A STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MERGED AND INCORPORATED SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Jacobus Nicolaas Redelinghuys, ID no. 6709095176087, hereby declare that this doctoral thesis, A staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions, is my own independent work and that all the sources used and quoted have been acknowledged by means of complete references. This thesis has not been submitted by me previously to any other higher education institution in fulfilment of requirements for the attainment of any other qualification. I also disclaim the copyright of this thesis in favour of the University of the Free State.

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J.N. REDELINGHUYS   **DATE**

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SOLI DEO GLORIA

LISTS OF ACRONYMS/ ABBREVIATIONS

ANC	-	African National Congress
ANU	-	Australian National University
AUC	-	Australian Universities' Commission
CAE	-	Colleges of Advanced Education
CCERSA	-	The Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa
CHE	-	Council on Higher Education
COLISA	-	The Consortium of Open Learning Institutions in South Africa
DoE	-	Department of Education
EFTSU	-	Equivalent Full-time Student Units
esATI	-	Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions
ESHEA	-	Eastern Cape Higher Education Association
FET	-	Further Education and Training
FOTIM	-	Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis
FSDoE	-	Free State Department of Education
HAI	-	Historic Advantaged Institutions
HBO	-	Dutch Higher Vocational Education Sector
HBUs	-	Historic Black Universities
HDI	-	Historic Disadvantaged Institutions
HEDCOM	-	Heads of Education Department Ministers
HEI	-	Higher Education Institutions
HEQC	-	Higher Education Quality Committee
HET	-	Higher Education and Training
HWUs	-	Historic White Universities
MBA	-	Masters of Business Administration
MEDUNSA	-	Medical University of South Africa
NAP	-	New Academic Policy
NCHE	-	National Commission on Higher Education
NEPI	-	National Education Policy Investigation
NQF	-	National Qualifications Framework
NWG	-	National Working Group
PDE	-	Provincial Departments of Education
PSCBC	-	Public Service Coordinating Bargaining Council
RSA	-	Republic of South Africa
SADTU	-	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
SAQA	-	South African Qualifications Authority
STC	-	Task-reallocation and Concentration
SWOT	-	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
TAFE	-	Technical and Further Education Institutions
TBVC	-	Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei
TC	-	Transitional Committee
TCE	-	Thaba 'Nchu College of Education
TSA	-	Technikon South Africa

UNISA	-	University of South Africa
UTEC	-	The University Technikon Collaboration
VU	-	Vista University
VUDEC	-	Vista University Distance Education Campus

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ABSTRACT

KEY WORDS: **Merger, incorporation, university, technikon, higher education, staff, transformation, development, programme, psychological**

Mergers and incorporations in higher education institutions are a world-wide phenomenon. The reasons why higher education institutions merge are not different from those of companies in the corporate sector, however, the initiators of the mergers/incorporations differs in the case of higher education institutions, because it is usually the government. When higher education institutions merge/incorporate, these institutions undergo major transformation. This transformation may include changes in the physical environment and resources, the location of the higher education institution, the administrative system of the higher education institution, its support structure, student and staff composition and as well as academic programmes.

The South African higher education sector had to transform because it was characterised by fragmentation as a result of the previous political dispensation. The result was that the South African higher education sector consisted of 21 universities, 15 technikons and 96 colleges of education and was characterised by racial and gender inequalities. After the first democratic election of 1994, South African government departments became more integrated and started to function as a coordinated system. The South African higher education system started its transformation process with the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) by presidential proclamation. The central proposal of the NCHE is that higher education in South Africa must be conceptualised, planned, governed and funded as a single, coordinated system.

The change proposed by the NCHE is disruptive and traumatic, especially for people involved in the changing process. When mergers/incorporations occur, the corporations or identified higher education institutions are unaware of the impact of the merger/incorporation on staff. Staff may experience feelings of shock, denial, fear,

anger, sadness and blame during the initial phases of the merger/incorporation. Staff may also lose a sense of loyalty towards the institution.

This study addresses the problems staff experiences during a merger/incorporation process with a literature review on the history and transformation of South African higher education sector, international experiences of mergers and theoretical perspectives on mergers. It continues by describing how staff perceives a merger. The second stage of the study provides an empirical investigation on how staff perceives mergers/incorporations. The investigation focuses on staff and management, especially the interaction and communication between staff and management regarding the merger/incorporation. It concludes with the development of a staff developmental programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions.

One of the main proposals of the programme is the appointment of an independent merger/incorporation facilitator, who would be without bias towards any of the higher education institutions. This programme is also characterised by identifying staff and management needs during a merger/incorporation, for example:

- the identification of management and staff needs;
- training for management and staff;
- psychological services for management and staff to assist with the merger/incorporation; and
- addressing cultural diversity from an institutional and staff perspective.

The merger/incorporation process is a changing process. In order for the changes to be as painless as possible, the programme proposes that continuous assessment should be built in throughout all the time-frames to ascertain if the merger/incorporation process, especially how the staff component is integrated, is going according to plan.

The study concludes with recommendations on how staff should be accommodated through the different stages of the merger/incorporation process. It reiterates the fact that

staff is one of, if not the most important, resource of any institution and should be given the attention it deserves.

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UITTREKSEL

Samesmeltings en samevoegings van hoëronderwysinstellings kom wêreldwyd voor. Die redes waarom hoëronderwysinstellings saamsmelt, verskil nie wesenlik van die samesmeltings wat in die korporatiewe wêreld plaasvind nie. Die verskil lê egter daarin dat, in die geval van hoëronderwysinstellings, 'n regering gewoonlik die inisieerder van die samesmelting is. Wanneer hoëronderwysinstellings saamgesmelt/saamgevoeg word, ondergaan hulle geweldige transformasie. Die transformasie wat voorkom tydens samesmeltings of samevoegings sluit in veranderinge van omgewing en hulpbronne, die fisiese ligging van die hoëronderwysinstelling, die administratiewe stelsel wat deur die hoëronderwysinstelling gebruik word, die hoëronderwysinstelling se onderhoudsisteme, studente en personeelsamestelling en akademiese programme.

Die Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwyssektor was gefragmenteer as gevolg van die vorige politieke bedeling. Die gevolg was dat die Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwyssektor bestaan het uit 21 universiteite, 15 technikons en 96 onderwyskolleges. Hierdie instellings was gekenmerk deur ras- en geslagsongelykhede. Na Suid-Afrika se eerste demokratiese verkiesing in 1994 het die verskillende regeringsdepartemente meer geïntegreerd geword. Die Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwyssektor het ook begin transformeer met die daarstelling van die Nasionale Kommissie vir Hoër Onderwys (NKH) deur presidentiële proklamasie. Die sentrale voorstel van die NKH is dat hoer Onderwys in Suid-Afrika gekonseptualiseerd, beplan, bestuur en befonds moet word as 'n enkele gekoördineerde stelsel.

Verandering kan traumaties wees, veral as mense betrokke is by die veranderingsproses. Wanneer samesmeltings of samevoegings plaasvind, is die maatskappye of hoëronderwysinstellings gewoonlik onbewus wat die impak van die verandering op hulle mag hê. Personeel kan gevoelens van skok, ontkenning, vrees, woede, hartseer en verwyt ervaar gedurende die eerste fase van die samesmelting of samevoeging. Personeel kan ook dislojaal voel teenoor hul instelling.

Hierdie studie fokus op die probleme wat personeel ervaar gedurende 'n samesmelting of samevoeging van hoëronderwysinstelllings. Dit word gedoen deur 'n literatuurstudie oor die geskiedenis en transformasie in Suid-Afrika se hoëronderwyssektor, internasionale ervarings rakende samesmeltings, asook teoretiese perspektiewe oor samesmeltings. Verder fokus die studie op hoe personeel dit ervaar wanneer hoëronderwysinstellings saamsmelt. Die tweede fase van die studie behels 'n empiriese ondersoek na personeel se ervaring van samesmeltings en samevoegings. Die ondersoek fokus op bestuur en personeel en spesifiek op die interaksie en kommunikasie wat daar bestaan tussen bestuur en personeel tydens 'n hoëronderwyssamesmelting of samevoeging. Die studie sluit af met die ontwikkeling van 'n personeelontwikkelingsprogram vir saamgesmelte en saamgevoegde Suid-Afrikaanse hoëronderwysinstellings.

Een van die hoofvoorstelle van die studie is die aanstelling van 'n onafhanklike fasiliteerder om vooroordeel uit te skakel wanneer twee of meer hoëronderwysinstellings saamgesmelt of saamgevoeg word. Van die program se kenmerke is ook om bestuur en personeel se behoeftes te bepaal tydens 'n samesmelting of samevoeging byvoorbeeld:

- die identifisering van bestuur en personeelbehoeftes;
- bestuur- en personeelopleiding;
- die beskikbaarstelling van sielkundige dienste aan bestuur en personeel vir leiding en terapie tydens die samesmelting en samevoeging; en
- die aanspreek van kulturele diversifiteit vanuit 'n institusionele en personeelperspektief.

Samesmeltings en samevoegings is 'n proses van verandering. Hierdie program stel voor dat deurlopende evaluering deel moet wees van 'n program om te bepaal of die samesmelting of samevoegingsproses, veral t.o.v. personeelintegrasie, volgens plan verloop.

Die studie sluit af met aanbevelings oor hoe personeel geakkommodeer moet word gedurende die verskillende fases van die samesmeltings of samevoegingsproses. Die

studie beklemtoon die feit dat personeel een van die belangrikste hulpbronne van enige hoëronderwysinstelling is en die aandag moet kry wat dit verdien.

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Chapter 1

Orientation

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Higher education world-wide is undergoing major transformation that in some cases is irrevocably changing their long-standing nature, images, notions and traditions. These changes are the result of a paradigm shift towards vocational training, a move to what Gibbons (1998:4-5) refers to as Mode 2 knowledge, bigger emphasis on accountability, quality and economies of scale. In Europe, the United States of America, the United Kingdom and Australia some of these changes have led to the merger/incorporation of various education institutions, as well as a change in the vision and mission of institutions.

In the South African context the transformation of universities is not only a result of global imperatives, but encompasses an added dimension, namely to break away from the legacy of apartheid. It could therefore be assumed that the transformation of higher education in South Africa has a dual purpose: transforming in order to stay relevant and competitive in the international arena, as well as living up to the expectations of those who were previously denied access to higher education. Change, however, is a painful process. On the one hand, various positive outcomes result from change, while, on the other hand, it implies a loss of what is familiar and historical.

The legacy of apartheid left South African higher education with a fragmented trinary system as the university, technikon and college sectors were divided along racial lines. One of the biggest challenges for years to come will be to restructure these different types of institutions into a coordinated system.

The merger and incorporation process of higher education institutions started when the National Commission on Higher Education in 1996 proposed a single coordinated higher education system (*vide* 5.2.3). Numerous draft merger and incorporation proposals followed on which the different higher education institutions commented.   The merger/incorporation proposals were concluded with the final announcement by the

Ministry of Education in the Higher Education Act (*vide* 5.2.3.1.7).   In order to understand these processes and the impact it have on staff, an attempt was made to deal with mergers/incorporations with sensitivity and scientific correctness as well as national and global needs and imperatives.

With the above introductory statements in mind, it seems important to give an outline of the background and problem statement to this study. This discussion gives impetus to the rationale for institutions to merge.

1.2   BACKGROUND AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Most South African higher education institutions are experiencing severe financial constraints due to declining state subsidies as well as declining student enrolment figures. In addition, it is argued that decades' lack of visionary planning, non-innovative strategic fiscal policies (both at institutional and national level), unrealistic enrolment projections and the absence of cooperation between institutions are ultimately paralysing the future of many South African higher education institutions and the system as a whole (NCHE 1996:30).

While several institutions are finding it hard to keep their doors open, academic staff fears that they might be rationalised within the year(s) to come. In an attempt to survive, universities reduce costs by cutting down on the number of faculties, placing moratoriums on overtime pay, attendance at conferences, new appointments and new capital projects as well as redeploying personnel (Bot 1999:4). Although it is not possible to put forward only one explanation for this status quo, it should be stated that the expected and predicted massification of South African higher education has not occurred (*vide* 4.2.3.1). During April 2000 Minister Asmal announced that institutions would be classified according to the type of students they enrol and programmes they offer. Some institutions may lose some of their teaching and research functions. Eventually colleges of education were incorporated into universities (*vide* 5.2.2) and 21 universities and 15 technikons (NCHE 1996:29) are to merge/incorporate (*vide* 5.2.3.1.7).

The minister did not foresee the entire closing down of institutions, as such a decision might be politically incorrect and insensitive. He propose the merging/incorporation of existing higher education institutions at regional levels to reduce the effort of "all institutions trying to do the same thing" and to build academic and administrative capacity (RSA DoE 2001b:15).

Given the duplication of the previous higher education system in terms of physical and human infrastructure, the merging/incorporation of higher education institutions seems to be one viable route to go. At the beginning of 2001 only a few examples existed such as the Johannesburg College of Education and the University of the Witwatersrand, Pretoria College of Education and the University of Pretoria, the Technikons of North West, Northern Gauteng and Pretoria signing an agreement to work closer on issues such as teaching, research and development (Beeld, November 1999). The University of the Free State and the Bloemfontein College of Education were already sharing physical resources and were, for all practical reasons, already one higher education institution (South African Teachers' Union 2000:1).

The merging/incorporation of higher education institutions commenced at a moderate pace, because merging/incorporation is a rather thorny issue to deal with. It inevitably implies the down-sizing of staff. Apart from fears concerning retrenchments, various types of institutional changes, that require that all staff involved will have to make certain paradigm shifts, accompany merging. Merging, thus, implies multifaceted complexities and needs to be handled with sensitivity, careful consideration, participatory and consulting decision-making and thorough planning. Martin and Samels (1993:31) warn that it takes five years to make merging happen, and ten years for the wounds to heal.

To be able to understand the complexities of the South African higher education system better, it is necessary to describe the ineffectiveness of the previous higher education system. A brief overview is provided on universities and technikons and colleges of education (also referred to as teacher training colleges). What becomes clear from this discussion is that, in order to have an effective higher education system, government will

have to restructure this sector and also do in the most cost-effective way – partly for redressing the country's needs in terms of social reconstruction and development, but also for financial sustainability.

1.2.1 The ineffectiveness of the South African higher education system

The structure of South African higher education institutions was mainly shaped by the apartheid ideology, especially after the elections of 1948. The University Education Act of 1959 established *universities* along racial lines. The end result was 21 universities for South Africa, that did not focus on geographic location, but on race. This can be seen in the fact that two of South Africa's provinces, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, have no resident universities, while a province like the Eastern Cape has four resident universities (Rhodes, Fort Hare, Transkei and Port Elizabeth), and a satellite campus of Vista university (*vide* 4.2.1 & 4.2.2).

Some of these universities were established not because of need, but for separate education and training according to race. An example is the establishment of universities in the so-called independent homelands and self-governing areas.   This created a cumbersome and ineffective university sector, characterised by uneven distribution of resources, duplication of programmes and varied academic standards (*vide* 4.2.1 & 4.2.2).

An Advanced Technical Education Act, 1967 (Act No. 61 of 1967) was promulgated to establish colleges for advanced technical education. In 1978 the designation of the colleges changed to technikons (Jacobs 1996:67-68). *Technikons* were also established along racial lines. Of the 15 technikons five were for blacks, one for coloureds and one for indians. The remaining eight were for whites (NEPI 1992a:50-7). As one of the functions of technikons is to prepare people for the workforce (Van Wyk de Vries 1974:186) and in knowledge application (NCHE 1996:30), they should have a far greater enrolment than universities. The opposite is true, however. According to the Report of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE 1996:31) in 1995 technikons had 20,7% of the higher education enrolment, whereas universities had 43,7%. This creates

an inverted pyramid, which means that the enrolment figures for students are in inverse proportions to patterns in many other countries.

The *college of education* sector was broadly organised along ethnic lines and controlled by fifteen different ministers in terms of different acts (NEPI 1992b:5). The total number of colleges of education in South Africa was 96 (NEPI 1992a:33). In an area like the Northern Province, for example, there were at some stage 21 colleges (Nkonka 2000) which all produced teachers in 1991. This, inevitably, resulted in an oversupply of teachers, but at the same time an undersupply of other vocationally trained people, especially in the rural areas where colleges of education were located. Most of these colleges of education were for blacks.

In an attempt to rectify the past and to restructure the entire higher education system, numerous policy documents were published since 1994 by different task teams and government departments. The following section will focus on some of these documents.

1.2.2 National policies leading to the restructuring of South African higher education system

For the South African Government, the decision to transform the higher education sector of South Africa was the result of a long process. It all started with the Van Wyk de Vries Commission's report on universities way back in 1974.

One important statement made in this report is that more inter-institutional cooperation should be pursued. The reason for this was the steadily rising cost of sophisticated equipment and the dearth of highly specialised manpower. Is was also mentioned that a central library service should be established to serve all regional libraries (including those of black universities) (Van Wyk de Vries 1974:485-486). Few of the recommendations made after this investigation were implemented.

The National Commission on Higher Education was established by presidential proclamation in 1995. Its terms of reference were published in the South African Government Gazette (No 5460 of February 1995). One of its recommendations was to have one higher education system in South Africa that was to be conceptualised, planned, governed and funded as a single co-ordinated system (NCHE 1996:10). It was argued that the system in place could not meet these challenges. The NCHE (1996:9) proposed the incorporation of colleges of education, nursing and agriculture into universities and technikons. These proposals were endorsed by the Education White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997b:18-19), which focused on the transformation of higher education.

In January 2000, the Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, requested the Council on Higher Education to provide the Ministry of Education with proposals for the reshaping of the higher education system in South Africa (*vide* 5.2.3.1.3) (CHE 2000). After reviewing the Council on Higher Education's proposals, the Ministry of Education released the National Plan for Higher Education (*vide* 5.2.3.1.4) (RSA DoE 2001a). These proposals were not final and higher education institutions commented on it. After considering the various inputs, the Ministry of Education released a report called the Restructuring of the Higher Education System: Report of the National Working Group (*vide* 5.2.3.1.5) (RSA DoE 2002a). The Minister had to comment on the findings of the National Working Group and provided his comments in the document called: Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education (*vide* 5.2.3.1.6) (RSA DoE 2002a). This document resulted in the final merger/incorporation proposals promulgated in the Higher Education Act of 1997 (*vide* 5.2.3.1.7) (RSA 1997).

As with universities, the incorporation of colleges of education was guided by policy initiatives. One of the first important investigations into teacher supply and education was done in 1992 by the National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI 1992a & b). The main aims of this investigation were to:

- improve the overall quality of the South African teaching corps; and

- reconstruct the institutions of teacher education to enable them to leave behind the legacy of apartheid (NEPI 1992b:67).

Some of the recommendations in this report were the elimination of duplication of study programmes and the maximum use of existing facilities (NEPI 1992b:35). In a follow-up investigation the National Teachers' Education Audit (1995) provided alarming facts about teacher education in South Africa. It provided information and statistics on 281 institutions offering pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes in South Africa. These institutions enrolled 480 317 students in 1994, making teacher education the largest single field of study within higher education (NCHE 1996:147). One of the main findings of this investigation was that teacher education in South Africa was not on standard and that the quality of programmes varied alarmingly between institutions. Due to this findings, it was proposed that all teacher training should be done at universities to ensure uniform standards and training throughout teacher training in the country. This is currently happening, as most colleges' doors were closed at the end of 2000.

Although official documentation (*vide* 1.2.2) states that institutions would merge/incorporate, the position of staff was still unclear (RSA DoE of 2000). This created feelings of uncertainty and/or hope, especially amongst staff members who were not sufficiently qualified to lecture at a university (Thaba 'Nchu College of Education 2001). Besides, the function of a university and that of, for example a College of Education, differs vastly. According to the Van Wyk de Vries Report (1974:73-74) the functions of a university are:

- to advance teaching;
- to educate and mould the student;
- to prepare the student for a profession;
- to be a good citizen of the country; and
- to be active in a scientific manner (research).

According to the NEPI Report (1992b:67) the aims of teacher education are:

- to improve the overall quality of the South African teaching corps; and
- to reconstruct the institutions of teacher education to enable them to leave behind the legacy of apartheid.

A comparison of these two types of institutions clearly shows that a university is more academic and a college of education more practice-oriented in nature. The profiles of these two types of institutions are not the same. A university might argue that college staff is not 'qualified' to lecture at a university. This may result in 'organisational clashes' between colleges of education and universities.

The powers to incorporate, merge or close higher education institutions fall under the auspices of the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997:21-22). For the rationalisation of colleges of education to commence, a technical committee was set up by the Department of Education in September 1997. Its main aims were to investigate and prepare a background report identifying the implications and outlining and implementation strategy to facilitate the transfer of colleges of education from provincial to national jurisdiction (RSA DoE 1998:3). Their final report was called "The incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector – A Framework for Implementation" (RSA DoE 1998). By 1 January 2001, every college of education was incorporated into a university or its function had changed to that of a further education and training institution (*vide* 5.2.2.4).

The merger/incorporation of higher education institutions in South Africa will result in the moving, relocating, and maybe dismissing of staff working at these institutions. There might be a negative effect on staff, fearing they might lose their jobs as well as the financial implications of, for example, the relocation of a family. For some staff members it may be the end of a career and everything they worked for, hoped for and aspired for.

Hay, Fourie and Hay (2001) state that feelings of frustration, anxiety and loss are understandable. Perceptions of unfairness and symptoms of depression, stress, fear of change, loss of commitment, demoralisation, unwillingness to do anything beyond the required minimum, feelings of not being kept well informed and a general loss of confidence in oneself and in management co-exist. This is why an investigation of this nature is so important, relevant and necessary. Having said this, the research problems and questions for this study come to the fore.

1.3   RESEARCH PROBLEM

From the discussion so far it is evident that South African higher education institutions are facing mergers or incorporations. Merging, however, is complex and has implications for managers and all staff involved. In order to make the merging/incorporation process acceptable for all and a fluent process, it is extremely important to investigate staff's perceptions and identify staff needs for organisational development. The research will attempt to address the following research questions:

- What is the rationale for the mergers/incorporations of higher education in general (Chapter 2)?

- Which forces are urging the mergers/incorporations of higher education institutions nationally and internationally (Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5)?

- Which lessons can be learned from international experiences in mergers/incorporations (Chapter 3)?

- What will the impact of mergers/incorporations be on academic and administrative staff, as well as on the management of higher education institutions(Chapter 6)?

- What are the psychological experiences facing staff who will be merged/incorporated (Chapters 6 and 8)?

- How will a 'culture of belonging' to the new merged/incorporated higher education institution be created (Chapters 6, and 9)?

- On what type of staff development programmes should merged/incorporated higher education institutions embark (Chapter 9)?

1.4   AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The primary aim of this study is to develop a staff development programme for merged/incorporated South African higher education institutions.   The secondary objectives of the study are to:

- provide an extended literature review on the rationale, implications, pitfalls and challenges of merging/incorporating South African higher education institutions and to identify forces that are urging the merging/incorporation of higher education institutions nationally and internationally;

- ascertain lessons learned from international experiences in merging/incorporations (Chapter 3);

- determine the impact of merging on academic and administrative staff, as well as on management staff (Chapter 6); and

- discover the psychological experiences facing staff who will be merged/incorporated (Chapters 6 and 8).

In order to address the above research questions and to achieve the objectives set for this study, this investigation employed the following research design and methodology.

1.5   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Babbie (1998:18) explained broadly that in the research process we look for reality. It is therefore very important that scientists agree on what reality is. To find the reality of a specific topic or subject area, research should be conducted through a process of systematically collecting and logically analysing information for a specific purpose (McMillan & Schumacher 1989:8). Strydom (1998:3) states that research should always probe or test the reality of a specific system of knowledge. Babbie (1998:24-25) goes

further by stating that social scientific theory aims to find patterns of regularity in social life. The social scientists should thus determine these patterns through a process of data collection and data analysis.

Garbers (1996:181) describe two types of research. The first is *applied research* that is conduced with a view to applying the results to some or other practical problematic situation. The second type of research is described as *strategic* or *basic research* that serves as the basis for the solution of applied research problems. McMillan and Schumacher (1989:20) also identify a third type of research namely, *evaluation research*, which focuses on a particular practice at a given site. It evaluates the worth of a given project at that specific site.

This research project can be described as applied research, because, according to Macmillan and Schumacher (1989:19) applied research is concerned with the application and development of research-based knowledge about a given field of study. Gay (1981:8) reiterates this point, and elaborates by stating that applied research is conducted for the purpose of applying or testing theory and evaluating its usefulness in solving educational problems.

As mentioned in 1.4, the main aim of this research project is to assist the staff in the mergers/incorporation of higher education institutions in South Africa by developing a programme that will maximise the benefit of such an endeavour and minimise trauma for staff involved. To achieve this aim the researcher employed a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research approaches.

The insights gained during the literature study in combination with the perceptions of the South African role-players of merged/incorporated higher education institutions and the ethnographic observations led to the development of a staff developmental programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions.

This research project was undertaken from a phenomenological perspective, because, according to McMillan and Schumacher (1989:385), a phenomenological perspective provides an understanding of a concept, or the participants or affected role-players' views of their social realities, or perception of the merger/incorporation process.   A staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions was developed by means of systematic data collection and analysis, a comparative analysis, policy analysis, interviewing and observations (*vide* 7.7.4).   The possible outcome of such an indept investigation is a more profound understanding of merged/incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa and will provide suggestions for staff development during and after the merging/incorporation process.   It is evident that, for the purpose of this research, multiple techniques had to be used, for example, qualitative and quantitative approaches.   The combination of these approaches resulted in combining various research techniques, for example exploratory interviews and structured questionnaires (*vide* 7.7.4, 8.2.1 & 8.2.2).

The exploratory interviews were mainly used to develop ideas, and to try to understand how staff at higher education institutions feel about the mergers/incorporations of higher education institutions (*vide* 8.2.2).   Both closed and open or free response questions were used in the questionnaires.   The main aims of the questionnaires were to investigate management and staff's perception on communication during the mergers/incorporations, merger/incorporation negotiations, how the mergers/incorporations were managed and the psychological experiences of management and staff during the mergers/incorporations (*vide* 8.2.1).

The participants in the study comprised a sample of ten of the possible sixteen merging/incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa.   The questionnaires were sent to a coordinator who distributed the questionnaires amongst management and staff according to the positions held at that specific institution *(vide* 8.3).

The data were analysed and used together with the literature review to develop a staff development programme for merged or incorporated South African higher education

institutions (*vide* Chapter 9). Interviews and observations were mainly used for literature review purposes.

1.6   SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

It is hoped that the study will contribute to the improvement of South African higher education as it could

- explain/clarify the need/rationale for proposed merging/incorporation of various higher education institutions for all role-players involved;

- benefit merged/incorporated institutions to make the transitional phase smooth and supportive;

- increase innovation, integration and effectiveness in the higher education sector;

- empower staff to function in a new organisational culture by a staff development programme; and

- provide guidelines for future mergers/incorporations.

1.7   DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Education, as a field of study, has evolved throughout the years and centuries to encompass various part-disciplines. The study of mergers/incorporations of higher education institutions in South Africa falls within various fields within the education fraternity. The following discussion focuses on these part-disciplines of education.

1.7.1 Part-disciplines of education

The research project's focus comprises three main part-disciplines of education. These fields are higher education, comparative education and management of education and educational leadership. It is important for this study to understand and clarify these concepts.

1.7.1.1 Higher Education

Jaffe (Thelin & Yankovich 1987:57) states that for him there are four things all college campuses have in common: mystery, tradition, hope and a sense of limitless possibility. There is nothing wrong with his perception, but it does not state what higher education as a part-discipline of education entails.

Higher education as a field of study may be distinguished from general and further education in that it takes account of the totality of post-school education. Such a definition may include further education. The difference lies in that higher education includes research, teaching and post-graduate studies (Dressel & Mayhew 1974:2).

Dressel and Mayhew (1974:7) continue by stating that higher education appears to be a field of study – ill-defined at the parameters – that is potentially useful in understanding many phenomena and in preparing people for careers in higher education.

This research project emphasises the social and institutional spheres of higher education. On the one hand, how does staff perceive change involved in the merger/incorporation processes, and, on the other hand, how does the institution change because of the merger/incorporation?

In the past, the higher education sector in South Africa comprised universities, technikons and single-discipline vocational colleges (education, nursing and agriculture). Various terminologies were used to describe higher education, for example post-secondary education, tertiary education and post-school education. According to the NCHE (1996:86) the term 'higher education' traditionally referred to universities and technikons. Only these two institutional types were considered 'national responsibilities', possessing a considerable measure of institutional autonomy, whereas other institutions involved in post-school education fell under the jurisdiction of various national and/or provincial government departments.

1.7.1.2 Comparative Education

Comparative education as part-discipline of education seeks for the origin and building blocks of education in every country. It seeks different approaches in education in various countries, and compares it with one another (Barnard 1981:18-20). The rationale for comparative education is for international understanding, educational improvement or reform, either in one's own country or abroad, and/or for explanation of national variance (Altbach, Arnove & Kelly 1982:509).

The development of comparative education went through three identifiable stages. Noah and Eckstein (1998:15) describe these stages as each having a different motive for comparative study and each producing a different genre of work. The first or early stage is called the 'period of travelers' tales', when comparative education was prompted by simple curiosity. The second stage was a period of educational borrowing, when the desire to learn useful lessons from foreign practices was the major motivation. During the third stage, international educational cooperation was stressed in the interest of world harmony and mutual improvement among nations. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, two more stages have appeared, both concerned with seeking explanations for the wide variety of educational and social phenomena observed around the globe. During the first of these stages, an attempt was made to identify the forces and factors shaping national educational systems. The second, and the latest, may be termed the stage of social science explanation, which uses the empirical, quantitative methods of economics, political science, and sociology to clarify relationships between education and society (Noah & Eckstein 1998:15). It is important to note that, during the last stage, qualitative research methods may be applied successfully because, according to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001:65) the qualitative research paradigm seeks the facts and/or causes of social phenomena.

The field of comparative education could be defined in terms of its content – school/society relations, which could be studied using methodologies derived from history and the social sciences, including economics, political science, sociology, and anthropology (Altbach, Arnove & Kelly 1982:513). Noah and Eckstein (1998:19)

reiterate this point by stating that comparative education is part of a wider attempt to explain phenomena, first, within educational systems and institutions, and second, surrounding education, and linking it with its social environment.

Comparative education is always involved in inductive reasoning. Research workers cannot be content with ascertaining the existence of a dependency relationship; they must also define the extent and conditions of occurrence (Riavola 1986:262). In studying higher education institutions in this research project, comparative education seeks to explore what, how and why mergers/incorporations took place in different countries and in South Africa. It also compares the specific characteristics of each case where mergers/incorporations occurred with its social implications.

1.7.1.3 Management of Education

Effective management in both the public and private sectors is becoming increasingly important. Adestina (1990:7) states that the concern about effective and efficient management (in education) has been the result of fear of failure and the disillusionment about competence in the public service.

Management can be defined as the organisation and mobilisation of all human and material resources in a particular system for the achievement of identified objectives in the system (Adestina 1990:7). Bell and Bush (2002:3) describe educational management as having the tendency to include the notion of leadership. Management is the overarching concept within which leadership is subsumed. Both these terms imply an emphasis on vision, mission and purpose, coupled with a capacity to inspire others to work towards the achievement of these aims.

Higher education is no exception. In the past, there were deeply held convictions about management of higher education institutions from funding agencies like the state. A popular position was the following:

> *"Most of us believe that the great colleges and universities have been
> those that were the least managed"* (Atwell sited by Volkwein 1987:125).

Management in higher education is very important for the effective and efficient functioning of higher education as a sector and individual institutions. For the effective management of higher education institutions, Meek and Goedegebuure (1989:83) identified management tools, for example, strategic planning, quality assessment arrangement for both teaching and research, flexible academic salaries and, to a slightly lesser extent, performance indicators. During a merger/incorporation, these management tools will undergo change that has to be successfully managed by higher institutional leaders. To change these management tool has a tremendous impact on staff, but also on the management sector of a higher education institution.

In this research project the emphasis is on the human and physical aspects of higher education institutions. The human aspects represent the staff involved in the merger/incorporation of higher education institutions and the material resources represents the physical infrastructure and assets of the above-mentioned institutions.

1.8   RESEARCH PLAN

In order to study the mergers/incorporations of higher education in South Africa and to develop a staff development programme for the merged/incorporated institutions, the following plan was followed.

Chapter one is an overview of the study. It provides background information to the study and states the different problems that staff experience during a merger/incorporation. It also provides the aims and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a theoretical explanation of mergers and incorporations in general. It also provides descriptions of the various forms of mergers as well as the different types

of institutions that merge or incorporate, and the impact that mergers and incorporations have on these institutions.

International experiences of mergers are described in Chapter 3. Three countries are used as examples. These countries are Australia, the Netherlands and Norway. The information gained from the literature review is applied in Chapters 7, 8 and 9 for the construction of a staff development programme for merged or incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa.

The experience gained from other countries are used as a basis for mergers/incorporations in higher education for chapter 4 that focuses on the development of higher education in South Africa. It clearly depicts how higher education was fragmented along racial lines and also the inequalities that existed.

The fragmentation mentioned in chapter 4 reiterates that the South African higher education sector had to undergo transformation. Chapter 5 describes the transformation, and focuses on the mergers/incorporations of higher education institutions in South Africa.

This transformation has a tremendous impact on staff. Chapter 6 discusses this impact. Experience gained in the corporate sector is integrated in this chapter to provide a possible strategy to limit the impact that mergers/incorporations have on staff.

Chapter 7 describes how a qualitative approach, with quantitative research elements, is applied in the empirical research section of this study.

In chapter 8, specific attention is given to how the methods mentioned in chapter 7, are applied in the development of a staff developmental programme for merged/incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa . This chapter also provides the results of the empirical investigation of the study.

The staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions is described in Chapter 9. This chapter concludes with recommendations on how to minimise the impact of a merger/incorporation on staff.

1.9   CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a background to the research into a staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions. The staff developmental programme is a very important issue, because when a higher education institution merges/is incorporated, it has an impact on the staff of the specific institutions. These people should be managed in a humane and effective way, so that knowledge and skills should not be lost, on the one hand, and the morale of the affected staff should also be kept high, on the other hand.

When governments and managers manage mergers/incorporations, they are usually concerned about the stock price of the company that is merging, the accumulated physical resources, and the gained and/or lost profit because of the merger/incorporation. The same can be said about mergers/incorporations in higher education institutions. This study tries to highlight how important it is to accommodate, communicate and assess staff's perceptions during and after a merger/incorporation. It goes further by proposing a staff development programme to be used during and after the merger/incorporation for the main purpose of creating a pleasant and effective working environment where staff can be informed about their and their institution's future.

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Chapter 2

Theoretical perspectives on mergers and incorporations in higher education institutions

2.1   INTRODUCTION

Although mergers and incorporations have been occurring for a long time in the business sector it is a more recent trend in higher education.   According to Somers and Bird (1990:38) mergers appear to be a key element of corporate growth strategies in that they are viewed as a cost-effective means of acquiring new assets, products and markets. Skodvin (1999:1) states that, in higher education, there are demands for greater efficiency, higher quality, and reductions in public expenditure.   The objective is to create larger institutions, functioning more effectively.   Subsequently this increasingly resulted in mergers or closures of institutions of higher learning.

In the South African context, the White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997) promulgated a single, national co-ordinated higher education system.   The National Plan for Higher Education (2001) followed and outlined the framework and mechanisms for implementing and realising the policy goals of the White Paper.   This was followed by the appointment of the National Working Group on higher education (NWG) by the Minister of Education in 2002 for the restructuring of the higher education system in South Africa.   One of the reasons for restructuring was the structural inefficiency within the higher education system (RSA 2002a:2).   In order to achieve above-mentioned proposals, it was announced by means of legislature (Higher Education Act No, 101 of 1997) that higher education institutions had to merge or incorporate.

There are various notions and possibilities involved in the merging or incorporation of institutions, for example cooperation between institutions, voluntary mergers, involuntary mergers, or incorporation of one institution by another.   Mergers also occur between different types of institutions, for example between technikons and universities and teaching training institutions/colleges into universities (e.g. faculties of education). Different authors describe these processes, for example Harman (1986, 1988, 1999, 2000, 2001) for the Australian context, and Goedegebuure (1989, 1992) for the European context.

Theoretical perspectives, for example merger, incorporation, amalgamation and combination for the joining of institutions are discussed. What does this terminology mean? Two of the terms, i.e. merger and incorporation, cannot be used as synonyms. In the South African perspective, for example, a merger between two institutions gives institutions equal status, whereas in an incorporation, one institution is "absorbed" by another institution, where the absorbed institution is seen as the junior partner (*vide* 2.2). It is thus very important to define the different terms used in this study. The chapter continues by describing different types of mergers used in the higher education sector, as well as the numerous benefits and problems of a merging process.

Any merger, successful or not, will go through various phases (e.g. the planning of the merger, the negotiations and the implementation of the merger). Lastly, the post-merger consolidation phase has to take place (Martin & Samels 1993:33-34). This phase is of vital importance, because it comprises the consolidation of the new institutions and also the building of a new institutional culture. During this phase staff needs to be supported, developed and consolidated for their own benefit, as well as for the benefit of the new, merged institution.

These descriptions create the theoretical building blocks for the effect that mergers and incorporations have on staff. The theoretical perspectives also create background information on mergers and incorporations in the creation of a staff development programme.

2.2   CREATING A WORKABLE DEFINITION

Different words are usually used to describe the "jointing" of institutions. The most frequently used words are incorporation, amalgamation, merger and combination. However similar they may seem, these words have different meanings for different people. Words, including the words mentioned above, have various nuanced differences and should be used sensitively. The main reason may be that words create perceptions and emotions. The outcome is that people react either in a positive or negative way; in

the case of the study, positive or negative towards a merger. The following discussion clarifies the differences between incorporations, amalgamations, mergers and combinations.

2.2.1 Incorporation

The term incorporation is the term most often used in policy documents and initiatives directed at the transformation of South African higher education. The National Commission on Higher Education (1996:82) stated that colleges of education, for example, should be incorporated into higher education institutions. The term "incorporation" may be seen as a synonym of acquisition or take over, which, according to Harman (2000:346) and Goedegebuure (1992:23) implies that one participating institution continues largely unaffected, with the other institution(s) being absorbed. Given the hard realities of the fragmented South African higher education system this seems most applicable in cases where a Historic Advantaged Institution (HAI) has to incorporate a Historic Disadvantaged Institution (HDI). The incorporation of such institutions has emotive reactions and initially contributes to resistance towards merging initiatives.

2.2.2 Amalgamation

In defining amalgamation, The Shortened Oxford English Dictionary (1973 Volume I:55) (recognised as an outstanding dictionary that is still popular today) describes amalgamation as "to unite together" so as to form a homogeneous or harmonious whole. Harman (1988:2) describes amalgamation in higher education as the development of a single structure of support services, consolidation of academic departments, the establishment of a single senior academic council or board, and a new governing body becoming the employing authority for all staff involved. Harman and Robertson-Cuninghame (1995:135) describe amalgamation in higher education in terms of strategic actions (that) organisations adopt in coping in a competitive and often hostile environment. They further explain that all organisational action is first and foremost

directed at securing institutional survival. Amalgamation, either hostile or co-operative, usually results in a total new institution with one of the institutions losing, to a great extent, its identity. It thus seems if amalgamation is not fundamentally underpinned by a win-win situation, but that one of the partners (usually the stronger one) is in a better and leading situation.

2.2.3 Merger

A merger is described as the combination or consolidation of one institution with another (The Shortened Oxford English Dictionary 1973 Volume II:1310). For Harman (1999:4) merging is a combination of two or more and separate institutions into a single governing body and single chief executive body, and whereby all assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single (new) institution. With merging, some characteristics of the original institutions may still remain intact, for example if the merged institution has a federal structure there may be an agreement that existing academic boards and governing bodies might continue, at least for a period (Harman 1999:5). Goedegebuure (1992:15) is in concord with Harman and Robertson-Cuningham's (1995:135) definition of a merger. He (Goedegebuure) states that one of the key elements of a merger is the fact that one of the institutions, usually the smaller or weaker one, ceases to exist and together they form a new organisational entity. These authors thus use the terms amalgamation and merger as synonyms. Goedegebuure (1992:16) adds an additional feature to mergers by describing and adopting a pragmatic definition of a merger:

> *A merger in higher education is the combination of two or more separate institutions into a single new organisational entity, in which control rests with a single governmental body and a single chief executive body, and whereby all assets, liabilities, and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single new institution.*[1]

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[1] Merger, amalgamation and combination are treated as synonyms according to Goedegebuure (1995:16) and Harman (2001).

