan and Schumacher (2001) furthermore state that data analysis entails several cyclical phases which are, among other things, the following:

- Continuous discovery, so as to identify tentative themes and develop concepts and mini-theories. In this regard Blaxter *et al.* (2001:192) reiterate that data analysis is an ongoing process with earlier analysis informing later data collection.
- Categorising and ordering of data, typically after data collection, so as to refine one's understanding of patterns and themes. The development of categories, integration of concepts and connections to existing literature, were ways of reconstructing the data. Differences and consistencies can be found in this way.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001), analysis begins when one has accumulated a subset of the data, providing an opportunity for the most important/relevant aspects of the phenomenon under study to begin to emerge. These initial leads are followed by pursuing the relevant persons, settings, or documents that will help illuminate/clarify the phenomenon of interest, namely administrative middle managers in higher education institutions. Field notes, methodology notes and theoretical notes (emergent trends) will all contribute towards the phenomenon of interest.

The researcher thus decided on the constant comparative method (Maykut & Morehouse 1994:134) of analysing qualitative data which combines inductive category coding with a simultaneous comparison of all units of meaning obtained. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:206) agree that comparative analysis entails the analysing of data in the course of which concepts and theories will be advanced, considered and developed.

#### 4.11 CONCLUSION

A clear indication of what the qualitative and quantitative research methodologies entail, as well as the current debate on these methodologies are

outlined in this chapter. Motivation for making use of primarily qualitative research in this study is also provided. The sampling process; ethical issues of the research; methods of data collection; validity and reliability of the data; and methods for data analysis are also included.

The following chapter deals with the research findings of staff development practices and needs regarding middle managers in the administrative cadre at the selected four higher education institutions that were researched.

## CHAPTER 5

# RESEARCH FINDINGS OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES AND NEEDS OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding Chapters 1, 2, 3 and 4, evidence of the importance of middle management development in the administrative cadre of higher education globally, including South Africa, was provided. During the rapidly changing higher education landscape, the importance of effective and efficient development and training practices cannot be overemphasised. This chapter provides an analysis of the empirical investigation into staff development practices and needs of middle managers in the administrative cadre in higher education institutions.

As outlined in paragraph 1.6.1, the aims of the research are as follows:

- Middle management should unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles (for example authoritative and non-delegation styles), but - at the same time - also relearn new skills (for example managing change and diverse groups of people) (Andrews in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 22 April 2001:16) to contribute to a quality higher education system (see 1.4).
- In addition to the above aim, middle managers should adopt what Fielden (1998) refers to as a "new managerial culture" in order to be more successful and more client- and service-orientated (as outlined in Chapter 3 and throughout the thesis).
- Learning priorities and specific actions for the empowerment of middle management in administrative positions in higher education should be clearly set (see 5.4.10.2; 5.4.12 and 6.3.2.1).

Stemming from the above-mentioned aims, the objectives (see 1.6.2) of the research are the following:

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs with regard to middle management development in higher education in order to address those needs (as highlighted throughout the thesis).
- A realisation by higher education institutions that it is crucial for middle management to be empowered and to stay empowered in pursuing higher education's objectives, among other things, quality service-delivery and customer satisfaction for both external and internal customers in order to stay competitive (6.3.5).
- A critical reflection by middle management in administrative positions on the challenges facing them to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with their higher education institutions' objectives (as indicated in 5.4.9.3).

Some of the above-mentioned aims and objectives were achieved through the literature (see Chapter 3 and throughout the thesis), while others were achieved through the empirical investigation (see 6.3.2.1 and 6.3.5).

## **5.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON INSTITUTIONS CONCERNED**

The following short background information on the four institutions provides the context within which the investigation was conducted. The four higher education institutions selected for investigation represent two Universities of Technology (one merged institution and one incorporation) and two technikons (to be merged with other institutions as from January 2005).

As previously mentioned in 4.6, great transformation is currently taking place in South African higher education, of which specifically the reconfiguration of the landscape of public institutions by means of mergers and incorporations is a key element/strategy. This restructuring of the institutional landscape of the higher education system was initiated by the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001:69-81) to – among others – enhance responsiveness to regional and national needs for academic

programmes, research and community service, as well as to build new institutional identities and cultures as integral components of a single co-ordinated national higher education system. This transformation and restructuring of the higher education landscape from 36 to 22 institutions, redress the scope, focus and effectiveness of the South African higher education system. Owing to the enormous impact they had on the research problem as well as on the sampling process - of which the impact was not fully realised at the beginning of the study - these processes are mentioned once again here.

The researcher's initial target was four out of the current four (100 percent) Universities of Technology, but access could not be gained to two of them. Instead, the researcher gained access to two other higher education institutions that are currently still known as technikons, but are in the process of merging with other institutions. Although these two technikons did not yet have university/University of Technology status, very valuable contributions were delivered from them. The researcher is of the opinion that these institutions contributed to a representative sample of the research population, because they were in the process of merging with other institutions. Although the four institutions were from four different provinces/regions, all of them promoted career-orientated/focused education and concentrated on high quality teaching, research and community service, which are relevant not only to the needs and aspirations of their respective regions, but also relevant to South Africa. The number of the students at the four institutions ranged from 7 000 to 40 000, implicating that medium- to large-sized higher education institutions were researched. It was agreed that neither the names of the institutions nor the names of the participants would be mentioned, due to ethical reasons.

### **5.3 BIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF PARTICIPANTS**

The participants in the semi-structured interviews were from institutions A, B and D, and those that responded via e-mail were from institution C. The following biographic profiles, as depicted in Table 5.1, give a more detailed picture of

these participants.

**TABLE 5.1: Biographic information of participants**

<b>INSTITUTION</b>	<b>SECTION/UNIT</b>	<b>GENDER</b>	<b>RACE</b>	<b>EXPERIENCE IN MIDDLE MANAGEMENT</b>
<b>A</b>	Assistant Registrar: General Administration	Female	White	10 years
	Manager: Employment Equity Office	Female	White	8 years
	Manager: IT	Male	White	10 years
	Manager: Human Resources	Male	White	8 years
	Head: Student Administration	Female	Black	4 years
<b>B</b>	Head: Student Administration	Female	White	4 years
	Head: Examinations	Female	White	7 years
	Director: IT	Male	White	9 years
	Director: Marketing and Recruitment	Male	Black	4 years
	Manager: Financial Administration	Female	Black	6 years

C	Director: Co-operative Education	Male	White	10 years
	Director: Student Counselling	Female	Black	17 years
	Director: IT	Male	White	14 years
	Director: Library and Information Services	Female	Black	10 years
	Director: Language Centre	Male	Black	7 years
D	Associate Director: ICT	Male	White	6 years
	Manager: Estates	Male	White	9 years
	Manager: Central Administration	Male	Black	6 months
	Assistant Director: Human Resources	Male	White	11 years
	Manager: Corporate Affairs/Marketing	Female	Black	5 years

At each of the four institutions a total number of five middle managers participated in the research, which amounts to a total of 20 participants. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 of the participants, whilst the other five participants responded via e-mail. These participants were representative of the middle managers from different administrative units/sections, to achieve a more in-depth discourse to yield many insights into the phenomenon under investigation. The sample of these middle managers was "purposeful" because most of the administrative sections/units at the higher education institutions were represented by the 20 respondents. It is noticeable that the middle managers in the IT/ICT-section at all four institutions were willing to participate in the research. The deduction can be made that most of the participants had served in middle management positions in higher education

for a considerable number of years. The average years of middle management experience was therefore 7.89.

#### **5.4 REPORT OF RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The findings of the investigation are discussed according to the questions that were submitted to the respondents via the interview guide (see Appendix E). The questions in the interview guide were based on the findings of the literature study. During and after the semi-structured interviews had been undertaken and also after the e-mail responses had been received, it became evident that in each question answered, certain themes and patterns recurred. These themes and patterns for each question will subsequently be discussed. For the ease of reading, the questions asked during the semi-structured interviews and via e-mail, will be repeated here, whereafter the responses from the participants will be elaborated on. It should be noted that the responses *per institution* - whether via semi-structured interviews or e-mail - were studied and are reported on in this way.

##### **5.4.1 The existence of a policy for the development of managers within the four institutions**

**Question 1:** Is there a policy for the development of managers within your institution?

The purpose of the first question was to determine whether management development was one of the focus areas of the institution's strategic planning.

Although staff development has become a vital component of higher education institutional policy-making to be distinguished by quality and relevance (see 1.4), it was evident that, except for institution B, 13 respondents at the investigated higher education institutions were unaware of the existence of such an institutional policy, while the rest responded in the negative. It is also



noteworthy that the policy for management development at institution B was reserved for senior/top management and definitely not aimed at middle managers. What is also worth mentioning, is that only one of the five respondents at institution B was aware of this policy for senior/top management. The fact that so many respondents were unaware of the existence of such a policy, could most probably be attributed to poor communication structures.

The researcher is of the opinion that a lack of an existing institutional policy for specifically middle managers could be attributed to several reasons. It could be attributed to different focus areas in the strategic planning of the institutions, since the top management regards the development of middle managers as a less important strategy. The top/senior management could also not regard the development of middle managers as critical in the changing and complex higher education landscape to bind them to such a policy.

It should, in addition, be emphasised that, although no formal policy exists for middle management development, all the respondents indicated that facilities and infrastructure, for example staff development units and staff development co-ordinators for the development of all staff, did exist at their institutions. The fact that facilities and infrastructure for development existed, could be regarded as a positive step towards the realisation of the importance of development.

At institution D the participants further mentioned that, although opportunities such as financial study support and training sessions with generic themes like time management, stress management and general financial management for staff development existed, in "reality very little was being done to develop staff". "No clear-cut guidelines in this regard is evident, except for formal study support", was reiterated by one of the interviewees.

The lack of a policy on management development would not give effect to organised and coherent development actions that are so desperately needed at higher education institutions.

#### 5.4.2 The role of the Skills Development Strategy in development activities

**Question 2:** Does the Skills Development Strategy play any role in this regard (a policy)?

The purpose of the question was to determine the relevancy of development activities regarding national and institutional needs.

Eighteen of the 20 participants of the four institutions indicated that the SDS indeed played a role in the facilities and infrastructure, for example staff development co-ordinators and units were available at their institutions. "The principles of lifelong learning and the promotion of equity are in a certain sense adhered to", but unfortunately the principle of demand-led skills development (see 1.3 and 2.3.1.1) is not evident in the development activities. The vision of the SDS, namely Productive Citizenship for All, plays a role in the sense of the promotion of equity and lifelong learning, in the facilities and attempts made at staff development practices at the four institutions.

Only two respondents from institution D indicated that the SDS did not play any role in the development activities. They elaborated that "these development activities were not aligned to national policy and acts" and that a "Skills Development Assessment/Audit had not yet been done" at their institution.

It was, however, agreed that the role of the Skills Development Strategy should not be overlooked when it comes to staff development. The guiding principles of lifelong learning, promotion of equity, demand-led skills development, efficiency and effectiveness (see 2.3.1.1) are vital components of staff development initiatives.

Although no mention was made of a skills development facilitator at any of the four institutions, there are staff members, for example in human resources and

centres for staff development who facilitate development. The institutions also claim through the Skills Development Levies Act (RSA 1999) for development activities of staff members.

#### **5.4.3 The priority given to management development by creating sufficient opportunities to develop**

**Question 3.1:** Does your institution give a high priority to management development by creating sufficient opportunities to develop? **Question 3.2:** If "Yes", what is the focus/nature of the development?

The purpose of the question was to establish the priority given to management development as well as the focus/nature of the development.

Conflicting viewpoints on the priority given to management development are evident, not only among the institutions, but also among the participants of institutions, except for institution A where all the respondents regarded the "priority as very low". They were of the opinion that their needs such as specialised development for their specific units/sections were not addressed. The participants at institution A elaborated further that, although facilities and infrastructure for the development of staff did exist at their institution, they were unanimously of the opinion that "much more could be done for middle management development". The development taking place at institution A mainly focused on generic development, namely time management, managing of meetings and basic financial management. No development action regarding their specialised fields of operation were undertaken.

At institution B three of the five interviewees indicated that a very low priority was given to management development, specifically middle management development. Of the utmost importance at institution B was the development of top management and of the academe, as maintained by these respondents. The remaining two interviewees stated that priority towards management

development was given in their respective units, and not institutionally. In one of these units, development is also "of a very generic nature and not specialised in the area of expertise". It is interesting to note that in the IT unit of institution B the development was not only of a generic nature, but also "very specialised regarding the area of expertise". The deduction can therefore be made that, because of the rapidly changing IT environment, the specialised development of IT staff is not negotiable. New systems and programmes are put into place at an extremely rapid speed, due to changes experienced in technology applications (see 2.2.4).

The respondents of institution C also had different opinions regarding the priority of management development. One respondent indicated uncertainty, while two respondents stated that sufficient opportunities to develop were created institutionally, and a further two offered a definite "No" with regard to sufficient opportunities. According to the respondents who gave a positive answer, a stumbling-block for development was limited financial resources, but despite this impediment, the "foci of the development were multi-faceted and needs-orientated". "Each manager was encouraged to map his development plan on the basis of financial resources available". It is worth mentioning that these development plans just remained plans and were not implemented. It should be noted that it is again in the IT unit/section (as at Institution B) that not only generic but also specialised development was at the forefront.

Four of the five interviewees from institution D indicated in no uncertain terms that low priority was given to management development, because sufficient opportunities to develop were not created. They further motivated that, although there were opportunities to develop themselves with regard to further studies, there were no measurable outcomes when generic development took place. One respondent explicitly stated that there was "no room to develop and grow as a middle manager", and that performance management was used only as a tool, not as a means to improve managers' performance. Only one participant at institution D noted that the priority given to management development was

debatable. Although opportunities for development were created at their institution, it was optional for management to participate.

The present low level of activity regarding management development at higher education institutions (see 1.5), is emphasised by these findings. This is in direct contrast with national policies and acts (see 2.3.1.1).

#### **5.4.4 Selection of management development on the basis of function and level**

**Question 4:** Is management development selected on the basis of function (for example administrative staff) and level (for example middle management) at your institution and then accordingly diversified?

The purpose of the question was to determine whether development was focused on specific groups and functions.

There was general agreement among the participants of institution A that management development was not selected on the basis of function (for example administrative staff) and level (for example middle management) and not accordingly diversified, although there was a need for this diversification to better empower middle managers. Management development, according to them, was more aimed towards generic themes, for example time management, communication skills, and stress management. Middle management would rather opt for more specialised development, for example project management, strategic planning of their units, and performance management.

This viewpoint was shared by the participants of institution B, except for the participant from the IT unit, who advocated that management development was in a certain sense selected on the basis of function and level. The participant further emphasised that the middle manager had to initiate for his own development to take place in his unit.

The replies of four of the five participants of institution C were that management was not selected on the basis of function and level. They continued that it was mainly generic development - as in the instance of institutions A and B – and “not to strengthen managers in their diverse fields of specialisation-related areas”.

At institution D development was also not selected on the basis of function and level, and also of a more generic nature, as was evident at the other institutions. Development initiatives also had to come from the individual. An “uphill battle” regarding management development was also encountered at institution D due to “inconsistency and a lack of policy and guidelines”.

The researcher is of the opinion that management development should in certain instances - because it would not always be possible - be selected on the basis of function and level, in order to give the most appropriate and relevant development. If development activities are not selected, it usually leads to development on generic issues.

#### **5.4.5 The prerequisites for middle management development**

Subsequently aspects with regard to the induction and continuous professional development of administrative middle managers will be dealt with and discussed.

##### **5.4.5.1 *Newly appointed middle managers in administrative positions with regard to requirements to undergo a formal induction programme in the relevant management areas***

**Question 5.1:** Are all newly appointed middle managers in administrative positions required to undergo a formal induction programme in the relevant management areas?

The purpose of the question was to determine if formal induction programmes in

the relevant management areas were regarded as imperative to be a requirement for middle managers.

The response to whether institutions A and B required newly appointed middle managers to undergo a formal induction programme in the relevant management areas, was an unequivocal "No". The only programme they required to undergo at these institutions, was a general orientation programme which all newly appointed staff members, not only middle managers, needed to undergo. Again, as mentioned in 5.4.4, the programme was primarily generic, where all staff members were acquainted for example with the structure of the institution and their powers and relationships, general rules and procedures to be followed, facilities available and staff and student numbers. What is worth mentioning, though, is that at institution B the IT section required middle managers to undergo an additional formal induction programme in the IT management area as mentioned in 5.4.3. The focus of this induction programme is on the structures, strategic and operational issues in the IT unit.

At institution C one of the respondents was unaware of the mentioned requirement, and one had a positive answer to the requirement, but at the same time mentioned that, in practice, the induction programme in the relevant management areas had not been adhered to. The rest of the respondents at institution C replied in the negative and stated that a general induction programme for all new appointees were followed, as was the case at institutions A and B.

The interviewees at institution D replied that all newly appointed staff members were required to undergo an orientation programme which was very limited in scope and not sufficient to prepare staff for their different tasks and roles. It was "mainly a general orientation programme and not directly related to management areas". Staff members at this institution were only acquainted with the vision and mission of the institution, the structure, organograms and general rules and procedures to be followed. Although this information is not irrelevant,

the primary need is a middle management preparation programme for their different roles and responsibilities as middle managers in their respective units/sections, which should be taken into account when implementing staff development programmes.

#### 5.4.5.2 *Requirement of middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development*

**Question 5.2:** Does your institution require middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development?

The purpose of the question was to establish the importance of continuous development of staff at the institutions.

Regarding the above-mentioned requirement, the researcher is of the opinion that not all middle management staff were really aware of what was required of them. At institution A, three interviewees indicated a definite "Yes" and two indicated a definite "No". Those participants with a positive response motivated their answers by stating that many opportunities were created at their institution to undergo professional development, and that it was free of charge.

The responses at institution B followed the same pattern as at institution A. Two of the respondents highlighted that their institution required from middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development by creating opportunities for them to develop, while three of them gave a negative answer. One of these three respondents elaborated that "the decision regarding continuous development lies with the individual, and not with the institution". This is a clear indication that middle management, and not only the institution, also have a responsibility towards continuous development. Surely middle managers are on a level to make responsible input with regard to their own development.



The respondents at institution C also had varied answers regarding the requirement to undergo continuous professional development. Three respondents mentioned that continuous professional development was required by their institution, for example to improve their qualifications and to publish in accredited journals, whilst two stated that there was no requirement – with one responding as follows: “I have never heard or read any circular or found written material where this is explicitly stated”. The deduction can therefore be made that not all middle managers at the institution mentioned were aware of whether it was required of them to undergo continuous professional development. Obviously staff development is not a strategic priority of the institution and is neither linked with performance appraisal.