A merger seems a proper description for two or more institutions that come together in an equal relationship. The merged institutions decide on equal basis what the mission and vision of the new institution will be.

2.2.4 Combination

Combination means the action of combining two or more separate things/units into a whole (The Shortened Oxford English Dictionary 1973:Volume I:372). When looking at merging and the combining of institutions in higher education the above-mentioned definition suggests that combination and merging refer to the "end result" after negotiating a settlement.

It must be stated that the concepts of incorporation, amalgamation, merger and combination are so interlinked that various authors often interpret them differently, without knowing the more subtle differences in possible interpretations. More often these concepts are not used correctly, for example, merger is used when one institution is absorbed by the other. The merger of the University of the North's Qwa Qwa campus with the University of the Free State may be used as an example. It is not a merger in the true sense, because the identity of the Qwa Qwa campus will seize to exist. The same can be said about the incorporation of Vista University (Bloemfontein Campus) into the University of the Free State according to the Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997 (RSA 1997). The staff at Qwa Qwa campus was tremendously affected, while staff at the University of the Free State was not even informed about the "merging" process (*vide* Chapter 7).

For the purpose of this study the terms merger and incorporation will be used interchangeably. The reason is that they describe the two different "joining" processes for the South African higher education institutions.

2.3   TYPES OF MERGERS OR INCORPORATIONS

A merger describes the action (*vide* 2.2.3, 2.4) when two or more institutions are combined. According to Goedegebuure (1992:15) the most extreme form of a merger will be when the old institution ceases to exist. However, a distinction should be made between various types of mergers. It seems as if differences do exist between these types or mergers. Harman (1988:3) describes various forms of mergers and the differences between these mergers. He categorises the different types of mergers in an organisational linkage continuum, depicted in table 2.1.

Table 2.1   Organisation linkage continuum (Harman 1988:3)

Voluntary cooperative agreement	Formalised consortium	Federation	Amalgamation to form a new unitary organisation
COOPERATION	COORDINATION		UNITARY STRUCTURE
	Organisation linkage continuum		
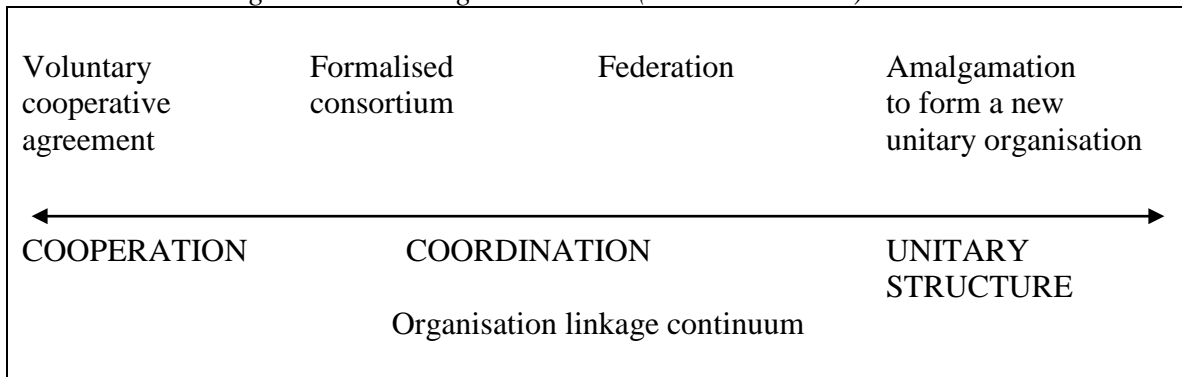
Harman (1988:3) describes a voluntary merger(s) as when two or more institutions initiate a merger themselves, not leading necessarily to a merger as a result. Some institutions may decide to cooperate only in certain projects on a voluntary basis. This can also be described as a voluntary cooperative agreement. This categorisation is still flawed because few mergers are entirely voluntary. There always is, according to Harman (1988:3) and Helepi (2001:4), an external force driving the merger. The merging institutions are always engaged in offensive or defensive actions in response to environmental influences, ranging from specific government initiatives to the impact of competitive market conditions. Skodvin (1999:3) and Harman (1986:570; 1988:3) clearly outline the differences between voluntary and involuntary mergers. In voluntary mergers two or more institutions start negotiating by themselves without any external

pressure, such as government. With involuntary mergers government or another external party initiates and forces the merger.

In the second place a formalised consortium may be formed. This type of consortium usually provides a common service to participating institutions such as health services, student counselling and library cataloguing (Harman 1988:3). Such a merger is more a cooperation between institutions for the benefit of all the participants. The example given by Martin and Samels (1993:31) describes how various institutions in the United States of America merged to reduce the extreme financial difficulties experienced by some. Martin and Samels (1993:31) also describe how some institutions consolidated for a more economical and less duplicative operation. The consortium's formation thus is to the benefit of all participating institutions and based on an agreement between these institutions. With acquisitions or incorporations one of the participating institutions absorbs the other(s) and continues largely unaffected, while in a consolidation (merger), the merger results in the formation of a completely new institution (Goedegebuure 1989:76; Harman 1988:4). For political reasons, proposed acquisitions are sometimes presented publicly as consolidations, with the emphasis on equal partners coming together (Strydom 1999:14).

The third type of organisational arrangement is the forming of a federation. In the case of a federation, the responsibility and authority of the merging institutions are divided between participating institutions. This type of arrangement may take a number of forms, but the most common pattern is the imposition of a super governing body and central administration. With a federal structure, power and responsibilities at both individual institutional level and central level are usually clearly specified (Harman 1988:3). An example of a federated structure is the University of London and the Claremont College in Southern California (Harman 1999:5). These institutions have certain shared responsibilities, as well as a certain amount of autonomy or independence. Botha (2001:277) states that the federal structure in mergers can take a variety of forms, the two main variants being centralised powers and functions that are specified, while the decentralised powers and functions remain with the individual members of the federation.

Another form of a federal structure is where devolved powers and functions are specified, while everything else is centralised. Lee and Bowen (1971:68) describes a consolidated system as the result "from the aggregation under a new central administration and governing board of previously existing campuses". This description can still be used today.

In the last instance an institutional merger takes place when the old establishments are closed and a new unitary organisation is formed. This scenario is the most extreme form of merger (Harman 1988:3). Harman and Robertson-Cuninghame (1995:137) also refer to this extreme form of a merger as flagship systems. In these systems the central campus has a strong influence on the daily management of other campuses. Central administrative functions are conducted at the main campus, and the values of the main campus concerning scholarship, research and teaching permeate all associated campuses. The consolidated model treats each campus equal to the others. Botha (2001:277) describes this type of merger as having a unitary structure. She states that a single identity would be essential in such a merger.

Cognisance should be taken that mergers can also occur between different types of institutions, as examples of universities and colleges of education that merged, exist. This creates problems, because the two merging institutions do not have the same objectives or institutional cultures, nor do they share the same vision and mission. The following section describes various merger combinations.

2.3.1 Within-sector versus cross-sectorial mergers

Within-sector mergers refer to mergers between institutions located in the same sector of the higher education system, for example university-university or college-college, while cross-sectorial mergers take place between institutions located within different sectors of the system, like a university-college merger (Goedegebuure 1989:76). This merger is also referred to as a vertical merger or a horizontal merger. A vertical merger is characterised by institutions that operate in similar academic fields and are oriented

towards a different type of product, while a horizontal merger is when there is a merger between institutions that operate in similar academic fields and are oriented towards similar types of products (Goedegebuure 1992:24). Strydom (1999:14-15) states that cross-sectorial mergers have special problems, such as different missions and roles, and are funded on different bases. These mergers also operate in different academic fields (Goedegebuure 1992:24). In the South African context a few cross-sectorial mergers already took place. An example is the Bloemfontein College of Education with the University of the Free State, and the Thaba 'Nchu College of Education with Vista University (Bloemfontein campus) (*vide* 5.2.2.3).

2.3.2 Overlapping versus complementary mergers

In overlapping mergers, the academic fields or curricula of the merged institutions are similar, while in complementary mergers, like the term implies, institutions with different interests form a new organisational entity (Goedegebuure 1989:76). These institutions also complement each other. To use the language of the corporate sector, the first can be referred to as a horizontal merger and the second as a vertical merger. In some respects, horizontal mergers can be more difficult to achieve since they usually involve integration of academic departments and programmes. Vertical mergers pose considerable problems in bringing together institutions with different disciplinary cultures and traditions (Strydom 1999:15; Goedegebuure 1992:18).

2.3.3 Two- versus multi-institutional mergers

This distinction refers to the number of institutions involved in the merger. Goedegebuure (1992:73) describes Harman's view on multi-institutional mergers. He describes the difficulties involved in merging institutions with distinctively different missions, values, and teaching and administrative styles. With some multi-institutional mergers, government agencies provided special assistance to bring participating institutions together and provide a framework for negotiations (Strydom 1999:1; Goedegebuure 1989:76). This merger may also be described as a diversified merger.

It is important to note that the various types of mergers will differ from country to country and may also depend on the various needs of that specific country. The different types of mergers each has its own phases. The following section describes the different phases of a merger process.

2.4   PHASES IN MERGERS AND INCORPORATIONS

Mergers and incorporations are a process and not an event. It is also a time consuming process that, according to Skodvin (1999:8), will result in tension between the role-players involved, because of the risk, uncertainty, negotiations, leadership and planning involved.

A merger also differs from institution to institution. Each institution has its own mission and vision. In combining the different missions and visions, problems will inevitably arose and such problems have to be resolved in one way or the other.

The following process seems to be most representative of further and higher education mergers throughout the world. To describe the merger process, Fielden and Markham (1997:4) identify the following three phases as typical in mergers:

- Pre-merger evaluation where each institution evaluates itself and the other institution to see if a merger is possible.
- Determining the length of the process: A realistic timeframe is drafted to indicate when and what should happen.
- Pre-merger collaboration: It implies that institutions have been collaborating before a decision is made to merge. Findings indicate that pre-merger collaboration does not guarantee a successful merger.

These phases indicate that more focus should be placed on the pre-merger strategy or merger planning strategy. It does not include the actual merger process and the

evaluation of the process thereafter. Martin and Samels (1993:33-34) define the typical phases in a merger somewhat differently. They suggest a process that includes a planning/evaluation phase before the actual merger starts. The actual merging process and a post-merger phase follow this. The steps are described as follows:

- Institutional self-assessment: Both partners should begin with a rigorous self-assessment process, focusing on both internal strengths and weaknesses, and internal ambitions and external enrolment trends, evolving conditions and competitive challenges.

- Pre-merger strategic planning: Institutions may now list institutions that may serve as merger partners. During this phase a merger task force is comprised, composed of trustees, members of faculties, administrators, students and alumni of the two (or more) prospective merger campuses. This task force has to propose an acceptable structure for both the new post-merger institution and an action plan for the merging process.

- Pre-merger negotiations: This is when the real negotiations among all the relevant stakeholders take place. The future of the 'new' institution is then decided.

- Merger implementation: The decisions taken in the above step will now be implemented by various subcommittees of the merger task force, which will normally struggle to reach agreements on various aspects (e.g. the combined mission and vision, curriculum, staffing, rank and promotions, etc.).

- Post-merger consolidation and community building: The real consolidation and community morale building process usually takes three to five years.

Fielden and Markham's (1997:4) phases are not descriptive enough, although they might have been functional in that particular context. An important consideration is that any merger theory should be adapted to suit the specific needs of a particular institution. The account of Martin and Samels (1993:33-34), though, is more descriptive. Some of the reasons are that it includes a pre-merger strategic planning phase that Fielden and Markham (1997) exclude. It might be included in their pre-merger evaluation phase, but is not described as such. Martin and Samels (1993) also elaborate on the pre-merger

negotiations: In the preliminary phases, each role-player should understand their role within the merging process and this phase usually would clear up all uncertainties. After this phase, important information regarding staff, e.g. profiles and compositions, will be revealed to the staff. The post-merger consolidation and community building phase may be the most important phase of all. The reason is that the two or more institutions that have merged / been incorporated, should start to function as one. The new institutional community should now be established with its unique new culture. The ideal is that this new culture forms part of every staff member. During this phase the whole merger is stabilised. This phase may continue for a couple of years, because the old institutional culture needs to be replaced with a new culture. It is important to note that the creation of a new culture does not happen overnight, but may take several years.

Goedegebuure (1992:25) reiterates above-mentioned approaches. This author draws our attention to the works of Millet (1976), Starkweather (1981), Martin and Samels (1993), and Goedegebuure and Vos (1988) on mergers that typically include four phases. Each phase has a 'beginning event' and an 'ending event' with factors that are influencing the actual merger.   Table 2.2 clearly describes these different phases in the merging/incorporation process.

Table 2.2   Phases in mergers and incorporations (Goedegebuure 1992:25)

PHASES		**BEGINNING EVENT**	**ENDING EVENT**	**FACTORS**
Phase 1	Pre-existing condition	Anonymity	Initial contact	• Environment • Community • Economic
Phase 2	Enabling forces	Initial formal contact	Initial integration of resources	• Sociological • Inter- and intra-organisational bargaining
Phase 3	Dynamics of implementation	Initial integration of resources	Full integration of resources	• Managerial • Psychological • Individual
Phase 4	Stabilisation	Full integration of resources	Revised and accepted organisation	• Institutional • Evaluative

It is interesting to note that, according to Goedegebuure's framework mergers originate primarily from external factors, for example government pressure (*vide* 2.5). After the merger process has been completed, internal factors like managerial and individual behaviour play a predominant role in actually shaping and structuring the new institution. According to Goedegebuure (1992:25) the beginning event and ending event limit the phases, but they clearly depict what is expected during that particular phase.

It should be noted, though, that each merger in South Africa might be different from all others, because of the difference in institutions and situations. Some mergers are cross-sectorial, while others may be vertical (*vide* 5.2.3.1.7). It would be limiting to have a uniform merger model. A combination of the models of Goedegebuure (1992:25) and Fielden and Markham (1997:4) could be used by institutions in South Africa, but it will depend on their unique situations and needs, especially when the negotiations between the institutions start.

Before, during and after a merger or incorporation the merging parties may experience various benefits and problems. Some of these benefits and problems relate to the differences between institutions, for example having different mission statements; academic fields, staff qualifications and needs. All these e differences have to be brought together in one institution.

2.5   BENEFITS OF AND PROBLEMS IN MERGERS AND INCORPORATIONS

There may be various reasons why higher education institutions merge. To describe the benefits of mergers is very difficult, because the merger or incorporation may be to the advantage of some institutions, while others may be disadvantaged.

2.5.1 Benefits of mergers and incorporations

Rowley (1997:261) states that the outcomes of the merger may not necessarily result in cost saving. Mergers or incorporations may benefit institutions in various ways. Rowley (1997:261) and Skodvin (1999:7) identify the various administrative, economic and academic benefits of a merger.

2.5.1.1 Administrative benefits

Administrative reasons for mergers may be defined as an action that is undertake in order for the institutions to function more effectively. The following factors have been identified as administrative benefits for mergers:

- To advance their quality and breadth of services (Martin & Samels 1993:31, Harman 2000:355).
- To achieve economies of scale with regard to the number of administrators, and to get more professional and efficient administration (Harman 2000:355).
- To rectify a fragmented higher education system inherited from a previous dispensation, for example in South Africa (Hay *et al.* 2001:100).
- To correct coherent and poor articulation between various types higher education institutions and programmes (Hay *et al.* 2001:100).

2.5.1.2 Economic benefits

The merger of institutions is not always a cost-effective exercise because of the costs involved in the merging or incorporation process. Taking above-mentioned fact into account, the economic factor is one of the most important considerations when mergers are discussed. The following economic reasons may result in a merger:

- The provision of a strengthened financial base (Martin & Samels 1993:31).
- To be eligible for state support (reaction to education policy) (Skodvin 1999:4).
- To increase economic efficiency (Harman 2000:355).
- To create larger and more efficient units (Harman 1999:3).

- A decline in the retention rate of students (RSA DoE 2001a).

- A decline in state subsidy, mainly as a result of poor economic growth (Hay *et al.* 2001:100).

- Declining student enrolments (Hay *et al.* 2001:100).

- The more efficient utilisation of staff in bigger multi-purpose institutions (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:114).

- The reduction of public expenditure and the size of the public sector (Skodvin & Stensaker 1998:74).

2.5.1.3 Academic benefits

In order for a higher education institution to be as effective as possible, a merger may be a solution. The following are some academic reasons for mergers or incorporations:

- To expand student opportunities and achieve new levels of academic excellence (Martin & Samels 1993:31, Harman 2000:355).

- To eliminate duplicative programmes (Skodvin 1999:7).

- To increase academic integration and collaboration, for example the creation of new multi- and interdisciplinary fields (Skodvin 1999:7).

- To improve the provisions for credit transfer both within and between different disciplines (Harman 2000:358).

- An expansion and improvement in the standard of facilities and services for teaching and research (Harman 2000:358).

- Improved access to library facilities for staff and students (Harman 1999:22).

- The need to meet the human resource needs of a country (RSA DoE 2001a).

2.5.1.4 Strategic benefits

A higher education institution has an important role to play in a specific community. It also has to place itself in the community to attract future students. Mergers may also take place for strategic reasons. These reasons may be:

- To enlarge the scope of institutions (Martin & Samels 1993:31).

- To have more access to resources (e.g. in its region) (Skodvin 1999:4).

- To diversify academic profiles, for example a merger/incorporation between institutions that complement each other and strengthen the education market (Skodvin 1999:7, RSA DoE 2001a:Executive summary).

- Organisations adopt a strategic action in coping with a competitive and often hostile environment (Harman & Robertson-Cuninghame 1995:135, Fielden & Markham 1997:1).

- To incorporate single purpose institutions into universities (Harman 1999:2).

- To ensure the fitness for purpose of higher education institutions in terms of their mission and programme mix (RSA DoE 2001a:Executive summary).

- The increased competition in the system, particularly from international and private higher education institutions (Hay *et al.* 2001:100).

It is important to note that the main beneficiary of the merger should be the community in the institution's region. As Rowley (1997:262) states, a merger should add value, and this can only be done if distinctive capabilities or strategic assets are exploited more effectively in the new organisation. However, before, during and after the merging process, various problems may arise.

2.5.2 Problems in mergers and incorporations

If a merger is forced upon institutions, it is inevitable that there will be some negative attitudes towards the process and the other institutions involved. If the participants in the merging process are worse off than in the past, it may also result in some animosity toward the incorporating or merging partner.

One of the problems with a merger is that a merger or incorporation may create uncertainty amongst staff (*vide* 6.3). An example is when different types of institutions merge, like a teachers' college and a university, the staff component will consist of "academic" researchers and "craft" teachers (Fielden & Markham 1997:3). These different staff profiles should unite and become a unit working closely together. The

problem may be alleviated by continuous and frequent investment in staff development
and training, particularly during and after the merging.

One of the results of a merger could be a loss of job opportunities, because more staff has
to be accommodated. Senior staff members would be directly affected, because some
may be asked to go on early retirement and others may lose promotions. The lack of
promotions would have an effect on the whole new staff component. The disruption of
staff and students is also one of the most problematic areas of mergers. Examples of
disruptions may be students that have to change courses, or travel to an adjacent campus
where courses are offered. This may have financial implications for them. Staff that was
resident on one campus, may have to travel to various campuses to teach. The workload
of the staff may also increase as a result of a merger (Further education funding council
2000:11). These factors may have a negative impact on staff morale (Harman 1986:583).

The potential costs of a merger are enormous. Fielden and Markham (1997:6) categorise
costs in terms of staff (development, training, relocation and redundancy costs),
administration (harmonising of all IT systems and networks in academic library and
administrative areas and redesign of other procedures and paperwork), legal and
professional fees relating to amalgamations, premises (modification and removal
expenses, property rights, security costs of empty buildings) and the management of time,
which is usually underestimated and impossible to determine. The initial inefficiencies in
the new merged institution are also a negative result, but may be temporary (Harman
1996:583). There may also arise commuting and communication difficulties at multi-
campus institutions (Harman 1999:25). Some of these problems are not always realised
at once. Some may occur when the merger is announced, while others may be
encountered during or after the merger.

2.6   CONCLUSION

From this chapter it became evident that the term merger has different meanings to
different institutions and stakeholders. In most of the cases it means a completely new

institution comes into existence, while the old institution ceases to exist. However, some characteristics of the old institutions will still prevail and it is only over time that an entire new institutional culture will be visible. Obviously, the culture of the institution that plays a stronger leadership role and who is more dominating will service much longer than a "subordinate" institution.

Each merger differs. It may be a voluntary cooperative agreement between institutions that could be either temporary or permanent, or it could lead to the creation of a totally new institution. Such a new institution may consist of multiple campuses or one central campus with the management system being fully integrated or functioning as a federal structure. It may not be a merger at all, but incorporation. This means that the incorporated institution is taken over by the "bigger" partner. Such a venture causes stress on the side of the incorporated institution. During incorporation, one partner is "informed" of decisions taken by the senior partner. Such an approach may cause a degree of animosity and stress for the staff of the incorporated institution. It is important that, during the merging process, managers try to accommodate their merging partner as much as possible, because after the merger, the institutions should function as one. If the people cannot be accommodated in one way or the other, it may cause a lack of performance and thus impact negatively on the institution as a whole.

The reasons why institutions merge may differ from institution to institution. Most mergers occur because of government intervention. The impact a merger/incorporation has on staff is not always anticipated. Governments focuses more on the cost-effectiveness of higher education institutions and not on the impact a merger may have on staff. Some benefits are less duplication of courses, and improved services to staff and students. Students will also benefit because of better and more resources and a merger eradicates elements of fragmentation within the system. During a merger staff may experience stress and turmoil because of job uncertainty, the possible cost of relocation and no promotions for the next few years, to name but a few. These factors may result in low staff morale. The above-mentioned reasons make it essential that a merger should be well planned and executed. One of the most important phases is the post-merger and

consolidation phase and community building which may take three to five years to complete. This state is supposed to stabilise the new institution. Therefore, merger managers should invest in various strategies to create a uniform new institutional culture. Some of these strategies are staff developmental sessions, team-building exercises and the establishment of an inclusive new culture development plan.

The focus of this chapter was to establish a theoretical framework of mergers and incorporations. The following chapter builds on this theoretical framework by describing some international perspectives on mergers and incorporations.

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Chapter 3

International perspectives on mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions

3.1 INTRODUCTION

South Africa is not the first country to undergo major transformation in higher education. Over decades various countries throughout the world have restructured their higher education sector from time to time. Examples of countries which have had their higher education systems restructured are Australia, some states in the United States of America, the United Kingdom, Finland, Hungary, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal and France, to name but a view.

Although each scenario poses its own and unique advantages for the South African situation, three countries were selected for discussion. These countries are Australia, the Netherlands and Norway. The reason why these three countries were selected was because in the case of Australia, like South Africa, mergers were enforced by government, although institutions could choose their own merging partners in most instances. Australia also wanted to change their binary higher education system to a unitary system. With the Netherlands, the government also announced mergers. Institutions could also choose their own partners. In the case of the Netherlands, various mergers occurred in the non-university sector. This created a binary system in the Netherlands. In the case of Norway, the government chose the merging partners for institutions, as is the case with South Africa. In Norway it was also the non-university sector that had to merge with universities. An investigation into these different scenarios will provide insight into the restructuring process of South African higher education sector.

3.2 THE AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCE

Australia has a fairly long and controversial history of educational mergers. In the first instance mergers in Australia have been used as a mechanism to restructure the country's national tertiary educational system (Meek 1988:85). Proposed mergers, however, have been seen by staff and students as a threat to unique institutional strengths and traditions,

while proponents of mergers have looked at potential benefits, especially the formation of larger and more diverse institutions, the drafting of stronger academic programmes, increased efficiency and cost-savings, and improved student services and infrastructure (Harman 1999:1). Obviously, the perceptions of stakeholders on mergers played an important role in determining the success of merging processes and actions.

In comparison to Europe, Australia can be seen as a relatively young country because its youngest higher education institutions date back to the nineteenth century. The development of the Australian system of higher education took a great leap forward after the Second World War. Soon after the War, the Commonwealth government created various new higher education institutions, for example the Australian National University (ANU), specifically to further research and post-graduate education (1946) and the New South Wales University of Technology (in 1958 changed to the University of New South Wales). New teacher training colleges also opened their doors to redress the shortage in the number of teachers. Some of the reasons were the result of the Second World War, as well as an anticipation by the Australian Government of increasing enrolments, and discussions about further expansion of technical education proceeded (Goedegebuure 1992:184-185; Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:113-14). In the late 1950s, early 1960s the demand for higher education in Australia far exceeded the capacity of the higher education system. The Australian Universities' Commission (AUC) investigated the problem under the chairmanship of Sir Leslie Martin. The Martin Report proposed the creation of a new sector of tertiary education next to the university sector. This sector was the colleges of advanced education (CAE) that existed mostly on the basis of technical, paramedical, arts, and agricultural institutions (Goedegebuure 1992:185-186).

The results of above-mentioned developments were the establishment of the Australian binary system. It comprised three types of institutions. The first leg of the biinary system was universities that had as one of its main functions to concentrate on research. The second leg comprised colleges of advanced education (CAE), that were established to concentrate on teaching, and technical and further education institutions (TAFE) whose emphasis was on short non-credit adult education type activities to associate

diplomas (Goedegebuure 1992:185-187; Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:18; Meek 1988:85; Harman 1986:568).

The problem experienced by the Australian tertiary education system was largely within the CAE sector. In general, most students demanded courses in the humanities, business studies and social sciences and not in the technologies. Many of the CAEs had to pour their resources into the non-technological areas in order to survive, and, in the process, create arts courses resembling those offered by universities (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:19). CAEs started to demand 'equal but different' status from universities as they (CAEs) moved into degree and post-graduate studies. The binary system, thus, became a "trinary" system (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:19; Meek 1988:80). In 1977 the Tertiary Education Commission was established to coordinate the three sectors of tertiary education and, according to government policy, and it was proposed that fewer, but larger institutions should emerge. This brought the process of institutional mergers to the fore (Goedegebuure 1992:188-189; Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:19-20).

In order to change from an, almost, 'trinary' higher education system to a unitary higher education system, the Australian higher education system underwent three major merger exercises from 1960 – 1991.

3.2.1 The first wave of mergers, 1960 - 1981

The first mergers took place with the forced and highly controversial merger of Canberra University College with the Australian National University (ANU) in 1960 (Harman 1999:11). It is interesting to note that 30 years after the integration, the ANU still operates with two academic boards (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:20). The aim of most of the mergers was to combine small institutions located on adjacent sites or institutions serving the same catchment area. The mergers also aimed to draw specialist institutions into universities or larger CAEs, and build larger and more comprehensive institutions. The Australian government handled the first wave of mergers that were, according to Harman (1999:11) spasmodic and largely uncoordinated. They had no overall national

approach, although during this period most state governments initiated enquiries into higher education focusing particularly on the need for rationalisation and mergers.

One of the only examples of a forced merger was between the Canberra University College and Australian National University (ANU).   In this case, the Federal Government, which funded both institutions, decided that the very small but rapidly growing Canberra University College should merge with the ANU, since both institutions were seeking major capital funds to facilitate expansion and upgrade facilities.   The government took these duplication into consideration.   Another negative factor was that some of the institutions were in two adjacent cities of less than 60 000 people each (Harman 1999:11).

The mergers that took place during this period were numerous.   In New South Wales and Victoria, small paramedical colleges combined to form consolidated health science institutes.   Wagga Agricultural College joined the multi-school Riverina CAE, while in Victoria teachers' colleges and institutes of technology were combined in the three regional cities of Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong and in Hobart a CAE campus was combined with the University of Tasmania (Harman 1999:11-12).

Some of the mergers in the late 1970s came about because of a fall in student enrolments, declining higher education budgets and an over-supply of teachers (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:22).   At the same time, many institutions were keen to restructure their awards and replace diplomas with bachelor's degrees.   Some of these CAE institutions put pressure on the government to be recognised as universities (Goedegebuure 1992:192).   This caused some concern about academic standards and the quality of academic staff and facilities.   As a result, even prior to the announcement of decisions of the Review of Commonwealth Functions, discussions were well under way at both state and Commonwealth levels about the need for increased rationalisation and further mergers (Harman 1999:12).

3.2.2 The second wave of mergers, 1981 - 1987

The second and third waves of mergers were driven by Federal Government action (Harman 1999:12). To reduce government funding, the Coalition Liberal-National Party Government, led by Malcolm Fraser, undertook a major review of Commonwealth Government functions and funding. This Committee was to review Commonwealth Functions and was unofficially named the 'Razor Gang' in the popular press. Its main aim was to cut costs and reduce the number of federal statutory bodies in various areas (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:22). One of the decisions to cut funding was an announcement on 30 April 1981 that 30 specified teacher education CAEs would be required to merge with larger multi-school CAEs or with universities, or they would lose their funding. This announcement did not explain any detailed rationale, but it was clear that one of the reasons was to achieve additional budgetary savings and deal with the over-supply of school teachers (Meek 1988:88).

Colleges and state governments opposed this decision by Government. The result of this campaign was that 13 new institutions were created, replacing the then existing 39 institutions. Only four colleges remained, namely Armidale College of Advanced Education, Newcastle College of Advanced Education, Milperra College of Advanced Education and the Hawthorn Institute of Education. The reason why they did not merge was because of a change of government (Harman 1999:13-14; Meek 1988:88). The Labor Party, led by Bob Hawke, took office and honoured a commitment made during the election campaign that, if it won office, the four colleges would not be required to merge (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:23-24; Harman 1999:13-14). Although this new government did support mergers in principle, it did not designate particular institutions to be merged (Meek & Goedegebuure 1989:24).

Some institutions were already busy with merger negotiations by the time of the announcement. Other institutions criticised the Government's decision publicly by cooperating with one another; and other institutions opposed the decision, thus delaying

the actual merger. This delay incured additional costs to the merger process instead of leading to savings (Harman 1999:14).

Some of the problems that were encountered with the Australian mergers in general were that cross-sectorial mergers (*vide* 2.3) between universities and colleges proved to be very difficult.   Little additional funds were made available to assist newly merged institutions. Although mergers took place, one limitation by the binary line was that the average size of many institutions remained relatively small (Harman 1999:14). There were also some important achievements made by merged institutions. Some institutions operated reasonably well and the trauma of the merger was soon forgotten (Harman 1999:15).

3.2.3 The third wave of mergers, 1987 - 1991

John Dawkins, Minister for Employment, Education and Training, led the third wave of mergers that took place between 1987 and 1991. This wave of mergers was an integral part of the Federal Government's reform of the higher education sector. Some important facts about this wave of mergers were that almost all higher education institutions were affected. The mergers were part of a clearly articulated plan for higher education reform and the government used a more subtle approach than with the previous waves of mergers. It clearly demonstrated the use of financial power by Federal Government and it involved the removal of the binary line, hence overcoming many of the previous problems encountered in cross-sectorial mergers of universities and CAEs (Harman 1999:15).

This reform plan for higher education was much more transparent than the initial merger waves. In December 1987, Minister Dawkins issued a Green Paper on reform in the higher education sector.   Responses were sought from state governments, higher education institutions and interest groups.   In July 1988 the Federal Government confirmed its plan in a White Paper titled, 'Higher Education: a policy statement (1988)'.

The White Paper included the following main items regarding mergers (Harman 1989:15-16):

- The abolition of the so-called binary system, which made a clear distinction between universities and CAEs with respect to roles and funding, and the replacement by a new unified national system of higher education.

- Major consolidation of institutions through mergers to form larger institutions.

- Substantial increase in the provision of student places and efforts to improve student progress rates in order to increase the output of graduates.

- An increased emphasis on disciplines such as applied sciences, technologies, computer science and business studies, perceived to be of crucial importance to economic recovery and economic growth.

- A more selective approach to funding, with increased emphasis on research regarding topics of national priority, and substantial increases in research funding.

- Changes to the composition of governing bodies to make them more like boards of companies, and the strengthening of management of universities and colleges, particularly to give much greater power and authority to chief executive officers.

- Major changes in staffing, particularly aimed at increasing the flexibility of institutions, efforts to improve staff performance, and to enable institutions to compete more successfully in priority areas of staff recruitment.

- Changes to achieve greater efficiency and effectiveness of the higher education system, including reduced costs in teaching, improved credit transfers and the rationalisation of external studies.

- Moving of some of the financial burden for higher education to individuals and the private sector, and encouraging institutions to generate some of their own income.

The new Unified National System specified that institutions were to be funded for teaching on a basis appropriate to their education 'profile', while research resources would be allocated on a competitive basis according to performance. The Federal Government saw the Unified National System as providing *"an opportunity to develop in a more systematic way a higher education system with fewer institutions. Each*

institution should have a broader and more diverse educational profile" (Harman 1999:16; Goedegebuure 1992:194).

For institutions to join the new Unified National System, they had to meet particular criteria. The most important aspect of these criteria was the size of the institution. For institutions to be eligible for federal funding, they had to have as least 2000 Equivalent Full-time Student Units (EFTSU) while to be funded for a broad teaching profile with some specialised research activity, institutions had to have at least 5000 EFTSU. Further still, to be funded for comprehensive involvement in teaching and research, institutions had to have at least 8000 EFTSU. Twenty-six institutions fell below the minimum size of 2000 EFTSU, while only 13 were above the limit of 8000 EFTSU (Goedegebuure 1992:194-195; Harman 1999:16).

Because some institutions did not comply with the above-mentioned criteria, these higher education institutions started a frantic search for partners. It also led to a bidding war among universities to attract the maximum number of colleges to enter into merger agreements. A very important aspect of the rationalisation plan was that the Federal Government did not intend to force any institution to enter a merger, but made it clear that institutions which did not comply with the government's criteria, ran the risk of financial penalties (Harman 1999:17). In a major speech, the Minister stated:

> *"It is my objective to ensure that those funds are used to support and develop sensible institutional arrangements, particularly where there is a case for institutions to merge or consolidate. Institutions, which choose to stand apart from this process, are entitled to do so. But they must be prepared to live with the consequences in a system which will be more competitive than in the past"* (Goedegebuure 1992:4).

Subsequently, the Minister appointed a Task Force on Amalgamations, led by the Chief of the Higher Education Council, which performed an important role in facilitating amalgamations, negotiating with both sides and institutions and advising the Federal

Minister on which recommended state plans for mergers were judged to be satisfactory (Harman 1999:17). According to Harman (1999:17-18) the Commonwealth guidelines clearly specified that amalgamated institutions should have:

- One governing body;

- one chief executive;

- one educational profile;

- one funding allocation; and

- one set of academic awards.

Special funds from the National Priority (Reserve) Fund were also made available to assist amalgamation. A total of Aus.$238,8 million was made available for the amalgamation process during 1990 and 1991. The outcomes of the mergers were very positive. The following table (Table 3.1) by Goedegebuure (1992:206) depicts the merger behaviour in Australia from 1987 to 1991. It also shows the size of the merged institutions.

Table 3.1   Merger behaviour in Australia 1987 – 1991 by institutional size
(Goedegebuure 1992:206)

	INSTITUTIONAL SIZE			
	Less than 2000	**2000 – 5000**	**5000 – 8000**	**More than 8000**
Merged	21	16	10	9
%	81%	70%	83%	69%
Did not Merge	5	7	2	4
%	19%	30%	17%	31%
Total	26	23	12	13
%	100%	100%	100%	100%

The major results of the mergers were a strong growth in student enrolments funded by the government and an increase in university size. It is important to note that geographical factors, for example the distance between institutions, influenced the possibility of a merger in Australia. In certain cases, especially in the second category

(size between 2000 – 5000), institutions did not merge because of geographical isolation (Goedegebuure 1992:207).

3.2.4 Results and the impact of the mergers

It is clear that institutions reacted on the pressures put on them by government throughout the three merger cycles. The Dawkins' policies, for example, did not only stimulate the smaller institutions to merge, but the larger universities took the opportunity to expand their operations through the takeover of smaller CAEs (Goedegebuure 1992:218-219). It also gave institutions an opportunity to secure their survival by combating diminishing resources and securing government funding.

The overall perception of the merger process in Australia is that it has been largely beneficial. Higher education transformed from a highly fragmented system, which included many relatively small institutions with a limited range of courses and limited facilities and staff expertise, into a system with a relatively small number of much larger and stronger multi-discipline institutions. The overall quality of these new institutions has since improved considerably (Harman 1999:26).

There had been some gains and negative effects in the mergers. Some of the gains were impressive academic gains leading to stronger programmes, better-qualified staff, a wider range of choices for students, and improved students services and institutional infrastructure. The disadvantages were the additional costs incurred by the institutions, the disruption and trauma caused to staff, some shorter terms of a decline in staff morale and loss of traditions of those institutions that ceased to exist (Harman 1999:26).

3.3   THE DUTCH EXPERIENCE

The Dutch higher education system is a binary system that consists of a university sector and a non-university, or higher vocational education sector (abbreviated as HBO). The first university in the Netherlands was founded in Leiden in 1575 as a reward for the

citizens' persistence to fight the Spaniards during the 80-year war. Others followed, e.g. the universities of Groningen (1614), Amsterdam (1632) and Utrecht (1634). Through the years, numerous other universities were also founded so that the Dutch university sector consists of thirteen universities at present (Goedegebuure 1992:136).

The non-university sector or HBO sector developed under different circumstances. According to Goedegebuure (1992:136) it is generally agreed that the oldest still existing institution is the Royal Academy of Fine Arts, which was founded in 1682 in The Hague, but most of the oldest institutions have their roots in the 19th century. Until 1818 vocational education was concentrated with the guilds. The needs of the Dutch community changed with the abolishment of the social structure. The need arise to create a new institutional infrastructure for high-level vocational education (Goedegebuure 1992:136).

The HBO sector's relative short history, starting in the middle of the 1960s, has resided under the regime of the secondary education act (the 'Wet op het Voortgezet Onderwijs). This law implied a very strict regulated system with little room to manoeuvre for the institutional management and tight and detailed government control. During this time the HBO sector consisted of some 350 schools for higher vocational training, ranging from schools as small as 50 to 60 students in schools with around 5000 students (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:112). This period was also characterised by substantial growth. Student numbers rose rapidly, creating the beginning of budgetary pressures that were to dominate the 1980s. In line with developments in other countries, the non-university sector was considered to be an appropriate avenue through which the increasing student body could be accommodated, as it, according to Goedegebuure, (1992:137):

- was considered cheaper than the university sector and 'education on the cheap' even then was considered an asset;
- catered for part-time education;
- provided the kind of orientation perceived as beneficial to the growth of the Dutch economy; and

- contributed to the ideal of a diversified higher education system because of the diversity of courses and programmes.

These expansions, however, also gave rise to discussions about both the internal structure of the sector and its relationship with the university sector and started the process of restructuring the non-university sector.

3.3.1 Restructuring of the Dutch non-university sector

The restructuring of the Dutch non-university (HBO) sector all started with the White Paper on Higher Education (1975) that described the restructuring through a five-phase plan. Problems with this proposal were primarily based on financial-economic and administrative-technical concerns (Goedegebuure 1992:140). On 13 September 1983, the Minister for Education and Science, Deetman, together with his colleague for Agriculture and Fisheries, Braks, published the White Paper Scale-enlargement, Task-reallocation and Concentration (STC) (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:113; Goedegebuure 1992:138, 144).

According to the STC-paper (1983:1) as cited by Goedegebuure (1992:144) and Goedegebuure and Vos (1988:114), the Dutch government aimed at strengthening the non-university sector with the restructuring so that the non-university sector could take an equal place next to the university sector.

The rationale behind this restructuring process may be defined from a qualitative and quantitative angle. According to Goedegebuure (1992:144), in the qualitative sense, educational possibilities and responsibilities were enlarged, while in the quantitative sense, the size of the institutions was to be increased, so that they would have 'an adequate size' in relation to the tasks to be performed. In operational terms, the White Paper policy aimed at:

- A considerable increase in the size of the institutions through mergers between institutes for higher vocational education. In this way, possibilities were created for

interaction between different disciplines, larger distribution of knowledge and experience over teaching staff, increased possibilities for student choice, a more solid basis for post-initial professional education, services and research, as well as a strengthening of the innovative or creative capacity.   The last three aspects, especially, could be shaped in larger institutions with a recognisable regional function.

- A broadening of institutional responsibilities regarding the allocation of resources, personnel policy, and the design of curricula.   For this, a strengthening of the institutional management was required.

- An increase in the efficient use of resources through the use of larger groups was possible.   The mergers also resulted in the concentration of expensive equipment and other facilities.   A coordination and, where possible, combination of certain parts or modules of study programmes also took place (STC-policy 1983:3-4 cited by Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:114; Goedegebuure 1992:144-145).

Apart form strengthening the HBO sector, there was also a retrenchment objective.   The operation resulted in a financial reduction for the total sector, amounting to Dfl. 68 million in the year 1988 and further (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:114).   The expectations of the ministers mentioned earlier were the restructuring of the HBO sector into a limited number of multi-sectoral institutions with considerable autonomy.   In order to achieve the above-mentioned expectation, HBO institutions had to meet certain criteria by the start of the educational year 1986-1987.   The following conditions were set:

- An institution had to have a minimum of 600 students to remain eligible for government funding;

- an institution had to have administrative unity, i.e. one governing board, one executive body, and one representative body; and

- if an institution was constructed out of different parts, these parts had to be within a reasonable distance from each other (Goedegebuure 1992:146).

According to Goedegebuure and Vos (1988:115) there were exceptions to the minimal enrolment condition.   When an institution was unique in the sense that only one

institution of that kind existed in the country, and also in the case of a teacher training college for primary education, that institution did not have to merge. To help with the transformation of the non-university sector, a new legal structure, the HBO Act, was developed. This act increased the responsibilities of institutional management and also increased institutional freedom regarding curriculum development and content. The minimum size of institutions was also increased (Goedegebuure 1992:151). It also created a new financial system, which would lay the basis for the enlargement of institutional autonomy.

The merging of institutions was very dramatic, especially for staff. A positive contribution to the merging process was the development of a social scheme to assist staff in coping with possible staff reductions and redundancies. This scheme consisted of a substantial fund from which redundant staff could be paid for a limited period of time, and through which retraining activities were funded (Goedegebuure 1992:152).

Institutions were allowed to choose their own merging partners. It gave institutions some form of choice in the transformation process that is not present in the South African situation.

3.3.2 The outcomes of Dutch non-university restructuring

In the Netherlands the results of the mergers were quite remarkable. By July 1987, 314 of the 348 HBO institutions have merged into 51 new institutions, while 34 remained independent. These mergers were mostly multi-sectoral HBO-institutions, while 15% of the institutions preferred mono-sectoral mergers (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:117). It is important to note that subsequent mergers occurred up to 1993 (Goedegebuure 1992:160).

A large majority of the changes that took place in the initial period of the mergers were either caused by idiosyncratic institutional and/or local factors. Some of these local factors were animosity between negotiators and negative actions by staff towards the

mergers. Another difficult factor was the large number of institutions affected by the mergers. Table 3.2 clearly depicts the merger behaviour by 1987.

Table 3.2   Merger behaviour by institutional size by 1987 (Goedegebuure 1992:160)

INSTITUTIONAL SIZE			
	Smaller than 600	**Bigger than 600**	**Total**
Merger	189	90	279
	91%	80%	87%
No merger	18	22	40
	9%	20%	13%
Total	207	112	319
	100%	100%	100%

Table 3.2 clearly indicates the vast number of institutions that merged. A total of 87% of all non-university institutions merged. The influence of the mergers on this sector was drastic when looking at the mere number of mergers. Factors that come to mind are the influence on staff and the physical and administrative transformation of the sector, to name but a few.

There were various reasons why institutions did not merge. Goedegebuure (1992:161-162) describes some of these reasons:

i)   If institutions were teacher training colleges, they were exempted from merging.

ii)   Institutions for economic and administrative education were large enough and did not find it necessary to merge.

iii)   Art institutions were very defiant of the merging process. They also saw themselves as mono-purpose institutions that should be exempted from merging.

The positive expectations that the STC policy stated at the beginning of the merger (*vide* 3.3.1) were not reached during the latter part of the mergers. According to Goedegebuure and Vos (1988:134) some 40% of the respondents to a questionnaire that was distributed

to staff at merging higher education institutions emphasised the fact that too little attention was paid to the educational aspects during the merger. Much time had been spend on organising the merger and building a totally new organisation.

An important consideration was that respondents felt that the educational advantages of the mergers surpassed the disadvantages. The following table (Table 3.3) clearly shows how respondents viewed the merger process.

Table 3.3   *Advantages and disadvantages of non-university mergers (Relative frequency) (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:137)*

	ADVANTAGES		**DISADVANTAGES**	
	1986	**1987**	**1986**	**1987**
EDUCATIONAL	35.2 (56)	40.0 (44	16.0 (17)	8.2 (8)
ORGANISATIONAL	26.4 (42)	33.7 (37)	39.6 (42)	35.7 (35)
PERSONAL	7.5 (12)	10.0 (11)	12.3 (13)	28.6 (28)
MATERIAL	8.8 (14)	10.9 (12)	13.2 (14)	16.3 (16)
IDENTITY	0.7 (1)	0.9 (1)	11.4 (12)	4.1 (4)
OTHER	21.4 (34)	4.5 (5)	7.5 (8)	7.1 (7)
TOTAL	**(159)**	**(110)**	**(106)**	**(98)**

The table shows that the number of mentioned advantages surpassed the educational disadvantages. This effect in 1987 was even stronger than it was in 1986. When comparing these numbers with the other categories an observation can be made towards growing confidence in the educational effects of the STC operation. The respondents' view on organisational effects of the mergers clearly indicates a vast number of disadvantages, although one of the main objectives of the STC was the organisational strengthening of institutions. In 1987 the number of advantages and disadvantages were more in equilibrium; the relative number of perceived advantages had risen, although the number of disadvantages was still large. With regard to the personal and material effects,

the scale turned to the disadvantages. The effect in 1987 was even stronger than it was the year before. The respondents who mentioned identity disadvantages did not have a clear view on their position in the new, merged institution yet. In 1987 they were less worried about this point, as a result of a growing clarity following the development of the process. The category "other" consisted of motivational problems, possibilities in getting "new tasks" as research, organising post-HBO courses, etc. (Goedegebuure & Vos 1988:137). According to the above-mentioned survey, staff members became used to the idea of merging and adapted to the new merged institutions. The following conclusion clearly shows how staff experienced merging in the Netherlands.

3.3.3 Conclusion on the Dutch mergers

It is evident that the HBO institutions reacted positively towards the STC White Paper. Initially larger institutions expanded their educational profile immediately. These were followed by a similar expansion in later years by the smaller institutions. This clearly shows that institutions react to changes in their environment; changes not only caused by government policy, but also by the actions undertaken by institutions. It is interesting to note that it was not weaker institutions that combined forces to become large, but rather larger institutions that became even more dominant at the supra-regional level (Goedegebuure 1992:180).

Another important observation was that diversified or vertical mergers exceeded the number of horizontal mergers by far. Through the years of mergers, the mergers became more diversified resulting in an HBO sector that is becoming increasingly concentrated, both in terms of actual institutional size and/or academic fields (Goedegebuure 1992:181).

The result of the growing diversified HBO sector is that the binary divide between universities and the HBO sector is constantly under pressure. The Dutch government is pursuing the issue of differentiation. By differentiation they mean differentiation in the

length of programmes, differentiation in the mode of delivery, didactic differentiation, etc. (Goedegebuure & Huisman 2000:121).

According to the Dutch minister of education, differentiation between the HBO sector and universities is still emphasised. It would also be possible, though, for an institution in the HBO-sector and universities to cooperate with one another as from the year 2000 (Goedegebuure & Huisman 2000:123). In the past, institutions were forced to follow specific regulations in the Higher Education and Research Act to make cooperation possible. From the year 2000, cooperation between institutions was much more substantive and flexible. One of the few, but important restrictions is that the HBO and university programmes should still be identifiable (thus leading to the respective HBO and university degrees, even if parts of the programmes are similar).

The Dutch mergers in the HBO sector have developed and evolved in various ways. They started with cooperation between institutions, to a White Paper 'forcing' a fragmented, unproductive HBO system (they could make their own choice); to the dynamic big multi-purpose multi-site, functional units. The following section will look at another example of mergers that occurred, namely those in Norway.

3.4   THE NORWEGIAN EXPERIENCE

The Norwegian higher education system experienced a large growth in student numbers in the late 1980s. According to Skodvin and Kyvik (2000:127) the increase of students at universities and non-universities was approximately by 70 percent. The result was that the non-university sector in Norway underwent a major reorganisation when 98 vocationally oriented colleges were amalgamated into 26 new state colleges. These encompassed the previous colleges of teacher training (25), engineering (15), health education (27), and social work (3), as well as the regional colleges (14), and various other institutions offering a specialist range of teaching programmes (14) (Kyvik 2002:53). The result of this reorganisation was that in 1999, higher education in Norway was provided by four universities that accommodated 75 000 students, six specialised

universities with about 7 000 students and 26 colleges that had approximately 75 000 students. Provision was also made for 26 private colleges (15 000 students). These colleges mostly had religious affiliations and also a number of colleges of business and administration and management.

Some of the reasons for the reorganisation process were associated with the large number of students as well as the budgetary constraints of the entire higher education system in Norway. This restructuring process entailed a set of disciplinary and administrative reforms.

Before reorganisation, the non-university colleges were dispersed throughout Norway. In most cases there were two colleges in one of the 19 counties within Norway. These colleges had 70 000 students and about 7 700 members of staff (5 000 occupied academic positions). The size of the institutions varied considerably: four of them had less than 1000 students and four had more than 5 000 students. These colleges offered a total of 500 programmes of one to four years' duration, two to four year programmes in professional and vocational fields, and one to one-and-a-half year university courses. Fifteen of the colleges also offered academic courses for a higher academic degree, frequently in collaboration with a university. In 1998, the colleges offered a total of 36 of these programmes. In addition, two colleges offered doctoral training in engineering. Half of the colleges had programmes only in professional fields, while the other half offered programmes in both professional and academic fields (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:129).

The restructuring of the non-university sector had various benefits. Some of these benefits were also there to help the student. It would increase student mobility between university and college sectors. One of the central aims of the restructuring exercise was to develop a credit transfer system. Such a system would enable students, who changed their educational objectives, not to have to start a course all over again and lose as little time as possible. This implied a flexible qualifications structure that could combine

courses from different types of institutions and fields of learning (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:128).

3.4.1 Restructuring the Norwegian non-university sector

The restructuring of the higher education sector in Norway started officially in 1965 when the Royal Commission assessed various aspects of the higher education system. The Commission proposed that all non-university institutions in each of the twelve regions should be administratively and organisationally integrated, and that the core of the new institutions was to be located in a study centre. This would offer students a broader choice of courses, broader and better milieu for teaching staff, and a better utilisation of buildings, libraries, and student welfare institutions. This proposal was not accepted by the Ministry of Education (Kyvik 2002:54).

In the early 1970s regional colleges were set up in various parts of Norway. These colleges offered more vocationally based programmes, as well as shorter vocationally based programmes – especially in economics and business administration. They relieved the universities of some undergraduate students (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:129). Some of the colleges had clear university ambitions that were resisted by the universities and by government.

In 1987 a Royal Commission was set up to evaluate the goals, organisation and priorities of higher education and research. The Commission found that the number of colleges were too high and recommended concentration within each region. Recommendations were made to merge institutions, to locate them in the same place, and to reduce the number of institutions by 50 percent. Finally the merger of the Norwegian higher education sector was accepted by the Ministry of Education. The transformation process was named 'Network Norway' (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:129). In 1993, the government finally decided that the existing colleges in each of the regions should be merged into new units and named state colleges (Kyvik 2002:54).   The historic and most comprehensive reform of Norwegian higher education became a fact. In the meantime it

had taken almost 30 years when the proposal for mergers had first been aired until 26 state colleges were inaugurated. The aim for the reform was considerably different in 1993 than at the end of the 1960s. The weaknesses of the college system were manifested, and the political opposition to such a change in the educational system had become considerably less. In this respect Norway places itself within an international trend aiming at reducing the number of many small, specialised single-purpose colleges, and creating a smaller number of larger, multipurpose, multidisciplinary institutions (Kyvik 2002:54-55).

The main purpose of the reform was to strengthen academic integration and cooperation as well as administrative functions by the creation of larger units (Norgard & Skodvin 2002:73). These purposes could be achieved by:

- Enhancing the quality of administrative functions and academic work through the creation of larger administrative and academic units;

- developing new and broader study programmes;

- breaking down barriers between the various courses; and

- using physical resources more efficiently (Kyvik 2002:53; Norgard & Skodvin 2002:73; Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:129).

According to Kyvik (2002:55) another aim of the reform, though not officially stated, was to prevent the two largest regional colleges from achieving university status. These two colleges had for many years attempted to become universities, but the Minister of Education was very intent to curb the tendencies to 'upward drift' and to limit the number of universities to the four established institutions. By establishing a binary system with two distinct higher education sectors, and by amalgamating these colleges with the professionally oriented non-academic colleges in each of their regions, he hoped to put an end to their ambitions to become universities.

The character of the merger process in Norway was, according to Norgard and Skodvin (2002:76-77), and Skodvin and Kyvik (2000:130) typical of a forced merger process initiated by the state in order to fulfil central goals. Norgard and Skodvin (2002:78)

describe the merger of Telemark College. They state that this merger was characterised as a top-down process. In spite of regional and local participation in the process (of merger), central authorities made decisions that, to a high degree, were the opposite of the institutions' recommendations in questions concerning both organisational structure and the location of the central administration body.

The creation of larger institutions went with the state administration reform of the 1990s. The transformation process included the development of a uniform management system for all public activity. This standardisation process was also to be of considerable significance for the management of the college sector and organisation of the colleges' activities. This standardisation process went further with the inclusion of state colleges under the same act as universities in 1996. In addition to regulating the relationship between central authorities and the higher education sector, the act gives a common framework for the organisation and governance of these institutions (Kyvik 2002:56-57). Furthermore, the act links the institutions through "Network Norway". This concept presupposes that the higher education institutions will be further developed within a national integrated system. "Network Norway" will require close cooperation and a better division of labour on teaching programmes and research between the various institutions of higher education. Further expansion should go together with specialisation, so that every state college can set national standards in at least one particular programme (Kyvik 2002:57; Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:128; Skodvin & Stensaker 1998:73). The Norwegian government called it the establishment of centres of excellence within institutions. The idea was to create integration and effectiveness both at the national level as well as within single institutions. The goal was to build up an integrated higher education system consisting of larger non-university institutions that should be active partners to the existing universities.

For the non-university sector to become an active partner with the universities, the Norwegian Ministry established about thirty node functions. These functions would, according to Skodvin and Kyvik (2000:128), help to create the centres of excellence, as previously mentioned. The objective with academic nodes - which means managed

specialisation and division of labour between higher education institutions – on principle, is a suitable governance mechanism for educational authorities and would help in the long term with the governance for central educational authorities.

According to the Act on Universities and Colleges, universities are responsible for basic research and also have the main responsibility for graduate education and research training. The state colleges are responsible for a wide variety of professionally and vocationally oriented teaching programmes, and in addition take on some of the university programmes for basic and undergraduate education (Kyvik 2002:57). The universities have their niche and so do the state colleges. Although there will be a certain area of duplication, academic drift should be guarded against.

After the Ministry of Education announced the merger in the Norwegian higher education sector, colleges consolidated, coordinated and planned the impact of the merger on them. Different units started to mark themselves in the reorganisation process. After the state college system had been established, it was generally the responsibility of the individual colleges to implement the measures necessary to fulfil the academic, administrative and economic objectives of the reform (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:131). The following section will focus on the outcomes of these reforms.

3.4.2 The outcomes of the Norwegian non-university restructuring

The effect of any merger on the individual is enormous. The results of the mergers in Norway were visible on three dimensions: administrative, economic and academic levels.

3.4.2.1 Administrative effects

The merger of the colleges was not only a physical merger between various institutions, but also an administrative reform. As a link in the development of management by objectives in administration, the decision-making authority and administrative tasks were to be delegated from the Ministry to the colleges (Kyvik 2002:66). The colleges assumed

a joint administration system in order to increase the quality of administrative functions. It resulted in a more competent college administration and relieved academic staff of administrative tasks, and also improved the quality of administrative functions (Kyvik 2002:67; Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:132). The lowering of administrative costs by better utilising administrative staff resulted in the decrease of administrative functions.

The distance between and size of the new institutions were some of the most important factors to take into account for the creation of the administration of the individual colleges. According to Norgard and Skodvin (2002:81) with the merger of Telemark College, the distance between the sub-units of the college had proven to have an impact on the administrative structure as well as the infrastructural network of the new merged college. The result was that there were no significant economies of scale with regard to the number of administrators at Telemark College. Although some duplicative administrative functions had been eliminated, the merger did not result in fewer administrators in total. Furthermore, the leadership at Telemark College underlined that it was more expensive to run a network institution than an institution with one campus.

From a governmental perspective the amalgamated colleges have increased their administrative capacity and developed much more professional administrations than the individual institutions had before the reform. Although the administration has become more complex, functions like library and electronic services have improved considerably (Kyvik 2002:67).

3.4.2.2 Economic effects

One of the most important goals of the restructuring of the higher education sector in Norway was to increase cost efficiency (Norgard & Skodvin 2002:81). In order to cut costs, the government had to employ certain strategies for cost reduction in the college sector. According to Kyvik (2002:67-68) the government first and foremost aimed at reducing expenditure per student through economies of scale in teaching, and a more cost-effective use of premises and administrative staff. In line with its assumptions of economies of scale in the amalgamated colleges, the government anticipated the effects

in the annual budgets. For the period 1994 – 1997 expenditure per student increased by
2.2 per cent. Consequently, the objective of a more cost-efficient college system was
achieved, but not a reduction in expenditure (Norgard & Skodvin 2002:80; Kyvik
2002:68).

3.4.2.3 Academic effects

One of the aims of the reform was to change teaching, research and educational processes
in the college sector. According to Kyvik (2002:64) the restructuring was meant to
enhance opportunities for closer contact and collaboration between staff across different
teaching programmes, and to be conducive for the development of a common educational
culture.

The colleges in Norway represented a diversity of study programmes with different
traditions and academic cultures (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:132). An important objective
for the college reform was to create stronger academic coordination within the sector
(Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:132; Kyvik 2002:64). A survey that was done three years after
the merger suggested that there was a common lack of cooperation in teaching. Three of
the reasons why there was a lack of cooperation were bad administration, cultural
differences, and geographical distance (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:133; Kyvik 2002:65).
Successful academic integration also depended on how cultural differences between the
merged institutions were overcome. Some faculties regarded the merger more as an
administrative and organisational reform than a reorganisation initiated to strengthen
teaching and research (Norgard & Skodvin 2002:83).

3.4.3 Conclusion on the Norwegian mergers

The Norwegian merging process is a typically forced merger process (v*ide* Chapter 2).
Few staff supported the ideas enthusiastically, and several colleges tried to avoid being
amalgamated with neighbouring institutions. One of the main reasons for this resistance
could be found in the character of the previous colleges; institutions with different tasks,
aims, and cultures were supposed to collaborate in the shaping of a new and larger

organisation.   Yet, the merger of 98 colleges into 26 new institutions was effectively
executed by a handful of people in the Norwegian Ministry (Kyvik 2002:69).

The extra resources that were allocated to the colleges for the extension of their
technological infrastructure, and the allotment of extra resources to colleges with
geographically separated campuses, offered an important basis for the technological
networks of the colleges to become quickly established.   In spite of the successful
technological establishment, however, the evaluation shows that new technology does not
fully replace face-to-face meetings.   It only offers a good supplement for cooperating
partners who are already acquainted (Skodvin & Kyvik 2000:134).

Weakly developed social, cultural or professional networks appear to be the great
obstacle to the development of academic cooperation across disciplinary boundaries.   The
reason for these problems is primarily cultural differences between staff in vocational
programmes on the one hand and the faculty in more academically-oriented study
programmes on the other.   Another contributing factor to cultural differences between
universities and colleges is the fact that many of the courses are very different in
character.   There are limitations to the extent to which academic synergy effects may be
achieved at the new colleges.   Furthermore, it seems likely that geographical distances
between different academic environments enhance the problems – or preserve old
barriers.

3.5   CONCLUSION

Important factors present in the three case studies are that during the Australian and
Dutch mergers, most of the institutions chose their own partners, but with the Norwegian
mergers merging partners were pre-selected.   Another interesting factor is that economies
of scale played a vital role in favour of merging.   Institutional expenditure was not
necessarily reduced after the mergers, but institutions were more cost-effective.   Because
of multi-campus institutions, some costs may have increased, for example transport costs
between different campuses.

Another aim of the mentioned mergers was to eliminate single-purpose institutions, accept them where it was not possible and to improve the types of programmes offered to students. The sectors clearly became more coordinated and technologically advanced, because, in most of the cases, different campuses were functioning as one institution. This created problems of its own, for example meetings between different campuses were difficult because of the distance and a lack of "face-to-face" interaction.

It is alarming to note that not a lot has been done to manage the "human component" of the mergers. The human component refers to staff employed and affected by the merging process. Attention was given to structures, processes and programmes, but there was a definite lack of staff management. Cognisance should be taken that the Dutch experience provided funds for the retraining of staff after the merging process (*vide* 3.3.1). The Norwegian experience in a way can, be compared to the merging process in the South African higher education sector. In Norway the merging process was forced and the Norwegian government chose the merging partners. New legislation was also drafted in Norway and the Netherlands. In the Netherlands and in Norway the higher education systems where totally transformed – the same as in South Africa. It seems like the Norwegian authorities did not give enough attention to the transition process of staff during the merging process; something the South African authorities should definitely address.

The merging processes in the South African higher education sector are derived from experiences, like these mentioned in this chapter, throughout the world. In order to fully understand the mergers in South African higher education, it is important to describe its history. The next chapter will focus of the transformation of South African higher education institutions.

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Chapter 4

Transformation in South African higher education institutions: Preparing the way for mergers and incorporations

4.1   INTRODUCTION

As with Australia, South Africa was a colony of the British Empire where numerous universities were established and developed. During this time (late 1800s and early 1900s) South Africa followed the British secondary education system (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:3). After the discovery of gold and diamonds, people needed to be more knowledgeable in South Africa. Skilled people were needed in the new blooming economy, but most of the universities were situated abroad. As a result a post-school or higher education system was needed in South Africa.

The South African higher education system did not develop as a unified system for all its people. Because of the apartheid policies of the South African Nationalist government, it was difficult for black, coloured and indian people to study at a university in South Africa. Different departments for different ethnic groups were created, which resulted in a fragmented, ineffective and costly higher education system for South Africa (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:4). This chapter focuses on the establishment of South Africa's higher education system and highlights the inequalities that existed in the fragmented higher education system.

4.2   THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR BEFORE 1994

The development of the South African higher education system for whites on the one hand and blacks (including coloured, indian, black), on the other, created a separated and unequal system. The following section describes how these two systems developed up to 1994. 1994 is chosen because it was when South Africa had its first fully democratic elections when a government for all the people was elected. After 1994 all government departments (including education) were integrated to form a single democratic elected government.

4.2.1 The historical development of "white" higher education

Higher education (university, technikon and college education) in South Africa can be classified as education after formal secondary schooling has been completed. According to Coetzee and Geggus (1980:3) higher education started in South Africa with the South African College at Cape Town in 1829. This college was a superior kind of high school, but also prepared students for matriculation and some advanced examination of the University of London, because South Africa had no advanced post-matric examinations at that stage.

A series of similar colleges, most of them under the aegis of either the Dutch Reformed Church or the Church of England were set up. These colleges were located in the Western Cape (Diocesan College, Rondebosch in 1848), Eastern Cape (St. Andrews College, Grahamstown in 1858, and Grey College Port Elizabeth) and in the Orange Free State (Grey College, Bloemfontein 1855), to name but a few. Universities eventually developed out of some of these colleges. The South African College became the University of Cape Town, the Gymnasium became the University of Stellenbosch, St. Andrews College became Rhodes University at Grahamstown, Grey College, Bloemfontein became the University of the Orange Free State, which today is the University of the Free State (Edwards 1990:43; Coetzee & Geggus 1980:3).

At Burgersdorp in the North-eastern Cape the Reformed Church founded a theological seminary in 1869. This was later moved to Potchefstroom in the Transvaal (North-west Province) and out of it eventually came the present Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:3), as proclaimed in 1951 (Edwards 1990:43).

The first Board of Public Examinations in Literature and Science was established in 1858 to provide coordination of standards, syllabi and examinations (van Wyk de Vries 1974:43). The University of the Cape of Good Hope, which received full university

status but undertook no teaching, followed this in 1873. The universities and colleges cooperate in such a way that teaching was done by the colleges in South Africa, but the University examined their students. The Board of Public examiners was incorporated in the University in 1874 (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:3).

After 1902, and especially after South Africa became a Union in 1910, the growth of university teaching was rapid. There was also a great deal of controversy, discussion and investigation as to future developments in the post-secondary field in South Africa. In 1916 the University Act of South Africa made provision for the establishment of a federal examining university; the University of South Africa (UNISA) which incorporated the University of the Cape of Good Hope and its federated teaching university colleges. The universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch were excluded because they became independent institutions (Edwards 1990:43).

University education expanded rapidly, for example the independent universities of Cape Town and Stellenbosch each with their own chancellor, vice-chancellor, council and senate (Edwards 1990:43). In 1921 the South African School of Mines and Technology became autonomous as the University of the Witwatersrand. The Transvaal University College became the University of Pretoria in 1931 and the Natal University College became the University of Natal in 1949, with campuses in Pietermaritzburg and Durban. Grey University College in Bloemfontein became the University of the Orange Free State in 1950 and Rhodes University College became Rhodes University in 1951 (Edwards 1990:43).

By 1951 South Africa had eight residential universities: four English-medium (Cape Town, Witwatersrand, Rhodes and Natal) and four Afrikaans-medium (Stellenbosch, Orange Free State, Pretoria and Potchefstroom) universities. The University of Port Elizabeth was established in 1965 as a dual-medium university and in 1967 the Rand Afrikaans University was established on the Witwatersrand (Johannesburg and surroundings) for Afrikaans- medium students (Edwards 1990:43; Coetzee & Geggus 1980:3-4).

In 1878 the Dutch Reformed Church established the first college for primary teachers' training in Cape Town. Teacher training was not regarded as higher education. The National Education Policy Amendment Act (73) of 1969 promulgated that teacher-training courses for secondary schools should extend over at least four years, with three years as a minimum for primary and pre-primary teachers. White secondary teacher training was only to be provided by universities (Edwards 1990:44-45). By 1978 there were about 140 single discipline, vocational colleges for education, nursing and agriculture in South Africa (NCHE 1996:29). This includes white and black colleges and colleges in the former homelands.

The development of technical education (it later evolved to technikons) started much later in South Africa. After the discovery of diamonds in 1867 and the main gold bearing reef in 1884, accelerated industrialisation increased the need for technical training. In 1894 the South African College (now the University of Cape Town) started to train mining engineers. It was a two-year theoretical course and was followed by two years' practical training at the South African School of Mines in Kimberley. It was later transferred to Johannesburg and, eventually, separated into the University of the Witwatersrand and the Witwatersrand Technical College (Edwards 1990:46).

In 1923 the Higher Education Act (3) enabled the Department of National Education to incorporate all technical education. The Advanced Technical Education Act (Act No. 61 of 1967) was promulgated to establish colleges as Colleges of Advanced Technical Education. In 1978 the designation of the colleges was changed to technikons (Jacobs 1996:68). The curricula and syllabus contents of technikons were nationally determined until 1986 when the Certification Council for Technikon Education Act, 1986 (Act No. 88 of 1986) was promulgated (Jacobs 1996:69-70) as opposed to universities who have the freedom to decide their own curricula autonomously.

4.2.2 The development of "black" higher education

One of the main points of departure in the transformation of the South African education system, was to have a single coordinated education system. South Africa's higher education system inevitably falls under the same transformation principles. In order to understand the merging of higher education institutions at present, it is of vital importance to make a study of how the dominantly black higher education system developed.

Before separate universities were developed, blacks were admitted to the universities of Natal, Rhodes, Cape Town and the Witwatersrand (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:4). Black university education started with the establishment of the South African Native College on 8 February 1916. This became a constituent college of UNISA in 1973, and was named the University College of Fort Hare. Until 1960 it was the only University College specifically established for black students (Coetzee & Geggus 1980:4).

The Extension of the University Education Act of 1959, which established racially based universities applied this ideology to higher education. The University Colleges of the North and Zululand were established for Sotho, Venda, Tsonga and Zulu speaking African people while the University of the Western Cape and Durvan-Westville for coloureds and Indians. The University of Fort Hare, which played a significant role in providing higher education to black people from South Africa and the rest of Africa, was restricted to Xhosa speaking Africans (NCHE 1996:29). The principles introduced by this Act were:

- The creation of state-controlled universities alongside state-aided universities; and
- the deprivation of universities of the right to accept or reject students for admission (Behr 1987:3).

In the early 1980s several universities were established in the "independent[1]" homelands, which were intended to serve the needs of separate development. The universities were Transkei (1977), Bophuthatswana (1978) and Venda (1981) (NCHE 1996:29; Edwards 1990:43).

Following the enactment of the University Act, the universities of Cape Town, University of the Witwatersrand, Rhodes and Natal dedicated themselves to the principle of freedom of association and the right to determine who shall be taught, who shall teach, what shall be taught, and how it shall be taught, without regard to any criterion, except academic merit (Behr 1987:3).

In 1976 the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa) was established in terms of Act 78 of 1976. Its sole purpose was to train doctors, dentists, veterinary surgeons and para-medicals from the black communities in South Africa (Behr 1987:4; Christopher 1994:158-159). Another new higher education institution was established for a specific population group, which meant duplication, whereas the money and resources could rather have been used for the improvement of another institution.

There was also a need for general university education for blacks residing in urban areas of South Africa. It resulted in the establishment of Vista University in 1982 (in terms of Act 106 of 1981). Its administrative headquarters are in Pretoria (as well as its distance education campus) but it has decentralised campuses in black townships in Soweto, Mamelodi (Pretoria), Bloemfontein, Zwide (Port Elizabeth), Thabong (Welkom), Sebokeng (Vanderbijlpark) and Daverton (Springs). According to Christopher (1994:155) Vista's establishment marked a major departure from the previous approach of sending students for further education back to the homelands in order to foster national identities. Its main purpose in 1981 was the upgrading of teachers education. Vista's

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[1] The Independent Homelands policy was created under B.J. Vorster and continued under P.W. Botha. Transkei and Bophuthatswana had obtained their independence in 1976 and 1977. Venda was to acquire it in 1979, and Ciskei in 1981. The Government intended that, as each Homeland acquired full sovereign status, so its citizens should lose their South African citizenship and retain that of the Homeland alone, even if they continued to live and work in the Republic of South Africa, as many thousands of them did. In

education enrolments declined from a peak of 35 000 in 1995 to 22 500 in 2000. That is
an overall decline of 13 100 (or 37%). This impacted on the viability of Vista University.
Its main satellite campuses will be amalgamated with higher education institutions, for
example the Vista Bloemfontein campus will be amalgamated with the University of the
Free State. Vista's satellite campus will be amalgamated with the University of South
Africa, together with Technikon South Africa to form one distance education institution
for South Africa.

The establishment of these universities for blacks was not well received, because it was a
higher education system planned for blacks by whites. Blacks, in the words of Franklin
Sonn, had the following sentiments towards separate universities:

> *"We who, in the early Sixties, found ourselves at the glorified high*
> *schools called ethnic universities assiduously prepared ourselves for a*
> *future we were not sure we wanted and tried our damnedest to*
> *separate the wheat from the chaff as Broederbond professors dutifully*
> *hammered home to us the basics of Christian National Education"*
> (Gray 1988:128).

The black universities were seen as nothing more than "bush or tribal colleges" by white
universities and blacks (Behr 1987:3), which created an inferiority complex amongst
students as well as black academics, as well as isolation from other universities. This
created a volatile situation in black universities throughout South Africa.

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such a way, South Africa could acquire an actual white majority to correspond with its political system
(Davenport 1991:413-414).

4.2.3 The results of a fragmented higher education system in South Africa

Universities, technikons and vocational colleges (education, nursing and agriculture) were all divided along racial lines. The result was that, by 1994, 21 universities, 15 technikons, 128 technical colleges and 96 colleges of education existed; most of which for different races (RSA DoE 1994:06:33).

Such a fragmented further and higher education system was, for obvious reasons, ineffective. In 1990 Thabo Mbeki, then the ANC's national director for international affairs, stated that, in the transformation of higher education:

> *"We shall have to fight for space… so that the people themselves can participate in the control and direction and remaking of the education system, and we shall have to challenge this extraordinary statistic – given to me by the leaders of the student movement – that 93 % of all graduates and professionals in South Africa today are white. This is impossible. You just can't have a thing like that; something has to happen…?"*(Vergnani 1990:39).

This system has generated many racial and gender inequalities in higher education. Some of these inequalities are represented in access, staff, research and research output, governance and funding.

4.2.3.1 Student access and outputs

Student participation rates indicated a stark persistence of racial inequalities in student access. The enrolment percentages in higher education by race clearly show that the student body has altered significantly since 1993. Over this period the number of black students has risen dramatically by 161 000, from 191 000 to 352 000, that means an increase from 40% to 60% of the total. Correspondingly, the number of white students has declined by 59 000, from 223 000 to 164 000 (47% to 28%).
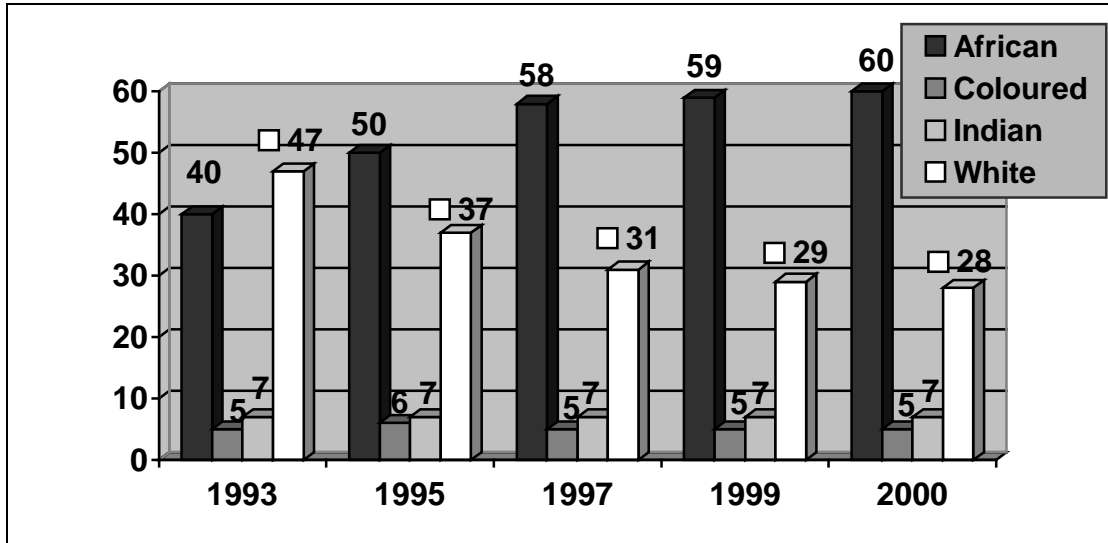
Figure 4.1   Enrolment % in higher education (CHE 2001:29)

The numbers of coloured and Indian students have increased slightly, while their proportions have remained the same (CHE 2001:29). This clearly indicated that inequalities existed and had to be rectified.

It is not only in the race enrolment that inequalities exist, but there is the imbalance of enrolment in the fields of humanities, business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology. The numbers from 1993 up to the year 2000 had not changed significantly as can be seen in Figure 4.2. The current ratio for humanities, business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology is 49:26:25. The National Plan aims to shift the ratio to 40:30:30 respectively. There is a greater need in business and commerce, and science, engineering and technology. Mergers may produce more effective institutions with less duplication, and this would let these institutions focus on disciplines/qualifications of shortage (CHE 2001:29).
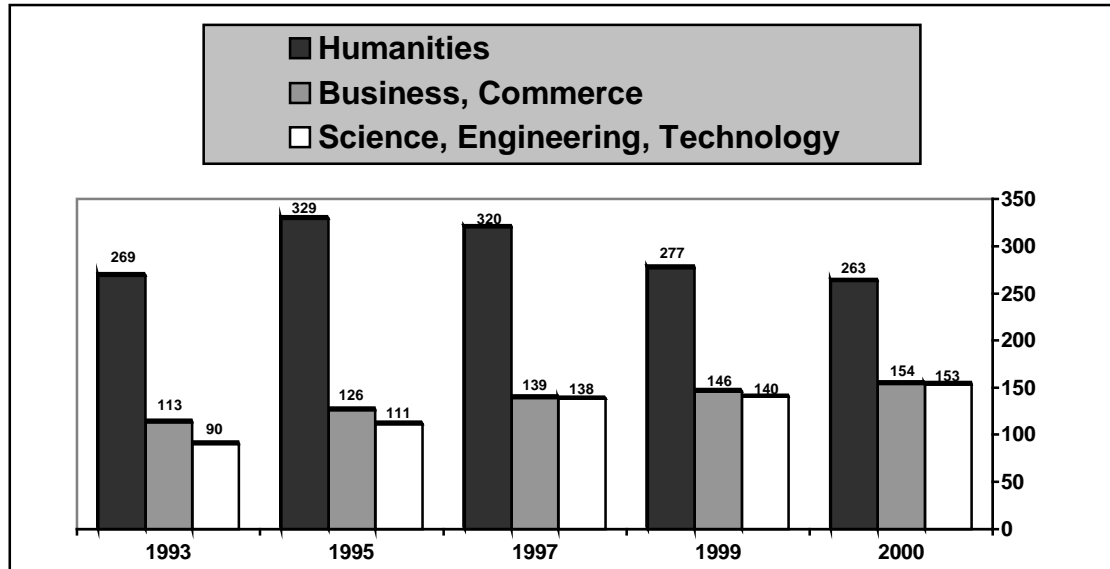
Figure 4.2   Full-time equivalent student enrolment in humanities, business and commerce, science, engineering and technology (CHE 2001:31)

Head count enrolments by field of specialisation (thousands)

It is evident that the system was and is still ineffective to provide in the human resource needs of the country. Enrolment figures as illustrated in Figure 4.2 regarding the broad field of natural and applied natural sciences suggest that without intervention the imbalances will continue to exist. This may be crucial to South Africa's economy.

The following table (Table 4.1) shows that the total of black (african, coloured and indian) graduates produced by universities increased by 3900 (or 22%) in 1998 compared to 1995.