It was only at institution D where all the respondents indicated that no requirement existed regarding middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development. They also unanimously advocated that it was totally up to the individual’s initiative to decide whether he wanted to undergo this development. What was also significant at institution D, was that two of the interviewees added that it was required from academic staff to undergo continuous professional development and definitely not from administrative staff.

No one can debate the absolute necessity for middle managers to undergo continuous professional development. In the current ever-changing higher education landscape, it should in actual fact be a requirement for all staff members.

#### **5.4.6 Linking development with performance appraisal, in other words alignment with other institutional objectives**

**Question 6:** Is the development linked with performance appraisal, in other words aligned with other institutional objectives?

The purpose of the question was to establish if development is linked/aligned to

other institutional strategies/objectives.

Only one respondent from institution C replied that development was linked with performance appraisal, whilst the rest of the respondents at institutions A, B and C answered a definite "No" to the question. One respondent stated: "There is no formal appraisal system or tool. One's annual evaluation lasts for about three minutes." The negative response from them could further be motivated by the fact that either a performance appraisal system did not exist at these institutions or, if it existed, it did not go without a hitch.

Like at institutions A, B and C, the respondents at institution D also replied in the negative. They elaborated further in this regard, stating that ultimately it remained the "thinking" of the institution to link development with performance appraisal, but it was not clearly defined. Plans and documents regarding performance appraisal were drafted, but no action was taken in this regard. A "clear lack on an integrated approach" that "cascaded strategy to operational individual levels", was what was missing regarding performance appraisal. It remained an "informal approach" which is not linked to targets or outcomes and it is difficult to measure its effectiveness.

As previously indicated in 3.5.2.2.4, the potential problems with regard to performance appraisals are prevalent and the source of the problems with appraisal systems lies in the system itself and not in the people involved.

If staff development programmes are not linked to other institutional objectives and plans, the desired impact on the institution will never be achieved and no coherency will be attainable.

#### **5.4.7 Value of the development activities in supporting management performance**

**Question 7:** How valuable have you found the development activities in

supporting your management performance?

The purpose of the question was to find out if the development activities were of any value with regard to middle managers' management performance.

At institution A no consensus to the value that was added to the interviewees' management activities could be reached. Three indicated that no value was added to their management performance, whilst two responded positively, especially with regard to the value of self-development. They added that the development activities had value in the sense of their personal development which, in turn, supported their management performance. What was of interest, was that one of the respondents at institution A mentioned that "although the development activities added value" to his management performance, "no following-up was done after an activity". This is regarded as one of the biggest vacuums in their development system/activities.

All the respondents at institution B delineated that the development activities at their institution indeed added value to their management performance, in the sense of more general/generic performance. Value to their skills in their specialised area was unfortunately not added. It is of interest that one of the respondents mentioned (as with institution A) that "the development activities were not structured on a continuous basis, with the result that no follow-up was done". This implies an *ad hoc* and unco-ordinated approach, which is not, for example, linked to learnerships and career advancement. One interviewee responded as follows: "It [development activities] is not used for any promotion purposes."

The responses at institution C underlined ambivalence towards the value added to their management performance. Responses ranged from "No" to "Low and medium impact" to "Yes". The respondents at institution C felt that, in certain instances with regard to self-development, value was added, but in their specialised field of management the value added ranged from "low" to "none". A

respondent at institution C replied: "There is no synchronisation between development activities and management needs, hence one cannot move towards the desired goals."

The same pattern of responses as at institution C was found at institution D. Answers ranged from "Impeccably invaluable" to "Not very effective". Three of the five interviewees indicated that the development activities at their institution were valuable with regard to valid outcomes in conflict resolution, self-assertiveness, time management and personal/self-development. Two interviewees stated that the development activities taking place were not very effective, because there was "no real commitment and drive" behind it. The interviewees further mentioned that the development was taking place through the middle manager's own self-initiative and mainly through further studies and not institutionally. The impact of the development on activities on the improvement of middle managers' service delivery was not very significant.

There could be no doubt with regard to the necessity of any staff development initiatives to support management activity in order to be relevant and to achieve the desired outcomes of the programmes.

#### **5.4.8 The influence of academic work and staff on administrative middle managers**

In the next section the influence of academic work as well as the "divide" between academic and administrative staff will be discussed.

##### **5.4.8.1 *The impact of academic work and policies/development on the work of administrative middle level managers***

**Question 8.1:** How do academic work and policies/development impact on the work of middle level managers?

The purpose of the question was to establish the impact as well as the extent of the impact of academic work, among other things, on the performance of middle level administrative managers.

There is certainly no doubt with regard to the "direct" and "major" impact of academic work and policies/development on the work of administrative middle level managers, as was generally agreed on by all the respondents of all four institutions. Although there was general agreement regarding the direct and major impact, differences regarding this impact need to be further elaborated on. According to one of the respondents from institution A, the impact was based on all the specialisation units in the administrative cadre. Another respondent from institution A put it subtly that "academics were not easy to work with".

The "immediacy" of administrative work in higher education is not always understood by the academe, and thus also has an immensely negative impact on the administrative cadre, as elaborated on by respondents of institution B. According to them, the academe slowed down the administrative work due to certain demands from academics to not always adhere to policies and procedures. According to one of the respondents, in a certain sense the academe "determined your workload". He further maintained that a "deadline" for various academics meant that whatever information or input was needed by the administrative staff, could be submitted "anytime it suited the academics". This attitude leads to increasing workloads for the administrative services, due to the direct impact of the academic work and policies/development.

An interestingly opposing perspective was gained from a respondent from institution A. Being a former academic himself, he also maintained that academic work and policies/development had a direct impact on the work of middle managers in the administrative cadre. But, interestingly, he was also of the opinion that the administrative cadre had a much bigger influence on the academe than visa versa. According to him, the academe created room for creativity and innovation, whilst the administrative staff were focused on

processes and thus influenced one another. Because of the influence on one another, they should have an understanding and a symbiotic relationship. He further advocated that, from an academic point of view, there was no negativity towards administrative personnel – it was only the “focus” of their work that differed – “academics want more freedom and there is much red-tape on the administrative side”. This perspective confirms the view of WHESDN/HESDA (2002) (see 2.2.6) that academics and administrative staff are absorbed in and focus exclusively on their own spheres of interest.

At institution C the motivation of participants also differed, ranging from a “Fairly positive impact” to a totally negative one. One of the respondents at institution C stated that the institution tended to support the academic structures and was biased towards the administrative staff.

As indicated earlier, relatively the same responses were received from institution D. Academic work, policies and development had a definite impact, which was aggravated by the “ivory tower mentality” of academics. Further responses were that academics tended to work in isolation from administrative staff and, for most of the academe, no deadlines existed. These responses underline the literature perspectives of Bladerston (in Pitman 2000) and Ramsden (1998) (see 2.2.6).

#### 5.4.8.2 *The influence of the “divide” between administrative and academic staff on middle managers in the administrative cadre’s work*

**Question 8.2:** How does the “divide” between administrative and academic staff influence your work?

The purpose of the question was to find out what influence the “divide” had on administrative managers’ service delivery.

Four of the interviewees at institution A regarded the "divide" between administrative and academic staff as having an immensely negative influence on their work. They maintained that the two cadres (administrative and academic) were "silos", and everybody was doing their own thing. This, in turn, led to unproductivity and a lack of self-confidence among some administrative staff. A "I-and-you-relationship", "us-and-them-culture", and "superior-inferior environment" are some of the responses gained from institution A. This divide can also be seen as a "huge barrier in terms of progressing" due to "a lack of cohesion and recognition", as one respondent put it, and can be "hugely problematic". The respondent (the former academic) who differed from the rest of the respondents regarding this matter, stated that no "divide" existed, only frustration from the academics with all the rules and processes on which the administrative cadre focused.

At institution B there was an overwhelmingly negativity towards the "divide" between administrative and academic staff. One of the respondents stated that most academic staff "treat you as if you are stupid and they are the geniuses". The respondents at institution B mentioned that, because academics did not adhere to rules, regulations and deadlines where administrative staff were involved, the "divide" impacted negatively on their tasks and service delivery towards academics and consequently students. As was mentioned at institution A, one of the respondents from institution B also echoed that the two cadres worked in "silos" and furthermore "no co-operation was received from academics".

Interestingly enough at institution C, three of the five participants advocated that the "divide" between academics and administrative staff no longer existed at their institution, due to "ongoing close liaison and cooperation". But two of the respondents at institution C agreed with the participants of institutions A and B. They also mentioned that "the quality of work depended upon a harmonious relationship with the academics", but that no "synchronisation" between the activities of academic and administrative staff existed and thus had a negative

impact on service delivery. One of the respondents explicitly stated that "academics didn't adhere to deadlines and didn't set timelines either". It also very often happened that decisions taken at certain forums were not transmitted to the administrative staff, hence problems were encountered with the implementation of these decisions, which, in turn, impacted negatively on internal service delivery.

At institution D only one interviewee reacted to the statement that the "divide" did not particularly influence his work, but the rest of the interviewees confirmed a very negative impact. A biasedness from top management towards administrative staff was prevalent at the institution – "academics were more privileged and less questionable than administrative staff". This "blatant divide" stresses the "perception of the academia – they don't need the administrative staff". Another response emphasised the clear "divide" by elaborating on academics in higher education as the "Big Brother-scenario", for example "a *request* from academics to administrative staff becomes an *instruction*".

The majority of the respondents interviewed echoed the views that had been raised in 2.2.6, namely that administrative staff are sometimes the victims of academic snobbery and negative attitudes. Changing of attitudes entails shifting of minds. This could also be addressed through awareness and sensitisation sessions through staff development.

#### **5.4.9 Essential requirements of administrative middle managers**

The next aspects which will be touched on, are the essential requirements which administrative middle managers must have, namely key competencies and skills; barriers to operate effectively; and critical challenges facing middle managers.



#### 5.4.9.1 *Key competencies and skills that are imperative to operate effectively within the middle management role*

**Question 9.1:** State the key competencies and skills that you regard as imperative to operate effectively within your middle management role.

The purpose of the question was to establish the key competencies and skills that middle managers regarded as essential to effectively and efficiently meet the demands they were confronted with on an almost daily basis.

It is evident from the literature study that demands for multiple competencies and skills are increasingly becoming imperative in addressing the change and complexity of the middle management role in the administrative cadre (see Chapter 3). It is also clear from all the respondents' answers that multiple competencies and skills are indeed required by the middle manager in the administrative cadre to operate effectively.

Eight out of the 20 respondents from all four institutions indicated that a starting point for competence would be to be knowledgeable about higher education and have a generic understanding of all the components of higher education. This is of the utmost importance to fit into the higher education landscape. To be highly knowledgeable and familiar with one's own focus/specialisation area in the administrative cadre is absolutely essential to operate effectively within the middle management role. Knowledge of national policies, for example the Skills Development Act, the HRDS, the Employment Equity Act and procedures for programme accreditation through SAQA and the NQF (see 2.3.1.1), is imperative for middle managers in the context of the current higher education landscape. Five of the respondents also stressed that a qualification in the line of the middle managers' function or specialisation is also important.

The following competencies and skills were highlighted by the vast majority of the respondents at all four institutions:

- Intelligence, innovativeness, logic and rational skills are needed to make sound recommendations to senior/top management for informed decision-making.
- Interpersonal skills are critical for middle management to be successful in their units/sections, because management is the process of working with and through other people (see 3.5.1). Essential to the interpersonal skills are diplomacy, effective communication skills, assertiveness, self-confidence, self-discipline and flexibility.
- The understanding and valuing of diversity in the workplace is seen as an essential competency middle managers should possess (see 3.5.1.4).
- According to the respondents, conceptual competence to analyse and diagnose complex situations in the higher education workplace (see 3.5.2), is also imperative. Information planning, strategic and operational planning, organising properly, decision-making and solving problems, are viewed as extremely important skills. Performance management, project management, implementation of control measures and monitoring skills are also of the utmost importance to middle managers.
- Specialised knowledge is imperative for the middle manager. A high level of technical skills, for example, understanding of and knowledgeable about the specific area of the middle manager, for example IT and related issues (see 3.5.3).
- Generic competencies such as skills in time management, crisis management, financial management, marketing, presentation and report-writing, were also regarded by middle managers as imperative to operate effectively within their middle management role.
- Visionary management/leadership in order to adapt and survive in the dynamic and changing competitive higher education landscape, was also highlighted by most of the middle managers.
- Business management skills, for example understanding of business processes and linking them with higher education, is also important for middle managers.

The above-mentioned host of competencies and skills are testimony to the complexity of the middle management functions in higher education institutions which need to be addressed in staff development programmes.

#### 5.4.9.2 *Barriers to operate effectively within the middle management role*

**Question 9.2:** What do you regard as the barriers to the above-mentioned effectiveness (that is, to operate effectively within the middle management role)?

The purpose of the question was to establish the barriers middle managers experience for effectively operating in their roles at the institution and at their respective sections/units.

It was evident to the researcher that most of the middle managers became increasingly frustrated and demoralised as a result of the following barriers:

- A centralised management approach which is regarded by middle managers as having no decision-making powers. This, in turn, leads to the involvement of senior managers in the decision-making process, which is also problematic due to the fact that at most institutions there is one individual representative at the top level.
- Poor top management as well as a lack of support from top management.
- Poor strategic and financial management.
- Organisational politics, for example unequal distribution of resources.
- Institutional policies that are not always implemented, as well as irregularities and ambiguities in the application of these policies and procedures.
- Attitudes of previously advantaged staff towards change, described by one of the respondents as "subtle racism".
- Financial stringencies resulting in a shortage of staff and facilities.
- Crisis management, resulting in more pressure on middle managers and their staff.

- Lack of communication with senior/top management in an integrated higher education system.
- "Ineffective reporting lines/structures which directly affect communication".
- "Lack of monitoring and evaluation processes to ensure attainment of set goals".
- "Lack of inter-administrative unit protocol".
- Non-understanding of "process ownership".
- "Committees rule", even if they are not experts in the field of the middle manager to make informed decisions.
- "Too much interference and ignorance to consequences from senior management".
- "Low level of competencies/skills of staff in certain sections/units".
- "Lack of integration of highly philosophical approach at top level and realities on ground level".

From all the above barriers to operate effectively within the middle management role, it can be inferred that the main issues/barriers centre around the management structures at the top, and frustrations due to a lack of their support. The implication thereof is that the top/senior and middle management need to have urgent discussions with regard to these issues and find solutions to prevent the negativity towards top/senior management and, ultimately, towards the institution.

#### **5.4.9.3      *Most critical challenges currently facing middle managers in administrative positions in higher education***

**Question 9.3:** What do you regard as the three to five most critical challenges currently facing middle managers in administrative positions in higher education?

The purpose of the question was to determine the most critical challenges middle managers are currently facing.

According to the respondents of all four institutions, the following critical challenges seemed to dominate:

- Insecurities due to the merging of institutions result in the demoralisation of staff. An interviewee responded as follows: "No sufficient resources or capacity exist to drive this [merging] process, but we are a merged institution". Insufficient resources and capacity to drive the merging processes, are some of the most critical challenges experienced by middle managers from institutions in the process of merging.
- Bearing the brunt of staff members' anger and insecurities regarding the merger processes.

The above-mentioned responses emphasise the major impact that the reconfiguration of the South African higher education landscape has on national, institutional and unit level, and reinforce the fact that no stakeholder or institution was really prepared for such major transformation and changes (see 5.2). These challenges are some of the most telling ones currently in South African higher education.

- Not being adequately prepared for the mergers.
- A lack of management capacity in administrative positions due to a lack of experience.
- To keep staff in unit/section positive and focused, loyal and committed.
- To fit operational issues in unit with strategy of institution.
- Professional jealousy from colleagues.
- No adequate communication structures.
- Lack of support from senior/top management.
- Lack of mentorship, development and succession planning. No clear career development paths exist.
- Inadequate human and financial resources.
- The academic/administrative "divide".
- Lack of ownership and delegation from senior to middle management.
- Affirmative action which reinforces the perception that it is linked to a lowering of standards.

- Lack of responsibility and accountability from staff.
- Diversity management and conflict that lead to demoralised staff.
- Building a power team in the unit/section for more effectiveness and efficiency.
- Keeping abreast of legislation and compliance with institutional policies.

The responses are intertwined. The inadequate preparation of staff on national issues for example mergers, has a direct effect on the institutional and unit level. The critical challenges on institutional level automatically flow into the unit level. If these challenges are not addressed at the institutional level by top management, then the problems experienced at the unit/section level could not be addressed properly.

A further implication of these challenges is that middle managers need to perform the management functions such as leading, controlling, organising and planning, which are also integrated activities. In order to perform these functions, they need to have interpersonal, conceptual and technical competence (see 3.5). These challenges again confirm the wide range of competencies and skills necessary for successful management, which can only be realised and enhanced through middle management development.

#### **5.4.10 Dilemmas facing middle managers and possible solutions**

Another aspect which has to be faced, is that of the dilemmas which face middle managers. In addition, possible solutions to these dilemmas are discussed.

##### **5.4.10.1 *Dilemmas middle management are currently facing in performing their tasks as middle managers***

**Question 10.1:** Which dilemmas are you currently facing in performing your task as middle manager?

The purpose of the question was to find out what problems/dilemmas they were experiencing in performing effectively and efficiently as middle managers.

The respondents emphasised the following dilemmas which are currently facing them in performing their tasks as middle managers:

- Mergers have an immense impact on the workload of middle managers.
- Lack of support and involvement of top management.
- Middle managers have no decision-making powers.
- Politics in the workplace – internal as well as external (affirmative action).
- Personal conflict, diversity and cultural differences among staff and in functions.
- Lack of integration of systems in institution, which is detrimental to the strategic focus of institution.
- "Lack of growth and development and an unclear career development path".
- "Subtle racism", which implies that the institutional culture is not conducive to change and diversity.
- Inadequate financial and human resources/capacity.
- Time management, for example meeting deadlines set by senior/top management.
- Lack of properly skilled staff in units/sections.
- Lack of process-ownership resulting in demotivation of staff.
- Lack of evaluation and monitoring mechanisms.
- Policies are paramount and primarily driven by equity forums.
- Middle managers are "managed by meetings" where resolutions are made and seldom implemented.
- Improving mentorship processes.

The above dilemmas again confirm the complexity of the middle management functions. Not only are middle managers faced with a lack of support from top/senior management, but also in a huge way by interpersonal (see 3.5.1) and political (see 3.5.4) issues at the workplace, which are not going to disappear.

Surely they should rather be empowered to deal with these realities in the workplace.

**5.4.10.2** *Specific actions that need to be taken to address the dilemmas/problems middle managers have identified in 5.4.10.1*

**Question 10.2:** Which specific actions need to be taken to address the dilemmas/problems you have identified (with regard to the previous question in 5.4.10.1)?

The purpose of the question was to determine the actions that needed to be taken to solve the problems/dilemmas middle managers experience.

The respondents identified the following interventions as possible strategies to address some of the dilemmas facing them:

- Continuous development of staff regarding new management practices which, in turn, will contribute to a feeling of worth and self-confidence in times of uncertainty.
- Intensive training and development, which focus on specialisation, not just periodical workshops. Specific and focused management training is essential. Themes that should be included are project management, performance management, longer-term planning of unit/section and risk management.
- Delegation of responsibilities such as allocation of funds in unit/section and more decision-making powers with regard to the unit/section to middle managers which, in turn, will lead to more empowerment/development of staff.

The outcry from middle managers for development/empowerment and training to address their dilemmas, is evident in the above responses. This aspect of development/empowerment is also echoed by Stamatis (1996:138) (see 3.7).



These development actions should be addressed in an organised and coherent way on a continuous basis throughout the year in order to be successful. It will also have implications on Human Resources (for example a skills facilitator), the performance management system and the governance model of an institution, because development should be an integral part of all institutional policies.

- Allowing units/sections to make decisions regarding their units/sections resulting in proper delegation of authority.
- "Integration of all systems and plans with strategic focus of the institution".
- Good and strong leadership and involvement of top/senior management with middle managers.
- Establishment and consolidation of leadership positions in merging institutions.
- More open management style from top management.
- Acceptance of ownership for responsibilities.
- "Adequate financial and human resources to implement new projects".
- Operationalisation of the mission and vision of institutions for quality service delivery.
- "Audit of people and services and alignment of people and services to strategic vision".
- Improvement of communication structures between middle and senior managers. Middle managers should be informed of decisions taken at senior/top level. Better communication could result in better work relationships, more productivity and more certainty regarding what is going on and what is expected of staff members.
- "Institution of a performance agreement that is goal-directed, time-bound and remuneration-based".
- "Relaxation of the institutional recruitment policies".
- All processes need to be identified and documented.
- Discipline and self-discipline among all staff, which implies taking responsibility and being accountable for the work/tasks they ought to

perform.

- Sensitisation of staff to be collective in seeking solutions to institutional problems.
- Consultation of issues with regard to transparency.

Middle managers should also be mindful of the fact that the barriers, challenges and dilemmas facing them that were mentioned previously, should not always be attributed to others, although the role of top/senior management in the mentioned actions cannot be ignored and underestimated. Middle managers should also look at solutions, but this again requires a mindshift to see in every challenge/dilemma an opportunity to solve it. Although it takes much longer to shape minds, this could be enhanced through development and self development.

#### **5.4.11 Opinions on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a recognised qualification**

**Question 11:** What is your opinion on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a recognised qualification?

The purpose of the question was to determine whether a formalised course in development, resulting in a recognised qualification, would be a need that middle managers were experiencing.

Except for one of the respondents from institution C stating that short formal courses might adequately address the development problem of middle managers, all the other participants from all four institutions were of the opinion that a formalised course in middle management was a very good idea. Their motivations ranged from "it would be beneficial to not only the middle manager, but also to the institution" to "it would be beneficial for all stakeholders of higher education". It could motivate and empower middle managers to improve their service delivery. The content of a formalised course should focus on specialised

aspects like "project management", "long-term planning in unit", "performance management" and "technical aspects of the unit/section". It is also imperative to seek the input of the middle managers in the administrative cadre.

These opinions leave the door wide open to the ETDP SETA. One of the strategic objectives of this SETA is the provision of high quality and relevant training of employed people across member organisations (see 2.3.1.1).

One of the respondents from institution A and one from institution D emphasised that "the *qualification* should not be of primary interest, but the *content* of the course". Of the utmost importance is that the content should cover all the core elements central to management, for example people management, skills management and performance management and should be linked to the strategic objectives of the institution. The focus should not be on a recognised qualification, although a formal qualification would be wonderful and indeed a bonus.

Any effort or attempt at a formalised course should be structured with specific outcomes and these outcomes should be evaluated. To focus on the real issue at hand, namely development, is definitely a step in the right direction.

#### **5.4.12 Critical issues in a model for middle management development in administrative positions**

**Question 12:** What would you regard as critical in a model for middle management development in administrative positions?

The purpose of the question was to obtain the perspectives of middle managers regarding imperative issues in a model for middle management development in administrative positions.

Middle managers regarded the following as critical in a model for middle

management development in administrative positions:

- Mentoring programmes with an experiential component.
- Management training supported by experienced mentors.
- "Development should incorporate elements of action learning linked to strategy, vision and mission of the institution".
- "Development should cut across various management disciplines and units, for example human resource components".
- Development actions should be addressed on a coherent basis.
- "Linking the competencies required of middle managers to succession planning".
- Continuous professional development focusing on key competencies and skills relevant to middle managers (see 3.5).
- Compulsory induction programmes for newly appointed middle managers.
- Accepted and acknowledged dimensions, skills and concepts of management, linked with specified outcomes, such as the acquirement of technical skills, knowledge of impact of national policies on middle management administration, management projects of units, etcetera.
- "A strong focus on self-development".
- "The model should contribute to a management organisational culture".
- Subject knowledge of specialised field has to be acquired, for example technical competence (the ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise) (see 3.5 and 3.5.3).
- Knowledge of objectives and expectations of position of middle managers.
- Acknowledgement and recognition of contributions of administrative staff and management.
- Promotion of good interpersonal relationships.
- Generic skills such as communication, conflict management and diversity management skills.
- Sound knowledge of the core competencies required of middle managers.
- Presentation and report-writing skills required to report on critical issues and to raise views appropriately.
- Networking skills within, for example, the industrial domain with regard to

co-operative education.

- Quality management and quality assurance guidelines should be incorporated in the model.
- Human resource management principles are essential.
- Understanding strategic objectives in order to link them to operational objectives of unit/section.
- Establishment of performance criteria for middle managers to be evaluated according to specific criteria and outcomes.
- Lifelong learning orientation.
- Inclusiveness to create unity and team spirit is essential.
- "Qualification as well as quantification of contribution or output to organisational success".
- The creation of professional forums for middle managers in higher education for a stronger voice to be heard.

These critical issues identified by middle managers have major and direct implications for staff development programmes. It will be a mammoth task ranging from induction programmes to continuous professional development; development of a wide range of competencies and skills; development of self-development; as well as integrating national, institutional and sectional aspects of higher education. These issues also echo the findings of the literature study.

#### **5.4.13 Attributes, skills and knowledge that should be developed in a model for middle management development in administrative positions**

**Question 13:** What attributes, skills and knowledge should be developed in such a model (for middle management development in administrative positions)?

The purpose of the question was to obtain the input of middle managers with regard to the attributes, skills and knowledge to be developed in a model for their development.

According to the respondents from all four institutions, the following attributes, skills and knowledge should be developed in a model for middle management development in the administrative cadre:

- Integrity.
- Dedication and willingness to learn.
- "Assertiveness and self-confidence".
- "Goal orientation and self-motivation".
- Monitoring skills.
- Forward thinking with an interest in anticipating future challenges.
- Core management skills, for example, generic competencies.
- People management skills linked with diversity management.
- Human resource skills to improve interpersonal relationships at work.
- Generic competencies, for example report-writing skills, presentation skills and group dynamics.
- Development of emotional intelligence to be able to deal appropriately with conflict, diversity and change.
- Communication skills for quality service delivery.
- Refining of leadership qualities.
- Setting of aims and objectives and planning and strategising to meet these aims and objectives.
- To be more creative and innovative.
- Team management skills to make a better contribution when working on a team project.
- Project management skills.
- Lifelong learning orientation.
- "Visionary management and leadership".
- Ability to develop policies.
- Diversity management to be able to minimise conflict with diverse groups.
- "Middle managers should lead by example, they should set the pace".
- "Knowledge of higher education is imperative. In addition, technical/specialised knowledge of the unit of middle management is required".

- Ability to understand/realise that certain people have to be managed in different ways.
  - "Focus should be placed on work performance and outcomes".
- A respondent from institution D argued that it was debatable whether specific attributes were needed, because they could be learned/acquired.

The implication for a staff development programme is that middle managers are aware of the attributes, skills and knowledge to be developed, so the input of these managers will be invaluable in the designing of staff development programmes.

#### 5.4.14 Participant observation

As indicated in 4.8.4, the researcher attempted to "indwell", to suspend as much as possible the researcher's own ways of viewing the administrative middle manager's world of higher education. Although the researcher was present at only three of the four higher education institutions, the observations made there could be triangulated with the findings of the electronic mail responses.

Owing to the researcher's responsibilities at a higher education institution, participant observation occurred many times during the research process. The observations mainly occurred during meetings and informal individual and group discussions where administrative middle managers were present/involved (see 4.8.4).

When doing participant observation, the researcher faced the difficulty of simultaneously being one of the members of the group, as well as observing everyone else from a researcher's point of view. The greatest advantage of observation is the presence of an observing, thinking researcher who is present at the scene of the action.

When possible, notes were taken of the observations, for example during meetings. When that was not feasible, for example during informal discussions outside of meetings, notes were taken as soon as possible afterwards. These notes included both the empirical observations and the researcher's interpretations of them. In the same way that it is impossible for the participant observer to observe everything, he can also not record everything he observes. Rather than recording a random sample of the participant observer's observations, the most important observations were recorded by the researcher.

Denzin (in Babbie & Mouton 2001:293) (see 4.8.4) states that the major types of observable data are the following:

- Expressive movement (facial expressions and posture, for example, were observed as uninteresting in certain formal meetings, while - during informal group discussions - there was more excitement as the meeting continued afterwards).
- Physical location (for example, differences in discussions of the same topic occurred, depending on whether the discussions took place in a boardroom or outside a formal venue on campus).
- Language behaviour (for example, the topic of discussion would be continued on a more informal note and with additional inputs outside of the meeting).
- Time duration (observations ranged from 15 minutes to one hour).

In addition, the researcher observed an increasingly demoralised administrative middle management, mainly due to uncertainties and fears regarding the current and future landscape of, among other things, lack of continuous development at their institutions and a lack of support from top/senior management. Dissatisfaction of current staff development practices due to the focus on only generic themes and not specifically related to their vital needs in the unit/section, is also prevalent among middle managers.



## 5.5 CONCLUSION

Many of the insights and perspectives gained from investigating the theory of higher education and higher education development, are substantiated by the viewpoints of the participants. What was evident during data collection as well as while analysing the data, was that, although minor patterns of differences in certain responses were experienced, there was considerable correlation of perspectives among the participants from the four institutions. Their perspectives were furthermore corroborated by the researcher's observations. It is further critical that the findings of the staff development practices in higher education and, more specifically those directly affecting middle managers, are to be addressed urgently if higher education is to make a significant contribution to quality service delivery to its internal as well as external customers, particularly with the HEQC audits that focus on information systems to be managed by administrative personnel and managers.

The following chapter contains the proposed model for the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions.

## CHAPTER 6

# PROPOSED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MIDDLE MANAGERS IN THE ADMINISTRATIVE CADRE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The vital role that the middle manager in the administrative cadre plays in the quality and relevance of the current dynamic and changing South African higher education landscape has been highlighted throughout this study. The challenges facing middle managers in administrative positions as well as the complexity of middle management functions are quite significant. Those institutions that proactively deal with these challenges are going to be well-positioned to succeed in an ever-changing higher education environment.

According to UNESCO (1994), strong and innovative staff development is one strategy which guarantees the quality and relevance of higher education in a changing landscape. HEFCE (2002) emphasises that middle management who are appropriately trained and developed and who perform effectively in pursuing the institution's objectives, is a prerequisite for success in any higher education system (see 1.2). But WHESDN/HESDA (WHESDN/HESDA 2002) states that most of the available evidence of management development points to an informal and *ad hoc* approach (see 1.5). This statement was echoed by some of the participants, namely that development activities are not structured on a continuous basis and that no follow-up action is taken, which implies an *ad hoc* and unco-ordinated approach to development. The impact of this kind of development approach on middle managers' service delivery is not very significant (see 5.4.7). It is extremely important to keep the momentum of development alive by providing structured, well-thought through staff

development opportunities to really have a significant impact on middle management.

The deduction can therefore be made that the provision of staff development for administrative middle management is currently still inadequate to really lead to "new management cultures" of excellent service delivery to their internal and external customers.

As indicated in 5.4.10.2, the respondents identified the following interventions to address some of the current dilemmas facing them in higher education, namely continuous development of middle managers, as well as specific and focused intensive management training and development. But the notion of training and development is also either narrowly or negatively conceived by some writers. In designing a development programme, it is extremely important to reconsider/review those issues that are normally creating resistance in development work/programmes. If they are not dealt with in a sufficient and appropriate manner, the impact of development may be less.

## **6.2 CRITICISM AGAINST THE NOTION OF MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT**

According to Middlehurst (1993), development and training are often seen as a means of rectifying deficiencies, as unnecessary for already competent professionals, or as add-on for the individual, specifically at levels below the top, with only indirect benefit to the organisation. The connection between individual development and improved performance is now being made more frequently, prompted by such pressures as appraisal and performance review, even more so in academic institutions due to their institutional culture of learning organisations.

Despite these criticisms, is it not ironic that higher education institutions - whose fundamental purpose is learning/development, which are supposed to be

learning organisations and which have the expertise to develop people - do not sufficiently develop their own people/managers? Training and development should be core activities of any higher education institution and these institutions should be an example to all other institutions. But, fortunately, higher education institutions have the ability/potential to explore and find innovative ways to develop administrative middle managers.

The proposed model for the development of administrative managers, was designed on the basis of the literature findings (see Chapters 1, 2 and 3), as well as the findings of the empirical investigation (see Chapter 5). This is indicated by means of cross-referencing.

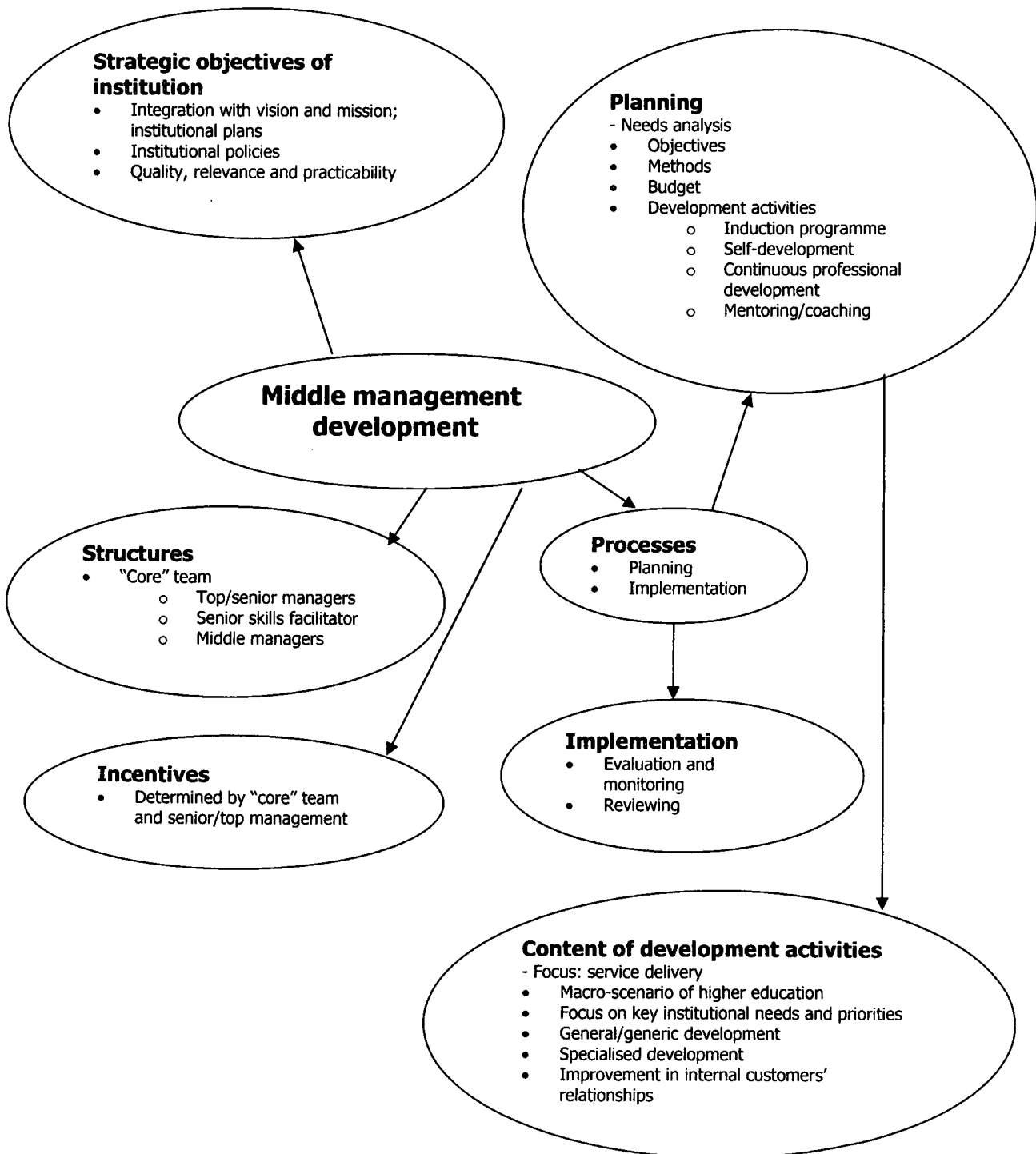
### 6.3 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT MODEL

The main aim of the proposed model is the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre (see 1.6) to become more service- and client-orientated, which is in line with their higher education institutions' needs and objectives. Development needs to be focused in a way that makes a real impact in areas of central strategic importance to the institution. It should become an integral part of institutional policies and performance management, and should not be an add-on, nice-to-have, *ad hoc* approach. This view that a holistic approach to staff development is essential, is also maintained by Brew and Boud (1996:8). They further elaborate that, central to this holistic approach, is the middle manager and his learning needs. The approach also recognises the developmental needs of the context in which middle managers are operating.

Any proposed model should not be rigid and should hopefully be general enough to be adapted at various higher education institutions. It should also be specific enough to be practically implementable. The proposed model attempts to take all these implied imperatives into consideration.

The proposed model for the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre in higher education institutions is outlined in Figure 6.1. This figure implies that middle management development should follow an integrated approach, focusing primarily on the strategic objectives of an institution, processes (planning and implementation), structures and incentives. Quality service delivery to provide excellent customer services, is central in this integrated approach.

**FIGURE 6.1: Proposed model for middle management development**



### **6.3.1 Strategic objectives of institution**

Staff development needs to be able to make a real impact institutionally, so middle management have to focus firmly on the strategic needs and priorities of the institution. Staff development also has to be budgeted for in order for development activities to take place. In order to give effect to the institution's strategic objectives, integrated approaches to implement this strategy have to be implemented for management development. The development should be vision- and mission-related/driven and be aligned with the strategic plan of the institution, as delineated by the participants in 5.4.10.2.