Table 4.1   *University graduates by population group (thousands) (Cloete & Bunting
2000:31)*

	1995	**1996**	**1997**	**1998**	**Average annual increase**
AFRICAN	14,4	14,6	17,1	17,8	7,3%
COLOURED	1,5	1,7	1,7	1,7	4.3%
INDIAN	1,7	1,7	1,8	2,0	5,54%
WHITE	33,9	32,4	33,6	33,4	-0,5%
TOTAL	51,5	50,4	54,2	54,9	2,2%

Students that do not complete their courses are costing South Africa millions of rands and
are also creating a poorly educated community. The problem not only lies with the
throughput rates, but also with the proportion of student enrolment. Figure 4.3 clearly
indicates the different proportion of enrolment by race between 1995 and 1998 (Cloete &
Bunting 2000:31).
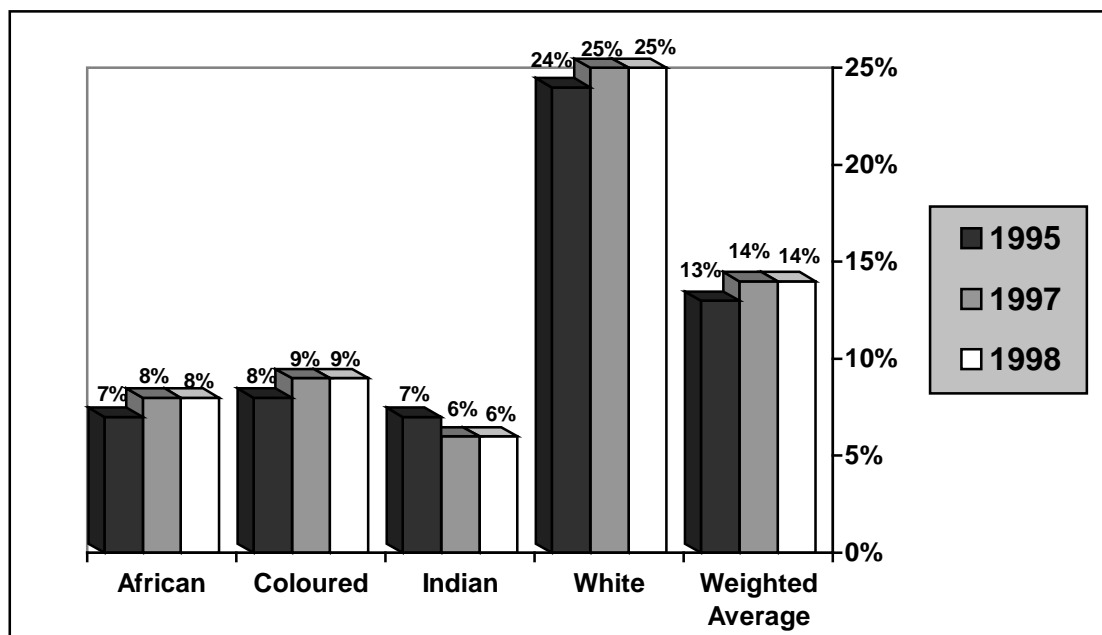
Figure 4.3   University graduates as proportions of enrolments by population group

Note: 1996 enrolment data not available (Cloete & Bunting 2000:32)

The implication of the difference in race enrolment is that only 6 – 9% of the total population of Africans, Coloureds and Indians are enrolled at higher education institutions, while 25% of Whites is enrolled at higher education institutions. The National Working Group on Higher Education (RSA DoE 2002a:Appendix 2:4) suggests that the output of postgraduate students should be increased and special attention should be given to the promotion of postgraduate training and studies. The difference between graduates and percentage enrolment in post-graduate studies are still below the benchmark[2] (between 0.6 and 0.8 for universities and 0.4 for technikons) set in 2002 by the National Working Group on Higher Education (RSA DoE 2002a:6). This average or benchmark is set at the completion of 33% master's degrees and 20% doctorates (RSA DoE 2002a:Appendix 3:2). Above-mentioned inequalities clearly indicate the differences that exist between different races in higher education. The ideal is that all races should be at the same weighted average, and not one ethnic group above the other. The mergers of higher education institutions would enable higher education institutions to provide students and staff with the same type of opportunities. Historically disadvantaged institutions would be more advantaged than in the past, while historically advantaged institutions can share their expertise with the previously disadvantaged institutions.

4.2.3.2 Staff

Discrimination did not only occur against students at South African higher education institutions. According to Dlamini (1995:42) most of the staff at black higher education institutions was white, and even the appointment of a clerk had to be approved by the Minister (of Education) (RSA DoE 1994:25-27).

The staff composition in the historically advantaged and disadvantaged higher education institutions bears little relation to democratic realities in South Africa, but reflects the racial and gender inequalities of the broader society. In terms of overall proportions, African academic staff at universities increased from 7% in 1993 to 12% in 1998, and more noticeably at technikons from 2% to 14%. The proportion of white academics

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[2] The benchmark is set at one. Everything below the benchmark is under one and above it is more than one.

decreased over this period from 87% to 80% at universities, and more markedly from 88% to 72% at technikons (Cloete & Bunting 2000:34).

Women staff made up 38% of professional staff, but was in the majority (51%) in the non-professional category. This indicates a strong gender division of higher education labour, in which women were concentrated in non-professional administrative positions and in the specialist support category, which includes librarians. Correspondingly, within the professional category, women were highly under-represented in the key sub-categories of executive/administrative/managerial staff and of academic staff. It is important to note that the proportion of women academics in the universities rose from 30% in 1992 to 35% in 1998. Over this period, the proportion of women academics at the historically black universities and technikons rose fairly rapidly from 32% to 37% and at the white universities and technikons also from 26% in 1992 to 32% in 1998. The following table clearly indicates how the composition of staff at universities and technikons changed from 1994 to 1999.

Table 4.2   Academic staff by 'race' and gender, 1994 and 1999 (CHE 2001:37)

Year	Institution Type		African		Coloured		Indian		White		Total		% Woman
1994	**Univ**	**HAU**	245	3%	50	1%	117	2%	7217	95%	7629	100%	30%
		HDU	1277	39%	269	8%	305	9%	1440	44%	3291	100%	34%
	Tech	**HAT**	26	1%	18	1%	19	1%	1893	97%	1959	100%	35%
		HDT	159	20%	109	14%	147	19%	361	47%	779	100%	34%
	Total		1707	13%	446	3%	588	4%	10911	80%	13652	100%	32%
1999	**Univ**	**HAU**	429	6%	97	1%	191	3%	6797	90%	7514	100%	36%
		HDU	1566	46%	237	7%	331	10%	1238	37%	3372	100%	37%
	Tech	**HAT**	171	7%	57	2%	68	3%	2040	87%	2336	100%	39%
		HDT	390	34%	138	12%	260	22%	376	32%	1164	100%	37%
	Total		2556	18%	529	4%	850	6%	10451	73%	14386	100%	37%

*   HAT: Historically advantaged technikons

*   HDT: Historically disadvantaged technikons

*   HAU: Historically advantaged universities

*   HDU: Historically disadvantaged universities

Positions that have a lower status and prestige, and which wield little influence, tend to be filled primarily by blacks and women. According to the NCHE (1996:38) most African staff was, and still is, concentrated at the bottom of the employment ladder. Most are employed as service staff, whereas most whites are employed as academic staff or in senior administrative posts.

The following graph clearly shows the disparity between male and female when considering permanent research and teaching staff at universities and technikons.
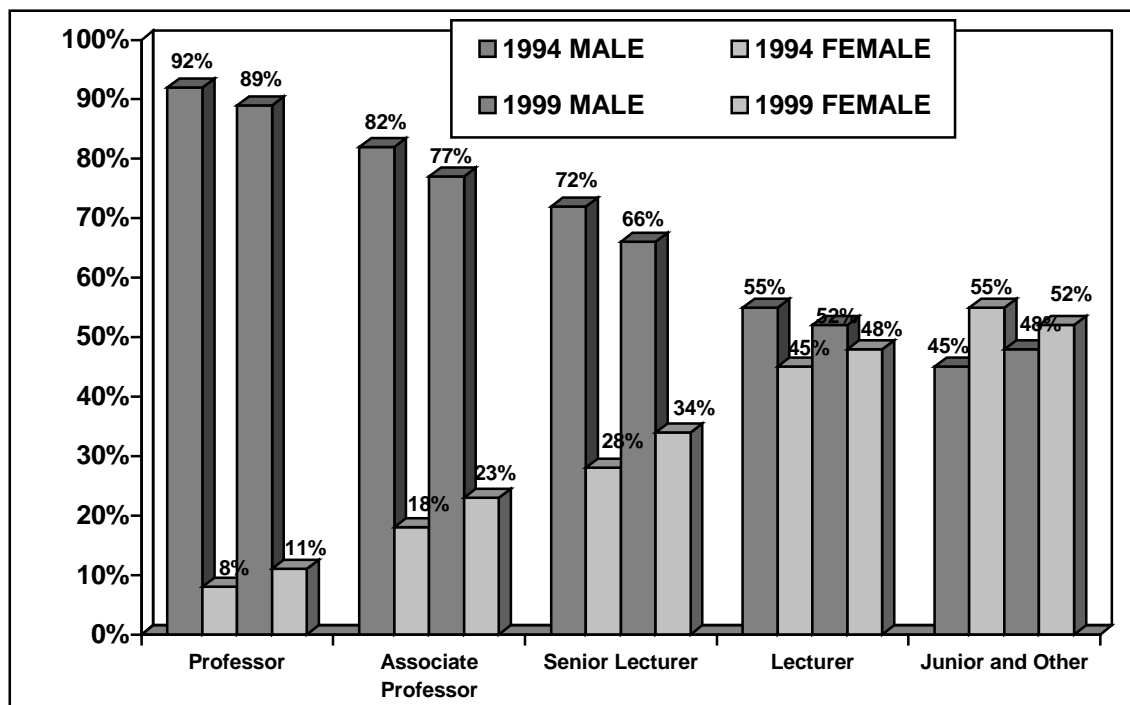
Figure 4.4:   Academic staff by rank and gender, 1994 and 1999 (CHE 2001:38)

The distribution of staff in higher education institutions in South Africa suggests that the barriers to full and equitable involvement in higher education faced by women and black people are many and complex. They need to be addressed so that the composition of staff can represent the demographic character of South Africa as a whole.

Figure 4.4 clearly indicates that, although the representation of women academics improved during the period 1994-1999, women continue to be severely under-represented

at the higher ranks, constituting only 11% of professors, 23% of associate professors, and 34% of lecturers in 1999. The percentage of women and men representation was the same on lecturer level, but on all the other levels, men were in the majority. At junior lecturer level, women were in the majority (CHE 2001:38).

4.2.3.3 Research and research outputs

During the apartheid years the Afrikaans universities, together with the English universities, produced 83% of all research outputs. The same situation prevailed in the technikon sector. The traditional white technikons produced 81% of all research articles (excluding distance education sector institutions) (NCHE 1996:41). A comparison done by Cloete and Bunting (2000:41) from 1986 to 1997 indicates that 10% of all research publication outputs were produced by the ten historically black universities, with the University of Durban-Westville and the University of the Western Cape making disproportionate contributions. More than 63% of these publication outputs were produced by only five of the historically white universities (Cape Town, Pretoria, Wits, Natal and Stellenbosch).

The National Working Group on Higher Education (RSA DoE:2002a) created a benchmark according to which each academic staff member should publish at least one publication unit per annum at a university and 0.5 at a technikon (RSA DoE:2002a:Appendix 3:2). The findings were that universities achieved between 0.2 and 0.3 and technikons between 0 and 0.2 of this benchmark (RSA DoE:2002a:6). This clearly indicates that technikons and universities in general are under-performing in terms of research output.

For research to be effective, it needs to be managed effectively and efficiently, as all other components of a higher education institution. The following subsection describes governance and how it had a negative effect on academic growth during the apartheid area.

4.2.3.4 Governance

The government's view on the governance of higher education institutions in South Africa is that universities (and technikons) are essentially legal entities whose nature and functions are prescribed by law. Because universities (and technikons) are in this sense the 'creatures of the state', they have no powers or rights other than those prescribed by law. Universities (and technikons) have, in particular, no autonomy other than that granted to them by the state for reasons of administrative efficiency alone (Bunting 1989:399).

Because of the situation that prevailed at historically black institutions during the apartheid era, the whole idea of autonomy and academic freedom in universities came under scrutiny. An example is the University of the North. Professor Joe Poolman, chairman of the University of the North's council and vice-rector of Rand Afrikaans University said this regarding autonomy:

> *"The University of the North is supposed to be an autonomous institution, but with so many members appointed by the minister or so-called self governing states we feel it is not as independent as it could be."* He adds that he would *"personally like to see a reduction in the number of state appointees"* (Vergnani 1990:40).

The above-mentioned statement clearly shows that the apartheid structure where self governing states could handle their own affairs and the independence homeland government were superimposed on the three sub sectors of higher education (NCHE 1996:41). Further division within the system sprang from the differential relations between the state and institutions. At the level of institutional governance, democracy and participation have been limited. The participation and representation of staff and students in institutional governance structures and procedures have varied from limited to non-existent (RSA DoE 1997a:13).

In 1996 the NCHE (1996:176-177) suggested a cooperative governance system. This model can be broadly located within the framework of state supervision. It moves from a

narrow concern with government to a wide range of governance mechanisms that are concerned with the growing role of associations, different agencies and partnerships.

Because of the autonomy of most of the South African universities, the implementation of cooperative governance has been far from easy and progress towards the goal has been uneven. Some of the problematic areas, according to the CHE report (2001:55), are:

- a lack of clarity of what needs transformation: the representation or the structures?
- no detail about the role and functions of management during transformation and also who should drive the transformation process and be accountable for it.

Effective governance is essential for an efficient higher education system, especially if the system comprises multi-campus institutions after a merger. During and after merging, staff should have the assurance that their governance structures are in place. This may enhance job security (*vide* Chapter 6). Another important consideration is the funding of higher education. The following section describes the funding system of the higher education system.

4.2.3.5 Funding

The fragmentation of the higher education sector resulted in different types of funding for each grouping, for example historically black universities (HBUs) were funded according to a mixture of budget funding and funds deriving from a different formula, whereas historically white universities (HWUs) were funded according to a specific formula. In 1985 all universities were funded according to the same formula, except the TBVC universities (NCHE 1996:45).

In 1987 a subsidy formula for technikons was introduced which represented a scaled down version of the subsidy formula for universities. The same funding system for colleges of education was in place as in schools, because colleges were part of the national Department of Education. These colleges of education either became part of the higher education, or further education sector (*vide* Chapter 5).

Funding inequalities between HWUs and HBUs existed. The following table (Table 4.3) clearly depicts these inequalities (NCHE 1996:45).

Table 4.3   Income inequalities for HBUs and HWUs (1993)

INCOME TYPE	HWU	HBU
Subsidy and tuition fee income	63%	73%
Income from investments, donations, grants and contracts	20%	14%
Other income (including residence fees)	17%	13%
Tuition fee income per enrolled FTE[*] student	R4 400	R3 500
Subsidy income per enrolled FTE student	R10 200	R6 600

[*]   FTE means a full time equivalent student at a university

As noted in Table 4.3 HBUs did not generate substantial funds from investments, donations or grants if compared to HWUs. The reasons for this may have been that the private sector did not believe in the future of the HBUs, or that funding were channelled to bigger higher education institutions. They had to rely more on subsidy and tuition fees for income. The lack of a student financial aid scheme was also a problem for HBUs. They attracted many students from economically deprived backgrounds that were unable to pay tuition fees leading to disastrous consequences for the HBUs and for themselves. The HBUs were not able to set tuition fees at the level of the HWUs.

The discrepancy with funding would be eradicated with the new proposed funding formula. It implies that all higher education institutions would be funded in a similar way.   The proposed funding framework will also generate a range of institutional responses and behaviours, and it will be important to assess these in terms of policy goals and equity, quality, effectiveness and efficiency.   There could be tensions in the simultaneous pursuit of these goals, which emerge clearly in anticipated changes in the funding and financing of the system. The following table (Table 4.4) shows trends in government subsidy allocations over six years (CHE 2001:57-58).

Table 4.4　　　*Government appropriations for universities and technikons (rands millions) (CHE 2001:57-58)*

Category/ Institution	1995 – 1996		1996 – 1997		1997 – 1998		1998 – 1999		1999 – 2000		2000 – 2001		2001 – 2002	
Subsidy funds														
Universities	2710	66%	3276	63%	3591	66%	3854	64%	4155	63%	4498	64%	4880	65%
Technikons	856	21%	1120	22%	1296	24%	1455	24%	1648	25%	1706	24%	1837	24%
Subtotal	3566	87%	4396	85%	4887	90%	5309	88%	5803	88%	6204	88%	6718	89%
Earmarked funds														
Universities	356	9%	574	11%	385	7%	482	8%	493	7%	503	7%	474	6%
Technikons	150	4%	236	4%	160	3%	208	4%	248	4%	271	4%	266	4%
Other														
NSFAS							4	<1%	5	<1%	6	<1%	30	<1%
Colleges Incorp													43	<1%
Redress									60	<1%	30	<1%		11%
Subtotal	506	13%	810	15%	545	10%	694	12%	806	12%	810	12%	813	
Total allocations														
Universities	3066	75%	3851	74%	3976	73%	4337	72%	4648	70%	5001	71%	5355	71%
Technikons	1006	25%	1356	26%	1456	27%	1663	28%	1897	29%	1977	28%	2104	28%
Other								<1%	65	1%	36	<1%	73	1%
Overall total	4072	100%	5207	100%	5432	100%	6004	100%	6610	100%	7014	100%	7532	100%

Tables 4.3 and 4.4 clearly show how funds were allocated to higher education institutions based on category and race. The funding formula has also changed so that race as criterion was eliminated, but category (technikon and university) still exists.

Table 4.5 shows that subsidy funding stayed relatively the same. It also shows that, in terms of the national terms, overall allocation has risen from just over R4 billion in 1995 – 1996 to about R7 billion in 2001 – 2002. With this, the ratio of allocations to universities and technikons has shifted from 75:25 to 71:28 over this period, reflecting a

corresponding shift in the ratios of student enrolment. What is noticeable is the fact that the proportion of earmarked funding has not increased, and in fact has shown a slight decrease over the period (down to 11% in 2001 – 2002). Clearly, the various equity and redress goals enunciated in the White Paper 3 and the National Plan will not be achieved unless substantial additional amounts are procured and/or allocated (CHE 2001 58).

4.2.3.6 Concluding remarks on a fragmented higher education system in South Africa

The separate development of the South African higher education system had a profound effect on the development of the South African community as a whole. The discussion on student access and output clearly indicates the differences within the South African communities. There are also various inequalities within the staff component. These inequalities exist in the employment of women and blacks, especially in more senior positions. The poor development of HDUs (Historically disadvantaged institutions) resulted in poor research and research outputs at these institutions. No real institutional development regarding research was done at these institutions. There were also different governance structures for technikons and universities and HDUs and HAWs (Historically advantaged institutions). A more uniform system had to be created. The same can be said of funding. Technikons and universities were not funded in the same way and a more equal system had to be established.

4.3   CONCLUSION

The South African education system, through its apartheid policies, established different higher education institutions for "white" and "non-white" people. These different groups could not choose where they wanted to study; the state decided for them. Because of this discrimination, South Africa's higher education system became a fragmented substandard educational system, which had to educate the masses for a future growing South Africa.

Inequalities existed in student access, staff and gender representation, research outputs, governance structures and funding mechanisms in the different higher education systems. Such an inefficient and one-sided system had to be more representative of the whole South African demographic character. The implications of the separate development of the different higher education systems in South Africa had a profound effect on the mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions. Under-development of higher education institutions occurred in certain areas of our country, while there was "oversupply" of higher education institutions in other areas. There was also no coordination of programmes amongst different institutions.

The new government that came to power in 1994 in South Africa proposed a single coordinated higher education system. The processes of creating a single coordinated higher education system involved the merging of colleges of education, universities and technikons (*vide* Chapter 5). The mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions will have a profound effect on the staff components of various higher education institutions. But what makes a higher education institution? It is its people. It is the staff and students that make a higher education institution. These staff and students are affected and will be further affected by the drastic changes that occur during and after a merger. In order for the negative implications for staff to be limited, it is very important that this merging process is planned, governed and managed in a systematic way. The following chapter will discuss the different changes that occurred in the South African higher education system in more detail.

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Chapter 5

Initiatives during the merger/incorporation of institutions in South African higher education

5.1   INTRODUCTION

As mentioned earlier, the previous South African higher education system was characterised by inequalities, a lack of access to various population groups, ineffective and inefficient institutions and duplication of programmes and facilities (*vide* Chapter 4). One of the reasons for this ineffective higher education system was the separate development of people along racial and ethnic lines. This was unacceptable on national and international level and the higher education system had to be transformed. One of the objectives of transforming the higher education sector is for coordinating the sector by merging and incorporating various higher education institutions.

As from 1988 some South African university and technikon staff and students started protests against the education system in South Africa. Hartshorn (1996:271) states that the protests centred on issues such as governance of higher education institutions, exclusion of students because of failure to satisfy course requirements, inability to pay fees, and a lack of relevance of the curricula and courses.

Hartshorn (1996:271) and Dlamini (1995:39) both describe how the majority of people in South Africa were denied equal opportunities to quality education. This emphasises the fact that the higher education sector needed to be transformed. The result was the proposal of a whole new education system for South Africa by the National commission on higher education (NCHE 1996:1).

This chapter describes how the people started to demand an equal education system for all - an education system not determined by race, or one governed by numerous departments. It starts by explaining why there was a need for a new education system in South Africa and continues by describing how the higher education systems transformed. Obviously the transforming process had immense implications on the staff of these sectors.

5.2 A NEW HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR SOUTH AFRICA

The transformation process of education in South Africa started with the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education by presidential proclamation and chaired by Jairam Reddy, a former rector of the University of Durban-Westville (Hartshorn 1996:271). Its terms of reference were published in the South African Government Gazette (No 5460 of February 1995) and consisted of six general and fourteen specific areas of higher education that were to be considered and investigated.

The central proposal of the NCHE (1996:82) is that higher education in South Africa must be conceptualised, planned, governed and funded as a single coordinated system. Hartshorn (1996:272) comments that such a new system does not imply that there would be a lack of diversification or differentiation. It will rather ensure diversity by facilitating the development of a range of institutional and programme offerings that are articulated through a single qualifications framework (RSA DoE 1997a:18) and offered by universities, technikons, public colleges and private providers (NCHE 1996:82).

One of the most important outcomes of the NCHE (1996) proposal was that universities, technikons and vocational colleges had to restructure. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) was established where the various niches of the different areas within education were explained (Understanding the National Qualifications Framework 1997:25). The different bands within the NQF reflect the three main groupings of education and training. The Higher Education and Training band deals with all learning related to national diplomas, degrees and post-graduate learning. The Further Education and Training band deals with all post-compulsory, pre-tertiary learning and integrates academic, technical and commercial learning. The General Education and Training band includes pre-school to Grade 9. According to Understanding the National Qualifications Framework (1997:25) grades 1 to 9 represent ten years of free and compulsory education for all. This band also includes Adult Basic Education and Training, equivalent to 10 years of primary education, as well as integrating skills training below artisan level. The NQF provides opportunities for the learner, regardless of age, circumstances and level

of education and training. It allows the individual to learn on an ongoing basis (lifelong learning) (Understanding the National Qualifications Framework 1996:6).

In order for the National Qualifications Framework to function properly, the higher education sector needed a single qualifications framework for all higher education qualifications in line with the NQF. In principle, the framework should comprise a laddered set of qualifications at higher education certificate, diploma and degree levels, including intermediate exit qualifications within multi-year qualifications. In addition, all higher education programmes, national or institutional, should be registered on the NQF, minimally at the exit level of whole qualifications (RSA DoE 1997b:2.66).

In the year 2000 the Council on Higher Education established an Academic Policy Task Team in order to provide advice to the Minister of Education on the processes of registration and accreditation of higher education qualifications and programmes in the context of the NQF. The Academic Policy Task Team wrote a report (RSA DoE 2001c) to publish its findings. It was the purpose of this New Academic Policy (RSA DoE 2001c:4) to achieve the following:

- To provide a detailed framework for the development and provision of higher education programmes and qualifications within a single coordinated higher education sector that gives effect to the goals for higher education as set out in the White Paper and the National Plan.

- To provide a coherent and comprehensive policy framework for the provision of higher education programmes and qualifications which will shape and supplement the policies and practices of South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and the Council on Higher Education's (CHE) Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) with respect to the registration of qualifications, and the accreditation and evaluation of programmes.

- To provide guidance to higher education institutions as they develop appropriate programme mixes in accordance with their institutional missions and three-year rolling plans.

- To provide for the effective and efficient utilisation of public resources expended on higher education by minimising wasteful overlap and duplication of programmes and qualifications.

The main purpose of the qualifications framework is to facilitate the articulation of qualifications on the framework. This involves clear statements of qualifications' entry and exit requirements. It also involves the recognition and transfer of credits between qualifications (RSA DoE 2001c:37). The New Academic Policy (NAP) replaces the first band describing higher education on the NQF. Some of the other purposes of the new academic plan for higher education are the use of new policy and legislative context for higher education, i.e. with the White Paper 3, the Higher Education Act, the National Plan and with the structures laid down by SAQA. It should also facilitate the provision of programmes that will produce graduates who can compete in a global market and it should be comparable with international qualifications frameworks. Furthermore the NAP has to be acceptable, as far as possible, to all stakeholders of the higher education system, easy to be understood by all higher education clients and stakeholders. The facilitation and the gradual integration of a previously divided, trinary higher education system (universities, technikons and colleges) are also important to articulate with the rest of the NQF. Some other proposals of the NAP are to encourage lifelong learning by catering for flexible, more open, multi-mode delivery systems and by making provision for the recognition of prior learning, provide guidance to internal and external quality assurance agencies for the consistent and reliable evaluation, accreditation and approval of qualification standards and the programmes that deliver them (RSA DoE 2001c:39:40).

Higher education institutions will award qualifications for not less than 120 credits of learning (i.e. the equivalent of two traditional full-time semesters). These qualifications will function more or less as 'market niche' enterprise courses. It is important to note that each credit comprises 10 notional study hours (a quantitative measure). The other way that learner attainment can be measured is qualitatively (what quality or level of complexity of learning is demanded by a particular qualification or its set of exit level learning outcomes?) (RSA DoE 2001c:41-42). The following table (Table 5.1) depicts the different qualifications proposed by the NAP (RSA DoE 2001c:30).

Table 5.1   A qualifications framework for higher education (RSA DoE 2001c:30)

NQF Levels	HE Sub-levels	(Cumulative minimum totals) & minimum credits per qualification	General Vertical articulation		Articulation Horizontal & diagonal articulation	Career-focused Vertical articulation		
8	PG 4	(1020) 360	Doctor of Philosophy (360 @ PG 4)			Doctor of Philosophy, Professional Doctorate (360 @ PG4)		
8	PG 3	(660) 180	Research Master's Degree (120 @ PG3)	Structured Master's Degree (60 @ PG3)		Research Master's Degree (120 @ PG3)	Structured Master's Degree (60 @ PG3)	
8	PG 2	(600) 180/120		Master's Diploma (120 @ PG2)	Master's Certificate (72 @ PG 2) (articulation credits)		Master's Diploma (120 @ PG 2)	Professional Master's Degree (180 @ PG2)
8	PG 1	(480) 480/120	Bachelor Honours Degree (120 @ PG1)	General Postgraduate Diploma (120@PG1)	Postgraduate Certificate (72 @ PG1) (articulation credits	Advanced Career-focused Bachelor's Degree, [e.g. B Tech] (120 @ PG1)		Career-focused Post-graduate Diploma (120 @ PG1)
7		(360) 360/120	General Bachelor's Degree (120 @ 7)		Graduate Certificate (72 @ 7) (articulation credits)	Career-focused Bachelor's Degree (120 @ 7)		
6		(240) 240	General Diploma (90 @ 6)		(articulation credits)	Career-focused Diploma (90 @ 6)		
5		(120) 120			Foundation Certificate (72 @ 5)	Career-focused Certificate (72 @ 5)		
4		(120) 120	FETC (72 @ 4)		Bridging Certificate (72 @ 4)	FETC (72 @ 4)		

Note: Brackets under each qualification indicate the minimum requirement at the NQF level at which the qualification is pegged.
[1] An internal in-service upgrading qualification that does not automatically lead to progression to Level 7 qualifications.

A unique characteristic of the proposed NAP qualifications framework for higher education is that provision is made for articulation. This is designed to enable horizontal and diagonal articulation between qualifications on the framework, as well as to allow for vertical articulation. This will facilitate meaningful articulation between qualifications in the two different tracks. A student, for example, studying for a B.Sc. degree at level 7 on the General Track, first has to acquire a General Certificate at Level 7 in the Articulation Column, before he/she may enter a Level 8 programme in the Career-focused Track. The Articulation Column is a curriculum 'space' where learners, who do not meet the full entry requirements for their target programmes, can 'catch up' without having to 'go back' to the beginning again, and where recognition of prior learning can be implemented. Depending on their learning needs and previous qualifications, learners may be required to earn either specified articulation credits or whole certificates in the Articulation Column, before they may be admitted to study mainstream programmes (RSA DoE 2001c:32).

The General Track contains those qualifications which traditionally have been offered only by universities, and which are based on academic, discipline-based and cognitive theories of learning. The qualification designators, of Arts, of Science, of Social Science and of Commerce may be used only for degrees in this track (RSA DoE 2001c:32).

The Career-focused Track contains the qualifications traditionally offered by technikons, and the professional qualifications traditionally offered by universities. The term Career-focused is used to broaden this category to include specialised programmes with a specific career focus that are not necessarily linked to a professional or statutory body. Qualifications in this track are based on vocational, career-based or professional understandings of learning, giving them a more applied, practical and market-orientated focus. Qualification designators used for degrees in the Career-focused Track are open-ended and are used to signify the professional or career focus, e.g. a Bachelor of Engineering, of Technology, of Education, of Social Work, of Nursing, of Agriculture, etc. (RSA DoE 2001c:32).

The rationale behind the NAP is an attempt to build an integrated and coordinated system for the programmes and qualifications offered in higher education in which learner progression and mobility are facilitated. This does not mean that learners should assume that progression and

admission to specific programmes is ever guaranteed. Under the Higher Education Act it remains the right and responsibility of higher education institutions to determine their own admission requirements and the entry requirements for particular programmes (RSA DoE 2001c:37-38).

The proposed New Academic Policy will demand various changes in higher education. Some of the changes will be the proposed shifts in the unit standards of curriculum planning and design from the individual course, to the programme and its respective qualifications. Furthermore, the outcome-based approach to curriculum design demands a more professional and rigorous approach to the assessment of students. The credit-based, modular systems that are designed for greater learner convenience and to allow greater flexibility in delivery modes and entry and exit points, will also require the professionalisation of academic management and support services, procedures and systems. It should be stated that the final version of this report has not been released yet and should have been distributed in March 2002. According to the time frames set by the NAP (RSA DoE 2001c:121), providers will have 2002 and 2003 to plan, re-design and re-format their offerings in accordance with the specifications laid down in the finalised New Academic Policy and implement these requirements as from January 2004 (RSA DoE 2001c:120). The draft Academic Policy, as described in this study, is currently in use and may be adjusted in the near future. This may create a backlog regarding the implementation of the final New Academic Policy.

The development of the national qualifications framework, including the Proposed National Academic Policy for higher education institutions is in a process of refinement. It should be stated that the qualifications framework has to do with the academic offerings and progression of students within institutions.

5.2.1 Cooperation between institutions

In order to achieve the goals of a uniform system and to be in line with NQF structures and other policies, the ministry viewed merging as an important vehicle to change the higher education system. In Harman's organisational linkage (*vide* 2.3) cooperation between institutions is seen as a voluntary cooperative agreement between different institutions. The emphasis is on voluntary

merging, however, it does not have to be voluntary. Circumstances, such as political, economic, social or any other factors force institutions to cooperate in one form or the other. Gibbons and Parekh (2001:51-53) state that circumstances may force some institutions to cooperate, but it is important to note that they may chose to initiate the cooperative agreement themselves. Examples of cooperation agreements before it was officially proposed were the Western Cape Institutions Trust or Adamastor Trust, which was established in 1993, and the Cooperation project in KwaZulu-Natal, also called the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions (esATI) established in the same year (Reddy 1998:16,31; Gibbons and Parekh 2001:19). The most important function for the cooperation between institutions was to, inevitably, merge.

After these cooperation agreements there were numerous proposals for the establishment of cooperation agreements between institutions. Some of the cooperation suggestions were described in the following important documents:

- the NEPI Report on Post Secondary Education (1992) (The National Education Policy Investigation Report: Post-secondary education 1992a);

- the NCHE Report on Transformation in Higher Education (NCHE 1996); and

- the Education White Paper 3 on Higher Education Transformation (RSA DoE 1997b).

After these documents had proposed cooperation, numerous regions engaged in negotiations, and established collaboration agreements. The "voluntary effect" of collaboration was eliminated and with this the natural evolution of regional consortia and/or mergers/incorporations. The following cooperation agreements were established in the 1990s in South Africa, according to Reddy (1998:16-42):

- The Consortium of Open Learning Institutions in South Africa (COLISA).
- The Free State Higher and Further Education Trust.
- Eastern Cape Higher Education Association (ESHEA).
- Foundation of Tertiary Institutions of the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM).
- The Cooperation Agreement between UNISA and the Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education (CHE) in Life Sciences.
- Potchefstroom University – Telematic Learning Systems.

- The University Technikon Collaboration (UTEC).

- School of Public Health.

These cooperations indicated that institutions can work together and that future articulation and movement between institutions and courses may be possible. The smallest of this regional consortium is COLISA with three institutions, while the largest is the Free State Higher and Further Education Consortium with 29 members. Incidentally, this is the only consortium that includes further education institutions (Reddy 1998:47).

There were considerable variations in the aims and objectives of these consortia and, for example, the financial contributions by each member. The reason for this is that no real guidelines were given for the establishment of regional consortia. Gibbon and Parekh (2001:20) comment on it as follows:

> *On the one side, the state department had, in effect, set the agenda for the consortia but did not support them in any way (because they were 'voluntary' organisations set up by 'autonomous' institutions), not even in the minimal way (the 'incentives') that had been promised in the White Paper 3.*

The following discussion will focus on how three of the most important documents that shaped the formulation of regional consortia.

5.2.1.1 The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Report

The National Education Policy Investigation (NEPI) Report on post-secondary education (1992a:114) proposes that be redress addressed by 'a plan of cooperation at all levels between historically disadvantaged universities and historically advantaged universities'. According to the NEPI Report on post-secondary education (1992a:123) cooperation is also imperative between the government, post-secondary education institutions, research bodies, organised labour and civic societies.

5.2.1.2 The National Commission on Higher Education

The National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE), a framework for transformation (1996) emphasised cooperation for redress and development in the higher education sector (NCHE 1996:2). It also stressed that the present system was fragmented and proposed cooperation and partnerships between higher education and society (NCHE 1996:9). It proposed the following (NCHE:18):

> *Regional cooperation is an important strategy in overcoming some of the legacies of apartheid. It would cluster institutions across the traditional divide between historically white and historically black institutions. The Commission proposes that the HEC (Higher Education Council) should encourage the formation of non-statutory regional structures with a mix of internal and external stakeholders. Such structures could be consulted on the planning needs of the region, mergers, rationalisation, programmes distribution, sharing of resources and the development of institutional capacity.*

The NCHE (1996:10) also describes the mismatch between higher education outputs and national and regional needs in South Africa. Clear goals and priorities, planning and coordination are needed in order to eradicate the mismatch that existed between the different higher education institutions (NCHE 1996:69). Such clear goals may come in the form of regional consultation and criteria for the approval of institutional plans that may include resource sharing, collaboration and articulation between institutions and the development of a resource-based learning approach (NCHE 1996:13).

5.2.1.3 The Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education

The Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education (RSA DoE 1997b) followed the NCHE (1996). The central notion of White Paper 3 is that:

> *Higher education must be planned, governed and funded as a single national coordinated system, in order to overcome the fragmentation, inequality and*

*inefficiency which is the legacy of the past, and successfully address the
present and future challenges of reconstruction and development* (RSA
DoE:1997b:10).

According to the White Paper regional cooperation and collaboration are intended to enhance the
articulation of programmes, mobility of learners between institutions, sharing of resources,
cooperation to enhance scarce academic and technical staff, library and information facilities; and
to reduce programme duplication and overlap (Gibbons & Parekh 2001:12).

The White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997b:49) also made provision for incentive funding to support
regional cooperation between institutions. Up to now no incentives were received for funding.
Most of the consortia did not cooperate as expected. Each institution still has its own culture and
agenda and, as Gibbons and Parekh (2001:20) state, little cognisance had been taken of how
deeply interest had become vested in the forms and structures of institutions that had been
inherited from the apartheid state, and how differently institutional players would approach the
issues of transformation and redress. The result was intense competition and power struggles
between some institutions within certain consortia.

The state had to change from its original plan of voluntary regional consortia to a confirmed
national plan. It is a pity that the state did not invoke the argument of public accountability
sooner, and with this gave the kind of support and structure that could help the regional consortia
to succeed and lead to amalgamations. The following documents describe the 'change of heart'
of the state. It still encouraged regional consortia, but proposed a more vigorous transformation
of higher education institutions.

5.2.1.4 The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997

The Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 (RSA 1997) made provision for three forms of
institutional cooperation, viz., the merger of public higher education institutions (Section 23), the
merger of sub-divisions of public higher education institutions (Section 24), and cooperation
between public higher education institutions (Section 38). The Higher Education Act does not
make any commitment regarding funding for cooperative agreements, as the White Paper 3 did.

5.2.1.5 Towards a New Higher Education Landscape

The following document, **Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century**, Council on Higher Education (CHE), June 2000 describes the aspect of cooperation. Its main point of departure is the following:

> *The Task Team is convinced that the problems and weaknesses of the higher education system will not disappear on their own or be overcome by institutions on their own. They must be confronted and overcome in a systemic way* (CHE 2000:2).

This document also states that mergers or incorporations cannot be voluntary, but should be structured (CHE 2000:26). It is important to note that the CHE Report (2000:60) changes it viewpoint from voluntary cooperation to that of combination (merging) of institutions. Cooperation may eventually result in merging. During the transitional period between the National commission on higher education report (NCHE 1996) and the New higher education landscape (CHE 2000) the premise moved from cooperation, as an alternative or prelude to merger to merger, as the only option.

5.2.1.6 The National Plan for Higher Education

Regarding regional consortia, the National plan for higher education (RSA DoE 2001a) will not seek to formalise the role of regional consortia in relation to the Department of Education, but still believes that regional consortia may play a valuable role in facilitating and promoting regional collaboration (RSA DoE 2001a:84).

5.2.1.7 The Restructuring of the Higher Education System

In the *The Restructuring of the Higher Education System* (RSA DoE 2002a) document, inter-institutional collaboration at regional level in joint programme development and delivery between

institutions are mentioned, but the main emphasis is on the reduction of institutions. (RSA DoE
2002a:1.1 p2).   It also states that all regions have regional consortia.   The main problem,
according to the National Working Group (NWG), is that regional consortia are voluntary.   The
NWG states that certain incentives may be applied to promote regional consortia, for example
sanctions through utilising the programme approval and funding processes (RSA DoE 2002a:1.2
p2).   The document also states that unnecessary programme overlap and duplication, and other
forms of inefficiencies and waste still exist.   This may result in combinations at meso- and micro-
levels. [1]

Unfortunately, the NWG does not make any mention of financial incentives (just sanctions)
regarding regional collaboration.   The mergers of higher education institutions have been
officially proposed.   The first sector within higher education that were incorporated were the
colleges of education.

5.2.2 Incorporation of Colleges of Education

The transition from an education system that was segregated along ethnic lines, characterised by
programme   duplication,   inefficiencies   and   poor   articulation   between   institutions   and
programmes, to a single coordinated education system was and in not easy.   After investigating
the different sections of post-secondary education, the National commission on higher education
included teacher education in the higher education sector that had to transform into a single
coordinated system (NCHE 1996:86).

Before a college of education could become part of the higher education sector, it had to:
- be   incorporated   into   universities   and   technikons   (NCHE   1996:82),   thus   moved   from   a
  provincial to a national jurisdiction; or
- be established as an autonomous college of education, either as a single campus institution or
  as   a   multi-campus   institution   as   a   whole   and   not   in   individual   components   or   with

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- [1] Micro-level is the combination of certain programmes and meso-level is the combination
  of departments from different institutions.

satellites/campuses/sites of delivery. To qualify as an autonomous institution, a single campus or multi-campus college of education will require a minimum enrolment of at least 2000 full-time students (RSA DoE 1998:6-7).