#### **6.3.1.1 *Integration with institutional plans***

The Strategic Plan, institutional Three-year rolling plan (TYRP), the Human Resources Development plan, as well as the Skills Development plan, should all emphasise and integrate management development as an area of priority. The respondents also emphasised this in 5.4.10.2. Human resource strategies must, in addition, be aligned with an analysis of middle management needs, for example the need for multiple competencies and skills as indicated in Chapter 3. These needs were also highlighted by the respondents in 5.4.9.1 and were regarded by them [middle managers] as critical in a model for middle management development (see 5.4.12).

Development should also be linked with performance management and appraisal systems if it is to be aligned with other institutional plans/strategies/objectives. Except for one respondent, all the others replied that development was not linked with performance appraisal. As indicated in 5.4.6, if management development is not integrated/linked to other institutional plans/objectives, the desired outcomes of management development will never be achieved. This implies that middle managers will not be sufficiently equipped to manage in the changing higher education environment, as argued in Chapter 1.5.

Strategic plans seek to bring together and integrate other institutional plans. It is expected of middle managers to manage and lead their units strategically in support of overarching organisational goals. Du Plessis (2004) reinforces that staff development should form an integral part of any institutional strategy that seeks to maintain and enhance the value of its workforce.

To achieve these outcomes of, among others, a critical reflection on challenges to develop middle management potential aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions and "new managerial cultures" (see 1.6.1 and 1.6.2), an institutional policy for management development is imperative.

#### **6.3.1.2      *Institutional policy on management development***

To meet the development needs of administrative middle managers, a coherent and comprehensive institutional staff development policy, which is related to the higher education institution's vision and mission and is instrumental in the attainment of its strategic aims and objectives, must be devised. Institutions should ensure that policies remain appropriate and relevant in the administrative and organisational environment in which they apply.

In broad terms, the content of such a policy should focus on, among other things, developing more effective and efficient middle managers in line with the institutional philosophy and strategic objectives of the institution as well as meeting the requirements of national development policies and acts. Proper procedural activities for developing and monitoring of progress should be stated in such a policy. The policy should also stipulate the responsibility of the individual middle manager, for example in self-development and lifelong learning, as well as the responsibility of the institution, for example by providing support for middle managers during development. The identification of middle management needs through, among other things, professional forums was regarded as a critical issue in a model for middle management development by the respondents (see 5.4.12), while skills audits should be part of an institutional



development policy. Although institutions can, as part of a national incentive by the government, claim for development expenses from the Skills Development Levy, the financial side of middle management development should still also be considered. Creating and designing development programmes will have cost implications. Finances are also needed as part of incentives for experts, whether they are institutionally based or otherwise. Also imperative in such an institutional policy is the measurement of the impact of middle management development that took place over a period of time. The impact on, for example, change management and interpersonal development might take a longer period before it can be measured, because a shifting of minds needs to take place. But the measurement in project management will depend on the progress and completion with the project in a specific period. This vital issue of the measurement of the impact of middle management development should be discussed and debated by institutional experts and middle managers. This policy should also be reviewed on an annual basis as changes take place, for example new national acts and policies which are implemented.

It is also essential that middle management development needs to be dealt with in the context of national policy in South Africa. As already mentioned in 1.3 and in more detail in 2.3.1.1, nationally there are many "progressively enabling" policies and Acts, for example, the Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b), the HRDS (RSA DoL 2001), the Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998a), the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), as well as others (see 2.3.1.1), with the rationale to develop our human resources. The Skills Development Act (RSA 1998b) has as one of its objectives the provision of an institutional framework to implement national, sectoral and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workplace. This Act provides the legislative framework for the national SDS (RSA DoL 2000), which is directed at the development of high-level skills and is underpinned by lifelong learning, the promotion of equity, demand-led skills development, efficiency and effectiveness. Middle managers should become involved in lifelong learning, and it is imperative that their development focus on demand-led skills that are needed for effective and efficient service delivery to all

their customers. These skills were identified in the literature study (see Chapter 3), and emphasised by the respondents in 5.4.9.1. The role of the SDS in development activities at the four higher education institutions that were researched, were regarded as important by the middle managers (see 5.4.2). The guiding principles of the SDS are vital components of staff development initiatives, and a skills development facilitator is very crucial in this regard. This facilitator's role should be to oversee and support the guiding principles of the SDS.

Closely interlinked with the above-mentioned Act and strategy, is the HRDS (RSA DoL 2001) (see 1.3 and 2.3.1.1) with its strategic objectives to improve the foundations for human development; to improve the supply of high quality skills; and to increase employer participation in lifelong learning (Asmal 2001a). The implications of this HRDS are that the model for middle management development could contribute to lifelong learning and high quality skills through self-development and continuous development.

The Employment Equity Act (RSA 1998a) (see 1.3 and 2.3.1.1) ensures that institutional measures are taken to ensure that people from designated groups have equal employment opportunities and are equally represented in all levels of institutions. This can be realised through empowerment/development, not only for greater access of underrepresented groups such as Blacks and women, but also for career plans with specific dates and the necessary support mechanisms in place. However, the practical implications thereof call for more debate and discussion on this particular issue.

The NPHE (RSA DoE 2001) focuses extensively on the development of key skills and competencies, which include management skills and competencies (see Chapter 3 and 5.4.9.1). Some of the key skills identified by the respondents are, among others, innovativeness, interpersonal skills, conceptual competence, specialised knowledge, visionary management, and business management skills. Quality assurance mechanisms and guidelines in a model for middle

management development are critical, as confirmed by the respondents in 5.4.12. Quality, a central component of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), will ultimately lead to excellent service delivery.

The above-mentioned is confirmed by UNESCO (1994), namely that staff development has become a vital component of institutional policy-making worldwide in order for education and training to be distinguished by quality and relevance, as indicated in 1.4. The lack of a policy regarding management development at most of the institutions that were researched (see 5.4.1), is a little daunting. As mentioned in 5.4.1, the lack of a policy on management development would not give effect to coherent development actions that are urgently needed at higher education institutions. The urgency of an institutional policy for management development at South African higher education institutions cannot be ignored in the current complex and changing landscape.

It is imperative to mention that, although an institutional policy on management development would be a start in the right direction, it does not imply that it will always be properly implemented. It is thus essential that the policy should be implemented to contribute to management development institutionally.

To make the implementation of a management development policy easier, development should be distinguished by quality, relevance and practicability.

#### **6.3.1.3      *Quality, relevance and practicability***

Taking into account that the issue of quality is at the heart of the NPHE (RSA DoE 2001), the "creation of a learning society" and creating the "opportunity to advance and develop", is critical (see 2.3.1.1). The way in which people are developed at work, has major effects upon customer service and quality. As previously mentioned in 2.3.3.1, middle management also need to facilitate quality awareness and promote the implementation of quality in their administrative processes and customer services.

Development programmes for middle managers should be relevant to current as well as future challenges in the higher education environment. It should integrate realities at the national, institutional and unit level. Realistic practice opportunities ought to be created to actively incorporate practice activity into the learning process. Starting with achievable projects/programmes can often be more successful than attempts to make rapid large-scale changes.

According to Robinson and Robinson (1989:1), it is of vital importance that higher education institutions distinguish between training/development for *activity* (training programme becomes the end) and training/development for *impact* (training should contribute to organisational effectiveness or assisting in performance). Development for *impact* is pivotal in the current fast-changing higher education environment. The impact should be determined by prevailing institutional needs and priorities. The participants in the research gave a clear indication that specific and focused management training is essential, for example project management, performance management, and long-term planning of the unit as mentioned in 5.4.4. Middle managers could, for example, prepare an analysis of their unit/section, identify a vision for its future, and develop a plan for achieving it. A balance should be achieved whereby intentions are challenging but achievable within the timeframe set. Self-evaluation and self-reflection by middle managers could also lead to the implementation of more practical programmes. This could be done by middle managers evaluating and reflecting on their day-to-day performance as well as on their longer-term performance by identifying where development is needed.

What is therefore needed, is innovative development programmes for middle managers in higher education that are hands-on, user-friendly and that will make a difference in the quality of services rendered by this group.

The processes regarding middle management development will subsequently be elaborated on.

### 6.3.2 Processes

Middle management development must be managed as a process and not as a single event. Such a process should involve the institution as a whole and not only sub-sections/units. Planning is absolutely essential in the whole process, and the "core" team of a top/senior manager(s), a senior human resources coordinator/skills facilitator and expert senior/middle managers should be involved in this planning process.

#### 6.3.2.1 *Planning*

In certain instances middle management development should – because due to limited resources and time constraints it is not always possible – be selected on the basis of function and level, in order to provide the most important and relevant development. If development activities are not selected on the basis of function and level, it usually leads to development of general/generic issues (see 5.4.4).

In the planning stage it is imperative to make provision for development activities/sessions well in advance by making it part of the year programme of the institution. Hassel (1999) suggests that staff time should be addressed in the planning stage to reduce frustrating barriers when implementing professional development. If ways are continually sought for technology to improve the efficiency of development, it would make the implementation of development easier. The WebCT can be used as a learning platform for middle managers, allowing on-line discussions and electronic access to source materials. The advantages thereof could be twofold, namely better time management and support of the "active is effective" principle. Ackers and Preston (1997) agree that development activities have also moved to individual based training such as e-learning and WebCT. The advantages thereof are evident in the literature study as mentioned in 2.2.4.

Middle managers' development needs should be assessed/analysed, and appropriate and sustainable interventions should be designed to address these needs. The planning cycle must again integrate strategic planning, for example among other things, objectives, development activities, methods and budget. This planning cycle could initially be scheduled by on-line meetings on a two-weekly basis, and afterwards on a monthly basis.

The objectives of the development of middle managers will subsequently be discussed.

- *Objectives*

The primary objective of the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre is for middle managers to improve their service delivery to their internal as well as their external customers. This improvement in service delivery also entails sound working relationships with internal and external customers. This will be discussed in 6.3.5.5. As already indicated throughout the study, development of middle managers is extremely important for creating "new managerial cultures" in order to be more client- and service-orientated (see 1.6.1).

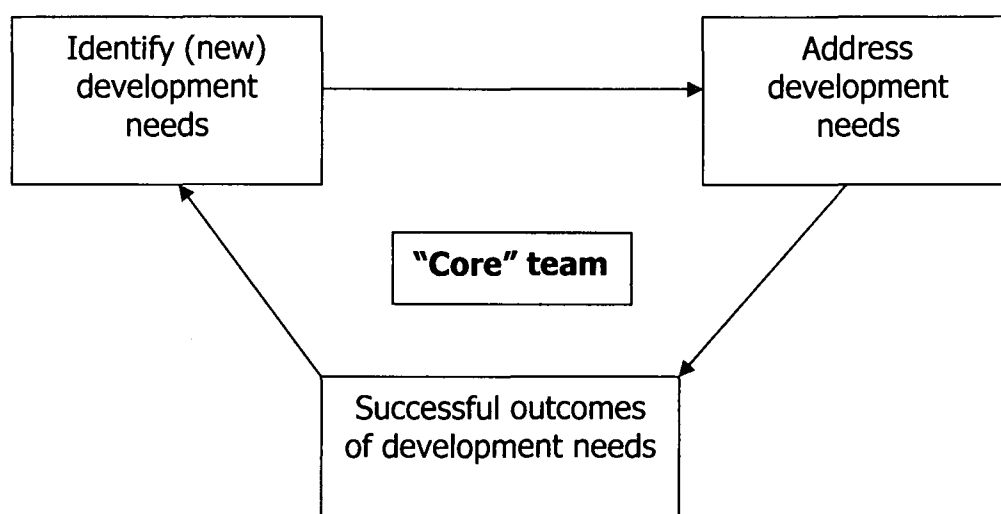
- *Development activities*

A wide range of activities for development could be incorporated at higher education institutions, for example, in-service training through management education, internal programmes, self-study, challenging assignments and projects and mentoring/coaching. It is of vital importance that the activities should be interactive in order for middle managers to really be involved to learn and contribute to their own development. This interactivity could eventually lead to effective and efficient middle managers rendering excellent service to all their customers.

Action learning has a high potential across the interactivity of development activities. As stated in 5.4.12 by the respondents, action learning linked to the strategy, vision and mission of the institution, is critical in a model for middle management development. According to Kerrigan and Luke (1987), the approach of action learning has developed in various forms and under a variety of names such as "action training", "capacity-building", "joint development activities", and so on. Action learning has been selected by the researcher to exemplify this type of development approach because of its relevance to the study. According to Pedler (1991), action learning is an approach to the development of people within organisations that uses real-life tasks as the vehicle for learning. Kerrigan and Luke (1987) describe action learning as organisational research integrated with managerial self-development.

The same writers maintain that action learning has three main components, namely people who accept responsibility for taking action on a particular issue; the particular tasks that people set themselves; and a set of participants who support one another in making progress. The people involved in these components, form a "core" team for action learning (see 6.3.2). Action learning presents itself as a tool that any group can apply to facilitate its learning, and thus to identify, address and solve its problems more effectively (Willmott 1994). McGill and Beaty (1995) state that it is primarily a developmental activity. Development applied to middle managers involves the whole person in a continuous and conscious learning process that takes place progressively over time and, indeed, their complete life cycle. The cyclical nature of action learning is demonstrated in Figure 6.2.

**FIGURE 6.2: The cyclical nature of action learning**



The following development activities, of which action learning should be integrated, will be discussed in more detail:

- *Induction programme for new middle managers*

New employees should become familiar with organisational structures and expectations right from the start by means of an induction programme for new middle managers. It is imperative for them to be informed from the beginning by being provided with the opportunity to understand the institutional context and insight into the higher education environment as a whole.

Currently general orientation/induction programmes for all staff members are prevalent at higher education institutions. As indicated in 5.4.5.1, the induction programmes entail information on the structure, general rules and procedures, facilities available, vision and mission, and organograms. Although this information is completely relevant and important to orientate new staff members, middle managers in the administrative cadre have a much greater need. They need a middle management preparation programme for their different roles and responsibilities as middle managers in their respective



units/sections; a programme that is directly related to their respective middle management areas.

The general induction programme for all staff members could then be followed by a sufficient orientation programme for specifically administrative middle managers. The "core" team that was elaborated on in 6.3.2, can make a significant contribution towards this specific programme. This programme should, among other things, focus on effective communication skills, self-discipline, conflict management and diversity management (see 5.4.10.2 and 5.4.12).

- *Self-development*

Although self-development is the ultimate responsibility of every administrative middle manager, it should still be encouraged and supported at higher education institutions. Middle managers have a clear responsibility to broaden their perspectives, address challenges and develop their skills to enhance performance in their current position and to be ready to assume further responsibilities. A strong focus on self-development was also identified by participants as a critical issue in a model for middle management development (see 5.4.12). This could be done by means of studies in the related fields of their expertise; extensive professional reading (not only to deepen expertise in the individual's field, but also to acquire familiarity with associated fields); seeking (and acting upon) feedback from internal and external customers and voluntarily participating in projects beyond the task at hand and beyond the middle manager's job profile. As mentioned in 5.4.3, individual middle managers at certain institutions also have the opportunity to map their own development plans. This could furthermore be done in consultation with experts at the institution.

The effectiveness of any staff development activity further depends on the active and purposeful participation of the individuals involved. If assignments and projects are given in any development activity, it should be done with pride and

responsibility. The individual middle manager should accept this responsibility to contribute to his own development.

- *Continuous professional development*

Continuous professional development also has a very strong link with action learning. All middle managers need to undergo a process of continuous professional development, not only to meet rising customer expectations in a fierce competitive environment, but also with regard to performance appraisal systems. Ongoing training and development are critical during change. Middle managers need to determine their successes and identify areas where improvement could be made. This is part of the process of continuous improvement. Middle managers also have a responsibility towards continuous professional development, by making responsible inputs with regard to their own professional development. They could, for example through a forum, discuss and indicate how their challenges and dilemmas could be addressed through development (see 5.4.12). The participants in addition suggested the creation of professional forums for middle managers in order for a stronger voice to be heard as critical in development.

Although perceptions exist that experienced middle managers do not need development as much as newly appointed middle managers, the researcher differs from this perception. It can happen that experienced managers have ineffective and rigid management styles that are not conducive to handling change and managing diversity. The glass ceiling syndrome, as elaborated on in 2.3.2, could also have a huge impact on White male middle managers. They have to be developed in an attempt to once again create meaning to their jobs. These ineffective management styles could also be slowly turned around to effective ones through development.

The development activities that need to be taken regarding continuous professional development will be elaborated on in 6.3.5.

○ *Mentoring/coaching*

Participants in the research maintained that mentoring programmes with an experiential component and management training supported by experienced mentors (see 5.4.12), are imperative for development.

Mentoring/coaching is central to professional preparation and development. Janas (1996) maintains that the optimal mentor possesses the expertise, commitment, and time to provide assistance. Whether mentors have time, is certainly debatable. They should manage their time properly and prioritise in order to be able to have time available for mentoring/coaching. The same writer further emphasises that, in locating potential mentors, an obvious starting place is the immediate higher education environment. The researcher is of the same opinion, because higher education institutions have many capable and expert staff to fulfil the role as mentors. Rowley (1999) elaborates that mentors who are effective in different interpersonal contexts, are models of continuous learners.

According to Chesterman (2001), recent management development practice has begun to draw attention to coaching rather than mentoring. Various types of coaching, depending on the aims of the coaching sessions and the goals of the person being coached, can be distinguished:

- Performance coaching (focusing on closing the gap between goals of the individual and current outcomes).
- Skills coaching (focusing on enhancing critical skills, for example public speaking and communication).
- Strategic coaching (focusing on strategic planning and management support).

The same writer further states that coaching differs from mentoring in the emphasis it places on *organisational* rather than *individual* needs and on establishing clearly designed outcomes. But a mentoring scheme can be designed to fulfil similar objectives to a coaching scheme.

It was evident from the research findings that a need for mentoring programmes exists. Although these programmes are most successful when formally established, with clear overall directions and co-ordination, informal mentoring can be integrated as well. If the programmes with mentors are structured, for example specific projects are undertaken and dates set for the completion thereof, it would be more advantageous to the middle manager. Informal mentoring that is integrated with the day-to-day activities of the administrative middle manager, could also be invaluable to the new middle manager.

o *Methods*

The outcry for development from staff, particularly in middle management, cannot be ignored any longer (see 5.4.10.2). Whether development activities would result in one-day workshops (for example for financial management skills); short courses (for example to include project management until the completion of the project); group discussion sessions (on a monthly basis among middle managers); formal qualifications; portfolios (not just samples including one's work, but also an analysis of customer needs); recognition of prior learning (RPL) (specific guidelines should be set); mentoring/coaching; informal/formal programmes; it should be discussed and planned by the "core" team involving senior/top management, a senior human resources co-ordinator, institutional experts in management, and - of course - by administrative middle managers. Whether the development is offered in modules, part-time, full-time or short courses, middle managers should work on individual as well as group projects and should also hand in major assignments relevant to their unit/section.

Opinions from middle managers on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a qualification, were very positive (see 5.4.11). The importance in this regard was that it should be structured with specific outcomes that should be evaluated, and that the emphasis should be placed on the content of the course. The qualification would be a "bonus" for middle managers. The researcher is of the opinion that the qualification should preferably be approved

by the DoE, registered by SAQA/NQF and accredited by the CHE.

- ***Budget***

If mostly institutional experts are used to develop middle managers by presenting development programmes, the budget needs will be considerably less than when external experts and consultants are used. Institutional experts would not only be invaluable with regard to cost-effectiveness, but would also promote the idea of a learning organisation associated with higher education institutions. These experts would also continuously learn during these development programmes.

#### **6.3.2.2 *Implementation***

Any initiative, including middle management development, depends for its success on implementation. This also implies a systematic process of evaluation and monitoring and reviewing to ensure accountability and success. Support and commitment from the top/senior management for successful implementation of middle management development are crucial. Top/senior management could be more involved in the planning, implementation and support of middle management development.

- ***Evaluation and monitoring***

Evaluating and monitoring the development strategy and its impact are essential. The lack of proper evaluation and monitoring mechanisms at higher education institutions regarding the development that is taking place, was identified by middle managers as some of the dilemmas facing them (see 5.4.10.1). Clarification on how the evaluation will be used to improve development should be one of the goals of evaluation. A shared approach to evaluation needs to be developed, in other words, the "core" team (see 6.3.2) involved in the development should be instrumental in the evaluation. This does, of course, not

exclude the internal and external customers, which in turn could lead to the ascertaining of more development needs. Evaluating and monitoring how development needs will be met, as well as evaluation of the effectiveness of development through the utilisation of new skills, would be to the benefit of all stakeholders.

- *Reviewing*

The aim of reviewing is to reflect on achievements for the period and receiving constructive feedback on performance and development plans for the coming year. Reflection is a process of reviewing and thinking critically about activities. These reflective thoughts can assist our understanding of experiences; make connections between different aspects of one's work; and identify possible improvements. A flexible approach in this regard is crucial, because priorities can change in the ever-changing higher education environment. Feedback from administrative managers, staff and customers is vital in reviewing the development, because the 360-degree assessment would have input from all the stakeholders demanding quality service by administrative sections/units.

Measurement of the impact of middle management development can be done after the first year, and again after two years, because certain developments, for example changing of attitudes and shifting of minds, take much longer to achieve. Institutions should also continuously experiment by undertaking pilot studies on a smaller scale to refine and to serve as a model for other units. The middle manager's insight into his own strong management skills and in those that are not yet developed, could also significantly contribute to more proactive and assertive re-skilling.

The structures of the development model will subsequently be elaborated on.

### 6.3.3 Structures

As previously indicated in 6.3.2, the researcher suggests that a "core" team at the institution which is directly involved and committed, should take the lead responsibility for different elements of the strategy. This "core" team should consist of a top/senior manager, a staff development co-ordinator/skills facilitator with sufficient seniority and capability, and dynamic managers from the institution to develop the middle managers, as well as the middle managers themselves. The development process needs to be driven by the "core" team, with a senior human resource/skills development facilitator to co-ordinate the whole process. The establishment of a national professional forum for higher education administrative middle managers (see 5.4.12) would benefit not only middle managers, but the higher education sector as a whole. A constructive working relationship is of the utmost importance, because these individuals will be accountable for implementation, progress and impact, and will be responsible for providing information for reporting to the relevant structures.

Using expertise from the institution is not only cost-effective, but serves as a way of publicly recognising staff. When external people have to be used, it should be in collaboration with internal staff who can provide input on context, culture and the particular needs of the institution.

There is also a national drive for inter-institutional and regional collaboration of higher education. While institutions face diverse challenges, many challenges are strikingly similar. By using experts and exchanging staff from different institutions in the same region, as well as by doing collaborative training by seminars and workshops, it could lead to cross-fertilisation, economies of scale and sharing scarce resources and expertise.

The whole issue of incentives also becomes extremely important.

#### **6.3.4 Incentives**

Although it was previously suggested (see 6.3.2) that dynamic and competent managers of institutions be "recruited" to act as mentors and be part of the "core" team to develop middle management, it is essential to address the dimensions of incentives.

Incentives should be determined by the "core" team (see 6.3.2 and 6.3.3) as well as by the input of top/senior management. Incentives may be tangible resources such as funding or time relief. They could also be provided through mechanisms that publicly recognise excellent initiatives in management development. To give public recognition to workplace contributions that are a demonstrated outcome of management development activities, could be a driving force for the experts involved in those activities.

The middle managers who excel in the development programme/activities and perform excellently in specific projects or assignments, should also be incentivised. This can be done by time relief, recognition and assisting the experts in future development activities. If expert senior/middle managers near retirement age are involved in developing middle managers, an incentive for them would be an attempt to create meaning to their working lives again and this could even make their retirement meaningful. Their experience and insight could be very valuable to middle managers.

#### **6.3.5 Content of development activities**

The findings of the literature study, as well as the viewpoints expressed by the participants in the research strongly confirm the following aspects as imperative in the content of development actions: It should be primarily formal activities, but informal actions could also be integrated in the development. The content of development should be appropriate to middle managers' needs and it must be embedded in core activities to develop and support managers in their current



and future roles. This development ultimately focuses on quality service delivery to internal and external customers.

The following actions include the issues that middle managers regarded as critical in a model for administrative middle management development (see 5.4.12):

#### **6.3.5.1      *A macro-scenario of higher education***

According to the research participants, knowledge of higher education is imperative and should be developed in a model for middle management development (see 5.4.13). It is critical that information and perspectives on the broader context of higher education – globally as well as in South Africa – provide the background to future initiatives. This background can provide a context which facilitates clearer understanding of change and of the challenges facing institutions and, ultimately, middle managers.

Knowledge of higher education is imperative in understanding the bigger picture. Without good basic knowledge you will never be able to be successful. Participants should receive a solid introduction to changes in the higher education environment and the impact on management concepts that are explored in-depth, making this a useful tool for institutions that wish to develop their multi-level management teams. As mentioned in 5.4.9.3, the inadequate preparation of middle managers on national issues for example mergers, has a direct impact on the institutional and unit level.

#### **6.3.5.2      *A focus on key institutional needs and priorities***

There is also a need for development to focus on key institutional needs and priorities; to understand the various systems/sub-units and how they relate and interact; where they fit into all academic processes; the total learning experience; and how these systems support the core business of the institution.

A variety of integrated approaches to meet these needs include drives for specific quality improvements institutionally as well as in the specific units/sections, mission statements, team-building activities, and delegated authority from senior/top management.

In order to focus on these key needs and priorities, some of the main barriers identified in 5.4.9.2, namely management structures at the top and a lack of support from them, as well as a lack of proper and effective communication structures, should be urgently addressed through development.

### **6.3.5.3 *General/generic development***

Generic development activities can also be very useful and valuable with regard to conflict resolution, time management, communication skills and budget management. The main problem with generic management development, as identified by the respondents, was that no follow-up is done (see 5.4.7). This is typical of unco-ordinated approaches to development. The solution would be to co-ordinate general management development in a way that follow-up sessions are held and input from middle managers can lead to improved programmes.

Essentials of, among others, group/team dynamics, presentation and report writing skills should also be included, as mentioned in 5.4.13. Development should also provide insights into practical skills such as financial and marketing management.

Demands for multiple competencies and skills from middle managers were highlighted in the literature study (see Chapter 3) as well as by the respondents (see 5.4.9.1). These multiple competencies and skills are a requirement by middle managers to operate effectively and efficiently. Although some of these competencies and skills can be partially addressed by generic development, the need experienced by middle managers to focus on specialised development in their units/sections cannot be ignored.

#### **6.3.5.4 *Specialised development of middle managers***

Conceptual competence – the ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations in the higher education workplace (see 3.5.2), is of the utmost importance to administrative middle managers. As indicated in 5.4.9.1, information planning, strategic and operational planning, as well as implementing strategic plans, organising, decision-making and solving problems are imperative for the middle manager to be successful. Performance management, project management, implementation of control measures and monitoring skills (see 5.4.10.2 and 5.4.13) are also essential for middle managers. The high level of technical skills, that is, to be knowledgeable about the specialised area of the administrative middle manager, necessitates continuous development.

When the nature/typical functions of the administrative sections/units, among others finances, marketing, IT, quality assurance and information management, are taken into account (see 3.4), it is clear that very specific knowledge and skills are presumed and are much needed. It is therefore not surprising that respondents identified specific, focused and intensive training and development as an action to address the dilemmas they are currently facing as middle managers (see 5.4.10.2).

#### **6.3.5.5 *Development for improvement in internal customers' relationships***

Higher education institutions, naturally remain focused on their core functions, namely teaching, learning, community service and research, with the administrative units existing to facilitate this core business. But, as was evident from the literature study (see 2.2.6) and the research findings at the four higher education institutions (see 5.4.8.1 and 5.4.8.2), the "divide" between academic and administrative staff has an extremely negative impact on specifically administrative managers and their staff. The general perception by respondents was that there were two clear cultures operating with administrative and

academic staff. This "divide" urgently needs to be eliminated through development, which implies both administrative and academic staff.

The underlying cause of much conflict between academic and administrative staff is probably opposing paradigms. The challenge for administrative management and their staff is to develop professional working relationships with academic staff, while at the same time ensuring quality service. A crucial prerequisite for a constructive working relationship between academic and administrative staff is a change of attitudes and perceptions among them.

The perception among middle managers that they experience a lack of support from top/senior management (see 5.4.9.2; 5.4.9.3 and 5.4.10.1), should also be addressed through group discussions during staff development sessions. The demoralising effect that this perception leads to, has to be addressed urgently to contribute to quality service delivery. The conflict between administrative and academic staff, as well as the perception by middle managers that support from top/senior management is lacking, could be effectively addressed through communication (see 3.5.1.5). Constructive dialogue is critical in this regard. Tucker (1984:175) suggests "Performance counselling" (see 3.5.1.5), which entails regular formal and informal contact to encourage participation and resolve conflicts. The respondents also identified proper communication as imperative for quality service delivery (see 5.4.10.2; 5.4.12 and 5.4.13).

As already stated in 2.2.5, good administration is also dependent on developing strong working relationships with customers, not only off campus, but also on campus. Baker (1990) emphasises that internal customers are seen to be just as important as external customers. He argues that, unless internal customers are treated well and treat one another well, it is impossible to develop an effective service orientation towards external customers.

Although a shift in attitudes takes much longer to be realised, this could be effected through staff development. When this has been effected, the result

would be quality service delivery to internal as well as external customers.

#### **6.4 CONCLUSION**

This chapter contains the proposed model for the development of administrative middle managers in higher education institutions. This proposed model should focus on the strategic objectives of the institution, processes (planning and implementation), structures and incentives. It is imperative that an integrated approach to middle management development in higher education is followed. Quality service delivery to provide excellent customer services, should be central in this integrated approach.

The following chapter captures the conclusions and recommendations regarding the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions.

## CHAPTER 7

# CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

The primary purpose of this research project/study was to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions in order to become more service- and client-orientated through enhancing their services and customer care (see 1.6). This model could ultimately lead to the empowerment of middle managers to render quality services to all their customers which, in turn, could also enhance their competitive edge and contribute meaningfully to their higher education institutions.

This primary purpose was supplemented with the following aims and objectives:

#### 7.1.1 Aims

- Middle management should unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles, but at the same time also relearn new skills (Andrews in *Sunday Times Business Times* of 22 April 2001:16) to contribute to a quality higher education system (see 1.4).
- In addition to the above aim, middle managers should adopt what Fielden (1998) refers to as a "new managerial culture" in order to be more successful and more client- and service-orientated (as outlined in Chapter 3 and throughout the thesis).

- Learning priorities and specific actions for the empowerment of middle management in administrative positions in higher education should be set clearly (as highlighted in 5.4.10.2; 5.4.12 and 6.3.2.1).

### 7.1.2 Objectives

The study furthermore wished to fulfil the following objectives:

- Creating an awareness of the intense needs with regard to middle management development in higher education in order to address those needs (as highlighted throughout the thesis).
- A realisation by higher education institutions that it is crucial for middle management to be empowered and to stay empowered in pursuing the objectives of higher education. Examples in this regard are, among other things, quality service-delivery and customer satisfaction for both external and internal customers in order to stay competitive (see 6.3.5).
- A critical reflection by middle management in administrative positions on the challenges facing them to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions (as indicated in 5.4.9.3).

In order to effect the above-mentioned aims and objectives, the following were examined:

- International and national trends impacting on middle level managers in the administrative cadre of higher education (Chapter 2).
- A competence profile and management skills required by these middle managers (Chapter 3).
- An empirical investigation into the professional development needs of administrative middle managers (Chapter 4).

The main findings of the research will accordingly be discussed.

## 7.2 MAIN FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

The main findings of the research, which included a thorough literature study involving current and relevant literature on staff development, for example HEFCE (2002) and WHESDN/HESDA (2002), as well as the nature of administrative middle management in higher education were revealed. Qualitative research was conducted in semi-structured interviews as well as via electronic responses with 20 percent of administrative staff in middle management positions at each of two Universities of Technology (incorporation/merging already completed) and two technikons (merging to take place in 2005). Participant observation in the workplace relating to middle management development was also used to generate ideas.

These main findings will be elaborated on in the following manner:

### 7.2.1 Main findings of the literature study

The main findings of the literature study in Chapters 2 and 3 will be discussed separately for greater clarification.

#### 7.2.1.1 *The findings of Chapter 2*

The aim of this chapter was to critically discuss and elaborate on the international and national trends that influence specifically middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions. These trends are crucial for middle managers against the background of quality customer service delivery.

It was evident from the literature study that currently higher education in particular is characterised by rapid change and transformation, globally as well as in South Africa. The increasing change and transformation worldwide were the result of, among other things, globalisation (see 2.2.2); massification (see 2.2.3);



ICT (see 2.2.4); competition and cooperation (see 2.2.5); the conflict between academic and administrative staff (see 2.2.6); and ethics in higher education institutions (see 2.2.7).

The aforementioned international trends also have a direct and major impact on the national trends of higher education institutions in South Africa. These national trends impacting on administrative middle management in higher education are, among other things, the changing role of government (see 2.3.1); policy and legislation (see 2.3.1.1); funding (see 2.3.1.2); the glass ceiling syndrome (see 2.3.2); the emphasis on quality assurance (see 2.3.3); and policy and legislation related to quality assurance (see 2.3.3.1).

For administrative staff there are equally rapid changes in management processes, techniques and technology. In addition, there is no doubt that distinctive challenges are facing administrative middle managers. In this regard a "managerial revolution" is taking place in higher education and "new managerial cultures" are urgently needed. Many middle managers are insufficiently equipped to deal with this revolution or to adopt a "new managerial culture" to unlearn rigid and ineffective management styles and to learn and relearn new skills. Adequate development of middle managers is essential to ensure that higher education institutions are sufficiently flexible to respond to the rapidly changing circumstances of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **7.2.1.2      *The findings of Chapter 3***

The most important purpose of this chapter was to discuss the competencies and skills required by middle managers for the new "managerial culture" (Fielden 1998) needed so urgently by middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions. When considering the main findings of Chapter 3, the impact of change discussed in Chapter 2, has to be taken into account. These findings also play a determining role in the findings of this chapter. These competencies and skills were discussed against the background of the impact of

change, not only on higher education institutions, but also on administrative middle managers. In this regard Cowan (1994:146) emphasises that an institution that fails to develop systems to cope with change, will result in increasingly low morale among staff and a decline in standards at all levels, including service delivery. It is imperative that middle management in higher education institutions are continuously aware that the rules of higher education competition will continue to change in accordance with rising external (prospective students, the policy-makers, the world of work, the community, alumni, and private sector donors), as well as internal (students, academic and administrative staff, in addition to management) customer expectations. Customers are increasingly demanding higher quality.

The nature of the administrative work within higher education was also outlined in this chapter, in order to gain a more comprehensive picture of the requirements of middle managers to render quality services to all their customers, internal as well as external. Middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions - whether they are for example in finances, student services, library and information services, marketing, quality assurance and ICT among other things - all need to manage and interpret information, control and manage funds as well as staff. They also need to plan, organise, lead and control integrated and interdependent activities and apply their specialised knowledge not only to their units, but also in a multi- and interdisciplinary manner. Continually improving the productivity in both internal and external service delivery in a constantly changing landscape requires key competencies and skills. The wide range of competencies and skills that were identified in the study, are testimony to the complexity of the middle management functions in higher education institutions.

Middle managers also have a vital part to play in higher education institutions' quality assurance processes and the promotion thereof. They need to facilitate quality awareness among administrative staff and promote the implementation of quality in their administrative processes and customer services. It is expected

from institutions to become more client-focused and to deliver excellent services, similar to those expected in the corporate world.

Critical competencies and skills that are particularly important and relevant to middle management in administrative positions in higher education institutions that were identified, were the following:

- Interpersonal competence (the ability to work well with people, understand their needs, communicate well, resolve conflicts and motivate others – both individually and in groups) (see 3.5 and 3.5.1). Key skills that form the interpersonal competency base are the following: creating an enabling environment (see 3.5.1.1); promoting a people-centred approach (PCA) (see 3.5.1.2); managing conflict (see 3.5.1.3); managing diversity (see 3.5.1.4); and effective communication (see 3.5.1.5).
- Conceptual competence (the mental ability to analyse and diagnose complex situations) (see 3.5 and 3.5.2). The following key skills are imperative: planning (see 3.5.2.1); organising (see 3.5.2.2); and controlling (see 3.5.2.3).
- Technical competence (the ability to apply specialised knowledge or expertise) (see 3.5 and 3.5.3). Technical skills are those tools, procedures and techniques that are unique to a middle manager's specialised situation.
- Political competence (the ability to enhance one's position) (see 3.5 and 3.5.4).

These multiple competencies and skills that were identified, would not only equip administrative middle managers to meet their current needs, but also prepare them for future changes. According to Stamatis (1996:138) (see 3.7), the answer to these requirements of middle management lies in the development of middle management.

## 7.2.2 Main research findings of the empirical investigation

The main research findings of staff development practices and needs of administrative middle managers in higher education institutions will consequently be discussed.

Although staff development has become a vital component of higher education institutional policy-making to be distinguished by quality and relevance (see 1.4), it was evident that, except for one institution having a policy for senior/top management, there was no policy on management development at the other institutions. The implication is that a lack of such a policy would not result in organised and coherent development actions that are so critical in higher education institutions. Although no formal policy exists for middle management development, all the respondents indicated that facilities and infrastructure for staff development did exist at their institutions (see 5.4.1).