Initially colleges of education were governed mainly by the Education Affairs Act (House of Assembly) Act 70 of 1988, but also by other laws applicable to the former Houses of Delegates and Representatives, the Education and Training Act and legislation of the former TBVC states (RSA DoE 1998:6,8). During the interim period between 1994 and the declaration of colleges as higher education institutions, various provinces had their own acts to govern colleges of education. One example was the Free State Teacher's Training Colleges Bill of 1996 that regulated the teachers' colleges in the Free State. The Higher Education Act took charge of a college of education when it was declared as an institution of higher education by the Minister (RSA 1997: 20:1-2).

The process of incorporation and rationalising colleges of education was a provincial responsibility as college personnel remained provincial employees until their respective colleges were declared institutions of higher education (RSA DoE 1998:7). It is important to note that, in most of the cases, college of education incorporations were initiated by the National Department of Education, as stated in the previous paragraph. This means the institutions did not have a self-assessment stage where the college decided to incorporate another institution. This stage was planned by the National Department of Education. The whole process of incorporation thus starts at the pre-merger strategic planning stage *(see stages in mergers *vide* 2.5).

5.2.2.1 Pre-merger strategic planning

A transitional committee (TC) coordinated the process of incorporation (RSA DoE 1998:20). Colleges of education were transferred to universities and technikons by the end of the financial year 1999/2000 (Niemann, Strydom & van der Linde 1999:15). The manner by which the incorporation took place, was by:

- Developing the necessary agreements between DoE and the Provincial Departments of Education (PDoE), including identifying their respective roles and responsibilities in the period prior to the incorporation of colleges into the higher education system. During this period the PDoEs continued to administer the colleges of education in their provinces.

- Developing a framework and a process for expediting the necessary negotiations with the labour unions regarding the transfer of staff from the employ of the state to that of the autonomous higher education institutions.

- Identifying the budgetary implications (including the costs of the incorporation process) and planning the transfer of the colleges of education budgets, including financial aid, from the provincial to the national budget vote.

- Developing a framework for the building of institutional, administrative, management and academic capacity (in particular, quality assurance).

The Minister of Education, after consultation with the Council for Higher Education and the Heads of Education Department Ministers (HEDCOM), decided to declare Colleges of Education subdivisions of universities or technikons (South African Teachers' Union 2000). This means that currently there are no more autonomous colleges of education in South Africa.

The following discussion focuses on the incorporation process of colleges of education. The incorporation of colleges of education in the Free State is used as an example. It started with the setting up of different task teams for preliminary investigations regarding above-mentioned assignments.

5.2.2.2 Pre-merger negotiations

The transitional period was characterised by the establishment of task teams, negotiations and uncertainties about what the future may hold. It also started the process of incorporation, because the initial planning was completed. These mentioned task teams had to represent all relevant stakeholders and were comprised of union representatives, colleges concerned, universities concerned and a representative of the Department of Education. These task teams were divided into three categories, namely academic planning, human resources, financial and physical resources task teams (Niemann, Strydom & van der Linde 1999:15-16).

- **The task team for academic planning**

The role of the task team for academic planning was to critically evaluate academic programmes regarding their effectiveness and efficiency, especially after a merger or incorporation. The task team had to concentrate on existing programmes and new programmes according to the NQF

requirements, identify overlapping of academic programmes, draw up possible scenarios with regards to needs of the teachers, staff and the needs concerning physical facilities, to name but a few.

- **The task team for Human resources**

The task team for human resources first of all had to investigate how many academic staff would be needed after incorporation of colleges of education. The task team concentrated on the post levels, age, qualifications, expertise and departmental affiliations of colleges of education. It also had to investigate the support staff component with reference to the post levels, age and nature of work. In this area labour legislation and trade unions played an important part. With the academic staff all trade unions were included in the investigation process to see if the incorporation process was fair.

- **Task team for financial and physical resources**

The task team responsible for financial and physical resources had to evaluate all the physical resources involved in the incorporation process. It also had to investigate the salary components that included the formula for staff allocation and the scope of salaries. Another important factor of investigation was the cost involved in the maintenance of physical resources. The income of the incorporated institution was also of vital importance because it would contribute to the future cash flow of the new merged institutions. This income included aspects such as student subsidies, class fees, and any other resources. Some logistical aspects also needed investigation. One example was the availability or lack of space to accommodate students, and community costs involved. In such a scenario, if an institution was closed in a small rural area, it may have some financial implications on the surrounding community.

5.2.2.3 Merger implementation

As stated in the introductory paragraphs of 5.2.3 some colleges of education were identified and declared higher education institutions by the end of the financial year 1999/2000. The remaining colleges of education would function in the further education and training sector (FET). The FET route was also a possibility to present more community-based and vocational-based education, thus providing numerous opportunities for some colleges of education (Dhladhla 2000:2). In the Free State Province, for example, there were seven colleges of education. Of these seven, three

were earmarked for higher education and the rest for the further education sector   The three
colleges earmarked for higher education were Thaba 'Nchu College of Education, Bloemfontein
College of Education and Tshiya College of Education (RSA FSDoE 1999:5; South African
Teachers' Union 2000:1).

As in the Australian model of mergers (Harman 2001) higher education institutions were given
an option to identify possible merger partners. An example is the colleges of education in the
Free State Province. The colleges were asked to give a preliminary option as to with which
university they wanted to merge, as stated in the minutes of the rationalisation committee
meeting of 24 May 1999 (RSA FSDoE 1999:5). It is interesting to note that only three of these
options materialised, namely Bonamelo and Sefikeng Colleges of Education becoming an FET
institution and Bloemfontein College of Education being incorporated into the University of the
Free State. Bloemfontein College of Education already used the facilities of the University of the
Free State and was, for all practical reasons, already part of that university. The initial option
given to the colleges, thus was not extended, because the final decision was in the hands of the
National Department of Education (RSA FSDoE 1999:5; South African Teachers' Union
2000:1).

The incorporation of colleges into universities and technikons had numerous implications in
academic planning, human resources and financial and physical planning divisions.

5.2.2.3.1   Implications on academic planning

The planning process of academic programmes is an arrangement between the incorporated
institutions (RSA FSDoE 1999:5; South African Teachers' Union 2000:1). An example is that of
Thaba 'Nchu College of Education and Vista University (Bloemfontein Campus).   Vista
University stated the following:

> *VU (Vista University) in not interested in expanding the current enrolment of
> the incorporated programmes* (Botha, Mokhaba, Schultz. & Acheampong
> 2000:2).

This clearly states that this college had no say in the incorporation process. A partner was selected for it (by the National Department of Education – *vide* 5.4.2.3.5) and the college had no option, but to abide by the "more dominant" partner's requests. The Incorporation of Colleges' document (RSA DoE 1998) does not prescribe the type of programmes to be offered by the incorporated institutions and states that the Technical Committee on the Norms and Standards for Teacher Education will address education curricula and accreditation (RSA DoE 1998:8). If a college is incorporated into another institution, then these two institutions will negotiate the different types of curricula offered. In other words, after incorporation or during the incorporation process, the institutions will decide which programmes will be offered at the new institution.

5.2.2.3.2   Implications on human resources

Academic and non-academic staff that were employed at a college of education were previously employed by the Provincial Department of Education and not budgeted for from the college's own budget. When incorporation took place between a university and a college of education, that employee's contract inevitably changed.

When incorporation took place between colleges of education and higher education institutions, there were serious staff implications for these staff members of colleges and financial implications to higher education institutions. Because of these implications, the following agreement was reached between the higher education institutions, the National Department of Education and the various trade unions regarding the status and position of college staff as noted in the PSCBC resolution 12 of 2000 (RSA DoE 2000:2).

A facilitation team negotiated with the receiving higher education institution (HEI) regarding the number and categories of posts needed. These posts were advertised:
- in a vacancy list closed to the college incorporated to that HEI; thereafter
- in an open vacancy list, with preference being given to serving personnel who are currently working in or have previously worked at a College of Education.

Employees employed at colleges of education received a severance package on resignation from the provincial education department. This package compensated the staff member for the change in conditions of service, and any dispense of the employer's obligations to such employees.

Educators that were not employed by a college of education, but were required to complete programme commitments, were absorbed by the province into a suitable substantive post, and then seconded for up to two years to offer programmes to pipeline students, such secondment was at the cost of the HEI, and at the end of the period the educator returned to his or her post. By agreement with the province concerned, the secondment may have been on a full time or part basis, with a *pro rata* payment of salary and benefits.

An employee who is not appointed to a post in an HEI:

- shall be absorbed by the province, in a suitable post, or

- may be offered a full severance package (RSA DoE 2000:2).

The movement of educators from the colleges of education to HEI, schools and the Provincial Department of Education was not always perceived well as stated in the article written by Hay *et al.* (2001). Staff had feelings of uncertainty and experienced a lot of anxiety (*vide* Chapter 6).

5.2.2.3.3   Implications on financial and physical resources

The Incorporation of Colleges document (RSA DoE 1998:23-24) states that the actual costs of running colleges of education should be determined. It also stated that, in order to determine the 1999/2000 budget, the costs necessary to facilitate the transition, such as capacity building, development of management and administrative systems, establishment of governance structures, etc. must also be taken into account. This clearly indicated that the Provincial Departments of Education received funds from the National Department of Education after each province had submitted the cost estimates of the above-mentioned criteria. In short, funds were made available for the incorporation of colleges of education into universities. The universities also made demands on the National Department of Education regarding funds. The incorporation of Thaba 'Nchu College of Education (TCE) by Vista university is a good example. Vista stated that the following improvements and provisions should be made (Botha *et al*. 2000:4-7).

- The upgrading of the academic and administrative infrastructure.

- The upgrading of the security at TCE.

- Provision should be made to cover the incidental but long-term operational expenses.

- Transport for staff and students between VU and TCE.

These costs exclude student income, subsidies, class fees, other resources and also the cost of staffing.

5.2.2.4 Concluding remarks on the incorporation of Colleges of Education

It is important to note that colleges of education were incorporated into universities. At first colleges of education were rationalised and then the remaining colleges were incorporated into universities. This implies that the college sector did not have a say in the entire process.

At first it seemed necessary to rationalise the college of education sector because there were 102 colleges in South Africa in 1992, which were not evenly distributed. These colleges were not always established due to educational needs, but merely to satisfy political aspirations. The staff of colleges generally accepted the rationalisation process of colleges of education (Hay *et al*. 2001:103). The problem arose with how rationalisation was approached. Ngwenya (2000:2-3) stated the following problems regarding the incorporation of colleges into higher education institutions at The Committee of College of Education Rectors of South Africa (CCERSA) conference in 2000:

- It was not amalgamation but incorporation into universities.

- The option of an autonomous College of Education was ruled out.

- Staff from colleges had to apply for posts at the university that incorporated them.

- The Department of Education did not protect the colleges' interests.

- Previously "white" colleges had close links with universities, making incorporation much easier for them.

- Few universities would employ staff of colleges of education.

- "Black" colleges were not highly regarded and yet excellent work was done in some of them. Some of them were well managed.

Problems existed in the college of education sector, for example it was expensive for the South African government, programme duplication and ineffective administrative practices existed. It also provided the education system of South Africa with quality teachers. It is important to note that teachers are primary agents in education. All teachers do not want to become academics; they want to teach. Should teacher education be part of higher or further education? Should it be with only one sector; or will a division between the further and higher education sector again result in programme duplication? A more viable solution may have been the transforming of colleges of education into technical colleges. Most of the colleges of education staff is more inclined to "fit" into the further education and training (FET) sector than as the university higher education and training (HET) sector.

5.2.3 The merger/incorporation of universities and technikons

Higher education institutions worldwide are undergoing major transformation that, in some cases, are irrevocably changing their long-standing nature, images, notions and traditions. The same is happening in South Africa. It is important to note that these changes did not just happen overnight. It that started with the publication of the National Commission on Higher Education in 1996 in which a single coordinated higher education system was proposed (NCHE 1996:8-9). That gained momentum with the incorporation of colleges into universities and technikons (*vide* 5.2.2). The next step was be to merge or incorporate some of the existing 21 universities and 15 technikons (NCHE 1996:29). The following discussion sheds light on the rationale for institutions to merge. It starts with the policy and legislative framework for the merging and transformation in the higher education sector.

5.2.3.1 Policy and legislative framework for transformation

Historically black institutions (HBI) were led by state control. Historically white institutions (HWI) had strong institutional autonomy (NCHE 1996:42) with own private university acts. The legal framework for the higher education sector was established by the Higher Education Act (RSA 1997). This act provided the legal basis for a single, national higher education system on the basis of the rights and freedoms of a democratic Constitution. This act replaced the Universities Act of 1955 (Act No. 61 of 1955), the Tertiary Education Act, 1988 (Act No. 66 of 1988), and the Technikons Act, 1993 (Act No. 125 of 1993). The Act left intact the private

university acts, which represent a legacy of the colonial and Commonwealth tradition of university governance (RSA DoE 1997b:36).

Apart from the above-mentioned acts, various official documentations were published on the transformation of the higher education sector. The following discussion will focus on the most important documentation leading this transformation strategy.

5.2.3.1.1 The National Commission on Higher Education: A framework for transformation (1996)

As stated in the introduction of this chapter, the National Commission on Higher Education: A framework for transformation (1996) provided the start for the merging of higher education institutions. The transformation of colleges is made clear with the following statement:

> *….Envisage the incorporation of colleges of education, nursing and agriculture into universities and technikons* (NCHE 1996:9, 82).

During this stage, the proposed merging of universities and technikons were not clear yet. The following statement suggests that the distinction between universities, technikons and colleges would be investigated:

> *At a later stage in this evolution, it may be decided whether the new system should retain the distinction between universities and technikons and colleges, change the nature of the distinction, and increase or decrease the number of institutional types* (NCHE 1996:16).

It should be stated that at that point the NCHE did not suggest that universities or technikons will merge in the future.

5.2.3.1.2 The Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa (No. 18207 of 1997)

The key goal of the White Paper 3 is to achieve a national, integrated, coordinated, and yet a differentiated higher education system (RSA DoE 1997b:19). These goals moved nearer to a

transformed higher education system. The White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997b) does not state that universities and technikons will merge in the future. White Paper 3 (RSA DoE 1997b) were followed by the Council on Higher Education's Size and Shape Report in 2000 (CHE 2000).

5.2.3.1.3   Towards a New Higher Educational Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the 21st Century. Size and Shape of Higher Education Task Team, Council on Higher Education (3 June 2000)

In late January 2000, the Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, requested the Council on Higher Education (CHE) to provide him with concrete proposals for the reshaping of the higher education system in South Africa. The CHE report (CHE 2000) stated that the higher education system in South Africa has a lack of coherence, coordination and specialisation. As a result the system fails to produce the necessary human resources such as quality graduates in science and engineering the country desperately needs (*City Press* 23 July 2000). It also states that the system is bedevilled by major inefficiencies (CHE 2000:15).

One of the inefficiencies identified by the report can be described as the geographic location of institutions. Another is the continued and increased fragmentation of the system because the higher education system does not function in a coordinated way. The report also identifies some of the major deficiencies that exist in the South African higher education system. Some examples are student throughput rates, graduation rates, student dropouts, student repetition and the retention of failing students, and unit cos. The skewed pattern of distribution of students in the various fields of study is also an area of concern, for example Science, Engineering and Technology, Business and Commerce and the Humanities and Education, the distribution of students in the various levels and fields of study also relating to race and gender, academic and administrative staff also displays extremely poor patterns of race and gender representation and distribution, most institutions have extremely low research outputs (CHE 2000:15) (*vide* 4.2.3). The merging of institutions will inevitably result in a more focused approach because more attention will be given to niche fields of study, for example science, engineering and technology and business studies. Duplication will be eliminated as far as possible because of the merger/incorporation of different institutions within the same region offering the same courses.

The result will be that various fields of studies will be concentrated where it is most needed (CHE 2000:15).

According to the CHE (2000:14-15) some of the conjunctional problems in higher education are the decline in student enrolments within the public higher education sector, the possible crippling effects on the ability of several institutions to continue to fund their activities because of the relationship between enrolments and funding, as well as their ability to attract more diverse sources of funding, the increase in public higher education institutions, many institutions have fragile governance capacity, the current higher education information systems are inadequate, especially in relation to information on finance matters. When different institutions merge or incorporate, they would not compete for the same funds. Resources could also be shared which may include human and physical resources.

To provide possible solutions to above-mentioned problems the Size and Shape report reclassified institutions according to their ability and the needs of the communities. In order to do so, it differentiated between five different types of institutions. These groups are (CHE 2000:5-6):

- Institutions which constitute the bedrock of the higher education system. The orientation and focus of these institutions would be on quality undergraduate programmes, limited postgraduate programmes up to a master's level and research related to curriculum, learning and teaching with a view to application.
- Institutions whose orientation and focus are quality undergraduate programmes, comprehensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the doctoral level, extensive research capabilities (basic, applied, strategic and developmental) across a broad range of areas.
- Institutions whose orientation and focus are quality undergraduate programmes, extensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the master's level, comprehensive postgraduate taught and research programmes up to the doctoral level, select areas of research (basic, applied, strategic and development).
- Institutions whose orientation and focus are dedicated distance education.
- Private higher education institutions.

It is important to note that these proposals were not accepted eventually. It was the start, though, of the merging of universities and technikons in South Africa.

The Task Team also provided some possible combinations for illustrative purposes that resulted in mixed reaction from different role-players. Some of the mixed reactions are:

➔ *Educate or die: writing's on the board for universities* by Cornia Pretorius (*Sunday Times* 23 July 2000). This article had a positive attitude towards the new educational dispensation by providing higher education to South Africans and abroad. The article also states that the university of tomorrow should be accountable for the taxpayer's money.

➔ *Dink mooi, min. Asmal! So kom hoër onderwys nie reg* by Flip Smit (*Rapport* 30 July 2000). The article asks if restructuring is really necessary. Transformation has occurred at most universities. Why must these universities change? All the universities are not ineffective.

It should be stated that the report drafted "a set of concrete proposals and not a set of general principles, which serve as guidelines for restructuring," (CHE report 2000:1).

In February 2001 the Ministry of Education responded to the Council on Higher Education's report in the National Plan for Higher Education (RSA DoE 2001a).

5.2.3.1.4 National Plan for Higher Education by the Ministry of Education (February 2001)

The National Plan for Higher Education (RSA DoE 2001a) was released on 5 March 2001. It brought the process of consultation to a close. The Plan is, therefore, not up for further consultation and certainly not for negotiation. This is not to suggest that there is no room for consultations on the detail of implementation or on the outcomes of the further investigations that are indicated in the National Plan (CHE annual report 2001:5).

When the Minister announced the establishment of the National Working Group in March 2001, following the CHE report on higher education, it had some key strategic objectives in mind. These objectives were (RSA DoE 2001a:6.4.1-6.4.2):

- to address how the number of institutions can be reduced and the form that the restructured institutions should take, and not whether the number of institutions can or should be reduced;

- to ensure that the reduction in the number of institutions does not result in the closure of existing sites of delivery; that is, it must be underpinned by the principle that higher education programmes would continue to be offered at all the current sites of delivery, but within new institutional and organisational forms and structures;

- to consider the full range of potential institutional arrangements, including the rationalisation of programme development and delivery through institutional collaboration, as well as different models of mergers;

- to consider the role and function of all existing institutions in the development of new institutional and organisational forms. It means that no institution should be exempted from the need to change fundamentally and from contributing to achieving a new higher educational landscape;

- to recommend the incorporation of the constituent campuses of Vista University into appropriate existing higher education institutions within each region, given the decision to unbundle Vista University. This does not include the distance education centre of Vista University (VUDEC), which will be incorporated into a single dedicated distance education institution through the merger of the University of South Africa (UNISA) and Technikon Southern Africa (TSA);

- to Merge the Natal Technikon and ML Sultan Technikon;

- to incorporate the Qwa-Qwa branch of the University of the North into the University of the Free State;

- to consider the following regional demarcations for the purpose of the investigation:
    - Eastern Cape;
    - Free State
    - KwaZulu-Natal
    - Gauteng
    - Northern Province
    - North West
    - Western Cape

The NWG was required to complete its investigation and to submit its recommendations to the Minster by no later than the end of December 2001.

The National Plan is a direct response to the CHE Size and Shape Report and embraces most of the CHE's recommendations, but differs in some key areas. The CHE Report (2001:9) states some examples. They are:

- The model of institutional differentiation. Whereas the CHE argued for differentiating institutions by allocating specific mandates and missions to them, the Ministry opts to create a new institutional configuration by missions.

- A second difference is the strategy for creating a new landscape. The CHE expressed reservations about relying too strongly on funding and quality assurance in creating a new HE landscape. The Ministry, however, reasserts the central role of funding.

In general the National Plan was well received by the higher education (HE) stakeholders. Some areas of concern were, according to the CHE report (2001:9):

- insufficient provision for institutional redress;

- not taking the impact of HIV/AIDS into account on the student participation in HE;

- the capacity of the Department of Education to cope with the implementation schedule of the National Plan;

- the Technikon Principals expressed concern about a statement stating that technikons as institutions' primary function is still to provide career-oriented programmes at diploma level. They feared that this would restrict the organic development that was occurring in the offering of degree and postgraduate programmes in a number of technikons;

- the proposed funding framework would have to be analysed before definitive conclusions could be made around some aspects of the National Plan.

These were still proposals by the Minister and not the final merging combinations. In the beginning of 2002 the NWG completed their task. This lead to The Restructuring of the Higher Education System: Report of the National Working Group (2002).

5.2.3.1.5   The Restructuring of the Higher Education System: Report of the National Working Group (RSA DoE 2002a)

This report represents the National Working Group's (NWG) recommendations to the Minister of Education on appropriate arrangements for consolidating the provision of higher education on a regional basis through establishing new institutional and organisational forms, including reducing the number of higher education institutions.

The NWG's recommendations were two-fold. At first it had general recommendations and second a set of proposals and recommendations on the consolidation of higher education. Here are some of the general recommendations (RSA DoE 2002a:Executive summary-2):

- There is room for regional collaboration, but is should be promoted by applying an appropriate mix of incentives and sanctions though the utilisation of programme approval and funding processes outlined in the National Plan for Higher Education.
- Universities and technikons should continue to operate as higher education institutions, but it did not support the suggestion that technikons be renamed universities of technology. An alternative may be "institute of technology" (NWG).
- There is a place for comprehensive institutions under certain circumstances and conditions.
- Colleges of agriculture and nursing should be incorporated into the higher education sector.
- Distance education programmes at traditionally residential institutions should be strictly regulated.
- Satellite campuses should also be regulated and stop their unplanned proliferation.
- Various new institutional and organisational should be formed to consolidate higher education provision. The total mergers would reduce the higher education institutions in South Africa from 31 to 21. The following table provides a breakdown of the NWG's proposals. Take note that the regional divisions are still the same as proposed by the National plan for higher education (RSA DoE 2001a).

Table 5.2   Proposed mergers/incorporations of higher education institutions according to the National Working Group (NWG 2002).

1. Eastern Cape
Port Elizabeth Technikons, University of Port Elizabeth and the Port Elizabeth campus of Vista University to be merged resulting in a single comprehensive institution offering both university- and technikon-type programmes
Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon to be merged with two primary sites in East London and Umtata
The University of Transkei is not suitable and should be disestablished. Its infrastructure should be utilised by the merged technikon and as a learning centre by the new Open Learning University of South Africa
The University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University and the medical school of the University of Transkei should be merged into one unitary campus.
2. Free State
Technikon Free State and the University of the Free State to be retained as separate institutions, with priority accorded to further transformation focused on equity and access.
The Bloemfontein campus of Vista University to be incorporated into the University of the Free State.
The Welkom Campus of Vista University to be incorporated into Technikon Free State
Consideration should be given to merging the nursing and agricultural colleges of the province with either the University of the Free State or Technikon Free State.
3. Gauteng
Rand Afrikaans University, the University of Pretoria and the University of the Witwatersrand to be retained as separate institutions, with priority accorded to further transformation focused on equity and access, as well as collaboration in programme development and delivery.
Technikon Northern Gauteng (TNG), Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria (TP) to be merged with two sites, i.e. the TNG and TP sites.
Technikon Witwatersrand to be retained as a separate institution, with priority accorded to regional collaboration with other institutions, especially in engineering.
Vaal Triangle Technikon to be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the infrastructure of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University.
Mamelodi campus of Vista University to be incorporated into the University of Pretoria.
Rand Afrikaans University, the University of the Witwatersrand and Technikon Witwatersrand to propose how best the facilities of the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University can be used to facilitate access.
The recent distance education developments at the University of Pretoria and at Pretoria Technikon should be viewed and where appropriate discontinued.

4. Kwazulu-Natal
MI Sultan and Technikon Natal merger should be finalised.
Mangosuthu Technikon to be merged with the new technikon.
University of Durban-Westville and University of Natal to be merged.
University of Zululand to be retained but with a changed mission prioritising technikon-type programmes with limited number of university-type programmes, with growth in the Richards Bay area.
Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand to be used by the merged technikon.
5. North West
The Potchefstroom University for CHE and the University of the North-West should merge to form one unitary multi-campus institution for the North West Province.
As part of this merger, the Vaal Triangle campus of Potchefstroom University should be retained and its telematic programmes regulated within the provisions of new government policy in this regard.
The nursing and agricultural colleges of the province should be incorporated into the new institution.
The students and staff (but not the facilities) of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University should be incorporated into the new institution.
6. Northern Province
University of the North, University of Venda and the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA) to be merged, with priority accorded to the development of technikon-type programmes.
All the colleges of nursing and agriculture of the province should be incorporated into the new institutions.
Staff and students of the Sebokeng campus of Vista University to be incorporated into the merged university.
7. Western Cape
University of Cape Town, University of Stellenbosch and Cape Technikon to be retained as separate institutions, with priority accorded to equity and access, as well as collaboration in programme development and delivery, in particular, a single teaching platform for the health sciences.
Peninsula Technikon and the University of the Western Cape to be merged into comprehensive institution offering both technikon- and university-type programmes.

It was also proposed that colleges of agriculture and nursing be integrated into and administered as part of the higher education system and form part of the merger proposals. A very interesting recommendation is that some institutions will merge, while others are to be incorporated into universities and technikons. The implication is that the incorporated institution are seen as not so important as the incorporating institution. Negotiations will also be handled as such, not respecting the incorporated institutions' programmes, and staff, to name but view aspects.

The NWG report does not provide details on how the mergers/incorporations should take place. It only states that it needs the commitment of government to make available the necessary financial resources to facilitate the amalgamation process. The second precondition for the successful implementation of the merger/incorporation process is the commitment and political will of the Government to restructure (RSA DoE 2002a:Concluding-1-2).

The NWG is also of the opinion that the establishment of a social plan, as proposed by the Council on Higher Education's report, provides a framework for addressing the human resource implications, which are critical to the success of the merger process. This includes developing measures to minimise job losses through staff qualifications through training programmes and developing a process for ensuring compliance with the obligations of the Labour Relations Act (RSA DoE 2002a:Concluding-3). One of the shortfalls of the report to the Minister of Education is that it does not indicate the process of merger/incorporation or time frames when the merger/incorporation process should be completed.

After the appointment of the National working group, the Ministry of Education had to comment on its findings to propose a new institutional landscape for higher education in South Africa.

5.2.3.1.6 Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education (21 June 2002)

Professor Kader Asmal, Minister of Education commended the Ministry of Education's findings regarding the National Working Group (NWG) in its report, *Transformation and restructuring: a new institutional landscape for higher education* on 21 June 2002 (RSA DoE 2002a). In this report the Ministry stated that the NWG had successfully discharged its mandate as outlined in its terms of reference. The higher education sector raised two concerns regarding the findings of the NWG:

- The NWGs focus was too narrowly on mergers, rather than considering the full spectrum of potential institutional arrangements, in particular, programme collaboration and rationalisation. In this regard, it should be pointed out that the NWG was asked to advise on "how" the number of institutions could be reduced and not on whether the number of institutions could or should be reduced. While this does not preclude the findings regarding

collaboration and rationalisation, it is not an alternative to merger, as implied by some responses, given the NWGs terms of reference (RSA DoE 2002a:no.2.1).

- That the NWGs consultative process was inadequate. The Ministry stated in this regard that the consultative process complied with formal requirements and that the role of the NWG was not to negotiate its proposals with the affected institutions.

The NWG's approach was also consistent with the National Plan. The National Plan argues that:

> *…there is no single factor that underpins the case for mergers or for new institutional and organizational forms. Instead, there is a range of factors linked to the specific context of different groups of institutions. For example, the historically black institutions may well differ from that of merging two small institutions. In the one case, the purpose may be that of overcoming the racial fragmentation of the higher education system. In the other, it may be that of achieving economies of scale and/or scope. In yet other cases, the rationale may be that of streamlining governance and management structures and improving administrative systems. Or it may be a combination of all of these factors* (RSA DoE 2001a:88).

Regarding the merger proposals, the New institutional landscape (RSA DoE 2002b:no.2.2) agrees with the following suggestions made by the NWG:

- The consolidation of the number of higher education institutions from 36 to 21. this includes the proposed mergers previously identified in the National plan for higher education (NPHE), namely
  - ➢ The establishment of a single distance education institution through merging the University of South Africa (UNISA), Technikon South Africa (TSA) and the distance education campus of Vista University (VUDEC).
  - ➢ The merger of ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, which came into effect on 1 April 2002 with the establishment of the Durban Institute of Technology.
  - ➢ The incorporation (and not merger) of the Qwa-Qwa campus of the University of the North into the University of Free State.

- The Ministry disagreed with the following proposals (RSA DoE 2002b:no.2.2):

  ➢ The proposed merger of Peninsula Technikon and the University of the Western Cape.

  ➢ The proposed merger of the University of Fort Hare, Rhodes University and the Medical School of the University of the Transkei.

  ➢ The proposal to leave the Rand Afrikaans University as a separate institution.

  ➢ The proposal to leave Technikon Witwatersrand as a separate institution.

  ➢ The proposal relating to the incorporation of the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University.

  ➢ The proposal that the infrastructure of Technikon North-West should not be retained.

The Ministry's proposals that differed from the NWGs, are as follows (RSA DoE 2002b:no.3.1-3.8.3):

- The University of Fort Hare should be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the East London campus of Rhodes University and the Health Sciences Faculty of the University of Transkei. It should focus on expanding access in the East London area, which is in line with the designation of East London as an industrial development zone by the Provincial Government.

- Rhodes University should be retained as a separate institution in Grahamstown.

- The Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon Witwatersrand should be merged to form a comprehensive institution, incorporating the East Rand and Soweto campuses of Vista University.

- The three technikons in the Tshwane metropolitan area, namely Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North-West and Technikon Pretoria should be merged.

- The University of the Western Cape should be retained as a separate institution, incorporating the Dental School of the University of Stellenbosch.

- Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon should be merged.

According to the New institutional landscape (RSA DoE 2002b:no.4) the new institutional landscape would comprise eleven universities, two of which would be expected to develop career-focused technikon-type programmes to address regional needs, six technikons, four comprehensive institutions, three of which would be established through the merger of a

technikon and a university and one through the redevelopment and refocusing of an existing university, and two National Institutes for Higher Education.

With the creation of a new institutional landscape, some clarification is required about how the creation will take place. This implies the creation of different types of institutions as well as the implementation process of the new institutions. The following section focuses on such a process, starting with types of institutions, the different merger models and also how collaboration between institutions can be established.

- **Comprehensive institutions**

A comprehensive institution is established through the merger of a university and a technikon. The proposal of the Ministry is of the intention to strengthen the provision of technikon programmes through ensuring that technikon programmes are available throughout the country. There are concerns about "academic drift". The Ministry stated that "great care" should be taken to prevent academic drift towards university programmes at the expense of technikon programmes in the comprehensive institutions (RSA DoE 2002b:no.5).

- **Merger models**

The NWG proposed that the merger of higher education institutions should take the form of unitary mergers. The main argument against unitary mergers seems to be that the institutions would lose their specific academic image that could, in turn, have an adverse effect on their national and international relationships. Such a merger would give the opportunity for a strong leadership to develop a new academic image and organisational identity, which could inspire staff, attract students and ensure the continuation of national and international partnerships. The federal model seems to be inappropriate because it would require the establishment of an additional administrative and government structure. The federal structures are also not suitable given the fragmentation and inequalities between the historically black and historically white institutions, which are a legacy of apartheid (RSA DoE 2002b:no.6).

The argument that voluntary mergers are more likely to be successful than mandatory mergers were not accepted by the Ministry, because to date there has been little or no collaboration in relation to broader policy goals such as reducing programme duplication and organisational

forms. The Ministry also stated that voluntary mergers were unlikely to succeed in South Africa
because of the deep-seated historical divides along racial lines, which continue to bedevil the
higher education system (RSA DoE 2002b:no.6).

- **Programme collaboration and rationalisation**

The Ministry identified certain areas where programme collaboration should take place. The
continued funding of the identified programmes from the 2004 financial year would be subject to
programme collaboration and rationalisation by the end of that year. The Ministry will determine
the framework for programme collaboration and rationalisation. The Ministry also proposes
some rationalisation of programmes. They are:

> ➢ The Dentistry Schools of the University of the Western Cape and the University of
> Stellenbosch should be merged into a single school, located at the University of the
> Western Cape.

> ➢ The University of Cape Town and the University of Stellenbosch should discontinue
> offering undergraduate programmes in nursing education. These programmes should
> be offered by the University of the Western Cape and the technikon established
> through the merger of Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon.

> ➢ The Ministry will also requested the Council on Higher Education to investigate the
> role and proliferation of Master of Business Administration (MBA) programmes, to
> advise on the rationalisation of these programmes (RSA DoE 2002b:no.7).

- **Institutional three-year "rolling" plans: Equity and Access**

The Ministry had proposed various target areas to change the size and shape of the higher
education system. These areas include:

> ➢ Increasing the overall participation rate form the current 5 percent to 20 percent.

> ➢ Shifting the balance in enrolment from 49 percent to 40 percent in the humanities;
> from 26 percent to 30 percent in business and commerce; from 25 percent to 30
> percent in science, engineering and technology.

> ➢ Enhancing the curriculum to respond to changing needs.

> ➢ Ensuring equity and access, especially in programmes in which black and women
> students are under-represented.

➢   Ensuring equity of outcomes through developing academic development strategies to address unacceptable dropout and failure rates, especially among black students.

➢   Addressing employment equity through measures to mentor, train and support young black and women academics.

➢   Sustaining existing, as well as building new research capacity (RSA DoE 2002b:no.8).

- **Implementation process**

Various preconditions are needed for the successful implementation of the restructuring process. Some of these preconditions relate directly to the commitment of government, particularly relating to the political and financial commitment. The Ministry accepts that to restructure, additional resources would be needed. These resources should be utilised to cover administrative and other direct costs linked to the merger processes, capacity building initiatives that may relate to administrative and management skills as well as academic capacity building and to lighten the debt burden of institutions. The Ministry is committed to covering the direct financial costs of the mergers, as well as to ensure that the merged institutions are financially sustainable (RSA DoE 2002b:no.9). Another precondition for the successful implementation of restructuring relates to the role of the higher education institutions. The institutions have to be fully committed to the restructuring process (RSA DoE 2002b:no.9).

For the restructuring process to be successful would require tremendous commitment from government as well as the higher education community in South Africa. It would not be easy, but may be successful if the physical factors, as stated above, are taken into account, as well as the human factor that is almost always neglected. In the New Institutional Landscape no mention is made of how staff would be supported before, during and after the mergers. What about incorporations? Staff of the incorporated institutions would have almost no protection against the incorporating institution. What about the process of integration? Did the merger management teams consider the psychological effect what the process has on staff?

The following section contains the final merging/incorporating proposals in terms of the Higher Education Act of 1997 (RSA 1997).

5.2.3.1.7   Final merging proposals by the Ministry of Education in terms of the Higher

Education Act, 1997 (Act No, 101 of 1997)

The Ministry of Education announced the following mergers and incorporations:

- **Mergers to take place as from January 2004 are:**
  - ➢ The University of Durban-Westville with the University of Natal.
  - ➢ The University of North-West with the University of Potchefstroom and the incorporation of students and staff of the Sebokeng Campus of Vista University.
  - ➢ Northern Gauteng Technikon with North-West Technikon with Technikon Pretoria.
  - ➢ The University of South Africa with Technikon South Africa and the incorporation of the distance education campus (VUDEC) of Vista University.

Except for mergers, certain institutions are required to be incorporated into other. The following section list these institutions.

- **The following incorporations should take place:**
  - ➢ The University of Fort Hare to incorporate the East London campus of Rhodes University.
  - ➢ The incorporation of all the Vista University campuses with the following institutions:
    - i)   Port Elizabeth campus with the University of Port Elizabeth;
    - ii)   East Rand and Soweto campuses with the Rand Afrikaans University;
    - iii)   Sebokeng campus with Vaal Triangle technikon (only the infrastructure);
    - iv)   Mamelodi campus with the University of Pretoria;
    - v)   Bloemfontein campus with the University of the Free State;
    - vi)   Welkom campus with the Free State Technikon;
    - vii)   The administrative function of the whole Vista University would cease to exist after the incorporation process.

Apart from the mergers that had to take place by January 2004 and the mentioned incorporations, certain institutions may merge not later than January 2005. The following section provides a list of these institutions.

- **Mergers to take place as from January 2005 are:**
  - ➢ Cape Technikon with Peninsula Technikon;
  - ➢ University of Port Elizabeth with the Port Elizabeth Technikon;
  - ➢ Rand Afrikaans University with Technikon Witwatersrand;
  - ➢ University of the North with the Medical University of South Africa (MEDUNSA);
  - ➢ Border Technikon with East Cape Technikon with the University of Transkei;
  - ➢ Durban Institute of Technology with Magosuthu Technikon with Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand.

- **Plan of action for mergers/incorporations**

Various institutions have done a lot regarding the reconstruction process of higher education institutions. The incorporation process will lead to various challenges for example, in the case of the merger between Rand Afrikaans University and Technikon Witwatersrand and the incorporation of the Vista campuses of Soweto and the East Rand, between 30 000 and 40 000 students will be registered in 2005 (*Rapport* 25 May 2003:18).

The incorporations and mergers was published during September 2003 in the Government Gazette. This would require that all the plans for incorporations and mergers should be ready. The following information had to be available by the end of June 2003:
  - ➢ The name of the new institution;
  - ➢ the address of the new institution;
  - ➢ the establishing date of the new institution; and
  - ➢ the nominations for appointment to the transitional council.

When looking at the law implications of the mergers and incorporations, the Higher Education Act of 1997 (RSA 1997), in particular Articles 23 and 24 as amended by Act 63 of 2002 (Act No. 63 of 2002) (*Rapport* 25 May 2003:18) these documents indicates that institutions have to take responsibility for the mergers and incorporations themselves.

To strategise the whole process of merger, Botha (2001:273-280) drafted a possible merger model. She used mergers in the private sector as a frame of reference, because mergers are not a

common phenomenon in the South African higher education (Botha 2001:274). The following section contains an adaptation of Botha's model. The different steps she used are categorised in the different merger/incorporation phases as described in the phases in mergers or incorporations (*vide* 2.5).

- **Institutional self-assessment**

Top management decides whether the possibility of a merger is to be investigated. If so, an internal investigating committee is established. If a merger is forced, the top management will not investigate the possibility of a merger, as it is in the South African scenario – the Ministry of Education decided. The institution then starts with its strategic planning for the merger.

- **Pre-merger strategic planning**

The investigating committee assesses the institution, determining its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis or something similar). Whether a merger is forced or not, institutions will assess their future partners. If institutions are not convinced that a merger will be successful, they may decide to cancel, if they had a choice in the merger.

The investigating committee makes recommendations to top management about whether a merger would be to the advantage of the institution, informed by the previous assessment. When a merger is forced, the recommendations may be given to the Ministry of Education, for example. That does not mean that the Ministry of Education will accept the recommendations. The next step is to start with the negotiation process.

- **Pre-merger negotiations**

Communication with the constituency of the institution is imperative at this stage. Inputs must be invited and considered. After the inputs of the different stakeholders have been received, the investigating committee will determine if a merger is a viable option. The investigating committee will then identify a number of potential merger partners, arranged in priority order. This is only an option if a merger is not determined by an outside body (e.g. the Ministry of Education).