Fifteen of the 20 participants of the four higher education institutions indicated that the SDS indeed played a role in the facilities and infrastructure of their institutions (see 5.4.2). Conflicting viewpoints on the priority given to management development were evident, however, not only among the institutions, but also among the participants of institutions, except for one institution where all the interviewees regarded the priority as very low (see 5.4.3). This present low level of activity regarding management development that was identified in the literature study (see 1.5), is emphasised by these findings. This is in direct contrast with the "progressively enabling" national policies and acts (see 2.3.1.1). The South African government realised the fundamental requirement of management development by putting into place several "progressively enabling" acts and policies to underline the importance of transformation and development of higher education staff, which is accordingly also applicable to middle managers in administrative positions in higher education. But, at the institutional level, there is a large gap between the crucial need for middle management development and the low level of activity.

Regarding the selection of management development on the basis of function and level, all participants, with the exception of two from the IT section, agreed that it did not take place according to the basis of function and level. If development activities are not selected, it usually leads to development on generic issues and not specialised development.

Again not all of the participants had a positive answer regarding the requirements of newly appointed middle managers to undergo a formal induction programme in their relevant management areas, as well as the requirement to undergo continuous professional development. But the absolute necessity for the aforementioned to be realised, is not debatable. It should be a requirement for all middle managers in the current ever-changing higher education section (see 5.4.5.1 and 5.4.5.2). Regarding the link of development with performance appraisal, in other words alignment with other institutional objectives, 19 out of 20 respondents stated that there is no link. If staff development programmes are not linked to other institutional objectives and plans, the desired impact will never be achieved and no coherency will exist. Although there can be no doubt with regard to the necessity of staff development to support management activity in order to be relevant and to achieve the desired outcomes of the programmes, there was also no consensus among participants regarding the value of the development activities in supporting management performance (see 5.4.7).

The direct and major impact of academic work and policies/development was generally agreed on by all the participants of all four the institutions (see 5.4.8.1). With regard to the influence of the "divide" between academic and administrative staff, most of the participants agreed that it had an immensely negative influence on their work. The majority echoed the view that had been raised in 2.2.6, namely that administrative staff are sometimes the victims of academic snobbery and negative attitudes.

As was evident from the literature study that demands that multiple competencies and skills are increasingly becoming imperative in addressing the change and complexity of the middle management role in the administrative cadre (see Chapter 3), it was also clear from the respondents' answers that multiple competencies and skills are indeed required by the middle manager to operate effectively. General congruence between the literature study and the respondents regarding the specific competencies and skills needed was experienced (see Chapter 3 and 5.4.9.1).

Furthermore the barriers to operate effectively within the middle management role (see 5.4.9.2); most critical challenges facing middle managers (see 5.4.9.3); dilemmas they are currently facing (see 5.4.10.1); and specific actions that need to be taken to address the dilemmas (see 5.4.10.2); were identified by the respondents. Possible strategies to address some of these issues were also identified by the respondents. They all realised the necessity of intensive, specific, focused, and continuous management training and development (see 5.4.10.2). They also stressed that development activities should be addressed in an organised way and on a coherent basis in order to be successful (see 5.4.12).

Opinions on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a recognised qualification, were also generally experienced positively (see 5.4.11). It was in addition emphasised by two respondents that the *qualification* should not be of primary interest, but the *content* of the course. Any effort or attempt at a formalised course should be structured with specific outcomes and these outcomes should be evaluated.

Critical issues that were identified in a model for middle management development were, among others, mentoring programmes; continuous professional development; compulsory induction programmes; self-development; technical competence; quality management; and the creation of professional forums for middle managers (see 5.4.12). These issues are also incorporated in the proposed development model in Chapter 6. The respondents also identified

attributes, skills and knowledge that should be developed in a model for middle management development, among others, project management; people management skills; core management skills; and knowledge of higher education (see 5.4.13). These attributes, skills and knowledge are also underscored by the literature study (see Chapter 3).

The main findings of the researcher as participant observer will subsequently be discussed.

#### **7.2.2.1**      *Participant observation*

The researcher observed an increasingly demoralised administrative middle management, mainly due to uncertainties and fears regarding the current and future landscape of, among other things, a lack of continuous development at their institutions and a lack of support from top/senior management. Dissatisfaction with current staff development practices due to the focus on primarily generic themes, as well as the fact that they are not specifically related to their vital needs in the unit/section, is also prevalent among middle managers.

#### **7.2.3**      **Proposed model for administrative middle management development**

The main aim of the proposed model is the development of middle managers in the administrative cadre (see 1.6) to become more service- and client-orientated, which is in line with their higher education institutions' needs and objectives. The proposed model implies that middle management development should be an integrated approach, focusing primarily on the strategic objectives of an institution, processes (planning and implementation), structures and incentives. Quality service delivery to provide excellent customer services, is central in this integrated approach (see Chapter 6).

### **7.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY**

The following aspects are indicators of the demarcations of this research:

- Only acts and policies in terms of the South African context are regarded as directive, although the international tendencies that pertain to the South African context should not be ignored. The South African higher education system and context also differ from the First-World countries. South African higher education has a unique and diverse staff composition which forces one not to be solely led by overseas higher education institutions.
- The target group is only limited to four higher education institutions (two Universities of Technology and two technikons) in the current higher education landscape in South Africa. It is nonetheless representative of the technikon and the University of Technology sector.
- The focus was limited only to middle managers in the administrative cadre of South African higher education institutions.

### **7.4 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In terms of future research, the researcher would recommend the following:

- Implementation of development programmes for effective administrative middle managers.
- Determining the effectiveness of implemented development programmes for administrative middle management.

### **7.5 CONCLUSION**

The pivotal role of staff development and self-development of middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions in order to be more service- and client-orientated, cannot be doubted in the current higher education landscape. Even in the seventh century BC, Kuan Chung Teu already realised the crucial role of the development of people. He stated the following:



"If you wish to plan for a year, sow seeds,  
If you wish to plan for ten years, plant trees,  
If you wish to plan for a lifetime, *develop people*".

There is no doubt that more effective and adequate administrative middle managers - which can be achieved by taking the above advice of Kuan Chung Teu into account – are needed, particularly in these demanding times of change and unprecedented opportunities offered by today's dynamic higher education environment.

Closer to our time, the highly significant and relevant quote by Alvin Toffler, namely "The illiterate of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn", supplements the above advice. It calls for deliberate and immediate intervention by higher education institutions and administrative middle managers in higher education. Rigid and ineffective management styles and practices that are no longer relevant in higher education, should be replaced by the "managerial revolution" (Peeke 1994:125) (see 1.5); by "new managerial cultures", as echoed by Fielden (1998) (see 1.5); as well as by learning, unlearning and relearning through development and self-development by administrative middle managers, in order to provide quality service to their internal and external customers.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ackers, P. & Preston, D. 1997. Born again? The ethics and efficacy of the conversion experience in contemporary manager development. *Journal of Management Studies* 34(4): 677-701.
- Allais, C. 1990. Towards management as a human enterprise. In C. Alant (Ed.). *Sociology and Society – A Humanist Profile*. Pretoria: Department of Sociology, University of South Africa.
- Anderson, B. & Maharasoa, M. 2002. Internationalisation of higher education: facilitating partnerships between universities. *South African Journal of Higher Education (SAJHE)* 16(1): 15-21.
- Asmal, K. 2001a. Media briefing by the Minister of Education on the Human Resource Development Strategy on 13 February.
- Asmal, K. 2001b. Speech presented by the Minister of Education at the Council on Higher Education (CHE) 3<sup>rd</sup> Consultative Conference held in Benoni on 29 November.
- Austin, A.E. 1998. Change and transformation in higher education in the United States: issues, challenges and trends. Paper presented at the Unit for Research into Higher Education in Bloemfontein during August 1998.
- Babbie, E. & Mouton, J. 2001. *The practice of social research*. Southern Africa: Oxford University Press.

- Badat, S. 1999. Martin Carnoy's 'Universities in a global innovation economy': Issues for Higher Education and Human Resource Development in South Africa. Education Policy Unit: University of the Western Cape (<http://www.chet.org.za/oldsite/debates/310798d.html>). Retrieved on 5 June 2003.
- Baker, J.R. 1990. New Approaches to Human Resource Management in the Australian Public Service: Some Private Sector Models. *Journal of Tertiary Education Administration* 12(2): 15-20.
- Baldrige. 1999. Human Resource Focus (<http://www.balridgeplus.com>). Retrieved on 18 July 2002.
- Barr, M.J. 1993. Becoming Successful Student Affairs Administrators. In M.J. Barr & Associates (Eds). *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Bergquist, W.H., Arburua, C., Bishop, H. & Smith, B.L. 1995. *Quality through Access, Access with Quality*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Blackwell, R. & Blackmore, P. 2003. *Towards strategic staff development in higher education*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Blair, G.M. 2001. *The Human Factor* (The University of Edinburgh) (<http://www.ee.ed.ac.uk/~gerard/Management/art6.html>). Retrieved on 27 June 2001.
- Blaxter, L., Hughes, C. & Tight, M. 2001. *How to research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Philadelphia: Open University Press.

- Brew, A. & Boud, D. 1996. Preparing for new academic roles: a holistic approach to development. *The International Journal for Academic Development* 1(2): 5-11.
- Burgoyne, J. 1988. Management development for the individual and organisation. *Personnel Management* 6(40): 4.
- Butcher, N. 2000. Information and Communication Technologies in South African Higher Education. Papers presented at the 2<sup>nd</sup> National NADEOSA Conference on 21-22 August (<http://www.saide.org.za/nadeosa/conference2000/butcher.htm>). Retrieved on 20 March 2004.
- Campbell, C. & Van der Wende, M. 2000. *International Initiatives and Trends in Quality Assurance for European Higher Education*. Exploratory Trend Report. Helsinki: The European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education.
- Carnall, C.A. 1990. *Managing Change in Organizations*. New York: Prentice Hall.
- Centre-ing Services. 2002. Using call blending to raise service centre cost-efficiency, productivity and service levels ([http://www.centre-ingservices.com/literature\\_using.htm](http://www.centre-ingservices.com/literature_using.htm)). Retrieved on 3 July 2004.
- Channel Consulting. 2003. Academic work at the University of the Free State (The core functions/tasks of a University). Bloemfontein: University of the Free State.
- CHE (Council on Higher Education). 2002. *National and Continental Human Resource Development Initiatives: Challenges for Higher Education*, Occasional Paper 1. Pretoria: CHE.

Cheales, P. 2000. *I was your customer*. Rivonia: Zebra Press.

CHE HEQC (Council on Higher Education. Higher Education Quality Committee). 2003. *Institutional Audit Manual*. Pretoria: CHE.

Chenail, R.J. 1995. *Presenting Qualitative Data. The Qualitative Report* 2(3) (<http://www.nova.edu/ssss/QR/QR2-3/html>). Retrieved on 23 May 2004.

Cherry, A.L. (Jr.). 2000. *A research primer for the helping professions: Methods, statistics, and writing*. Belmont, California: Brooks/Cole Thomson Learning.

Chesterman, C. 2001. Women and Mentoring in Higher Education. Workshop held at Technikon South Africa on 17 October.

Clark, B.R. 1997. Common problems and adaptive responses in the universities of the world: organizing for change. *Higher Education Policy* 10(3/4): 291-295.

Clark, B.R. 1998. *Creating entrepreneurial universities: organisational pathways of transformation*. London: Pergamon Press.

Cloete, N. 1997. Quality: Conceptions, Contestations and Comments. African regional consultation preparatory to the World Conference on Higher Education held in Dakar, Senegal, on 14 April.

Clutterbuck, D. & Crainer, S. 1991. *Los maestros del management: nombres que llegaron mas lejos*. Barcelona: Grijalbo.

Coens, T. & Jenkins, M. 2000. *Abolishing Performance Appraisals: Why they backfire and what to do instead*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc.

- Conrad, C.F., Haworth, J.G. & Lattuca, L.R. 2001. Introduction: Expanding perspectives on/in qualitative inquiry. In C.F. Conrad, J.G. Haworth & L.R. Lattuca (Eds). *Qualitative research in higher education: Expanding perspectives* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston: Pearson Custom Publishing.
- Cotter, H. 1999. *Power and Responsibility: Practical Ethics in the life of a University* (Curtin Vice-Chancellory, Curtin University) (<http://www.curtin.edu.au/curtin/dept/eesj/ethics.htm>). Retrieved on 12 September 2001.
- Cowan, B.J. 1994. Staff development: the key to the effective management of change in higher educational institutions. Proceedings of the Ninth Biennial SAARDHE Congress and General Meeting: "State of the art in higher education" held in Cape Town from 13-15 June.
- Crowson, R.L. 1987. Qualitative research methods in higher education. In J.C. Smart (Ed.). *Higher education handbook of theory and research. Vol. III*. New York: Agathon Press.
- CVCP/HEQE (Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Principals of the Universities of the United Kingdom/Higher Education: Quality and Employability). 1999. *Report on skills development in higher education*. United Kingdom.
- Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S. 2000. Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) United States of America: Sage Publications Inc.
- Dorfling, N. 2003. Management: An Overview. Paper presented at the Tertiary Institutions Faculty Administrative Forum held in Port Elizabeth from 23-24 April.

Du Plessis, L.A. 2004. Can staff development efforts sustain the changing landscape of higher education? 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Conference. The Idea of Education. Prague, Czech Republic, held from 9-11 August.

Du Pré, R. 2003. Coping with Changes in Higher Education in South Africa. Paper presented at the Annual Conference of the Forum for Advancement of Continuing Education held in Scotland from 2-4 July ([http://www.face.stir.ac.uk/Paper 101-RoyduPréR 000.htm](http://www.face.stir.ac.uk/Paper%20101-RoyduPréR%20000.htm)). Retrieved on 20 March 2004.

Du Preez, E. 2003. Role and Impact of Communication and Clientele Service in Faculty Administration. Paper presented at the Tertiary Institutions Faculty Administrative Forum held in Port Elizabeth from 23-24 April.

Du Toit, H. 1996. The National Qualifications Framework and the Higher Education Implementation of a Quality Assurance System in South Africa. In A.H. Strydom, L.O.K. Lategan & A. Muller (Eds). *Quality Assurance in South African Higher Education: National and International Perspectives*. Bloemfontein: Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Orange Free State.

ENQA (European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education). 2003. *Quality Procedures in European Higher Education*. ENQA Occasional Papers 5. Helsinki: Danish Evaluation Institute.

Fehnel, R. 2002. Transformation in Higher Education: Global Realities and Local Pressures. Keynote Address at the UNITECH Conference held at the Wild Coast Sun on 16 October.

Fielden, J. 1998. "Higher Education Staff Development: A Continuing Mission". Commonwealth Higher Education Management Service (CHEMS) (<http://www.unesco.org/education/educprog/wche/principal/mission.html>). Retrieved on 18 July 2002.

Fisser, P. 2002. *Implementing ICT university-wide, from theory to practice*. 'The New Educational Benefits of ICT in Education' Conference held at Rotterdam, the Netherlands from 2-4 September (<http://www.oecr.nl/conference/main.htm>). Retrieved on 5 June 2003.

Florence, M. 1996. *Supervising and Managing People*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill.

Fourie, M. 2003. The development of a model for effective and efficient performance management systems for educational/academic staff in higher and further education and training in the Free State region. (Extract from project application for information purposes.) University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.

Gellert, C. 1997. Higher education in Western Europe. In M.F. Green & F.M. Hayward (Eds). *Transforming higher education: views from leaders around the world*. Washington: Oryx Press.

Gibbons, M. 2001. Globalisation in higher education: a view for the South. Paper presented at the International Conference on "Globalisation and Higher Education: Views from the South" held in Cape Town from 27-29 March.

Hales, C. 1999. Why do managers do what they do? Reconciling evidence and theory in accounts of managerial work. *British Journal of Management* 10: 335-350.



- Hartman, N. & Scott, I. 1990. Introduction. In N. Hartman & I. Scott (Eds). *Restructuring South African tertiary education: academic contributions to the debate on rationalisation*. Johannesburg: UDUSA.
- Hassel, E. 1999. *Professional development: learning from the best. A toolkit for schools and districts based on the national awards program for model professional development*. Illinois: North Central Regional Educational Laboratory (NCREL).
- Hay, D. 2001. Quality assurance in South African higher education: Challenges and imperatives. Paper presented at the "When somebody's watching: Perspectives and reflections on academic audit conference" held at the University of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia.
- Hay, D. & Tisani, N. 2002. *Towards a national staff development plan for South African higher education institutions*. Progress report. Pretoria: South Africa.
- Hayward, F.M. 1997. Higher education in Africa: crisis and transformation. In M.F. Green & F.M. Hayward (Eds). *Transforming higher education: views from leaders around the world*. Washington: Oryx Press.
- HEFCE (Higher Education Funding Council for England). 2002. *Rewarding and developing staff in higher education*. HEFCE Report No.14. England: HEFCE.
- Hohnbaum, C. 2002. *Creating a New Learning Model to avoid Skills Gaps and to fulfil the future needs of the knowledge society*. 'The New Educational Benefits of ICT in Education' Conference held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, from 2-4 September (<http://www.oecr.nl/conference/main.htm>). Retrieved on 5 June 2003.

- Hunsaker, P.L. 2001. *Training in Management Skills*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Hutchins, E. 1993. Learning to navigate. In S. Chaiklin & J. Lave (Eds). *Understanding practice: perspectives on activity and context*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Ilbury, C. & Sunter, C. 2001. *The Mind of a Fox – Scenario Planning in Action*. Cape Town: Human & Rousseau/Tafelberg.
- Janas, M. 1996. Mentoring the Mentor: A Challenge for Staff Development. *Journal of Staff Development* 17(4):1-6  
(<http://www.nsd.org/library/jsd/janas174.html>). Retrieved on 6 June 2002.
- Jeffery, C. 2002. Staff Development, Education and Training. Perth: Murdoch University (<http://www.hr.murdoch.edu.au/staff/td/policy/PT0002.html>). Retrieved on 18 July 2002.
- Kerrigan, J.E. & Luke, J.S. 1987. *Management training strategies for developing countries*. Colorado: USA.
- Knight, J. 2004. Internationalisation Remodeled: Definition, Approaches, and Rationales. *Journal of Studies in International Education* 8(1): 5-31.
- Koorts, A.S. 2001. Higher Education Institutions in a Global Context: Philosophy and Practice. Paper presented at the IEASA Conference held in Bloemfontein on 7 September.

- Kraak, A. 1999. Higher Education and the Knowledge Economy: Critical Issues Facing South Africa's Post-Apartheid Transition. Unit for Systematic Studies, Group Education and Training: HSRC (<http://www.chet.org.za/oldsite/debates/310798f.html>). Retrieved on 5 June.
- Krathwohl, D.R. 1998. *Methods of educational and social science research – An integrated approach*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: Longman.
- Lange, L. 2002. Voldemort and Race in South Africa: Reflections on Affirmative Action in Higher Education. Paper presented at the Colloquium for Human Rights and Transformation in Higher Education held in Bloemfontein, the Technikon Free State on 15 November.
- Lategan, L.O.K. 1997. Defining Quality for South African Universities. In A.H. Strydom, L.O.K. Lategan & A. Muller (Eds). *Enhancing Institutional Self-Evaluation and Quality in South African Higher Education: National and International Perspectives*. Bloemfontein: Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Orange Free State.
- Lebedun, J. 1998. *Managing Workplace Conflict*. United States of America: American Media Inc.
- Levy, D.C. 1997. Latin America and the Change in Change. In M.F. Green & F.M. Hayward (Eds). *Transforming higher education: views from leaders around the world*. Washington: Oryx Press.
- Lonsdale, A. 1996. Performance Management: The fourth generation. *Campus Review* 6(13): 1-8.

- Ludeman, R.B., Turner, M. & Kaunda, L.L. 2001. Bridging Nations: The Important Role of International Education in the Globalisation of Higher Education in the South. Paper presented at the International Conference on "Globalisation and Higher Education: Views from the South" held in Cape Town from 27-29 March.
- Maassen, P. 1995. The rise and impact of the "evaluative Stat": The issue of quality in European higher education. *South African Journal of Higher Education (SAJHE)* 9(2): 63-88.
- Maassen, P. & Cloete, N. 2002. Global reform trends in higher education. In N. Cloete, R. Fehnel, P. Maassen, T. Moja, H. Perold & T. Gibbon (Eds). *Transformation in Higher Education: Global Pressures and Local Realities in South Africa*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Mandew, M.S. 2000. Rediscovering student services partnerships: Is a seamless curriculum in student life and learning a pipedream? (Professoral address delivered on 15 June.) Technikon Free State, Bloemfontein.
- Mandew, M.S. 2003. Workforce Development Centre for Technikon Free State. (Unpublished document for information purposes.) Technikon Free State, Bloemfontein.
- Marais, F.C. 1997. The Management (Problem-solving and Decision-making) of the Academic Development Programme of the OFS Region and Communication with various Academic Leaders at various levels. University of the Orange Free State, Bloemfontein.
- Marton, F. 1994. Phenomenography. In T. Husen & T.N. Postlethwaite (Eds). *International Encyclopedia of Education* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.) Vol. 8. London: Pergamon.

- Maykut, P. & Morehouse, R. 1994. *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. London: The Falmer Press.
- McGill, I. & Beaty, L. 1995. *Action learning: A guide for professional, management and education development*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Kogan Page Limited.
- McKenzie, G., Powell, J. & Usher, R. 1997. *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*. In G. McKenzie, J. Powell & R. Usher (Eds). *Understanding Social Research: Perspectives on Methodology and Practice*. London: The Falmer Press.
- McKinnon, K.R., Walker, S.H. & Davis, D. 2000. *Benchmarking: A manual for Australian Universities*. Canberra: Australia.
- McMillan, J.H. & Schumacher, S. 2001. *Research in Education – A Conceptual Introduction*. (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Addison Wesley Longman, Inc.
- McNamara, C. 1999. *Complete Guide to Ethics Management: An Ethics Toolkit for Managers* (<http://www.mapnp.org/library/ethics/ethxgde.htm>). Retrieved on 12 July 2001.
- Mdladlana, M.M.S. 2001. Speech by the Minister of Labour at the Launch of the Human Resources Development Strategy in Pretoria on 23 April.
- Meadows, E.E. 2001. *Process: The Person Centered Approach* (Camelot USA) (<http://www.camelot-usa.com/person-centered-approach.html>). Retrieved on 30 June 2001.
- Mertus, J. 2001. *Notes on Qualitative Research* (<http://academic3.american.edu/~mertus/QUALIT~1.HTM>). Retrieved on 23 May 2004.

- Middlehurst, R. 1993. *Leading academics*. Buckingham: Society for Research into Higher Education and the Open University Press.
- Mills, D.B. 1993. The Role of the Middle Manager. In M.J. Barr & Associates (Eds). *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Moore, P.L. 1993. The Political Dimension of Decision Making. In M.J. Barr & Associates (Eds). *The Handbook of Student Affairs Administration*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Mouton, J. & Marais, H.C. 1996. *Basic concepts in the methodology of the social sciences*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Mouton, J. & Muller, J. 1998. Tracking trends in theory and method: Past and future. In J. Mouton, J. Muller, P. Franks & T. Sono (Eds). *Theory and Method in South African Human Sciences Research: Advances and Innovations*. Pretoria: Human Sciences Research Council.
- NCHE (National Commission on Higher Education). 1996. *A Framework for Transformation*. (Discussion paper.) Pretoria: NCHE.
- Nevins, M.D. & Stumpf, S.A. 1999. 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Leadership: Redefining Management Education (<http://www.strategy-business.com/strategy/99305/html>). Retrieved on 20 March 2001.

- Noruwana, J.M. 1997. The necessity of self-evaluation and quality assurance in South African universities. In A.H. Strydom, L.O.K. Lategan & A. Muller (Eds). *Enhancing Institutional Self-Evaluation and Quality in South African Higher Education: National and International Perspectives*. Bloemfontein: Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Orange Free State.
- Oakley, E. 2001. Keynote Addresses Presentations with Heart and Substance (Enlightened Leadership International Inc. Englewood.) ([http://www.enleadership.com/keynote\\_2.html](http://www.enleadership.com/keynote_2.html)). Retrieved on 10 July 2001.
- O'Connor, T. 2001. Qualitative social science research methodology (<http://faculty.ncw.c.edu/toconnor/308/308lect09.htm>). Retrieved on 26 May 2004.
- Oppenheim, A.N. 1992. *Questionnaire design, interviewing and attitude measurement*. London: Continuum.
- Pace, L.A. 1999. The Ethical Implications of Quality [Business and Organisation Ethics Network (BON).] (<http://www.jyu.fi/ejbo/articles/pace.html>). Retrieved on 20 May 2001.
- Pedler, M. 1991. *Action learning in practice*. Gower: London.
- Peeke, G. 1994. *Mission and Change: Institutional Mission and its Application to the Management of Further and Higher Education*. London: SRHE and Open University Press.
- Peterson, M.W. 1991. Introduction. In J.L. Bess (Ed.). *Foundations of American Higher Education: An ASHE Reader*. Lexington: Ginn Press.

- Pitman, T. 2000. Perceptions of Academics and Students as Customers: a survey of administrative staff in higher education. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 22(2): 1-11.
- Postiglione, G.A. 1997. Asian higher education: growth, diversity, and change. In M.F. Green & F.M. Hayward (Eds). *Transforming higher education: views from leaders around the world*. Washington: Oryx Press.
- Pring, R. 2000. *Philosophy of Educational Research*. London: Continuum.
- Punch, K.F. 2000. *Introduction to social research: Quantitative and qualitative approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Ramsden, P. 1998. *Learning to lead in higher education: The Leadership Challenge in the Contemporary Context of Higher Education*. London: Routledge.
- Rapport/City Press. 2003. Loopbaan wat vashaak, kan wye gevolge hê. 5 Oktober: 1.
- Ratcliff, D. 2002. Qualitative Research Methods Part One: Introduction (<http://don.ratcliff.net/qual/expq1.html>). Retrieved on 13 February 2004.
- Ratcliff, J.L. 1997. Institutional Self-Evaluation and Quality Assurance: A Global View. In A.H. Strydom, L.O.K. Lategan & A. Muller (Eds). *Enhancing Institutional Self-Evaluation and Quality in South African Higher Education: National and International Perspectives*. Bloemfontein: Unit for Research into Higher Education, University of the Orange Free State.
- Ricks, B.R., Ginn, M.L. & Daughtrey, A.S. 1995. *Contemporary Supervision. Managing People and Technology*. United States of America: McGraw-Hill.



- Robbins, S.P. & De Cenzo, D.A. 2001. *Supervision Today*. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall.
- Robinson, D.G. & Robinson, J.C. 1989. *Training for impact: how to link training to business needs and measure the results*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Rowley, J.B. 1999. The Good Mentor – Educational Leadership 56(8): 1-5 (<http://www.ascd.org/readingroom/edlead/9905/rowley.html>). Retrieved on 6 June 2002.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1995. *South African Qualifications Authority Act*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1997. *Higher Education Act (No. 101)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998a. *Employment Equity Act (No. 55)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1998b. *Skills Development Act (No. 97)*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RSA (Republic of South Africa). 1999. *Skills Development Levies Act*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa. Department of Education). 1997. *Education White Paper 3. A programme for higher education transformation*. Pretoria: Department of Education.
- RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa. Department of Education). 2001. *National Plan for Higher Education*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

RSA DoE (Republic of South Africa. Department of Education). 2003. *Government Gazette*. Vol. 461, No.25737. Pretoria: Department of Education.

RSA DoL (Republic of South Africa. Department of Labour). 2000. *Skills Development Strategy*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

RSA DoL (Republic of South Africa. Department of Labour). 2001. *Human Resource Development Strategy*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

Schwarz, S. & Teichler, U. 2000. *The Institutional Basis of Higher Education Research – Experiences and Perspectives*. Dordrecht, The Netherlands: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Scott, I. 2003. Establishing Academic Development at Technikon Free State: Analysis and Proposals. (Unpublished document for information purposes.) Technikon Free State, Bloemfontein.

Seagren, A.T., Creswell, J.W. & Wheeler, D.W. 1993. *The Department Chair: New Roles, Responsibilities and Challenges*. ASHE – ERIC Higher Education Report No.1. The George Washington University, School of Education and Human Development, Washington D.C.

Seymour, D.T. 1993. *Causing Quality in Higher Education*. American Council on Education. Phoenix, Arizona: Oryx Press.

*Skilling South Africa (SA)*. 2001. Positive steps taken to resolve skills shortage. February: 1-8.

Stamatis, D.H. 1996. *Total Quality Service – Principles, Practices, and Implementation*. Florida: St. Lucie Press.

- Strasheim, C. 2001. South African and global business schools: an industry review ([http://www.sabusinessreview.co.za/July2001/general\\_articles/strasheim.htm](http://www.sabusinessreview.co.za/July2001/general_articles/strasheim.htm)). Retrieved on 13 June 2003.
- Strydom, K., Fourie, M. & Van Niekerk, D. 2003. A Guide for Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) in higher education institutions (HEIs). University of the Free State, Bloemfontein.
- Sunday Times Business Times*. 2001. How some people see opportunity where others see nothing. 22 April: 16.
- Sunday Times Business Times*. 2003a. Wanted: Good soft skills. 13 July: 2.
- Sunday Times Business Times*. 2003b. Money can't buy you loyalty. 5 October: 1.
- Szucs, A. 2002. *Expectations, opportunities, realities – ICTs, eLearning and ODL at universities in Hungary and Central Europe*. 'The New Educational Benefits of ICT in Education' Conference held at Rotterdam, the Netherlands from 2-4 September (<http://www.oecr.nl/conference/main.htm>). Retrieved on 5 June 2003.
- Thompson, H. 2000. *The Customer-Centered Enterprise*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Tucker, A. 1984. *Chairing the Academic Department: Leadership among Peers*. (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). New York: American Council on Education. Macmillan Publishing Company.
- Tulloch, S. 1993. (Ed.). *Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder*. London: The Reader's Digest Association Limited.

- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation).  
1994. *Higher education staff development: directions for the 21<sup>st</sup> century*.  
Paris: UNESCO.
- Van der Merwe, D. 2002. Reflections on the impact of globalisation on higher  
education policy (<http://general.rau.ac.za/aambeeld/julie2002.htm>).  
Retrieved on 13 June 2003.
- Van Eldik, P. 2000. The Role of Higher Education in Technological Innovation  
within the South African Context. In L.O.K. Lategan (Ed.). *The Making of a  
University of Technology*. Bloemfontein: Technikon Free State.
- Vanim, G.A. 2001. *Managing Change*. Ohio: South Western Educational  
Publishing.
- Volksblad*. 2001. Gebruikers moet tred hou met tegnologie. 16 Oktober: 12.
- Walters, S., Kamwengo, M., Taruvinga, M. & Munro, K. 2001. Lifelong Learning,  
Higher Education and Active Citizenship? Paper presented at the  
International Conference on "Globalisation and Higher Education: Views  
from the South" held in Cape Town from 27-29 March.
- WHESDN/HESDA (Welsh Higher Education Staff Development Network/Higher  
Education Staff Development Agency). 2002. *Management Development  
in the Welsh Higher Education Sector: Research Feasibility Project*.  
Swansea.
- Whyley, C. & Callender, C. 1997. *Administrative and support staff in higher  
education: their experiences and expectations*. The National Committee of  
Inquiry into Higher Education Report No.4. University of Leeds, England  
(<http://www.leeds.ac.uk/educol/ncihe/report4.htm>). Retrieved on 11  
November 2003.

Willmott, H. 1994. Management education: provocations to a debate.  
*Management Learning* 25:105-136.

Winburg, C. 1997. *Learning how to research and evaluate: The teaching and learning series*. Cape Town: Juta & Company Ltd.

Woods, K. 2002. *The Evolution of the Digital Campus*. 'The New Educational Benefits of ICT in Education' Conference held in Rotterdam, the Netherlands, from 2-4 September  
(<http://www.oecr.nl/conference/main.htm>). Retrieved on 5 June 2003.

## Appendix A: Letter of request

Dear Prof./Dr/Sir/Madam

Request to participate in a Ph.D. study entitled: "A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION"

I am currently occupying the position of Assistant Director: Office for International Affairs at the Central University of Technology, Free State. My main functions are related to the title of my research, which I am writing to obtain the Ph.D. degree in Higher Education Studies at the University of the Free State (Student number: 2000050142). My promoter is Prof. H.R. (Driekie) Hay.

As indicated by the title, the overall goal of this research is to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions in order to enhance their services and customer care. In addition, this model could enable middle management to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions.

The value and relevance of the model can only be enhanced through the contribution of middle managers. The research methods which will be utilised in the study are, in the first place, a thorough literature study (which has already been completed); followed by, in the second place, semi-structured interviews. The interviews will consist of predominantly open-

ended questions and will therefore be mainly qualitative in nature. I plan to conduct the interviews, which should take no longer than approximately 60 minutes, myself.

I am fully aware of the fact that you have an extremely busy schedule, but I would like to enquire whether it would be possible for you to assist me in arranging semi-structured interviews which would take place **during May/June 2004** with **five (5)** middle managers (managers bridging the ranks with senior/top management and the operating employees) in administrative positions in any five of the following sections/units: Human Resources; Student Services/Administration; Marketing; Examinations; Finances; Central/General Administration; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Information Management; Library and Information Services; Projects and Maintenance; and Quality Assurance at your institution. The request for middle managers to participate in the study, the form of consent for the semi-structured interviews as well as the questions to be posed during these interviews will be sent to you in the form of attachments.

If you could not assist me, I would appreciate it if you could assist me in identifying a person to help me in this regard. The preparations would entail arranging all five (5) interviews to be scheduled to take place in the course of one/two day(s) during May/June 2004, as well as arranging a venue. Should you be willing to assist me, please fill in the accompanying consent form and return it to me electronically as soon as possible. If possible, I would like a response from you **no later than 30 April 2004**. An

honorarium of R500.00 will be paid for your OR your substitute's effort once I have completed the interviews.

Your help and co-operation will be highly appreciated. I also wish to thank you for your time spent in reading this communication. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

MAS D. VAN GENSEN

(STUDENT NO.: 2000050142)

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE

BLOEMFONTEIN 9301

PROMOTER: PROF. H.R. (Driekie) HAY

(THIS LETTER IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN AFRIKAANS.)



## Appendix B: Form of consent

Date:

Please fill in the accompanying form with regard to the semi-structured interviews which are scheduled to take place during *May/June 2004*.

Please indicate the appropriate answer:

- I undertake to help you with the arrangements of the semi-structured interviews. YES NO
- I am unable to be of assistance, but I undertake to provide you with the particulars of a representative/substitute who will perform all the functions as requested by you. YES NO
- I am aware of the fact that an honorarium of R500.00 will be paid to me or to my substitute when the interviews have been completed. YES NO

My particulars/the particulars of the person who will assist you are as follows:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Full names: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cellular number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return this form to me electronically on or before 30 April 2004.

My full particulars are as follows:

E-mail address: [dvghensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvghensen@tfs.ac.za)

Telephone number: (051) 5073837

Cellular number: 0829261899

Thank you in advance for your kind co-operation and your time spent in filling in this form.

Yours faithfully

**MS D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENT NO.: 2000050142)**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**(THIS FORM IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN AFRIKAANS.)**

## Appendix C: Letter to the interviewees

Date:

Name of the interviewee:

Address:

Dear Interviewee/Colleague/Sir/Madam

Request to participate in a Ph.D. study entitled: "A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION"

I am currently occupying the position of Assistant Director: Office for International Affairs at the Central University of Technology, Free State. My main functions are related to the title of my research, which I am writing to obtain the Ph.D. degree in Higher Education Studies at the University of the Free State (Student number: 2000050142). My promoter is Prof. H.R. (Driekie) Hay.

My research mainly focuses on the dilemmas of middle managers in the administrative cadre of higher education institutions. As all of us know by now, the higher education environment is increasingly volatile. It is also expected from institutions to become more client-focused and to deliver excellent services, similar to those expected in the corporate world. However, higher education institutions are not well known for delivering satisfactory levels of service to their internal and external clients. Thus "new managerial cultures" are needed. Middle management in particular is an

area of intense need to build management capacity to enhance performance in higher education. It is therefore crucial for middle management to be empowered and to stay empowered in pursuing the objectives of their institutions.

The overall goal of this research is to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions in order to enhance their services and customer care. This model could lead to the empowerment of middle managers to render quality services that will also enhance their competitive edge.

Your contribution is of crucial importance in endeavouring to find a solution to the problem, namely developing this model to enable middle management to develop and utilise their potential, aligned with the objectives of their higher education institutions. Your experience as a middle manager will contribute significantly towards the development of the model.

The research methods which will be utilised in the study are, in the first place, a thorough literature study (which has already been completed); followed by, in the second place, semi-structured interviews. The interviews will consist of predominantly open-ended questions and will therefore be mainly qualitative in nature. I plan to conduct the interviews, which should take no longer than approximately 60 minutes, myself.

As your expert co-operation is so important in completing this project, I trust that you will find time in your busy schedule to participate in this

research. Should you have any inquiries, please feel free to contact me. My particulars are as follows:

Telephone number: (051) 5073837 / 0829261899

E-mail address: [dvgensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvgensen@tfs.ac.za)

The semi-structured interviews are scheduled to take place during **May/June 2004**. Should you be willing to participate, please fill in the accompanying consent form and return it to me electronically as soon as possible.