The investigating committee then drafts a basic proposal document, with variations tailored to potential partners, as a merger scenario with anyone of them would be unique. This would not be necessary in a forced merger, because the outside body already would have determined the viability of the merger in a previous investigation.

A merger negotiating delegation approaches the institutions that appears at the top of the priority list. If they are not receptive, the next one is approached. In the case of a forced merger, negotiations will still take place, but it would not be necessary to look for another partner.

Once a potential partner has responded positively, and set up a joint task team under the leadership of a project manager. When the joint task team is established, the merger can commence.

- **Merger implementation**

Communication with the constituencies of both institutions must take place at this stage. The joint task team conducts a process of due diligence in identifying the synergies of the partners and the goals of the merger.

The constituencies will now comment on the synergies and goals. This will enable the joint task team to identify all relevant issues and set up joint sub-teams to deal with each issue. The issues would include at least institutional culture, academic programmes, personnel, structure, governance, finance, facilities, support services and client base. The joint sub teams report to the joint task team and a roll-out plan, with time frames, is created, informed by the joint sub-teams' reports.

The constituencies may now comment on the roll-out plan. Once the roll-out plan is finalised, the merger is announced and the plan is set in motion. The project manager and the joint task team continuously monitor the progress and efficiency of the plan. Adaptations are made if and when necessary. Quality assurance forms part of the monitoring. It is important that regular feedback is provided to constituencies. After the actual process, post-merger consolidation and community building may be the most vital stage of the merger.

- **Post-merger consolidation and community building**

Post-merger integration is continuously facilitated. It is also important that sound management principles are adhered to throughout the merger process. The final step of the actual process is closure. When it is reached, it is communicated to the different constituencies. During the merger processes, the ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal engaged in a voluntary merger and established the Durban Institute of Technology. This merger came into effect on 1 April 2002. It is interesting to note that the new institution, the Durban Institute of Technology again has been earmarked to merge with Mangosuthu Technikon and the Umlazi campus of the University of Zululand (RSA DoE 2002b:no.2.2, no.9; RSA 1997).

The incorporation of the Qwa-Qwa branch of the University of the North into the University of the Free State came into effect in on 1 January 2003. This was incorporation and not a merger as mentioned in the New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education (RSA DoE 2002b:no.2.2). Not all the staff at the University of the North, Qwa-Qwa branch retained their positions and/or salaries, but no staff member at the University of the Free State was affected. According to some of the feedback received most of the staff at the University of the Free State did not even know what was going on regarding the incorporation of the Qwa-Qwa branch of the University of the North (*vide* Chapter 8).

The merger process in the higher education sector is not yet completed, as can be seen in the implementation plan of the final proposals for mergers (RSA 1997).

5.3   CONCLUSION

The South African higher education sector is currently being restructured from 36 to 21 institutions. This restructuring takes place between universities, between universities and technikons and between technikons. The mergers are also between institutions of different cultural backgrounds. One of the mergers is also the establishment of a single distance higher education campus for universities and technikons.

Various factors should take cognisance when trying to understand the magnitude of the task at hand. To merge the administrative capacity of, for example, the various distance education sectors; the distance education branch of Vista University, the University of South Africa and Technikon South Africa, may be a difficult exercise. That may be why the establishment of common standards for higher education, as proposed by the New Academic Policy (RSA DoE 2001b) is so important. Articulation between institutions and different qualifications becomes easier for the student. The recognition of different types of qualifications also becomes more uniform in South Africa.

The merger and incorporation of physical and administrative infrastructure within the higher education sector is, and will be difficult, but with a well-defined and planned strategy may succeed. The problem arises when the human factor is not taken into account. Do the higher education institutions consider the input of staff or is staff seen as part of the physical infrastructure that has to be "managed" and "planned" in order to succeed in the merger? Various lessons can be learned from higher and further education mergers abroad, but also from the private sector. For lecturers, academic and non-academic staff the whole transformation exercise was and still is painful. It causes feelings of insecurity, the loss of drive because promotion possibilities became less, and relocation to name but a few. Students are also affected. The pipeline students at colleges had to complete their existing courses. The following chapter concentrates on the impact mergers have on staff.

<center>*****</center>

Chapter 6

Staff experiences during a higher education merger or incorporation

6.1   INTRODUCTION

*Judgements cannot be made about any culture except from
within it (Peck 1997:199).*

The impact that a merger has on higher education and corporate staff is usually
enormous. If it is an incorporation and not a merger, the impact is even greater
because the "subordinate" institution is viewed as inferior by the senior merging
partner. During the early 1990s many chief executive officers of companies
involved in mergers and acquisitions started to recognise that their biggest
challenge in achieving the desired benefits, came from accommodating staff (Price
1999:39). Veldsman (2002:27) and Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:56) confirm that
people-related problems prevent a full third of all mergers and acquisitions from
meeting financial expectations, and that organisational dynamics clearly play a
significant role in the ultimate success or failure of any corporate marriage.

A critical consideration is that each merger is unique and that every merger has its
own human or staff problems and solutions to the problems. This chapter
describes the typical problems of staff in merging and identifies strategies to deal
with them.

Before problems can be addressed, a clear background towards human motivation
and needs is necessary. Various points of view are discussed to try to understand
why individuals think the way they do. This section is followed by a discussion of
the psychological impact change has on individuals. The chapter concludes with
the problems experienced during a merger and proposes strategies to alleviate
some of them. The literature used as a basis for this chapter has been derived from
the corporate world and is not so much about higher education. It should be noted
that the experiences gained from the corporate world should be adapted for
mergers and incorporations in the higher education sector.

6.2   PSYCHOLOGICAL   VIEWPOINTS   ON   HUMAN MOTIVATION AND NEEDS

Maslow's theory of sequential development describes how an individual is motivated. He states that an individual's motivation is based on the satisfaction of his/her needs. Maslow utilises a pyramidal hierarchy to illustrate the needs an individual has. At the bottom of the pyramid are physiological needs that are followed by the needs for safety, love and belonging, self-esteem and finally, self-actualisation. According to him, lower order needs, at the bottom of the pyramid, should be met before consideration can be given to the higher order needs at the top. The first two needs, physiological and safety, are essential for human survival. The satisfaction of the next level of needs, love and belonging and self-esteem, is essential for a sense of adequacy and psychological health. Self-actualisation, at the top of the pyramid, is the ultimate human goal. However, it appears that many people fail to achieve this phase (Maslow 1987:17-22).

Herzberg (Kenrick 1993:1499) identified two separate, but important, areas that have to be taken into account as factors that influence people's potential to work effectively. These factors are hygiene and motivation. Motivational factors give rise to satisfaction and are mainly accomplished within the task itself. Examples are feelings of accomplishment, recognition, responsibility, personal growth and development.

There is a similarity between Herzberg's motivator and Maslow's self-esteem and self-actualisation needs. The similarity is that motivators, as with self-esteem, were found to be associated with work that offers challenges, scope and autonomy, work in which workers were stretched to the limit of their abilities (Kenrick 1993:1499).

Maslow's needs for safety and order come to the fore in times of mergers. Individuals' safety and order are threatened by the announcement of a merger. Managers must be on the alert for these individuals' needs and be prepared to stimulate and maintain motivation. Maslow and Herzberg stress the importance of self-esteem, achievements and the recognition by others of a person's worth. It is important that one's work encourages personal growth and development, allows self-actualisation through happiness, fulfilment, a state of perfection and goal attainment. In times of merging, it becomes extremely difficult to achieve all of these, due to uncertainty and "fears" of the unknown and a job loss. Even in this time the manager should help the employee to strive for self-actualisation (Kenrick 1993:1500). According to Kenrick (1993:1500) it will depend largely on the managers' style and leadership ability and whether or not they themselves have come to terms with working in a complex transitional phase. The possibility that some employees might be placed at a job on a lower level for instance, may lead to a loss of self-esteem and they may well have become demotivated themselves, and it may prove to be difficult to reverse this process.

McGregor's alternative Theory Y (Kenrick 1993:1501) suggests that physical and mental effort in work is as natural as in play. Committed people will exercise self-direction and self-control in working towards objectives. Commitment to objectives is related to the rewards associated with fulfilment. The capacity to exercise a relatively high degree of imagination, ingenuity and creativity in solving problems is widely, not narrowly distributed in the population. This also means that human interactions as a means of increasing morale are very important. Thomason (Kenrick 1993:1501) indicates that giving increased job interest, recognition, opportunity for achievement, and social esteem may increase employee's morale. Plans such as these could possibly include job enlargement, job enrichment and various participation arrangements.

Maslow's hierarchy of needs (Maslow 1987:18) clearly indicates what drives staff to perform in the workplace. These are financial, security, social, status and

recognition advancement and achievement awards. Kenrick (1993:1502) states that achievement awards are said to give workers a sense of fulfilment and self-actualisation. It is, thus, the duty of managers of mergers and incorporations to see how they may help staff towards self-actualisation during and after a merger.

When Maslow and Herzberg's theories are examined, one can deduce that a merger or incorporation has the potential to threaten the basic functionality of an employee. That functionality exists in the individual's self-esteem or self-actualisation as described by Maslow. The individual's cause of motivation, according to Herzberg, is then eliminated, because he/she has no security for the future. This means that the individual has to restore his/her motivational ability. The basic esteem needs, according to Maslow (1987:21), will range from feelings of self-confidence, worth, strength, capacity, adequacy, and of being useful and necessary in the world, to feelings of inferiority, of weakness, and of helplessness.

For the individual to be motivated again and to have a feeling of worth, it is important to go through all the necessary emotional stages in order to deal with what happened in the workplace.

6.3   THE PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE

Change is inevitable during a merger. When changes occur within an organisation, the employees will be affected in one way or another. According to Galosy (1990:90) a merger is not only a loss of position. Even more important is the prospect of facing the unknown. When companies or higher education institutions merge, employees face many losses, including the following:

- Hierarchical status – often the acquirer becomes the 'boss';
- knowledge of the institution – procedures and people change;
- trusted subordinates – people tend to be shifted around;

- network – new connections are formed;

- control – acquirers usually make the decisions;

- future – no one knows what will happen;

- job definition – most things are in flux for a while;

- physical location – geographic relocation is typical in mergers; and

- friends or peers – often people resign, are fired, or are transferred.

Such a merging experience will create different stages of emotional acceptance within individuals. These stages of acceptance will differ from individual to individual. Kübler-Ross (1969) describes in her book *On death and dying* how people perceive loss. She identifies five stages of managing a loss. These stages are denial and isolation, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance.

Different authors adapted the Kübler-Ross model, for example Brousseau (1989:73), Somers and Bird (1990:39), Devine (*s.a.*:12), and Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:58) to describe how employees perceive change within an organisation. Devine (*s.a.*:12), and Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:58) provided an indebt breakdown of the psychological experience of employees' perspectives stemming from these. Figure 6.1 depicts the transitional curve of the emotional syndrome during a merger.

THE TRANSITIONAL CURVE OF MERGER EMOTIONS
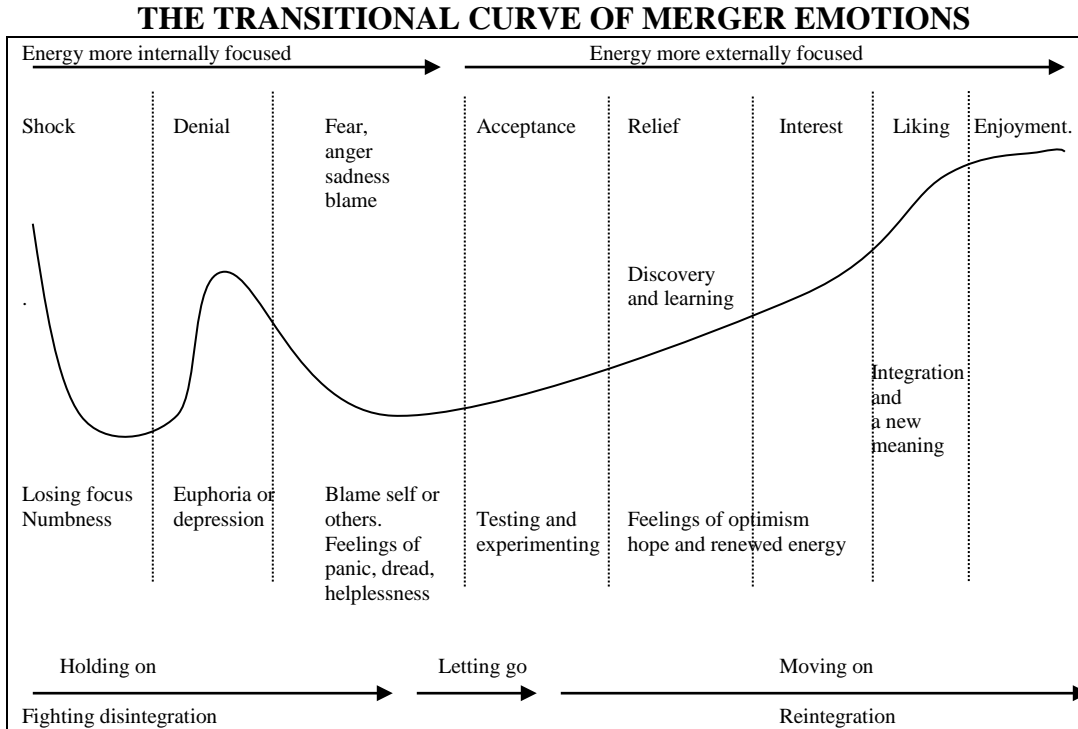
Figure 6.1   The transitional curve of emotions experienced during a merger (Based on the work of Kübler-Ross 1969 and adapted from Devine *s.a.*:12, and Hunsaker and Coombs 1988:58)

During the first reactional stage employees tend to channel their energy internally. They hold on to what they have and fight integration. Typical emotions during this stage are:

- Shock – staff or employees are shocked to hear of such a rumour.

- Denial – the individual does not believe the rumour; he/she also may react positively or negatively.

- Fear, anger, sadness and blame – people fear that they may lose their jobs. They may feel betrayed and may experience depression. They may blame management, government, a new political dispensation or even themselves, and may also feel helpless.

After the reactional stage, employees tend to let go of the past. This stage may be called an acceptance stage. During this stage the employees tend to channel their energy externally. They move on and go for reintegration. Emotions during this stage are:

- Acceptance – employees may feel at some stage that it is futile to fight the merger and accept it. This may result in feelings of relaxation and calmness.

- Relief – people will realise that the situation is not as bad as initially imagined. They will discover and learn the new culture of the new merged or incorporated institution. Feelings of optimism and hope will start to emerge.

- Interest – people will start to be interested in the new organisation. They will pursue their careers with renewed energy.

- Liking – as people start to be more positive, they will ask questions such as: "What part can I play?" They will feel integrated and will have a new meaning.

- Enjoyment – people may experience feelings of joy within the new organisation.

The fact that staff experience a variety of emotions during a time of merging poses a variety of organisational problems that have to be dealt with in an effective way. The following section will discuss these problems and needs of staff in detail.

6.4   PROBLEMS OF STAFF DURING A MERGER OR INCORPORATION

When a merger is announced, most staff will lose a sense of loyalty towards the institution. As stated in the previous section (*vide* 6.3), feelings of fear, anger, sadness and blame will prevail. This stage is of great importance to the institution, because low staff morale may damage the future of the institution.

A variety of factors, such as the types of institutions that merge, determine the extent of problems experienced by staff. If the merger is between equal partners, they will experience similar problems. If it is an acquisition of unequal partners, the problems experienced by the acquiring institution will be far greater than the

one that is doing the acquiring. Drawing on literature from both the corporate and higher education sector, the following staff-related problems associated with mergers were identified. According to Fried, Tiegs, Naughton and Ashforth (1995:403) staff experience problems based on the following reasons:

- Threat of reduction of job control, which is often associated with an actual reduction in job control;

- unfair treatment of employees who were terminated because of the acquisition or merger; and

- loss of prospects for promotion and career-pathing.

These aspects result in staff experiencing anxiety and stress during a merger or incorporation, whereas the merger planning only focuses on the legal matters and the financial sustainability of the merger. Little attention is given to human considerations (Marks & Mirvis 1986:39-40).

A possible change in the work environment, the reduction of job control and the loss of prospect for promotion will create fear amongst staff. Fear usually results in uncertainty. This is also true during merging and inevitably creates uncertainty amongst staff. Uncertainty is often promoted by a lack of communication during the merger. Botha (2001:276) states that a lack of and bad communication is one, if not the biggest, contributing factor to fear and anxiety amongst staff members when institutions merge. Devine (*s.a.*:16) alerts us that communication should be a key component in the merging process, especially between management and staff. Another problem with communication, according to Marks and Mirvis (1986:38), is that executives become less accessible during the merger and leave their 'own' people uninformed. The result is that rumours and speculations rush in to fill the communication vacuum that develops. This may result in various problems, such as truth getting distorted, unfounded ideas are reported as established facts, insignificant to sound like drama and problems are blown out of proportion, etc. (Pritchett 1985:46-47).

Another problem is that uncertainty my result in staff having a negative outlook towards their jobs. They may feel bored, sad, angry and fearful, as stated in the earlier section (Kübler-Ross 1969; Devine *s.a.*:12; Hunsaker & Coombs 1988:57-58). If employees do not have pride in their work anymore, they may feel a lack of loyalty, job satisfaction and resentment towards employers. Employees may even start to steal from the organisation (IOMA 2002:6-7; Burns & Rosen 1997:70).

To merge two cultures may be the most difficult aspect of the merger. Van Maanen and Barley (1985:36) describe that organisational culture may consist of various factors. They (Van Maanen & Barley 1985:36) also state that an organisational culture first of all consists of the ecological context of a work setting. This refers primarily to the ways in which the workplace activities are structured: who does what, when, and where. Secondly, the organisation's internal topography usually cleaves, both formally and informally, around products, materials, tasks, technologies, and shifts. More often than not, these cleavages are reinforced by territorial segregation, so that social mappings become spatially encoded. Third are historical forces that also shape the ecological context of a work organisation. Current practice reflects not only the weight of an institution's past policies and strategies, but also the dynamics of regulation, competition, and market structures that mark the organisation's external environment during particular eras. The fourth aspect reflects on the social demography, as workplaces are populated by specific types of actors who have interests in and expectations for each other's behaviour: workers, staff, managers, suppliers, customers, and so forth.

When two or more institutions merge, these unique characteristics of organisations have to blend. Some of these characteristics will have to be sacrificed in order for the merger to be successful. Authors like Botha (2001:276), Somers and Bird (1990:40-41) and Marks and Mirvis (1986:41) point out that the merger of cultures is problematic and that institutions should be extremely sensitive during the

merging process to respect the cultures of the various institutions. According to Marks and Mirvis (1986:41) different cultures may cause a 'we versus they' approach.

Marks and Mirvis (1986:41) warn institutions to take care of their employees. According to them, 50 percent of executives seek other jobs within the first year after a merger. Another 25 percent plan to leave within three years. This may not be the employees that the institution can afford to lose.

One of the biggest problems is that students may lose when a merger occurs. Utley (2002:6) states that if the landscape of higher education is changing, students' rights should be safeguarded. Unless care is taken, students will find themselves worse off than before.

There are many problems during a merger. The above-mentioned discussion deals with only some of these problems. Some of these problems may have very simple straightforward solutions, while others will be much more complex to solve. The following section describes strategies to approach these problems. As stated earlier, it is important to note that each merger is unique and that these solutions may not be suitable for all mergers.

6.5   STRATEGIES TO SURVIVE A MERGER OR INCORPORATION

If one looks at a merger or acquisition from the employee's point of view, his/her perspective is that of loss. It is the whole sense of loss, with its feelings of mourning and anxiety that can actually threaten a merger's success (Galosy 1990:90). The key for a successful merger is to turn the feeling of loss from the employee's point of view to a perception of gain. On the one hand, individuals should motivate themselves to be positive towards the merger, but on the other

hand, the merger should be handled in a 'people-friendly' manner. Various aspects play a role in above-mentioned considerations, but maybe the most important one is the individuals' way of thinking about the merger. Various strategies may be employed for a possible successful merger. First the employee should focus on its outlook towards the merger or, in other words, for the employee to have a positive attitude.

6.5.1 A positive attitude towards the merger or incorporation

It would be helpful for the managers of the merger if they can perceive the attitude of staff towards the merger. A helpful instrument is to distribute a questionnaire amongst staff members to determine their attitude. It is very important that the management of the various institutions should have a positive attitude towards the merger because their feelings and emotions would inevitably be disseminated to their subordinates.

Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:57-58) call the measurement of staff's emotional reaction, "the emotional reactions inventory". Scores are obtained on four scales that measure negative emotional orientations (boredom, sadness, anger and fear), and four scales that measure positive emotional reactions (interest, enjoyment, liking and relief). These two dimensions are combined to provide a two-by-two matrix (*vide* Figure 6.2) indicating an overall positive outlook (optimistic), a negative outlook (pessimistic), a reserved outlook ("cool"), or an outlook combining both intense positive and intense negative emotions ("hot"). A subscale measures the extent to which a respondent is likely to share these feelings with someone else (repression). The emotional reaction inventory clearly identifies patterns of emotional reactions that captured the experience for the employees during the merger.

Matrix indicating range of emotional outlook
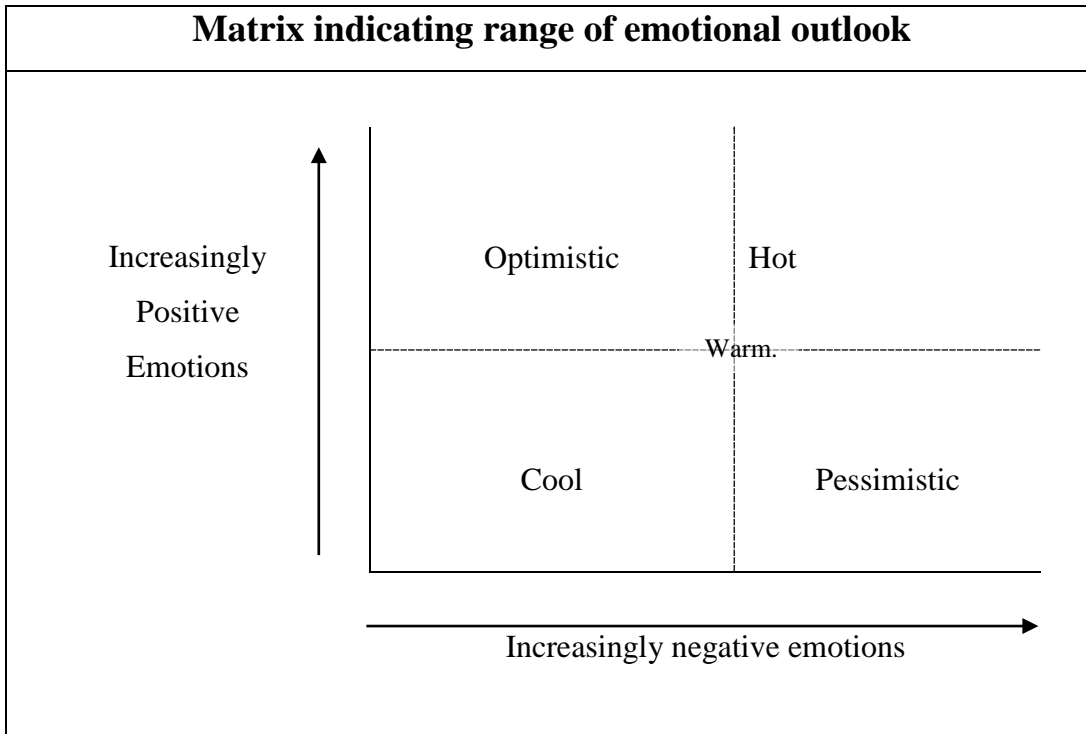
Figure 6.2 Matrix indicating ranges of emotional outlook (Hunsaker & Coombs 1988:58)

Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:58-59) state that not everyone will be at the same stage at any given point in time. As depicted in Figure 6.2 staff would become more optimistic if they experience more positive emotions. Staff may also become pessimistic if negative emotions are experienced. A staff member may be "cool" (neutral) if he/she experiences positive nor negative emotions, or "hot" (aggressive/outspoken) if the staff member experiences positive and negative emotions. These emotions may vary with the different stages within the merger as depicted in the transitional curve of emotions (*vide* Figure 6.1 and par. 6.3). It is possible, though, that some individuals may stay in one stage and not move to accepting and making the most of the merger. One of, if not the most important, question for the individual to ask is: "How do I move with the merger?" There are various strategies to follow. The following aspects may be seen as guidelines in assisting the individual to adapt and accept the merger.

According to Devine (*s.a.*:2) it is important to accept the challenge of change. What can you, as an individual, gain or benefit from the whole exercise? Before you can accept the challenge you would need a certain degree of self-awareness.

Brousseau (1989:74) states that during the merger one needs to know what one is doing and why. Brousseau (1989:74-75) studied the work of Driver *et al.* (1989) where they explained the habits of thinking. According to Driver *et al.* (1989) there are two parts associated with one's decision-making style (Brousseau 1989:74-75). The first part is the amount of information typically used when decisions are made, and the second part is the strategies employed for a clear course of action. Brousseau (1989:75) concludes that the individual has to be flexible in his/her type of decision-making style; not uncertain, but able to adapt to a given situation.

It is also important to be objective in the different courses of action and decisions during a merger. Brousseau (1989:76) and Devine (*s.a.*:9) state that there are usually various rumours during a merger that have to be assessed during any given time. A helpful way of measuring a rumour is to file it as 'probably false' until the rumour can be proven correct.

It is also important to try to tolerate the uncertainty during the pre-merger period. Devine (*s.a.*:3) states that time has to be taken before reaching a decision regarding the merger. Managers and staff also need to be proactive instead of reactive. To be proactive, staff members need to think ahead and also plan certain courses of action. According to Brousseau (1989:77) and Devine (*s.a.*:2-3) some of the following aspects need to be considered:

- Accept the challenge of change – how can it be accelerated?
- Establish priorities – what things are really important to the institution?
- Avoid blind allegiance to old methods – think practically in solving problems.

- Use change to make real improvements – improvements in policies, methods, procedures and roles that otherwise would be very difficult to alter.

- Develop and maintain a problem-solving orientation – how can problems be diverted? Think about an array of solutions.

- Be informed about the merger on a regular basis.

- Get to know the different role-players in the merger.

These guidelines may be helpful for staff members that are not actively involved in the merging process itself.

6.5.2   Communication during the merger or incorporation

Mergers can be seen as human based transactions (Devine *s.a.*:16). That is why communication is one of the most important tools or strategies for driving a successful merger. Employees want to know what is going on and what the future holds for them. It is not always easy as the following quotation describes:

> *If I had it all over again, I would focus more on the 'soft' issues in the early stages (of the merger), especially the communications component. However, in the early days, the frustrating reality was that the questions outnumbered the answers. When employees are clamouring for facts, it is awkward to have to reply (because) we are not sure yet* (Burns & Rosen 1997:71).

To inform employees, management may arrange face-to-face meetings, personal visits and have written information about the merger (Burns & Rosen 1997:71). This would build trust and also be used as problem-solving meetings (Devine *s.a.*:16; Galosy 1990:92). Galosy (1990:92) recommends that a survey tool be developed where employees can rise problems and concerns. Managers have so much pressure to let the merger run smoothly that they may omit important 'people issues'. This tool may help managers to address staff issues and also assist

managers to communicate the organisation's approach towards the merger. Galosy (1990:91) and her associates were involved in the merger of two financial service giants. The consultants focussed on the emotional end of the merger and offered the managers the following options: An employee survey on the merger; a publication for managers called *Managing the merger*; a publication for managers and employees called *Cards on the table*; problem-solving and creativity meetings; and team building exercises. All these options focused on an open communicative approach to the merger that may create less stress for the employees. During meetings it was stressed that the managers should focus on the following:

- Make few promises and keep to all of them;

- increase the amount of communication;

- if there is nothing to report, then provide facts about the acquired firm or new people; and

- plan exactly what to tell the employees and follow up in every possible way Galosy (1990:91).

Devine (*s.a.*:10,17) confirms this argument in stating that the most important consideration in a merger is to "talk to your people" and try to establish what they are thinking and feeling. Try to focus the team on the benefits of the merger and translate any macro-benefits into concrete benefits, which the staff can experience as soon as possible. She states that managers should see themselves as less of communicators, but more of effective internal marketers, thus selling the merging concept to staff. By using this approach, the new institution will look more attractive to the staff members and may retain key staff members that the institution may need in the future.

6.5.3   Retain the best people for the institution

One of the biggest risks during a merger is that some staff members, especially the marketable ones, might decide to take control of their own careers rather than to leave it in the hands of others. They may leave for other companies and the institution may lose valuable human resource assets (Burns & Rosen 1997:70). It is, however not always possible to stop employees from leaving an organisation. When key staff members decide to leave, the organisation should try and retain the services of those employees. Attractive incentive bonuses and/or key positions in the new organisation may stop some of the employees from resigning (Duncan 2002:5). It is very important to retain the best people for the organisation in order to ensure continuity and effectiveness (Burns and Rosen 1997:70,72). According to Devine (*s.a.*:6) key players in the organisation should be identified as soon as possible and involved in the merging process. Most of the time these employees are highly employable and may be lost for the new institutions, if key players are not involved from within the staff component.

6.5.4 Manage the culture of the new institution

During the merger of higher education institutions, especially the merger of different types of institutions, cultural clashes may be expected, for example when a technikon merges with a university. According to Georgopoulos (1999:44) it is important that cultural differences are understood and respected when a merger occurs. These cultural differences may occur at different levels. Van Maanen and Barley (1985:36) categorises organisational culture as ecological issues, internal topography, historical forces and social demography (*vide 6.4*). Taylor and Austin (1992:3-5) interpret cultural issues as organisational issues, staff issues and service delivery issues, while Walter (1985:301) describes cultural issues as shared attitudes, values, beliefs and customs of members of a social unit or organisation. It is important to note that the value system represented in an organisation first centres on individuals and second on capital (property) (Walter 1985:302).

From an individual or psychological point of view an organisational merger means that a new group identity is imposed on employees. This implies that the organisational culture of the organisation will have to change, so will the functioning of the individual within that culture (Terry, Carey and Callan 2001:267). According to Terry *et al*. (2001:268) the Social identity theory addresses the self-concept that derives from membership to social groups and social categories, and contrasts with one's personal identity, which reflects one's characteristics as a unique individual. When people define themselves as members of a self-inclusive social category (e.g. a sex, class, team), self-categorisation as group members means that the similarities among members (including the self) on stereotypical dimensions are accentuated, as are the differences between in-group and out-group. In other words, perceptions of the self and others are depersonalised in such a way that the self and others are not perceived as individuals, but as group members.

When two organisations or higher education institutions merge, it would contribute towards a successful merger if the two (or more) institutions were of equal status (Terry *et al*. 2001:269). An important consideration, however, is that it is easier for institutions of a lower status to associate with institutions of a higher status, than the reverse (Terry *et al*. 2001:269). Terry *et al*. (2001:270) state that inter-group contact between the merged institutions is vital to promote a successful merger. It allows members of different groups to discover similarities in beliefs and values that in turn lead to attraction.

Engström, Rosengren and Hallberg (2002:14) state that balancing involvement (knowing of, and being part of the merging process) by staff in all the various areas of the institution during the merger, as mentioned by Van Maanen and Barley (1985:36) (*vide 6.4*) and Taylor and Austin (1992:3-5), allows the staff to 'feel part' of the new organisation. This feeling of belonging would help to create a new institution. With balancing involvement, aspects like trust, respect, challenge and commitment become important building bricks for a successful

merger. These aspects would all contribute in establishing a new uniform organisation.

It is important, from a managerial point of view, to understand the cultural differences between the different institutions, because the manager will have to be able to identify the key tactics used by team members to adhere to their own cultures. Different negotiation teams will have different strategies or 'cultural hot spots' that will generate tension and conflict. Managers should be able to identify these differences. Each different team should, with the use of a cultural model, identify positive and negative aspects of their previous culture, and also that of the other culture. It is important that the 'opposition' states positive characteristics of the other organisations' culture (Devine *s.a.*:19). The role of management or leadership should not be underestimated in adapting to a new culture after merging, regardless of the management style (Quinn & McGrath 1985:323). Management should give the new merged workforce a sense of citizenship in the new corporate structure. Pritchett (1985:117) states that management should give the people a new flag to wave. Staff should identify with the new culture and make it their own.

For staff to adapt to a new culture may be the most difficult part of the whole merger, because of the sensitivity of the issue. If one of the institutions has a long and colourful history, for example, that institution's history and beliefs should be respected. At the end of the day corporation, dedication and a willingness to change will be the deciding factor in determining a successful merger.

6.6   CONCLUSION

The merging process will have pitfalls and shortcomings. Peck (1997:204) describes the effort of human nature in the following way:

> *Despite the odds against doing things perfectly, you should do*
> *the best you can (Peck 1997:204).*

If the management team strives for perfection during a merger, taking all the contributing factors into account, the chances are much higher that the merger will be successful. After discussing the different needs of individuals and also what and how individuals are motivated, it should follow a more staff-friendly approach during a merger. Motivation, with challenges, and the individual's safety and order within the workplace are some important factors that play a decisive role during a merger. The key for any institution that goes through a merger is to guide the employees through the transitional curve of emotions. The individual will be shocked at first, but he/she should be guided up to a point of enjoyment at the end of the merger.

There are various problem areas that management should consider before, during and after a merger. Some of these problem areas are a lack of communication, negativity by staff members, and the changing from one culture to the other. The result usually is that institutions lose some of their valuable employees. These institutions have to implement various strategies to curb such losses and to create a more positive approach towards the new institution.

Some of these strategies are to develop communication strategies for the new merged institution, create a new identity for the new institutions of which the employees may be proud, motivate the staff, try and retain the best people for the institution. It is still a very difficult exercise to keep staff motivated during a merger, especially if some staff members will be retrenched. If a positive and transparent approach is followed, staff may trust the process and, may want to be part of the new institution in the future.

One of the main problems during a merger is still the uninvolvement of staff. Another problem is the adaptability of staff to the new organisational culture. The type of institutional culture accepted by the new established institution and how the staff of the merging institutions adapts to this culture may one of the keys to a successful merger. In the case of incorporation, is staff retrained, orientated and

motivated to be part of the new institution? How is the new staff component developed in order to establish a new, effective and efficient higher education institution? All these questions need to be answered for a merger to be successful.

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Chapter 7

A qualitative research perspective

7.1   INTRODUCTION

In the previous chapters the merging and incorporation processes in South African higher education and the impact these changes have on staff were described.   In order to understand the turmoil staff endures during the merging and incorporation of the higher education institutions in South Africa, a qualitative investigation into how the mergers proceeded and also how staff was involved in the process, seemed imperative. Cognisance, however, should be taken that it is extremely difficult, complex and unpredictable to describe human feelings, attitudes and emotions.

In educational research, two research paradigms have dominated during the past 100 years – the qualitative and quantitative research paradigms.   Research in education has been primarily dominated by empirical enquiry or quantitative research – also called the positivistic approach (Pring 2000:31).   The empirical or quantitative research methodology is not able to "capture" the human element sufficiently (Pring 2000:32). Pring (2000:32) alerts us that a person cannot be the object of scientific enquiry, since educational practice is found where individuals observe experiences, struggle to understand, and to come to find value in different realities and activities. It is interesting to note, though, that the understanding of human behaviour at higher education institutions through ethnographic-type, or qualitative research methods is not very old. Crowson (1987:2) refers to authors such as Bushnell (1962), Becker, Geer, and Hughes (1968) in this regard. The study of the internal workings of higher education institutions in terms of their organisational cultures and their administration dynamics has been highlighted from 1962 by Riesman and Jencks (Crowson 1987:2).

The qualitative researcher's emphasis is on studying human action in its natural setting and through the eyes of the actors themselves. In the case of this study for example, staff involved in the merging and incorporation of higher education institutions is studied primarily from an ethnographic view.   Babbie and Mouton (2001:279) describe an ethnographic study as the data of cultural anthropology that is derived from the

observation of behaviour in a particular society. Staff in higher education is a specific community with a specific educational context. Staff work in more or less the same work environment, e.g. educate students, engage in research, working hours are the same, to name but a few characteristics.

This study uses the qualitative research paradigm in order to capture the opinions of both staff and management regarding mergers and incorporations. It tries to probe respondents to disclose their feelings about the merger or incorporation process. This is done in an unstructured way; in other words, respondents were asked to write their opinions down regarding various aspects of the merger or incorporation process. The above-mentioned procedures are elements of the qualitative approach.

This chapter starts by describing the role and characteristics of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies. Qualitative and quantitative research is defined respectively; describing some differences and similarities between the two research methodologies. It also describes how to combine the use of qualitative and quantitative research. The focus of this chapter is to portray the rationale for the methodology used in this study, as well as to prove the scholarly approach to this research. The research employed in this study is primarily a qualitative study that is enhanced by some quantitative dimensions.

7.2   QUALITATIVE   AND   QUANTITATIVE   RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Higher education as a discipline tends to cut across various disciplines. Teichler (2000:15) explains that four main spheres of knowledge, structured according to the logic of themes and to the disciplines or related areas of expertise of higher education, can be identified. According to Teichler (2000:15) many research projects that aim at cutting across disciplines and themes include the following typology:

- Quantitative-structural aspects of research;

- knowledge and subject-related aspects;

- person or teaching and learning-related aspects; and

- aspects of institutions, organisations and governance.

The quantitative approach dominated the study of higher education as that research in higher education was more based on quantitative-structural studies (Teichler 2000:15). Conrad, Haworth, and Lattuca, (2001:xi), on the other hand, celebrate the rise and growing acceptance of qualitative research in higher education, because qualitative research provides more opportunities to describe human behaviour, as, it is in this case, in the study of higher education.

Qualitative and quantitative research methodologies each has its place in the world of science, although researchers almost always employ quantitative research in natural science due to the nature of natural sciences. These approaches may be used in the social sciences, natural sciences, commercial sciences, and law, to mention but a view. The type of research will be influenced by the approach decided on by the researcher, and the type of knowledge the researcher is producing. There is a danger, though, that a too sharp distinction is made between the different types of research approaches, for example between qualitative and quantitative research. For many years the quantitative research approach was regarded as the only "true" reflection of the truth and that qualitative research was seen as an assault on the search for "truth". Positivists allege that qualitative researchers write fiction, not science, and that these researchers have no way of verifying their truth statements or the validity of the research. These quantitative researchers regarded their perceptive on research as the only true search for meaning (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:8).

Some quantitative researchers feel negatively about qualitative research, because quantitative researchers are seen as having a distinctive view about the nature of knowledge regarding the physical and the social world. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, question this, and very often reject quantitative enterprise as 'epistemologically flawed' (Pring 2000:43). The differences are also reflected in the

respective language of each and in the way in which key ideas or concepts take on a different logical character. Some of these philosophical concepts link together in logically different ways and take on slightly different meanings. Such words as 'objectivity and subjectivity', 'reality', 'truth' and 'verification', 'knowledge' and 'meaning' are interrelated and defined differently within the two paradigms (Pring 2000:43; Punch 2000:61).

The type of study will determine what type of data should be used. It may be all quantitative, all qualitative or it may be a combination of both. The type of data the study consists of, should determine primarily what approach should be followed.   The researcher should, first of all, concentrate on what he/she is trying to find out and not be limited by the rigid application of a research method.

The following section will describe the differences between qualitative and quantitative research methodologies and also how these methodologies may be combined.

7.3   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH DEFINED

To define qualitative research methodology is not easy because it has received various labels throughout the years. Some researchers prefer the label ethnographic research or also a more restrained meaning like "ethno methodology". A recent descriptor is that of naturalistic inquiry (Crowson 1987:3).   In order to obtain a relevant definition of qualitative research for this study, various definitions have been explored.

The first definition is that of Winberg (1997:39). Winberg wrote a basic guideline on research called *How to research and evaluate*. The idea of this booklet was to introduce research to learners and students. Qualitative research, according to Winberg (1997:3), is research that produces descriptions of how and why people do certain things.

Crowson (1987:3-4) finds it difficult to define qualitative research because of the different viewpoints on this research methodology. He states that qualitative research

ranges from a specific press towards cultural understanding (ethnography) to the larger suggestion of an alternative philosophy paradigm (e.g. naturalistic), to the field encompassing a cornucopia of foci, assumptions, and techniques. In various labelled field research, case study research, descriptive research, action research, and, of course ethnography and qualitative research, neither method nor its key descriptors are clear.

To work in the qualitative paradigm is to constantly employ techniques such as data collection, participant observation, the discovery and use of unobtrusive measures, informal interviewing, life history construction, content analysis, and videotaping. After the data have been collected, the researcher seeks from the data an understanding of the phenomena observed, rather than some generalisable knowledge or explanation, prediction, and control (Crowson 1987:3-4).

Denzin and Lincoln (2000:7-8) describe qualitative research as a set of practices, embraced within its own multiple disciplinary histories, constant tensions and contradictions over the project itself, including its methods and interpretations. The field sprawls between and crosscuts all of the human disciplines, even including, in some cases, the physical sciences. The process of qualitative research puts an emphasis on the qualities of entries and on the process and meanings that are not experimentally examined or measured (if measured at all) in terms of quantity, amount, intensity, or frequency. Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed or nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied, and the situational constraints that shape inquiry. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning.

McMillan and Schumacher (1989:386) (more recent version of book is not available,) narrow the definition down to that of education. They see educational ethnographic (qualitative) research as an analytical description of a social environment and groups which recreate for the reader the "shared beliefs, practices, artefacts, folk knowledge, and behaviours" of those people in an educational activity. They also state that reality is a social construction, that individuals or groups derive or ascribe meanings to specific

entities such as events, persons, or objects. Individuals form constructions in order to make sense of these constructions, as viewpoints and/or perceptions. Belief systems are thus "constructed realities" of individuals or groups. In other words, the "data" are, so to speak, the constructions offered by or in the sources; data analysis leads to a reconstruction of the constructions.   To narrow the definition down, educational qualitative research is a process, a way of studying human life as it relates to education. Data collection strategies are conducive to obtaining people's perceptions in social settings.   The process is inductive which builds abstracts from the particular social constructions (data) that have been gathered.

Babbie and Mouton (2001:53, 270) simplify the description of what qualitative research is.   They describe qualitative research as research conducted in a natural setting, attempting to study human action from the insider's perspective (also referred to as the "emic" perspective).   For them the goal of research is defined as to describe and understand rather than to explain and predict human behaviour. The focus of qualitative research is thus rather on the processes involved than on outcomes.   The emphasis, therefore, is on methods such as unstructured interviewing, participant observation and the use of personal documents that place the primary aim on in-depth ("thick") descriptions and understanding of actions and events.   The research process is often inductive in its approach, resulting in the generation of new hypotheses and theories. The qualitative researcher is also seen as the "main instrument" in the research process.

Although the definitions of qualitative research offered by Denzin and Lincoln (2000), Winberg (1997), McMillan and Schumacher (1989) and Crowson (1987), provide accurate and, sometimes, detailed explanations of what qualitative research is, the description of Babbie and Mouton (2001) is accepted for this study. The reason is that it provides a simplistic, though thorough and detailed explanation of qualitative research. They also explain the role of the researcher the best. It is, however, imperative that the researcher acquaints him/herself with both paradigms so as to take informed decisions as well as to participate in academic discourses on research methodology.

7.4   QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH DEFINED

Babbie and Mouton (2001:49) draw our attention to the quantification of constructs in the quantitative research paradigm. The quantitative researcher believes that the best, or only, way of measurement is assigning numbers to the perceived qualities of things. A related topic concerns the central role of variables in describing and analysing human behaviour. This has become known as variable analysis. The central role is afforded to control for sources of error in the research process. The nature of control is either through experimental control (in experimental design) or through statistical controls (in multivariate analyses). We obviously know by now that human behaviour is much more complex than to try and explain it in this way.

Punch (2000:4) and McMillan and Schumacher (1989:14) simplify the description of quantitative research as empirical research where the data are 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 (2000:41,77) explains that 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.   McMillan and Schumacher (1989:12) describe quantitative research as a hypothetic-deductive approach. It makes deductions from theory and thereafter identifies a hypothesis, as where qualitative research almost never uses a hypothetic-deductive approach.   In quantitative research the hypothesis is then tested by providing data to confirm, reject, or modify the theory.

Bryman (1988:10-13) also resides with a more "sociological" point of view on quantitative research. He states that, in quantitative research, social surveys are one approach that may be used in contrast to experimental design, which constitute the main approach to data collection within the tradition of quantitative research. Surveys and experiments are probably the main vehicles of quantitative research, but three others are also worthy of a brief mention. The analysis of previously collected data, like official statistics, can be subsumed within the tradition of quantitative research. Quantitative

research also has a specific genre or special language. These scientists use this language in their investigations in a natural order – variables, control, measurement and experiment. This unsatisfied imagery reflects the tendency for quantitative research to be underpinned by a natural science model. This means that the logic and procedures of the natural sciences are taken to provide an epistemological yardstick against which empirical research in the social sciences must be appraised before it can be treated as valid knowledge. The epistemology upon which quantitative research is declared warrantable knowledge, and the mere presence of numbers, are unlikely to be sufficient. Nor is it the emphasis on accumulating quantitative data by those working within the tradition that the critics of quantitative research find unacceptable. Rather, it is the package of practices and assumptions that are part-and-parcel of quantitative research, which derives from the application of a natural science approach to the study of society, which occasions their distaste.

As described in 7.3 and 7.4, there are various differences between and similarities in the qualitative and quantitative research approaches. The following section focuses on some of these similarities and differences in order to establish a research approach for this study.

7.5 DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES BETWEEN QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES

Before describing the differences between and similarities in qualitative and quantitative research, it is important to note that it would be inappropriate to conceive research methodology as a single continuum – with conventional quantitative inquiry at one end and the qualitative approach to research (naturalism) at the other end. Crowson (1987:4) makes this statement and also asserts that these two research paradigms have fundamentally different epistemological traditions, but despite of these differences, have, of late been treated as potentially compatible systems of investigation. Basic philosophic

differences are ignored in the interest of concentrating upon procedures from both traditions that can be cooperatively employed to serve a specific project or line of research.

7.5.1 Differences between qualitative and quantitative research

The two types of differences included in this study are firstly that of Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001:65) who describe the differences in qualitative and quantitative research in broader terms (*vide* Table 7.1).   The second description is taken from McMillan and Schumacher (1989:14-15) who focus on the research process itself.

Table 7.1   *The differences between qualitative and quantitative research*

The differences between qualitative and quantitative research	
Qualitative paradigms	**Quantitative paradigms**
• Concerned with understanding behaviour from actors' own frames.	• Seek the facts/causes of social phenomena.
• Naturalistic and uncontrolled observations.	• Obtrusive and controlled measurement.
• Subjective.	• Objective.
• Close to the data: the 'insider' perspective.	• Removed from the data: the 'outsider' perspective.
• Grounded, discovery-oriented, exploratory, expansionist, descriptive, inductive.	• Ungrounded, verification-oriented, reductionist, hypothetical-deductive.
• Process-oriented.	• Outcome-oriented.
• Valid: real, rich, deep data.	• Reliable: hard and replicable data.
• Ungeneralisable: single case studies.	• Generalisable: multiple case studies.
• Holistic.	• Particularistic.
• Assume a dynamic reality.	• Assume a stable reality.

(Source: Blaxter, Hughes & Tight 2001:65)

The most important distinction between qualitative and quantitative research, according to Blaxter, Hughes and Tight (2001:65) is that qualitative research investigates behaviour in an unstructured way, while quantitative research focuses on facts that cause social phenomena. In the study of the mergers and incorporations of higher education institutions in South Africa, both of these approaches will be used. Some information gathered are facts, while others are respondents' interpretations of events.

McMillan and Schumacher (1989:14-15) also noted some distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research within the research process. The following section describes these differences and similarities.

7.5.1.1 Assumptions about the world

Quantitative research is usually based on what is called a "logical positivist" philosophy, which assumes there are social facts with a single objective reality, separate from the feelings and beliefs of the individuals. **Qualitative research**, on the other hand, is based more on what is called a "naturalistic-phenomenological" philosophy, which assumes that multiple realities are socially constructed through individual and collective definitions of the situation.

7.5.1.2 Research purpose

Quantitative research seeks to establish relationships and explain courses of changes in measured social facts. **Qualitative research** is more concerned with understanding the social phenomenon from the participants' perspectives. This occurs through the researcher's participation in the life of those actors in a research role or through historical empathy with participants in past social events.

7.5.1.3 Research methods and process

In **quantitative studies** there is an established set of procedures and steps that guide the researcher. The quantitative researchers also choose methods as part of a pre-established design before data collection. In **qualitative studies**, there is greater flexibility in both

the methods and the research process. Typically, a qualitative researcher uses an emergent design and makes decisions about the data collection strategies during the study.

7.5.1.4 Prototypical studies

The **quantitative researcher** employs experimental or correlational designs to reduce error, bias, and extraneous variables. Quantitative research also seeks to control for bias through design, and to take into account subjectivity in data analysis and interpretation. The prototypical **qualitative study** of ongoing events is an ethnography, which helps readers understand the multiple constructions of reality. Qualitative research also includes the prototypical study of past events in historical research using analytical research techniques to reconstruct and understand the multiple realities of past events.

7.5.1.5 Role of the researcher

The ideal **quantitative researcher** is detached from the study to avoid bias. In quantitative studies the scholars emphasise the importance of data collected by a skilled, prepared person in contrast to an instrument. **Qualitative researchers** become "immersed" in the situation, present or past, and the phenomenon being studied, for example, ethnographers assume interactive social roles in which they record observations and interviews with participants in a range of contexts.

Many other examples exist which describe the distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research (e.g. Punch 2000:14-19; Babbie & Mouton 2001:273; Pring 2000:48). Many of these distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research are not absolute. Researchers may combine qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study, or some of the characteristics of one of the methods. This means that the different research paradigms may be used together. Although the two research approaches have various differences, some similarities also exist.

7.5.2 Similarities between qualitative and quantitative research

As there are differences between qualitative and quantitative research there, certainly, are similarities. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:65) describe some of these similarities:

- While quantitative research may be used mostly for testing theory, it can also be used for exploring an area and to generate hypotheses and theories. Similarly, qualitative research can be used for testing hypotheses and theories, even though it is mostly used for theory generation.

- Qualitative data often include quantification (e.g. statements such as more than, less than, most, as well as specific numbers).

- Quantitative approaches (e.g. large-scale surveys) can collect qualitative (non-numeric) data through open-ended questions.

- The underlying philosophical positions are not necessarily as distinct as the stereotypes suggest.

It would be easy to make clear distinctions between qualitative and quantitative research. This may be a naïve realism attributed to those who espouse the more quantitative methodology and is not justified. How the world is conceived, could be different and, indeed, is different from one social group to another. Such social constructions are constantly reconstructed as new experiences and force us to reshape how actions and the world are understood. Hence, the need for that interpretive and hermeneutic tradition in which researchers seek to understand the world from the perspective of the participants, or to understand a set of ideas from within the evolving tradition of which they are part. Pring (2000:55) states that the different modes of how researchers understand reality are possible, because there are stable and enduring features of reality, independent of researchers, which make such distinctions possible. This applies not simply to the physical world, but also to the social and personal aspects thereof. The social and personal world of the individual is, however, more difficult to evaluate. Most persons have predictable emotions and capacities which make it possible for certain purposes to consider them the same from person to person – and thus open to quantification. The

qualitative investigation can clear the ground for the quantitative – and the quantitative are suggestive of differences to be explored in a more interpretive mode.

7.6   THE COMBINATION OF QUALITATIVE AND QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

The philosophic cornerstone of qualitative methodology is its effort to describe and render understandable the world of subjective experience.   In the quantitative methodology, the researcher tries to discover "truths" or generalisable cause-effect relationship (Denzin & Lincoln 2000:8). When a researcher conducts a qualitative study, for example, and also makes use of statistical techniques, the researcher is also using quantitative techniques. When qualitative and quantitative techniques are employed, the philosophy of one research methodology is used, for example the qualitative research paradigm, but with application of certain techniques of another research philosophy, like that of the quantitative research paradigm.   During this study the above-mentioned approach is used.

Studies differ from each other.   The type of techniques used by the researcher are determined before the start of the study, or is determined as the study progresses. It is important to note that there are fundamental differences between qualitative (phenomenological) and quantitative (positivist) research traditions as Babbie and Mouton (2001:271-273) rightfully point out. It is inevitable, though, that a specific study would either be more of a qualitative nature, or more of a quantitative nature. Blaxter *et al.* (2001:67) agree when they point out that a researcher may use the families, approaches and techniques that represent different dimensions of the research process. The researcher may use alternatives from the different dimensions in combination as appropriate to the study. This may include a particular set of research questions and may focus on specific approaches or techniques, and concentrate on either a qualitative or quantitative strategy. The researcher mixed and varied the usage of these techniques during this study. It is important to note that it is up to the researcher, given his/her

preferences, the resources available, constraints of the study and the particular issues of the research, how he/she will conduct the research (Blaxter *et al.* 2001:67).

7.7   SOME THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

When a specific research paradigm is followed, certain principles should be adhered to in order to achieve the goal set by the researcher.

7.7.1 Procedural principles of qualitative research

The procedural principles of qualitative research in higher education are best described by Crowson (1987:10-11). He states that the inquiry in higher education rests upon four key procedural principles, namely that:

- the central research objective is to understand rather how to explain, predict, or control;
- true understanding, according to the qualitative approach in higher education will be achieved if the researcher is the prime instrument for data collection;
- the research process will be conducted with an emphasis upon analytical induction, rather than a hypothesis-testing sense; and
- the search for understanding is heavily value-laden.

7.7.2 Objectivity and subjectivity

In describing the differences between qualitative and quantitative research Blaxter *et al.* (2001:65) describe qualitative research as subjective and quantitative research as objective. This may be an oversimplification of describing qualitative and quantitative research. The term objective is briefly described as doing justice to the subject of study (Babbie & Mouton 2001:274). It is important to note that objectivity is both a procedure

and characteristic of sound research practices.   McMillan and Schumacher (1989:10) state that objectivity means, to the layperson, being unbiased, open-minded, and not subjective.   As a procedure, objectivity refers to data collection and analysis procedures from which only one meaning or interpretation can be made.   Standardised tests in education are objective, for example, because several people, given the instructions, can undertake the same test and get the same score. Objectivity in qualitative (non-statistical) research means explicitness in the way the data were collected, categorised, reconstructed, and interpreted. Objectivity thus refers to the quality of the data produced by the procedures for collecting and analysing data and not to the researcher's personal characteristics. The importance of objectivity is broader and pervades the entire research process. Exact descriptions of research procedures allow other researchers to replicate a study. This is done more easily in a controlled laboratory situation with measurements made by machines of high reliability and precision. Educational research is seldom conducted in a laboratory, and it involves the study of human behaviour.   Although objectivity is important in research, it is more difficult in researching humans.

7.7.3 Reliability and validity

Babbie and Mouton (2001:276) describe reliability and validity as trustworthiness. They state that the basic issue of trustworthiness is uncomplicated. They ask the question about how an inquirer can persuade his or her audience (including him- or herself) that the findings of an inquiry are worth paying attention to or worth taking account of? They also explain that a quantitative study cannot be considered valid unless it is reliable, and a qualitative study cannot be called transferable unless it is credible, and it cannot be deemed credible unless it is dependable.   In concord, Denzin and Lincoln (2000:230) explain that the search for validity only evolves with established techniques. Obviously the techniques of verification will depend on the purpose of the study.

McMillan and Schumacher (1989:10-11) maintain that if research tests a theory, then further testing with other groups or in other settings could confirm or revise the theory. If the study entails qualitative exploratory research that is supposed to propose theory, then

the proposed theory could be verified with designs using quantitative approaches. Some qualitative studies, however, provide descriptive understandings about relatively unique situations, and these insights or understandings are extended, but not replicated, in subsequent research of different situations or historical areas for revision or confirmation. Qualitative research is thus not verified in the same manner as quantitative research.

7.7.4 Methods of gathering data

Qualitative researchers are studying spoken and written representations, and also the records of human experiences. They use multiple methods and multiple sources of data in order to study human behaviour (Punch 2000:174). According to Punch (2000:174) several types of data collection might well be used in one qualitative project. Babbie and Mouton (2001:288) also indicate that the idea is not to freeze a (research) method into a certain frame, but rather to have as many creative ways to study our world as possible.

During a qualitative research investigation, it is the researcher who is the main instrument of investigation (Crowson 1987:7). Punch (2000:149) also states that the researcher is essentially the main measurement device in a study. The research will, in essence, be part of the research process by observing and participating in the research process. In such a way the researcher will obtain a fuller understanding of the research process.

One of the measures of qualitative data collection is observation. According to Cherry (2000:55) and Babbie and Mouton (2001:293) the researcher is required to use him/herself as the data-collection instrument. The researcher should also make a decision on how the observations will be conducted. Will the researcher be a non-participant (simple) observer, or a participant observer? During this study the researcher was a participant observer because he was part of an incorporation process.

Another way of collecting qualitative data is by interviews. The most common approaches with interviewing are unstructured, structured and a mix of structured and unstructured (Cherry 2000:55). Babbie and Mouton (2001:289-293) and Oppenheim

(1992:65, 67) describe the basic individual interview. The first type of interview is an open or exploratory interview which allows the object of study to speak for him/her/itself rather than to provide the respondent with a battery of pre-determined hypothesis-based questions. The second type of interview is the depth individual interview. Indept interviews the researcher is not that interested in the content of the conversation, but rather in the process by which the content of the conversation has come into being. The third type of interview is focus group interviews. These interviews can be conducted by choosing eight to twelve respondents and placing them in a circle. The researcher would then manage the focus group by interviewing the individuals, starting at any specific respondent. The researcher could also conduct research using a group discussion to find out the group's feeling about a certain aspect. Crowson (1987:35) describes that an advantage of the interview in higher education is the opportunity it provides for a glance backward as well as forward (speculatively) in time.

Another method that needs mentioning is the questionnaire. A questionnaire is not some sort of official form, nor is it a set of questions, which have been casually jotted down without much thought. A questionnaire is an important instrument of research and a tool for data collection. The questionnaire has a job to do: its function is measurement (Oppenheim 1992:100). Although the questionnaire is more often used in the quantitative research approach (Punch 2000:91), it could also be used in the qualitative approach. The use of unstructured questions and open-ended questions, for example, where, according to Oppenheim (1992:112), the respondent is required to give a free response, and is not allowed any kind of choice, may also be classified as qualitative and are very useful in qualitative research.

To design a questionnaire is not a simple exercise. According to the Information Systems Services of Leeds University (Burgess 2001:1) and Oppenheim (1992:7-8) survey designs usually follow the following steps or actions:

- Defining of the research aims.
- Identifying the population and sample.
- Deciding how to collect replies.

- Designing the questionnaire.

- Running a pilot survey.

- Carrying out the main survey.

- Analysing the data.

The format of a questionnaire is just as important as the nature and wording of the questions asked (Babbie & Mouton 2001:239). Burgess (2001:6) explains that the questionnaire design usually comprises three elements:

- Determine the questions to be asked.

- Select the question type for each question and specify the wording.

- Design the question sequence and overall questionnaire layout.

An improperly laid-out questionnaire can lead respondents to omit questions, confuse the respondents regarding the nature of the data desired, and even lead the respondents to disregard certain questions. As a general rule, the questionnaire should be spread out and be uncluttered (Babbie & Mouton 2001:239).

It is important that every questionnaire should contain clear instructions and introductory comments where appropriate. It is useful to begin every self-administered questionnaire with basic instructions for completing it. These instructions should begin by telling them exactly what they should do. If open-ended questions are used, respondents should be given some guidelines about whether brief of lengthy answers are expected (Babbie & Mouton 2001:243-244).

This is not to say that these methods are the only ways of gathering data through the qualitative research method. Crowson (1987:7, 31) states that documentary analysis, questionnaires and paper-pencil examinations can be employed by qualitative researchers to enhance understanding. The multiple uses of data collection are called triangulation. The use of triangulation, according to Punch (2000:247) is to check the findings of one study against the findings from the other study, for example, the results of a qualitative

investigation might be checked against a quantitative study. The aim is generally to enhance the validity of findings.

During this study the researcher used multiple techniques, i.e. qualitative and quantitative techniques. The results achieved by using triangulation were useful, because it provided the researcher with extra responses by respondents made in a qualitative way, and also enabled him to report on the same question quantitatively.

7.7.5 Sampling and site selection

In qualitative research sampling is important because, according to Punch (2000:193) everyone cannot be studied everywhere doing everything. When choosing a sample for a qualitative study, the researcher should first decide what group of people is going to be studied. Cherry (2000:54), and Babbie and Mouton (2001:287) describe two ways of qualitative sampling.   The first is the traditional social science approach where a representative sample of the population is studied.   Second, is the phenomenological approach where a sample technique is employed.

Punch (2000:193) describes three types of sampling techniques in qualitative research. He identifies a maximum variation sampling where the researcher would deliberately seek as much variation as possible. The homogeneous sampling plan would seek to minimise variation, while convenience sampling where advantage is taken of cases, events, situations or informants may be used that are close at hand.   Extreme-case sampling, on the other hand, would learn from unusual or negative manifestations of the phenomenon. The most important consideration regarding sampling and site selection is that there is a clear principle involved, which concerns the overall validity of the research design, and which stresses that the sample must fit in with the other components of the study.

In drawing a sample, every institution should have an equal chance of being involved in the study (if the study is relevant to that specific institution). Every member (institution)

of the population should have a specified non-zero probability of being included in the sample and this is referred to as a probability sample (Oppenheim 1992:39).

7.7.6 Data analysis

Before discussing data analysis in qualitative research, it is important to note that there is, according to Babbie and Mouton (2001:490), no one neat and tidy data analysis approach to qualitative data analysis, nor even one approach to each specific type of qualitative data analysis. Punch (2000:199) states that there are a variety of techniques, because there are different questions to be addressed and different versions of social reality that can be elaborated upon. The different techniques are often interconnected, overlapping and complementary, and sometimes mutually exclusive.

Qualitative data, though, are lacking when it comes to methods of analysis. Punch (2000:200) quotes Miles in describing the dilemma that qualitative researchers face in the process of analysing data.

> *The most serious and central difficulty in the use of qualitative data is that methods of analysis are not well formulated. For quantitative data, there are clear conversions the researcher can use. But the analyst faced with a bank of qualitative data has very few guidelines for protection against self-delusion, let alone the presentation of unreliable or invalid conclusions to scientific or policy-making audiences. How can we be sure that an 'earthy', 'undeniable', 'serendipitous' finding is not, in fact, wrong?*

If the researcher employs established techniques, for example descriptive understanding of the results obtained (*vide* 7.7.3). A key question in assessing a piece of research is: how did the researcher get to these conclusions from these data? If there is not an answer to that question – if the method of analysis cannot be described and scrutinised – it is difficult to know what confidence to have in the findings put forward (Punch 2000:200).

The major task of analysing qualitative data is data reduction. This is to transform the raw data that the researcher has collected by coding each sentence or phrase into codes for full theoretical coverage. The next step in the process is that of organising and analysing data collected by, for example, questionnaires or interviews. This will help the researcher to understand the data and also to be able to conduct further analysis of the data (Cherry 2000:58). The last step of data analysis is that of concluding or drawing conclusions from the data (Crowson 1987:43; Punch 2000:203). Crowson (1987:43) concludes by describing the qualitative researcher as a solid technician, that has to be sceptic, must perform as a creative intellectual craftsman, be flexible, aware, innovative, and responsive.

At this stage of the study, the researcher usually wants to verify and test the conclusions reached in the study. It would start by data reduction, followed by analysing the data and conclude by drawing conclusions from the information obtained in the study.   The researcher would typically employ one or more of the following data analysis techniques in qualitative research:

- Descriptive categories in the data
- Construct categories from the data
- Central categories within the data
- Constant comparisons of the data
- Inductive reasoning
- Deductive reasoning (Cherry 2000:59).

The above-mentioned techniques are used in Chapter 8. In Chapter 8, all six categories are used (*vide* 8.9). During the questionnaire design, the researcher has categorised questions into various sections (see Appendix A). These sections are used when the data is described (*vide* 8.9). Inductive and deductive reasoning are also employed during the description of the data, but more in Chapter 9, where the results are used to make recommendations.

The aim of using the above-mentioned techniques is to develop a theoretical model. The usage of the collected data should be as effective as possible in obtaining the information required to develop the theoretical model.

7.8   CONCLUSION

The description of the various research paradigms indicates the differences, but also the similarities between qualitative and quantitative research. The emphasis, in the words of Pring (2000:33) is not to indicate the differences, because these vast contrasts refer to a 'false dualism'. The two research paradigms reflect the contrast between the objective world of physical things and the subjective world of 'meaning' between the public world of outer reality and the private world of inner thoughts. Such dichotomies are mistaken and researchers may fall into a philosophical trap. Educational research is both and neither.

The study focuses mainly on the qualitative research paradigm regarding the planning and implementation, but uses a questionnaire with qualitative and quantitative questions for the empirical study. In the interpretations of these questions both qualitative and quantitative data analysis techniques are used for a more complete understanding of staff perceptions regarding mergers and incorporations. The qualitative research paradigm is becoming more popular in the study of higher education, because researchers are focusing more on human behaviour, than in the past when higher education might have focused more on aspects such as admissions, the type of programmes used, the physical environment of the higher education institution, to name but a view topics that may relate more to quantitative studies (Teichler 2000:15; Conrad *et al.* 2001:xi). The following chapter describes the research process used in this study, followed by the results of the findings.

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Chapter 8

A qualitative investigation into staff and management's perceptions on mergers and incorporations in South Africa

8.1   INTRODUCTION

The focus of this chapter is to describe the research process used in collecting the data as
well as to present results obtained during this study. The first section starts by describing
how data was collected.   The instruments used for collecting data were mainly
questionnaires and, to a lesser extent, interviews. Although most of the questions used in
the questionnaires were closed questions, thus indicating a quantitative approach. The
open-ended questions and some open responses in the closed questions utilised a more
qualitative approach.

Participants of the study comprised staff members of higher education institutions that are
merging or being incorporated. The selecting of the participants was a daunting task,
because some institutions felt that they were not ready yet to complete the questionnaire.
At the end, most of the representatives of institutions that were approached, agreed and
cooperated in the study. One of the main reasons why data on how staff perceives the
merger/incorporation process were collected was to determine how the
merger/incorporation process affects staff.

The second section of this chapter reports on the results obtained from the questionnaires.
The responses from staff and management ranged from positive to negative responses.
Various types of institutions (e.g. universities and technikons) reacted to the
questionnaires. Some of these institutions are in the process of being incorporated, while
others are in the process of being merged. The perceptions of staff and management were
weighted against each other in order to compare their different perceptions and opinions
regarding the merging/incorporating process.

8.2   METHODS OF GATHERING DATA

For the purpose of this study two basic data gathering methods were used, namely questionnaires and interviews. As mentioned in Chapter 7 (v*ide* 7.7.4) the design of a questionnaire is not an easy process, particularly compiling a questionnaire that is reliable, valid and is suitable to gather the data needed for a specific study.

8.2.1 Questionnaires for gathering data

The questions used in the questionnaire were both closed and open or free response questions. This implies that a qualitative research approach, by means of open-ended questions, was used. The researcher also made use of closed questions, characteristic of the quantitative research approach.

It is important that a questionnaire be correctly designed, because most problems with questionnaires and their analysis can be traced back to the design phase of the project (StatPac 2002:1). Survey instruments should be properly structured to obtain the information required according to the aims of the project. This does not mean that the outcome of the research is planned, only the process. To work proactively would help to ensure that the outcome of the research is more reliable. In the design of the questionnaire for this study, certain criteria were employed (*vide* 7.7.4). The following advice provided by Babbie and Mouton (2001:239) and Burgess (2001:1-6) was taken into consideration:

- The research aims regarding survey design determined that two separate questionnaires should be designed: one for staff and one for management.
- The population responding to questionnaires was the staff and management of merged/incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa (*vide* 8.3). Different levels of staff were involved to make the results more representative of the entire staff population.

- The questions were determined by the extensive literature review on the research topic (*vide* Chapter 2-7).

- The types of questions ranged from open-ended questions requiring a more qualitative unstructured response from the respondents, to structured questions where more structured answers were needed. Within some of the structured answers, the respondents were requested to provide their own interpretation of the merging/incorporation process if they experienced the need to do so.

- The question sequence and questionnaire layout were done in such a way that the questions followed logically on one another. The questionnaire was also structured according to discernable categories based on the literature. These categories were institutional information that was not compulsory to complete (for the confidentiality of the research), demographic information, merger negotiations, communication and managing of the merger, and psychological experiences of management and staff.

- An explanatory letter accompanied the questionnaire so that the respondents knew exactly what was expected of them (v*ide* Appendix A).

The questionnaire design included various steps. The first step was the initial design of the questionnaire. This draft questionnaire was referred to experienced researchers at the University of the Free State to provide inputs on the content of the questions. The improved questionnaire was language edited and sent to some of the merging and incorporating higher education institutions. Various comments were received, only thereafter the questionnaire was finalised and distributed.

8.2.2 Pre-data exploratory interviews

Although no formal interviews were used for data collection purposes, the exploratory interviews need to be mentioned, because the information gathered from these informal interviews complemented the literature review for the study (*vide* Chapter 2 of the literature review). According to Babbie and Mouton (2001:249) face-to-face interviews are the most common method to collect survey data. Rather than asking respondents to

read questionnaires and enter their own answers, researchers sent interviewers to ask the questions orally and record respondents' answers. The interview has the explicit purpose of one person obtaining information from another during a structured conversation based on a prearranged set of questions. One of the advantages of a structural interview is that the researcher can obtain more relevant information from the respondent during an interview than with a questionnaire.

For this study the researcher interviewed Dr. Kay and Prof. Grant Harman of the University of New England in Australia. Dr. Kay and Prof. Grant Harman are considered leading researchers in mergers of higher education institutions, especially in Australia. Prof. Grant Harman has published numerous articles and books on the topic of mergers. The reason why they were chosen, was because they were on a visit to South Africa and the opportunity arose to interview them about their experiences in mergers in higher education. These experiences were used to amplify the literature review to provide background information on mergers, and also to establish what type of questions to ask respondents when the questionnaires were compiled.

The researcher used exploratory interview techniques for the purpose of establishing the specific aims of the research. Oppenheim (1992:67) describes exploratory interviews' function as "to develop ideas" and "to try to understand how ordinary (academic) people think and feel about the topics of concern to the research". The researcher asked pre-determined questions and they could answer the question in an unstructured manner. The interview lasted for one hour and was recorded on an audio-cassette. The researcher also took notes where it seemed necessary. After the interview, the information gathered was transcribed and used within the literature review (v*ide* Chapter 2.1, 2.2.3).

8.3   SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

When participants were selected to form part of the study, all higher education institutions that were in the process of merging or incorporation, were identified. It was alarming, though, that some institutions stated that they were not willing to partake in the

study because they did not have the time to distribute the questionnaires. Some institutions agreed, but never returned the questionnaires. However, every higher education institutions involved in a merger or incorporation in South Africa had the opportunity to be part of this study. The sample thus can be referred to as a probability sample (Oppenheim 1992:39).

The study sample comprised ten higher education institutions out of 16 possible universities and 14 technikons (the institutions were all treated as higher education institutions and not as universities and technikons). It should be stated that more than one campus of Vista University was included in the sample because each Vista campus is supposed to be incorporated with higher education institution in this region and it was argued that every incorporation experience would be different. The sampling process that was followed and which is in line with Punch's (1998:193) opinion on this, relates to the principle of availability of institutions to partake in the study. An important consideration during the sample process was that the study required as high as possible feedback rate. To secure a high feedback rate, a research coordinator was identified at each institution. An electronic mail message, explaining the study, followed up by personal telephone calls by the researcher, was used to establish which institutions were willing to participate in the study.

The questionnaires were sent to the research coordinator by courier service with the relevant instructions included in the package. The coordinator distributed the questionnaires to staff and management according to the positions held at the institution. After collecting the questionnaires, they were returned to the researcher by courier service, payable by the researcher. The coordinators at the various institutions were reminded to adhere to the due dates for returning the questionnaires. The follow-ups were very successful and provided the researcher with a total response rate of 64%.

8.4   OBJECTIVITY OF RESEARCHER

It is difficult for a researcher to be completely objective, especially in qualitative research (*vide* 7.7.2).   Seeing that the role and background of the researcher could have an influence on the research outcomes and interpretation of data, these issues need to be explicated beforehand.

During the discussion of the research problem (*vide* 1.3) the role of the researcher was explained in detail. The researcher has been a university student (both full-time and part-time) for close to fifteen years, a lecturer at a college of education for eleven years and a deputy principal at a secondary school for three years. The researcher has acquired considerable experience in the field of education, and especially in higher education, for example being part of a process where a college of education was incorporated into a university. This experience was supplemented by a literature study on higher education. The researcher used the knowledge gained to provide him with insight and understanding of staff's perceptions of mergers and incorporations.

8.5   DATA ANALYSIS

The first type of data gathered was from interviews. The data were recorded with the prior permission of the participants. Thereafter a transcript of the interviews was made. This transcript was used for literature review purposes. The second type of data used was the information gathered from the questionnaires. The first step that the researcher used in analysing the data, was data reduction. This involved transforming the raw data by coding each sentence for full theoretical coverage.

The next step in the process of data analysis was organising and analysing the collected data. This helped the researcher to understand the data to conduct further analysis of the data. This included drawing tables for the quantitative questions, and coding for the qualitative or unstructured questions. The last step of the data analysis entailed the

drawing of conclusions and verifications. These conclusions needed to be a true representation of the data, and therefore the results were presented in a logical and meaningful way (*vide* Chapter 9).

8.6   RELIABILITY

The background of the researcher, as well as the research process that was employed in this study, contributed to the reliability of the study (*vide* 8.5, 8.6). As stated in 8.5, the researcher employed three main sources of data: exploratory interviews, questionnaires with open-ended and structured or closed questions.

8.7   VALIDITY

According to Maxwell (2001:301), validity, in a broad sense, pertains to the relationship between an account and something outside of that account, whether this something is construed as objective reality, the constructions of actors, or a variety of other possible interpretations. Validity in qualitative research can, thus, be defined as a positivist notion or purpose to substitute for this the concept of "authenticity". Various factors contributed to making the research valid. These factors include the selection of institutions that were involved in mergers/incorporations, the systematic analysis of data, and the complete and accurate description of the research process. The study provides a clear motivation why particular data gathering methods were used and also provides a clear description of the context within which the research was done.

8.8   LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The research project is limited in the sense that not all South African higher education institutions involved in mergers or incorporations participated in the study. Some institution representatives stated that they did not have time to complete the questionnaires or that, as in one particular institution, were still in sensitive negotiations

and still deciding whether they would accept the proposals of the Ministry of Education. Although clear instructions were given, the researcher had to rely on the "trustworthiness" of the research coordinators at the various institutions. It was also difficult to obtain feedback from, staff not directly involved in the merger/incorporation negotiations, because, in most cases, management did not inform these staff members about the merger/incorporation process.

Another limitation of the study is that this is not a longitudinal type of study, but captured the merging/incorporation up to the middle of the mergers/incorporation process in South Africa. All the questionnaires were sent early in the merger/incorporation process, which is why staff and management could not respond to the outcome of the mergers/incorporations in higher education institutions.

8.9　REPORT OF THE RESEARCH FINDINGS

The findings of the research will be used to develop a staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions. The data on which the findings are based, were collected from ten higher education institutions. Ten questionnaires were sent to each of these institutions. For the purpose of this study, management may be defined as individuals that are in managerial positions within a higher education institution. These positions were in academic or non-academic departments. Staff are individuals within a higher education institutions not involve in the day-to-day management of academic or non-academic departments. Of the six management questionnaires, the contact person at each institution had to distribute one to top management, two to deans, to two directors (non-academic) and one to a head of an academic department. The four staff questionnaires had to be distributed to a senior lecturer, a lecturer, a senior non-academic staff member and a junior non-academic staff member (*vide* Appendix A). There are differences in terms of the questions that were asked to staff and management. It was argued that management steers the merger/incorporation process, while staff, on an institutional level, is informed about the

process and receives information from management. The following subsections describe
the type of information required from management and staff:

- Section A: institutional information (not compulsory)

- Section B: demographic information

- Section C: merger/incorporation negotiations

- Section D: communication regarding management of the merger or incorporation

- Section E: psychological experience resulting from the merger or incorporation.

The research findings start by describing the institutional information.

8.9.1 Institutional information

Institutional information was required in the questionnaire in order to determine which
institutions responded and returned the questionnaires. Not all the institutions completed
this section.   This section was, however, not compulsory as was indicated on the
questionnaires (*vide* Appendix B). All the information provided was treated with great
confidentiality.

8.9.2 Demographic information

Information was also required about the individuals who completed the questionnaires.
This information included questions on the respondents' age, gender, current and possible
future career positions and years of employment at the current institution. Of the ten
institutions three were technikons and seven universities. Two of the universities are
traditional Afrikaans-speaking universities, but one of the two universities' language
policy changed so that Afrikaans and English are now used as medium of instruction.
The ten institutions that participated in the study are from five of South Africa's
provinces.   The provinces are the Free State, Gauteng, Eastern Cape, North-West
Province and Limpopo Province.

8.9.2.1 Age distribution of staff and management

The following table provides the age distribution of the participants.

Table 8.1   Age distribution of staff and management

AGE	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
20 – 30	4	13,8	0	0
31 – 40	8	27,6	3	8,7
41 – 50	10	34,5	15	42,9
51 – 60	6	20,7	13	37,2
61 and above	1	3,4	4	11,2
	29	**100**	**35**	**100**

The age distribution indicates that staff management is clearly older than the staff component. There also are no managers in the 20 – 30 year old cohort. It clearly shows that management is, in most cases, older than general staff. It is expected and in line with literature on the profile of managers in higher education. Staff, on the other hand, needs to come through the ranks (which takes time before they would be employed in management positions).

8.9.2.2 Gender distribution of staff and management

The gender distribution of staff and management is depicted in Table 8.2. It comprises the total number of respondents who answered the questionnaires, as well as the percentage this total represents.

Table 8.2   Gender distribution of staff and management

GENDER	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
MALE	17	58,6	23	65,7
FEMALE	12	41,4	9	25,7
NO ANSWER			3	8,6
	29	**100**	**35**	**100**

The gender distribution indicated that staff, and particularly management, were
dominated by males. It should be noted that not all staff completed the questionnaires.
The conclusion drawn from this is that more males participated in the study than females.

8.9.2.3 Staff's current post levels

The current position of staff or the type of work the respondent is currently engaged in, is
depicted in Table 8.3.

Table 8.3   Staff's current positions

CURRENT POSITION	TOTAL	%
Administrative official	6	20,7
Support staff member	4	13,8
Junior lecturer	0	0
Lecturer	11	37,9
Senior Lecturer	5	17,3
Researcher	1	3,4
Associate Professor/Professor	2	6,9
TOTAL	**29**	**100**

The current positions of staff represent a broad distribution of post levels between
administration, support staff and academic staff. According to the results obtained only
two (6,9%) of the respondents were associate professors or professors. This distribution
clearly indicates that various post levels participated in the research process. This would
enable the researcher to obtain inputs from staff in various post levels within the higher
education fraternity.

8.9.2.4 Current post levels of management

The management respondents' current positions are reported in Table 8.4.

Table 8.4   Management's current positions

POST LEVELS	TOTAL	%
Rector	2	5,6
Vice Rector	3	8,6
Dean of Faculty	8	22,9
Head of Department	8	22,9
Head of Administration	2	5,7
Director/Vice-Director	6	17,1
Registrar	2	5,6
Assistant Registrar	1	2,9
Sub-faculty Head	1	2,9
Associate Professor	1	2,9
Human Resource Practitioner	1	2,9
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

More academic managers than managers of administration or support staff formed part of the study. Included were a human resource practitioner, two registrars and an assistant registrar, as well as two heads of administration. The representation of management positions provides the researcher with a clear understanding of how the different units within a higher education institution foresee the merger or incorporation process. An important consideration would be to perceive if above-mentioned staff would foresee any change in their current position after the merger/incorporation process.