Thank you for your kind attention and your time devoted in reading this communication. I sincerely hope that you will be able to oblige me and I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

**MS D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENT NO.: 2000050142)**

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE**

**BLOEMFONTEIN 9301**

**PROMOTER: PROF. H.R. (Driekie) HAY**

**(THIS LETTER IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN AFRIKAANS.)**

## Appendix D: Form of consent

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Hereby I, the undersigned, consent to participate in the **semi-structured interviews** which are scheduled to take place **during May/June 2004**. My full particulars are as follows:

Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname: \_\_\_\_\_

Full names: \_\_\_\_\_

Title of post: \_\_\_\_\_

Unit/Division: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cellular number: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

My full particulars are as follows:

E-mail address: [dvgensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvgensen@tfs.ac.za)

Telephone number: (051) 5073837

Cellular number: 0829261899

I wish to ensure you that the information will be treated in a highly confidential manner and that there will be no reference to any names. Thank you in advance for your kind co-operation.

Yours faithfully

**MS D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENT NO.: 2000050142)**

**ASSISTANT DIRECTOR: OFFICE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, FREE STATE**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**(THIS FORM IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN AFRIKAANS.)**

## Appendix E: Interview Guide

### A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION

The purpose of the semi-structured interviews is to create a model for the development of middle management in administrative positions of higher education institutions in order to enhance their services and customer care. This will be done by obtaining expert opinions from middle managers (managers bridging the ranks with senior/top management and the operating employees) in administrative positions in the following sections/units: Human Resources; Student Services/Administration; Marketing; Examinations; Finances; Central/General Administration; Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Information Management; Library and Information Services; Projects and Maintenance; and Quality Assurance.

#### INTERVIEW GUIDE

1. Is there a policy for the development of managers within your institution?
2. Does the Skills Development Strategy play any role in this regard?
- 3.1 Does your institution give a high priority to management development by creating sufficient opportunities to develop?
- 3.2 If "Yes", what is the focus/nature of the development?



4. Is management development selected on the basis of function (e.g. administrative staff) and level (e.g. middle management) at your institution and then accordingly diversified?
- 5.1 Are all newly appointed middle managers in administrative positions required to undergo a formal induction programme in the relevant management areas?
- 5.2 Does your institution require middle management staff to undergo continuous professional development?
6. Is the development linked with performance appraisal, in other words aligned with other institutional objectives?
7. How valuable have you found the development activities in supporting your management performance?
- 8.1 How do academic work and policies/development impact on the work of middle level managers?
- 8.2 How does the "divide" between administrative and academic staff influence your work?
- 9.1 High quality middle management in the administrative cadre in higher education institutions require multiple competencies and skills, not only to equip middle managers to meet their current needs, but also to prepare them for future changes. State the key competencies and skills that you regard as imperative to operate effectively within your middle management role.
- 9.2 What do you regard as the barriers to the above-mentioned effectiveness?

- 9.3 What do you regard as the three to five most critical challenges currently facing middle managers in administrative positions in higher education?
- 10.1 Which dilemmas are you currently facing in performing your task as middle manager?
- 10.2 Which specific actions need to be taken to address the dilemmas/problems you have identified?
11. What is your opinion on a formalised course in middle management development resulting in a recognised qualification?
12. What would you regard as critical in a model for middle management development in administrative positions?
13. What attributes, skills and knowledge should be developed in such a model?

(THIS INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS IS ALSO AVAILABLE IN AFRIKAANS.)

## Bylae A: Brief van versoek

Geagte Prof./Dr./Heer/Dame

Versoek om deel te neem aan 'n Ph.D.-studie met die titel: "A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION"

Ek beklee tans die pos van Assistentdirekteur: Kantoor vir Internasionale Aangeleenthede aan die Sentrale Universiteit vir Tegnologie, Vrystaat. My hoof funksies hou verband met die titel van my navorsingsprojek wat ek skryf met die oog daarop om die Ph.D.-graad in Hoëronderwysstudies aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat te behaal (Studentenommer: 2000050142). My promotor is Prof. H.R. (Driekie) Hay.

Soos die titel aandui, is die oorhoofse doelstelling van my studie om 'n model te skep vir die ontwikkeling van middelbestuur in administratiewe poste aan hoëronderwysinstellings met die oog daarop om hul dienste en kliëntediens te bevorder. Verder kan hierdie model middelbestuur in staat stel om hul potensiaal te ontwikkel en te gebruik in lyn met die doelwitte van hul hoëronderwysinstellings.

Die waarde en relevansie kan slegs verhoog word deur die bydrae van middelbestuurders. Die navorsingsmetodes wat in die studie gebruik gaan word, is in die eerste plek 'n deeglike literatuurstudie (wat reeds afgehandel is). Dit sal in die tweede plek gevolg word deur semi-gestruktureerde

onderhoude. Die onderhoude sal hoofsaaklik uit oop vrae bestaan en sal dus hoofsaaklik kwalitatief van aard wees. Ek beplan om self die onderhoude - wat nie langer as ongeveer 60 minute behoort te duur nie - waar te neem.

Ek is deeglik bewus van die feit dat u 'n uiters besige program het. Ek wil egter tog die vrymoedigheid neem om te verneem of u my moontlik behulpsaam kan wees om die reëlings vir die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude te tref. Daar word beplan om hierdie onderhoude gedurende Mei/Junie 2004 te voer met vyf (5) middelbestuurders aan u instelling (dit wil sê bestuurders wat 'n brug vorm tussen senior bestuur/topbestuur en die operasionele werknemers) in administratiewe posisies in enige vyf van die volgende afdelings/eenhede: Menslike Hulpbronne; Studentedienste/Administrasie; Bemarking; Eksamens; Finansies; Sentrale/Algemene Administrasie; Inligtings- en Kommunikasietegnologie (IKT); Inligtingsbestuur; Biblioteek- en Inligtingsdienste; Projekte en Instandhouding; asook Gehalteversekering. Die versoek aan middelbestuurders om aan die studie deel te neem, die toestemmingsvorm vir die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude sowel as die vrae wat gedurende hierdie onderhoude gestel gaan word, sal aan u deurgegee word in die vorm van aanhangsels.

As dit nie vir u moontlik is om my van hulp te wees nie, sou ek dit waardeer indien u my behulpsaam kan wees om 'n persoon te vind wat my in hierdie verband kan help. Die voorbereidings sou die volgende behels: Die tref van die reëlings met die oog daarop om al vyf (5) onderhoude in die loop van een/twee dae af te handel gedurende Mei/Junie 2004, asook die tref van die

reëlings vir 'n geskikte plek en lokaal. Sou u bereid wees om my te help, vul asseblief die meegaande toestemmingsvorm in en stuur dit so gou as moontlik elektronies terug aan my. Indien moontlik, sou ek 'n antwoord van u waardeer nie later nie as 30 April 2004. 'n Honorarium van R500.00 sal aan u OF aan die persoon wat deur u aangewys word, betaal word so gou die onderhoude afgehandel is om my dank te betuig.

U hulp en samewerking sal hoog op prys gestel word. Ek wil u ook bedank vir die tyd wat u spandeer het om hierdie skrywe te lees. Ek sien daarna uit om van u te hoor.

Die uwe

**ME. D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENTENOMMER: 2000050142)**

**ASSISTENTDIREKTEUR: KANTOOR VIR INTERNASIONALE  
AANGELEENTHEDE**

**SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**PROMOTOR: PROF. H.R. (Driekie) HAY**

**(HIERDIE BRIEF IS OOK IN ENGELS BESKIKBAAR.)**

## Bylae B: Toestemmingsvorm

Datum:

Vul asseblief meegaande vorm met betrekking tot die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude in. Hierdie onderhoude is geskeduleer om plaas te vind gedurende Mei/Junie 2004. Dui asseblief die gepaste antwoord aan:

- Ek onderneem om te help met die reëlings vir die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude. JA/NEE
- Ek kan u ongelukkig nie help nie, maar ek onderneem om u te voorsien van die besonderhede van 'n verteenwoordiger/plaasvervanger wat al die voorbereidings soos deur u versoek, sal tref. JA/NEE
- Ek neem kennis van die feit dat 'n honorarium van R500.00 aan my OF aan my plaasvervanger betaal sal word wanneer die onderhoude afgehandel is. JA/NEE

My besonderhede/die besonderhede van die persoon wat u sal help, is as volg:

Titel: \_\_\_\_\_

Van: \_\_\_\_\_

Volle name: \_\_\_\_\_

Posadres: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

E-posadres: \_\_\_\_\_

Telefoonnommer: \_\_\_\_\_

Selnommer: \_\_\_\_\_

Handtekening: \_\_\_\_\_

Stuur hierdie vorm asseblief elektronies terug aan my op of voor **30 April 2004**. My volle besonderhede is as volg:

E-posadres: [dvghensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvghensen@tfs.ac.za)

Telefoonnommer: (051) 5073837

Selnommer: 0829261899

By voorbaat dankie vir u vriendelike aandag en samewerking, asook die tyd wat u spandeer het om hierdie vorm in te vul.

Die uwe

**ME. D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENTENOMMER: 2000050142)**

**ASSISTENTDIREKTEUR: KANTOOR VIR INTERNASIONALE  
AANGELEENTHEDE**

**SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**(HIERDIE VORM IS OOK IN ENGELS BESKIKBAAR.)**

## Bylae C: Brief aan persone met wie onderhoude gevoer is

Datum:

Naam van die persoon met wie onderhoud gevoer word:

Adres:

Geagte Kollega/Heer/Dame

**Versoek om deel te neem aan 'n Ph.D.-studie met die titel: "A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION"**

Ek beklee tans die pos van Assistentdirekteur: Kantoor vir Internasionale Aangeleenthede aan die Sentrale Universiteit vir Tegnologie, Vrystaat. My hoof funksies hou verband met die titel van my navorsingsprojek wat ek skryf met die oog daarop om die Ph.D.-graad in Hoëronderwysstudies aan die Universiteit van die Vrystaat te behaal (Studentenommer: 2000050142). My promotor is Prof. H.R. (Driekie) Hay.

My navorsing fokus hoofsaaklik op die dilemmas van middelbestuurders in die administratiewe kader van hoëronderwysinstellings. Soos ons almal teen hierdie tyd weet, is die hoëronderwysomgewing uiters wispelturig. Daar word ook van instellings verwag om meer op kliënte gefokus te wees en om uitstaande diens te verskaf wat soortgelyk is aan dié wat in die korporatiewe wêreld gelewer word. Hoëronderwysinstellings is egter nie bekend daarvoor dat hulle bevredigende vlakke van diens aan hul interne en eksterne kliënte lewer nie. Dus word "nuwe bestuurskulture" benodig. Middelbestuur in die



besonder is 'n gebied waar 'n intense behoefte bestaan aan die bou van bestuurskapasiteit om prestasie in hoër onderwys te verbeter. Dit is dus van kardinale belang vir middelbestuur om bemagtig te word en te bly wat betref die nastrewe van die doelwitte van hul instellings.

Die oorhoofse doelstelling van my studie is om 'n model te skep vir die ontwikkeling van middelbestuur in administratiewe poste aan hoëronderwysinstellings met die oog daarop om hul dienste en kliëntediens te bevorder. Hierdie model mag lei tot die bemagtiging van middelbestuurders om kwaliteitsdienste te lewer, wat ook hul mededingende voordeel kan verhoog.

U bydrae is van kardinale belang in 'n poging om 'n oplossing te vind vir die probleem, naamlik die ontwikkeling van hierdie model om middelbestuur in staat te stel om hul potensiaal te ontwikkel en te gebruik in ooreenstemming met die doelwitte van hul hoëronderwysinstellings. U ondervinding as 'n middelbestuurder sal aansienlik bydra tot die ontwikkeling van die model. Die waarde en relevansie kan slegs verhoog word deur die bydrae van middelbestuurders.

Die navorsingsmetodes wat in die studie gebruik gaan word, is in die eerste plek 'n deeglike literatuurstudie (wat reeds afgehandel is). Dit sal in die tweede plek gevolg word deur semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude. Die onderhoude sal hoofsaaklik uit oop vrae bestaan en sal dus hoofsaaklik kwalitatief van aard wees. Ek beplan om self die onderhoude - wat nie langer as ongeveer 60 minute behoort te duur nie - waar te neem.

Aangesien u deskundige samewerking so belangrik is vir die voltooiing van hierdie projek, vertrou ek dat u die tyd in u besige skedule sal vind om aan hierdie studie deel te neem. Indien u enige navrae het, moenie huiwer om my te kontak nie. My besonderhede is as volg:

Telefoonnommer: (051) 5073837 / 0829261899

E-posadres: [dvgensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvgensen@tfs.ac.za)

Die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is geskeduleer om **gedurende Mei/Junie 2004** te geskied. Indien u bereid sou wees om deel te neem, vul asseblief die meegaande toestemmingsvorm in en stuur dit so gou as moontlik elektronies terug aan my.

Baie dankie vir u vriendelike aandag en die tyd wat u spandeer het om hierdie skrywe te lees. Ek hoop van harte dat u in staat sal wees om my te help en ek sien daarna uit om van u te hoor.

Die uwe

**ME. D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENTENOMMER: 2000050142)**

**SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**PROMOTOR: PROF. H.R. (Driekie) HAY**

**(HIERDIE BRIEF IS OOK IN ENGELS BESIKKBAAR.)**

## Bylae D: Toestemmingsvorm

Datum:

Hiermee onderneem ek, die ondergetekende, om deel te neem aan die **semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude** wat geskeduleer is om plaas te vind **gedurende Mei/Junie 2004**. My volle besonderhede is as volg:

Titel: \_\_\_\_\_

Van: \_\_\_\_\_

Volle name: \_\_\_\_\_

Posbenaming: \_\_\_\_\_

Eenheid/Afdeling: \_\_\_\_\_

Posadres: \_\_\_\_\_

E-posadres: \_\_\_\_\_

Telefoonnommer: \_\_\_\_\_

Selnommer: \_\_\_\_\_

Handtekening: \_\_\_\_\_

My volle besonderhede is as volg:

E-posadres: [dvghensen@tfs.ac.za](mailto:dvghensen@tfs.ac.za)

Telefoonnommer: (051) 5073837

Selnommer: 0829261899

Ek wil u verseker dat die inligting op 'n hoogs vertroulike wyse hanteer sal word en dat daar geen verwysing na enige name sal wees nie. By voorbaat dankie vir u vriendelike samewerking.

Die uwe

**ME. D. VAN GENSEN**

**(STUDENTENOMMER: 2000050142)**

**ASSISTENTDIREKTEUR:           KANTOOR           VIR           INTERNASIONALE  
AANGELEENTHEDE**

**SENTRALE UNIVERSITEIT VIR TEGNOLOGIE, VRYSTAAT**

**BLOEMFONTEIN**

**9301**

**(HIERDIE VORM IS OOK IN ENGELS BESKIKBAAR.)**

## Bylae E: Onderhoudsgids

### "A SERVICE-ORIENTATED MODEL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NON-ACADEMIC MIDDLE MANAGERS IN SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION"

Die doel van die semi-gestruktureerde onderhoude is om 'n model te skep vir die ontwikkeling van middelbestuur in administratiewe poste aan hoërondewysinstellings met die oog daarop om hul dienste en kliëntediens te bevorder. Dit sal geskied deur middel van die verkryging van die deskundige menings van middelbestuurders (dit wil sê bestuurders wat 'n brug vorm tussen senior bestuur/topbestuur en die werknemers) in administratiewe posisies in die volgende afdelings/eenhede: Menslike Hulpbronne; Studentedienste/Administrasie; Bemarking; Eksamens; Finansies; Sentrale/Algemene Administrasie; Inligtings- en Kommunikasietegnologie (IKT); Inligtingsbestuur; Biblioteek- en Inligtingsdienste; Projekte en Instandhouding; asook Gehalteversekering.

#### ONDERHOUDSGIDS

1. Bestaan daar 'n beleid vir die ontwikkeling van bestuurders binne u instelling?
2. Speel die Vaardigheidsontwikkelingstrategie ("Skills Development Strategy") enige rol in hierdie verband?
- 3.1 Plaas u instelling 'n hoë prioriteit op bestuursontwikkeling deur genoegsame geleenthede tot ontwikkeling te skep?
- 3.2 Indien "Ja", wat is die fokus/aard van die ontwikkeling?

4. Word bestuursontwikkeling aan u instelling geselekteer op die basis van funksie (bv. administratiewe personeel) en vlak (bv. middelbestuur) en dan daarvolgens gediversifiseer, d.w.s. afgewissel of gewysig?
- 5.1 Word daar van alle nuut aangestelde middelbestuurders in administratiewe betrekkinge verwag om 'n formele induksieprogram in die relevante bestuursarea te ondergaan?
- 5.2 Verwag u instelling dat middelbestuurders voortdurend professionele ontwikkeling moet ondergaan?
6. Is die ontwikkeling gekoppel aan prestasie-evaluering, m.a.w. in lyn met ander institusionele doelwitte?
7. Hoe waardevol het u die ontwikkelingsaktiwiteite ter ondersteuning van u bestuursprestasie gevind?
- 8.1 Watter uitwerking het akademiese werk en beleide/ontwikkeling op die werk van die middelvlakbestuurders?
- 8.2 Hoe beïnvloed die skeiding ("divide") tussen administratiewe en akademiese personeel u werk?
- 9.1 Hoë kwaliteit middelbestuur in die administratiewe kader in hoëronderrysinstellings benodig veelvuldige bekwaamhede en vaardighede, nie alleen om middelbestuurders toe te rus om in hul onmiddellike behoeftes te voorsien nie, maar ook om hulle op toekomstige veranderinge voor te berei. Noem die sleutelbekwaamhede en vaardighede wat u as essensieel en van kardinale belang beskou om effektief binne u middelbestuursrol te funksioneer.
- 9.2 Wat beskou u as hindernisse in die bereiking van bogenoemde effektiwiteit?

- 9.3 Wat beskou u as die drie tot vyf mees kritieke of belangrikste uitdagings waarmee middelbestuurders in administratiewe poste in hoër onderwys tans te kampe het?
- 10.1 Watter dilemmas en probleme staar u tans in die gesig in die uitvoering van u taak as middelbestuurder?
- 10.2 Watter spesifieke stappe moet geneem word om die dilemmas/probleme wat u geïdentifiseer het, aan te spreek?
11. Wat is u mening aangaande 'n geformaliseerde kursus in middelbestuursontwikkeling wat 'n erkende kwalifikasie tot gevolg sal hê?
12. Wat sou u as uiters belangrik in 'n model vir middelbestuursontwikkeling in administratiewe poste beskou?
13. Watter eienskappe, vaardighede en kennis behoort in so 'n model ontwikkel te word?

(HIERDIE ONDERHOUDSGIDS VIR SEMI-GESTRUKTUREERDE ONDERHOUDE IS OOK IN ENGELS BESKIKBAAR.)