8.9.2.5 Foreseen change in job position after the merger/incorporation

Respondents were asked if they foresaw any change in their position after the completion of the merger/incorporation process. The following table depicts the respondents' responses.

Table 8.5   Foreseen change in position after the merger/incorporation

FORESEEN CHANGE IN POSITION	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
YES	7	24,2	16	45,7
NO	21	72,4	16	45,7
DO NOT KNOW	1	3,4	3	8,6
TOTAL	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

Staff and management in general did not perceive that their positions would change drastically after the merger or incorporation. Management, though, indicated that their positions might change considerably. The reason for this may be because there are less management positions available within a merged or incorporated institution than those for staff. The minority of staff respondents answered positively (24,2%), stated that their positions would remain the same or lower and 72,4% of staff predicted that their positions would change.   On the other hand, 50% of management stated that their positions would be unchanged and 50% indicated that their positions might change. Most of management who indicated that their positions would change, were uncertain how the change would occur. In one instance, where a subunit of a university had been incorporated into another university, the respondents indicated that the subunit would have no department heads. The department head would reside on the campus of the incorporating institution. The respondent was a head of department and indicated that he/she would hold the position of a lecturer in future. Such dramatic changes could have enormous psychological implications on individuals. Other respondents reported that they were uncertain and of the opinion that they might even be declared redundant.

8.9.2.6 Period of employment of staff and management

The period of employment by staff members might also have an impact on the amount of stress they experience and whether they will adapt to the new merged/incorporated institution or not.

Table 8.6   Period of employment of staff and management

PERIOD OF EMPLOYMENT	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
0 – 6 months	0	0	0	0
7 months – 11 months	2	6,9	1	2,9
1 – 5 years, 11 months	5	17,2	6	17,1
6 – 10 years	7	24,2	8	22,9
More than 10 years	15	51,7	20	57,1
	29	**100**	**35**	**100**

The main feature of Table 8.6 is that most of the respondents had been employed for more than 10 years at their institutions.   The second highest employment period was between 5 – 10 years (24,2% for staff and 22,9% for management).   This is a clear indication that most staff that participated in the survey had been employed for more than five years at their respective institutions.   It shows that most of the staff that participated in the study had not changed careers often, and were likely to stay with their current institution.

The last question on demographic information referred to the specific job status of the respondent after the merger.   Most respondents answered that, as their institutions had not yet merged by the time of completing the questionnaire, they were not sure what would happen afterwards, as no discussion on this issue had taken place.   A lot of speculation, however, did exist.

8.9.3 Merger/incorporation negotiations

The next section of the questionnaire focused on the nature of merger or incorporation negotiations between different institutions.   The researcher wanted to establish how staff and management were involved in the negotiation process and how the respondents perceived their future partner.   The first question aimed at assessing staff's involvement in the merger or incorporation negotiations.

8.9.3.1 Staff's involvement in merger/incorporation negotiations

An important question for this study was to enquire if staff was involved in the merger/incorporation negotiation process.

Table 8.7   Staff's involvement in merger/incorporation negotiations

STAFF'S INVOLVEMENT	TOTAL	%
YES	7	24
NO	22	76
TOTAL	**29**	**100**

In most of the institutions staff was not involved in the merger or incorporation negotiations. In instances where one institution was the dominant partner, staff did not really care about the merger or incorporation, as they thought that their careers or positions would not be affected at all. In the case of subordinate institutions, most of the staff was interested in the merger/incorporation, but was not informed by management.

8.9.3.2 Establishment of a merger/incorporation office or structure

The establishment of a merger/incorporation office or structure is generally accepted to be of great value to assist the institution and staff to facilitate the merging incorporation process effectively. Table 8.8 indicates managements' responses regarding the establishment of a merger office or structure for the facilitation of the merger or incorporation process.

Table 8.8   Establishment of a merger/incorporation office or structure by the institution

RESPONSE	TOTAL	%
YES	29	82,8
NO	5	14,3
NOT YET	1	2,9
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**35**	**100**

The majority of institutions had established a structure to work on the merger or incorporation, but it seems that, in most of the cases, they did not include staff in the merger/incorporation negotiations. It is important, though, that, according to the responses, most institutions (82,8%) established a merger/incorporation office.

8.9.3.3 Type of staff involvement in the merger/incorporation

Staff members that were in a process of merging/incorporation made the following responses regarding their involvement in the merger/incorporation process.

Table 8.9   Types of staff involvement in the merger/incorporation

WAYS OF INVOLVEMENT	TOTAL
The opportunity to comment on draft proposals	1
Involve in a task team or nominated as a representative on different task teams	5
Involve through the labour union	5
Involved in reskilling of merging/incorporated partner's staff	1
As an alumnus	1
In the institutional forum	1
TOTAL	**14**

The staff who responded to this question indicated that they were involved in a task team or nominated as a representative on different task teams (5 respondents). In such a way staff is constructively involved in obtaining information about the merging partner or incorporated institution, and also involved in negotiations that may merge different departments and functions of the merging institutions. The staff members (5 respondents) that were involved through their labour unions, represented their constituents and were expected to report back to staff about the merging/incorporation negotiations. The labour unions are the collect platform for staff grievances to be addressed and are supposed to protect their members' interests.

8.9.3.4 Institutional differences between staff and management

Staff and management were asked if there were significant institutional differences, in their opinion, between their institution and their partner.

Table 8.10   Institutional differences between institutions

INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INSTITUTIONS	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
YES	27	93,2	30	85,7
NO	1	3,4	1	2,9
NO ANSWER	1	3,4	3	8,5
UNSURE	0	0	1	2,9
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

Most of the respondents replied that there definitely were differences. This may indicate that staff would have difficulty in adapting to the newly merged institution. In the following question, staff indicated their differences according to set choices.

8.9.3.5 Types of institutional differences according to staff

It is important to ascertain how staff perceives their merging/incorporating partner. Table 8.11 depicts how staff viewed the main differences between the merging institutions.

Table 8.11   Types of institutional differences according to staff

TYPES OF INSTITUTIONAL DIFFERENCES ACCORDING TO STAFF	TOTAL
Teaching and learning	7
Mode of delivery	5
Research	9
Staff profile	14
Student profile	13
Community service	5
Management	1
Organisational culture	1
Organisational ethos	1
Do not know	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	**N =57**

Some respondents chose more than one type of institutional difference. Most of the staff respondents indicated that the most significant differences between the merging/incorporating institutions were in the areas of staff profile (the type of work staff do), student profile (the courses students enrol for) and research culture. The differences between teaching and learning and mode of delivery were also highlighted as institutional differences. Some of the responses obtained from the open-ended questions clearly indicated that the institutions that merged or were incorporated, have different missions and visions and that their 'clientele' also differed. One of the aspects of the merging or incorporation process, inevitably, would be to coordinate the differences by either eliminating some learning programmes or finding areas where similarities existed. During this process the different role-players of the different institutions should 'give and take' in order to establish a new uniform institution. The establishment of a new

homogeneous type of institution would go hand in hand with delicate negotiations between the merging/incorporating institutions. These negotiation teams need to be creative in order to determine 'common ground'. This 'common ground' would be the starting point to establish a new homogenous type of institution. After establishing common ground, the differences between institutions should be eliminated through negotiations and consultation. It may imply accepting the mode of delivery of one institution, but the research strategy of the other. The merging institutions will establish common ground if two equal partners are merging, but if one institution is dominant, the dominant partner may 'enforce' its institutional characteristics on that of the subordinate institution (*vide* 2.3).

8.9.3.6 Types of institutional differences according to management

The management respondents were required to indicate the type of institutional differences between the merging/incorporated institutions. The questions posed to management were unstructured or open ended. The responses provided by management were categorised into various subsections, as discussed below:

- **Cultural differences**

There is cultural diversity between institutions. Some of the diversity is embedded in the fact that in the past black students predominantly studied at specific institutions. An interesting comment was that the predominantly black institutions had less foreign students. This may be an indication that the predominant black institutions, and, thus historically disadvantaged institutions, had fewer links with foreign universities.

The differences between HAIs and HDIs were also highlighted. Some of the respondents felt that there was more transformation at HDIs as at HAIs, but the respondents did not provide detail. This may impact on the willingness of some institutions to change. The HDIs and HAIs, according to one respondent, have different world and life philosophies. Various respondents felt that some institutions had a much stronger research culture than others. The merging of these types of institutions may also result in racial tension, because of different histories and language. Religious differences were also mentioned.

- **Differences in information technology systems**

Different technological and knowledge systems are employed at different institutions. The merging and incorporation process would imply that a homogeneous information technology network be established, and would have cost implications on the merger or incorporation. System differences may also have implications on staff training, because some staff members will have to be retrained in, for example, a new computer or library system.

- **Differences in institution type**

Management respondents felt that it was difficult to merge or incorporate different institutional types. This is of relevance in the case of universities and technikons that are merging. These institutions have different types of programmes and course structures and also have different market and niche areas. It is known that a technikon has closer links with the community and industry. With a merger, they might lose these relationships, which might jeopardise some of their programmes. As a result, the institution may lose funding, and eventually some staff members may lose their jobs. Some respondents indicated that the merging institutions had different mission and vision statements. The bigger the differences, the more difficult it becomes to merge these institutions, because institutions either have to incorporate a partner's vision and mission into its own, or change it completely. If the mission and vision are completely changed, merging/incorporating institutions will cease to exist.

- **Management**

Some of the respondents stated that management was more accessible at HDIs than at HAIs. The merging or incorporating higher education institutions have different hierarchical structures in management. This implies different management and leadership styles. Some of the respondents gave the impression that their institution was more organised, dedicated and professional than their merging or incorporated partner.

- **Teaching and learning programmes**

Different institutions offer different types of programmes. The focus on research and development, and the needs of the surrounding communities and business sector, differ at various institutions. An important response was that the merging or incorporating institutions should re-establish the quality and economic viability of existing programmes. The different task teams on teaching and learning programmes should, after careful consultation with different academic departments, decide which programmes could be incorporated and which programmes should be phased out. Teaching and learning programmes are one of the most important considerations during a merger or incorporation, because one of the main functions of a higher education institution is to teach students. It also has implications for staff in the sense that it could help to keep jobs or to lose them.

- **Quality assurance**

Quality assurance was one of the major areas of concern. Some respondents felt that there was a difference between institutions in terms of the quality of the mode of delivery of programmes. The quality of course content may differ. Institutions have different views on quality in higher education and differences in work ethics and discipline of staff, which may impact directly on quality. The respondents did not provide details of the type of quality differences they foresaw. It might be the perception of the management respondents that there were differences in quality, or these management respondents might have had first-hand information, after investigating their merging partner, on how the other institution functioned. The quality differences may be in various functional areas of the institutions, for example mode of delivery, support services, and infrastructure. It is important for institutions to consider the 'non-physical' factors of quality, for example the areas of transformation and cultural diversity.

- **Finances**

According to some respondents some of the merging partners lack financial sustainability. Some institutions may be reluctant to inherit institutions with financial problems and bad debts, for example a high percentage of student debt. Institutions may

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also experience little financial support from government, which is indeed the case as reported from institutions who have already merged.

8.9.3.7 Willingness to change institutions' unique characteristics

Change is inevitable during a merger or incorporation. Because staff is the lifeline of any institution, the following question addresses the willingness of staff and management to change.

Table 8.12   Willingness to change institution's unique characteristics

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE INSTITUTION'S UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
YES	14	48,3	15	42,9
NO	15	51,7	20	57,1
TOTAL	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

The results from this question are quite remarkable, because almost half of the staff respondents indicated that they were willing to change some of their institution's unique characteristics. Management, on the other hand, was more reluctant. It would be problematic for the merger/incorporation process if management is reluctant to change. It would have a negative impact on the merger/incorporation process because management should lead the merger process. One of the reasons may be that they know what the implications of change are for staff (for example lower salaries, no promotions for a long time, a limited amount of management posts available, lowering of posts, to name but a few). Taking these negative aspects into account, almost 43% indicated that they were willing to change their institution's unique characteristics.

The following three questions relate to the organisational culture that was established at specific institutions' throughout the years. Some of these institutional cultures are more than one hundred years old. It is quite natural, though, that there would be some resistance to change. The first question tries to assess if the respondents would have any

objections if the unique organisational characteristics and artefacts of his/her institutions were changed, for example to a new identity, name, flag, logo, etc.

8.9.3.8 Objections to change institution's unique organisational culture

Staff and management may have objections to the merger/incorporation process. The following table indicates whether staff and management respondents had such objections.

Table 8.13   Objections to change institution's unique organisational culture

OBJECTIONS TO CHANGE INSTITUTION'S UNIQUE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
YES	14	48,3	15	42,9
NO	15	51,7	20	57,1
TOTAL	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

Organisational culture is not as important as one would expect, because half of the staff indicated that they would not mind to change, while in management, the positive response to change was almost 60%. This is a clear indication of people being willing to change and that there are more important aspects regarding change than organisational culture. Some of these aspects have a bearing on teaching, learning and research (*vide* Table 8.11). One of the respondents indicated that organisational culture is never really neutral, because it usually favours one organisation or the other organisation.

8.9.3.9 Willingness to change institution's unique organisational culture

To merge or incorporate different institutions is not easy. To help the change process staff and management should be willing to change. The following Table depicts staff and management's willingness to change.

Table 8.14   Willingness to change institution's unique organisational culture

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE INSTITUTION'S UNIQUE ORGANISATIONAL CULTURE	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
YES	20	69	21	60
NO	7	24,2	14	40
NO ANSWER	1	3,4	0	0
SOME	1	3,4	0	0
TOTAL	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

Almost 70% of staff proclaimed willingness to change to neutral organisational
characteristics, while in the case for management, 60%. It indicates that the respondents
were willing to change, but the change should not be biased in favour of one cultural
group or the other – in other words, doing away with the dominant features of both
institutions and creating a new institution.

8.9.3.10   Willingness to change to organisational characteristics of partner

Staff and management may indicate that they are willing to change, but *what* are they
willing to change? Are staff and management willing to accommodate the
merging/incorporating partner, and in which ways and on which levels? The respondents
could mark more than one category.

Table 8.15   Willingness to change to organisational characteristics of partner

WILLINGNESS TO CHANGE TO ORGANISATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTNER	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
Name of institution	7	24,1	12	34,3
Programmes offered at institution	8	27,6	18	51,4
Mode of tuition or delivery (e.g. lecturing to distance learning)	3	10,3	11	31,4
Corporate identity (e.g. colours, flag, anthem)	5	17,2	14	40
Physical location of institution (moving to a different site)	1	3,4	1	2,9
Leadership of institution	12	41,4	18	51,4
Medium of instruction	3	10,3	2	5,7
Something new or neutral characteristics	1	3,4	1	2,9
None	4	13,8	2	5,7
No answer	1	3,4	2	5,7
TOTAL RESPONSES	**45**	*	**91**	*

*   Respondents answered more than one category

Management indicated that they were willing to change to the programmes and teaching modes of the merging/incorporating partners (the quality of the programmes were not mentioned). Another interesting response was that of change in leadership. More than 40% of staff and more than 50% of management indicated that they would prefer the leadership of the merging/incorporating partner. It would be interesting to see if these management respondents were of the dominant or subordinate institution, or maybe the management respondents felt that their institutions were inferior in terms of quality programmes offered, or leadership to that of their merging partner. Most of the staff and management respondents indicated that they were reluctant to change the medium of instruction and location of the institution. Some of the reasons might be that lecturers were not conversant or comfortable in another language, and that they would be unwilling to travel to another location if the location of the merged/incorporated institution change.

8.9.3.11   Academic performance of new merged institution

The academic performance of higher education institutions is of vital importance for academics. To try and assess how respondents perceived the future academic performance of the new, merged/incorporated institution was rather difficult because the new institution did not exist yet. Most of the responses regarding academic performance might be based on prejudice.

Table 8.16   Possible academic performance of new merged institution

POSSIBLE FUTURE ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF NEW MERGED INSTITUTION	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
BETTER	8	27,6	15	42,9
WORSE	8	27,6	8	22,9
THE SAME	6	20,7	3	8,6
UNSURE	1	3,4	7	20
NO ANSWER	6	20,7	2	5,6
TOTAL	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

The same number of staff respondents indicated that the new, merged/incorporated institution's academic performance would be better (27,6%) and worse (26,7%). Almost 21% of the respondents indicated that it would possibly stay the same. Six (21%) of the staff did not answer the question.

The management respondents seem to have a clear and positive expectation of their future preference in terms of which institution would perform better. Almost 43% of the respondents indicated that the new institution's performance would be better and almost 23% that it might be worse. 20% of the respondents were unsure about the future performance of the merged institution.

8.9.3.12   Institution's status in the merger/incorporation negotiation

The following question wanted to establish what status the respondent's institution had in

the proposed merger/incorporation negotiations.

Table 8.17   Institution's status in the merger/incorporation negotiations

INSTITUTION'S STATUS IN THE MERGER / INCORPORATION NEGOTIATIONS	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
ITEM	*TOTAL*	*%*	*TOTAL*	*%*
DOMINANT	6	20,8	10	28,6
EQUAL	12	41,5	11	31,4
SUBORDINATE	5	17,2	11	31,4
TAKING THE INITIATIVE	0	0	1	2,9
EQUAL ON PAPER	1	3,4	0	0
FLUCTUATES	2	6,9	0	0
IT'S AN INCORPORATION, BUT MERGING PARTNER TREATS IT AS A MERGER	1	3,4	0	0
DO NOT KNOW	1	3,4	2	5,7
NO ANSWER	1	3,4	0	0
TOTAL RESPONSES	**29**	**100**	**35**	**100**

The responses varied from dominant to equal to subordinate. Staff, though, indicated that

they saw themselves more equal, whereas with management, the same number of

respondents indicated that they perceived their institution's position as equal and

subordinate (31,4%). An interesting response came from two respondents, stating that

their institution's position fluctuated from equal to subordinate. Another interesting

comment from one staff member was that their partner was treating the process as if it

were a merger, although it was an incorporation. Such an approach would do wonders

for staff morale, because they would see themselves as equals with the merging partner.

8.9.3.13   Staff and management's attitude during the merger/incorporation

The attitude of staff should be positive in order for a merger or incorporation to be successful. The next question relates to the attitude of staff and management during the merger or incorporation process. The respondents had to indicate how they perceived the attitude of staff and management at their institution during the merger/incorporation, on the one hand, and also the attitude of their merging/incorporating partner's staff and management's attitude on the other hand.

Table 8.18   Staff and management's attitude during the merger/incorporation

	YOUR INSTITUTION				MERGING PARTNER			
	STAFF		MANAGEMENT		STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
ATTITUDE	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
POSITIVE	5	17,4	15	42,9	5	17,2	9	25,7
NEGATIVE	0	0	2	5,7	2	6,9	6	17,2
CO-OPERATIVE	17	58,7	17	48,6	16	55,2	16	45,7
DERAILING	2	6,9	3	8,6	3	10,3	2	5,7
THINK INCORPORATION NOT MERGER	1	3,4	0	0	0	0	0	0
NOT MUCH NEGOTIATION	1	3,4	0	0	0	0	0	0
NO CONSULTATION	0		0	0	0	0	0	0
MIX: DOMINANT TO CONSIDERATE	1	3,4	0	0	1	3,4	0	0
PASSIVE RESISTANCE	0		0	0	1	3,4	0	0
POSITIONING	0		1	2,6	0	0	1	2,9
UNCERTAIN	1	3,4	0	0	2	6,9	3	8,6
NO ANSWER	1	3,4	0	0	1	3,4	0	0
TOTAL	29	100	38	*	31	*	37	*

*   Respondents answered more than one category

Staff is not very positive towards the merger/incorporation, while management seems more positive toward the process (42%). It may be because staff is uninformed about the merging/incorporation process, while management know what is happening. In general, staff and management do not perceive their merging partner as positive. Contact between

the merging/incorporating partners will help to eradicate negative and false perceptions of the partner. The respondents of both staff (58,7%; 48,6%) and management (55,2; 45,7%) categories had the perception that their institution and the merging partner were cooperating. The respondents (less than 10,5%) perceived their institution and the merging partner as derailing, or being negative towards the merging process. These respondents might change their attitude if they received enough information on how the merger/incorporation would affect them and what their futures would be at the new, proposed institution. One of the interesting categories included by some of the respondents was that their institution followed instructions of Government and did not take the merging partner into consideration. Such a response implies that there is no or limited communication between the merging/incorporating institutions and this could have a negative impact on staff. The reason for the negative impact on staff is that staff may perceive the merging partner as a lifeless object and not an organisation comprising people that may add value to the quality of work at the new institution. This may also be the case with an extremely dominant institution that does not consider the merging partner at all. Another interesting category was that of positioning. This clearly indicates that institutions are favouring their own institution before considering the merging/incorporation partner. This is something one would expect. One staff member indicated that an approach of passive resistance was followed. Such an attitude would impact directly on the quality of work at the institution and should be avoided at all cost. Negative responses clearly indicated that staff needed information and guidance regarding the merger.

8.9.3.14   Choice of merging/incorporation partner

The following responses in this section only pertain to management. The first question was if the institution's merging/incorporating partner was the institution's first choice.

Table 8.19   Choice of merging/incorporation partner

RESPONSE	TOTAL	%
YES	12	34,3
NO	16	45,7
DID NOT CHOOSE	7	20
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

Government never gave higher education institutions the option to choose their own merging partners, accept where some institutions were already cooperating and sharing facilities (*vide* 5.2.2.2). When mergers and incorporations were initially announced by the Council on Higher Education (*vide* 5.2.3.1.3), institutions were asked to respond to the initial proposals. More respondents (45,7% stated no) indicated that government did not consider their first choice of a merging partner. An interesting response was that 20% of the respondents stated that they did not choose any merging partner. This is a clear indication that some institutions did not consider merging at all.

8.9.3.15   The initiator of the merger/incorporation

Determining the initiator of the merger is an important question, because if the option to merge comes from institutions, the attitude may be more positive towards the merger.

Table 8.20   The initiator of the merger/incorporation

BODY	TOTAL	%
GOVERNMENT	29	82,8
YOUR INSTITUTION	2	5,7
THE OTHER INSTITUTION	1	2,9
NO ANSWER	3	8,6
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

The overwhelming response was that Government initiated the merger or incorporation. Two respondents indicated that their institution had initiated the merger or incorporation, while only one respondent indicated that the other institution had initiated the merger.

Management was also asked to indicate when their institutions had started with the merger/incorporation process. The answers provided were not helpful, because every respondent provided a different date. Dates ranged from when the process of incorporation started in 1998, up to March 2003 when some institutions were already far on their way with negotiations.

8.9.3.16   Cooperation between institutions before merger/incorporation

Staff might have been more positive towards the merging process if there was some sort of cooperation prior to the Minister's announcement of mergers/incorporations (*vide* 5.2.1).

Table 8.21   Cooperation between institutions before merger/incorporation

RESPONSE	TOTAL	%
YES	21	60
NO	13	37,1
HAD DISCUSSIONS	1	2,9
TOTAL	35	100

The fact that 60% of the institutions represented in the research had cooperated in one way or the other, prior to the announcement of the Minister, may contribute towards more successful mergers or incorporations. The way mergers/incorporations are facilitated, to a great extent, determines the success thereof.

8.9.3.17   Role-players involved in the negotiation process

Various role-players need to be involved if a merger or incorporation is to take place.
The following question tried to ascertain which role-players were involved in the
participating institutions' negotiation processes.

Table 8.22   Role-players involved in the negotiation process

ROLE-PLAYERS	TOTAL	%
GOVERNMENT	13	37,1
DIFFERENT TRADE UNIONS	8	22,9
COMMUNITY	8	22,9
STAFF REPRESENTATIVES	19	54,3
STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL	12	34,3
ACADEMICS	1	2,9
TOP MANAGEMENT	2	5,7
BROAD CONSULTATIVE FORUM	1	2,9
SENATE	1	2,9
ALUMNI	1	2,9
INTERNATIONAL FACILITATOR	2	5,7
COUNCIL MEMBERS	2	5,7
STILL PREPARING PROCESS	2	5,7
NO ANSWER	3	8,6
TOTAL RESPONSES	75	*

*   Respondents answered more than one category

The highest percentage (54,3%) of management respondents indicated that staff
representatives had to be involved in the process. This is definitely a positive response
from management, because it indicates that management sees the need for staff
representation during the merger/incorporation negotiations. Government drew the next
highest response rate (37,1%); because it was the initiator of the merger/incorporation
process, and it had to be involved. The involvement of the Student Representative
Councils is of vital importance (34,3%), because they have to inform students on how the
merger/incorporation would affect their future studies. The management respondents
also indicated that the different staff unions and the local community were to be involved
(22,9%). Only one or two respondents respectively indicated that academics, council
members, top management, the senate, broad consultative forum and alumni were part of

the process. Two of the management respondents (probably from the same institution) indicated that they employed a facilitator from the Netherlands to assist with their merging process. It is very promising to see how management wants to involve staff, but when it comes to real decision-making regarding staff, management most probably does not involve staff. It is important to note that the staff representatives have a duty to inform the staff about decisions made during negotiations. It may be that these representatives do not inform the staff about relevant information pertaining to the mergers/incorporations.

8.9.3.18   Budget for merging/incorporation

The last question pertaining to merger or incorporation negotiations was in connection with budgeting. The researcher wanted to establish if the institutions had budgeted for the merging process. Although Government indicated that it would provide financial support for the merging/incorporation process, it is also of vital importance for an institution to budget for the process. It may indicate to what extent the specific institution was planning for future occurrences, for example, indirect costs related to the merging or incorporation process.

Table 8.23   Budget for the merging/incorporation process

RESPONSE	TOTAL	%
YES	14	40
NO	18	51,4
GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE	1	2,9
DO NOT KNOW	2	5,7
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

The results pertaining to budgeting for merging or incorporation clearly indicate that more than half of the respondents wanted Government to take responsibility for all the financial implications of the mergers/incorporations, because these institutions did not budget for the merging/incorporation process. Only 5,7% of the respondents did not know who should take responsibility for the expenses.

The following section focuses on the communication and management of the merging/incorporation process.

8.9.4 Communicating about and managing the merger/incorporation

The communication process during and after the merging or incorporation process is of great importance. The reason is that staff wants to be informed about their future. It provides certainty. Uncertainty may result in key staff members resigning, and low morale in the workplace, to name but a few (*vide* 8.9.5).

The section on communication and the management of the merger/incorporation tries to ascertain if and how communication took place and also what was communicated to staff. The first question is concerned with communicating the news of the merger to staff, and how management informed staff about the merger.

8.9.4.1 Information received by staff regarding the merger/incorporation
Staff had to hear about the merger or incorporation in one way or the other. The following question wanted to determine how staff was informed about the merger or incorporation process

Table 8.24   Information received by staff regarding merger/incorporation

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
LETTER / E-MAIL	9	31
GENERAL MEETING	7	24,1
DEPARTMENTAL MEETING	7	24,1
BY MEANS OF MEDIA	13	44,8
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE	9	31
DOCUMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	6	20,7
WEBSITE	1	3,4
TOTAL	**52**	*

*   Respondents answered more than one category

Most of the staff heard of the merger or incorporation through the media. This may not be irregular, because management at higher education institutions might also have heard

about the mergers or incorporations the same time as the staff. Even if management
heard some of the information at the same time as staff, management should respond to
this information in a way that would assure staff of their (managements) support. The
highest frequency of communication between staff and management is by letter or e-mail,
followed by a general institutional meeting and departmental meetings.

According to the staff's response rate, it seems that top management informed their staff
members about the forth-coming merger or incorporation.

8.9.4.2 Information sent to staff by management

Another important question was about how management informed staff about the
merger/incorporation process.

Table 8.25   Information   sent   to   staff   by   management   regarding   merger   or
*   incorporation*

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
LETTER / E-MAIL	14	40
GENERAL MEETING	21	60
DELEGATE TO HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS	14	40
BY MEANS OF MEDIA	20	57,1
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE	13	37,1
DOCUMENTS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION	15	42,9
TOTAL	**97**	*

*   Respondents answered more than one category

There is quite a difference in comparing the percentages of staff and management
responses to this question. 40% of management respondents reported that they had
informed staff initially by e-mail or letter about the merger or incorporation. This
correlates with staff's responses (31%). As stated in the previous paragraph, it is
important that staff hear from the management about the merger or incorporation. A high
percentage of the respondents (40%) stated that they had informed staff in a general staff
meeting and also delegated the information to heads of departments for further
dissemination. It is alarming, though, that some staff members read about the process in
the Government Gazette or in official documents of the Department of Education.

Before the type of information dissemination, from a managerial point of view, is discussed, it is important to establish whether top management informed their staff about the merger or incorporation.

8.9.4.3 Confirmation of information dissemination to staff

Management has to inform staff and staff has to receive the information. The following question tried to ascertain if management informed their staff about the merger/incorporation process and if the staff respondents agreed that they were informed.

Table 8.26   Confirmation of information dissemination to staff

RESPONSE	MANAGEMENT		STAFF	
	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
YES	32	91,4	19	65,5
NO	2	5,7	8	27,6
NO ANSWER	1	2,9	0	0
SOMETIMES (NOT ALWAYS)	0	0	2	6,9
TOTAL	35	100	29	100

It should be stated that the questions differed slightly from staff to management. Management were asked if they informed their staff (at all), and staff were asked if they were regularly informed (assuming that they were initially informed). 65,5% of staff responded that they were regularly informed and 27,6 indicated that they were not regularly informed. Some staff members added an additional response and stated that they were informed only "sometimes". These responses clearly indicated that staff members felt that they would prefer to be informed more regularly about the merging/incorporation process. The regularity of information dissemination is also very important. The following table depicts how regular management communicated with staff regarding the mergers/incorporations.

8.9.4.4 Regularity of information dissemination

If staff and management respondents confirmed that they were regularly informed about the merger/incorporation, how often did the information sessions occur?

Table 8.27   Regularity of information dissemination

RESPONSE CATEGORY	STAFF TOTAL	MANAGEMENT TOTAL
EVERY WEEK	2	6
EVERY MONTH	8	9
QUARTERLY	0	6
AFTER EVERY MEETING WITH THE OTHER INSTITUTION	9	19
NEVER	0	1
CONTINUOUSLY AS NEED ARISES	0	5
SOMETIMES	2	0
ONE INFORMATION SESSION	1	0
ON AN ONGOING PERIOD	1	0
TOTAL	**23 ***	**46 ***

*   Some respondents did not answer and others answered more than one category

The highest response rate from both staff and management was obtained for the item after every meeting with the other institution, because management obtained new information to communicate to staff members. Most respondents indicated that management informed them monthly of all the new developments of the merger/incorporation process. It is important to note that, even if there is no new information to communicate to staff, management should still communicate with staff about the mergers/incorporations, for example some encouragements or positive inputs to motivate the staff members. One respondent stated that their institution informed staff continuously as the need arose.

8.9.4.5 Strategies for information dissemination

Various methods may be used to disseminate information between staff and management. The following table depicts how management and staff respondents received their information.

Table 8.28   Strategies for information dissemination

CATEGORY	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
REGULAR WORKSHOPS	1	3,4	0	0
OPEN DISCUSSIONS	9	31	22	62,9
INFORMATION SESSIONS	13	44,8	16	45,7
E-MAIL / OPEN LETTER	14	48,3	19	54,3
BY IMMEDIATE LINE MANAGER	5	17,2	0	0
DIFFERENT STRATEGIES FOR DIFFERENT STAFF	0	0	1	2,9
OPEN DISCUSSION IN SENATE	0	0	1	2,9
INFORMATION SESSION WHEN STAFF REQUESTED A MEETING	2	6,9	0	0
NEWSLETTER	2	6,9	0	0
RUMOUR	1	3,4	0	0
INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS	1	3,4	0	0
TOTAL	**48**	*	**59**	*

*   More than one answer by respondents

The three most prominent methods, according to the respondents, for disseminating information were open discussions, information sessions and e-mail or open letters. Important comments on information dissemination were that different strategies were used for different staff.   This may be for staff at different levels of seniority. Management respondents stated that an open discussion was held in Senate. It seems as if staff was not part of these open discussions. The managers or institutions did not include their staff in planning or discussing the merger/incorporation. A very dangerous way of information dissemination is by rumours. It is obvious that staff will talk amongst each other, but if enough information is spread amongst staff, rumours, especially false rumours, will be limited to the minimum.

The following question assessed whether institutions provided some way of support to staff during the merger or incorporation process.

8.9.4.6 Management plan for staff support

Staff support is important when change occurs in any business, and also in higher education. The following question was posed to determine if a support plan existed for staff during the merging/incorporation process at the participating institution.

Table 8.29   Management plan for staff support

RESPONSE	TOTAL	%
YES	6	20,7
NO	22	75,9
NO ANSWER	1	3,4
TOTAL	29	100

The majority of respondents (75,9%) indicated that their institutions did not provide a management plan for staff support. One respondent did not answer and the rest indicated that such a plan existed. It clearly indicates that management do not see the importance of staff support during a merger/incorporation process and have not even thought about it being important.

If a staff management plan exists, it is essential that staff should have the opportunity to make contributions towards such a plan.

8.9.4.7 Staff contributions in a staff management plan

In a merger or incorporation some staff-members may lose their jobs, be redeployed or transferred. It is important for staff to contribute towards the establishment of such a plan.

Table 8.30   Staff contributions in a staff management plan

RESPONSE	TOTAL
YES	8
NO	8
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONDENTS	16

Only half, or 50% of staff respondents who indicated that a staff management plan did exist at their institutions, were given the opportunity to provide inputs regarding their

needs. Such a plan should be open for discussion. Some of the main reasons for this are that staff know what their needs are and that a more transparent plan would be more acceptable to staff in general. It should be noted that only six staff respondents indicated that such a plan existed at their institutions, but when respondents were asked if they made contributions to such a plan (the next question), sixteen responded.

8.9.4.8 Retrenchments, lowering of positions and/or lowering of salaries at new institution

When institutions merge or an institution is incorporated, some staff may become redundant. This is one of the reasons why staff experiences anxiety and stress. The following question asked staff and management if the possibility of retrenchments, lowering of positions and/or lowering of salaries after the merger or incorporation existed.

*Table 8.31   Occurrence of retrenchments, lowering of positions and/or lowering of
             salaries after the merger or incorporation*

	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
CATEGORY	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
YES	3	10,3	7	20
NO	8	27,6	6	17,1
UNCERTAIN	18	62,1	19	54,2
YES, WITH INCORPORATED INSTITUTION	0	0	1	2,9
NOT DISCUSSED	0	0	1	2,9
NOT INTENDED	0	0	1	2,9
TOTAL	29	100	35	100

Most of the respondents were uncertain if the merger or incorporation processes would include any retrenchments, lowering of positions and/or lowering of salaries. In a merger, though, the institutions are supposed to be equal partners. One institution may not demand retrenchments, or the merger/incorporation may be a joint decision by the new, merged institution's top management's structure. With an incorporation, the institution that incorporates has more power and may retrench, demote or lower the salaries (in accordance with the Labour Relations Act) of the incorporating institution's

staff, because they may see them as redundant. People may be asked to apply for new posts at the new merged/incorporated institution.   These staff members are not guaranteed to be successful in applying for the existing posts. An example of such a process is the incorporation of colleges of education in South Africa, where higher education institutions were not obliged to incorporate the staff component. According to a management respondent at a college, staff was retrenched in two phases. The first phase was before incorporation and the second stage was after the incorporation. It should be stated that these staff members where employees of the Department of Education and, in most instances, were placed in schools and departmental offices were there was a need. This made it easier for the incorporating institutions, because college staff members were assured of an income (*vide* 5.2.2).

8.9.4.9 Future of redundant staff members

During a merger or incorporation there may be redundant staff members. The following question tries to establish what will happen to such staff members.

Table 8.32   Future of redundant staff members

	STAFF		MANAGEMENT	
CATEGORY	TOTAL	%	TOTAL	%
EARLY RETIREMENT	3	10,4	14	40
LAY-OFFS	0	0	4	11,4
LOWER SALARIES	1	3,4	4	11,4
DIFFERENT POSITIONS	3	10,4	9	25,7
VOLUNTARY PACKAGES	2	6,9	15	42,9
COMPULSORY PACKAGES	0	0	6	17,1
RETRENCHMENTS	1	3,4	0	0
UNCERTAIN (TOO EARLY)	6	20,7	8	22,9
TOTAL	**16**	*	**60**	*

*   Not all respondents answered and some provided more than one response

It is clear that staff respondents were uncertain what would happen after the mergers or incorporations. The highest response rate from the staff respondents (20,7%) was that they were uncertain about what would happen. Some staff members also indicated that early retirement (10,4%), different positions (10,4%) and voluntary packages (6,9%)

might be an option. One staff member indicated that he/she was sure that retrenchments
would be unavoidable.

It seems as if the management respondents were clearer about the future of staff. The
highest incidences were also that of early retirement (40%), different positions (24,7%)
and voluntary packages (42,9%). Compulsory packages also had a high response rate
(17,1%). Eight of the management respondents indicated that it was too early and that
the different institutions should still come to an agreement according to the Higher
Education Act (22,9%).

The effects of a merger or incorporation are enormous for staff. The following three
questions focus on staff's future prospects in the new higher education institution.

8.9.4.10   Future career prospects

Staff members may want to feel that they have a future at their present higher education
institution.

Table 8.33   Future career prospects

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
YES	20	69
NO	7	24,2
HOPE SO	1	3,4
UNCERTAIN	1	3,4
TOTAL	**29**	**100**

Most of the staff respondents indicated that they saw themselves as having a future at
their current institution. Almost 25% of the respondents indicated that they did not have
future prospects at the current institution. One respondent hoped that he/she would have
a future at the new institution, and the other staff member was uncertain. This may
indicate that staff was positive towards the new merged/incorporated institution.

The staff members that indicated that they saw themselves as having a future at their
current institution, had to indicate how they saw their future.

8.9.4.11   Future prospects in staff's current institution

Most staff members have certain career aspirations and a merger or incorporation may change such aspirations.

Table 8.34   Future prospects in staff's current institution

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
BRIGHT	5	17,2
UNCERTAIN	5	17,2
MODERATE FUTURE	6	20,7
MERGER WILL NOT AFFECT CAREER DEVELOPMENT	3	10,3
MERGER WILL AFFECT FUTURE CAREER	6	20,7
CLOSE TO RETIREMENT	1	3,4
MERGER PARTNER'S STAFF WILL HAVE MORE CERTAINTY	1	3,4
TOTAL	27	*

*   Not all respondents answered and provided, in some cases, more than one response

Most of the staff members indicated that the merger/incorporation process would affect their future career (20,7%). This will definitely cause stress with staff and needs to be addressed. IT may also result in some key staff members leaving the higher education institution.   Staff members' responses, in general, show uncertainty, because 17,2% indicated that they have a bright future, 17,2% were uncertain and 20,7% of the staff's, prospects were moderate regarding their future.   The last category of "not sure" is probably very near to the truth, because the merger or incorporation would affect every staff member in one way or the other. An important comment from one respondent was that the merging partner's staff had more certainty than his/her institution's staff, indicating that the institutions involved in the merging/incorporation process, were not equal partners and that the impact on the merger would be more severe on the "junior" partner of the merger or on the incorporated institution.

8.9.4.12   The effect of a merger or incorporation on staff

The last question in this section is concerned with staff that do not see themselves as part
of the future institution.

*Table 8.35   The effect of a merger or incorporation on staff in their working
environment*

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
BE REDUNDANT	1	3,4
NO JOB IMPROVEMENT	0	0
DEGRADING IN STATUS OF JOB	3	10,3
LOWERING OF SALARY	1	3,4
TOTALLY NEW JOB DESCRIPTION	4	13,8
EARLY RETIREMENT	1	3,4
NOT SURE	4	13,8
TOTAL	**14**	*

*   Not all the respondents answered this question

This question elicited whether staff was of the opinion if they do not have a future at the
new, merged higher education institution. Only one respondent indicated that he/she
might be redundant. All other respondents indicated that they expected to be degraded in
status, or go on early retirement, whilst 13,6% were unsure. The responses to this
question indicate that staff in general was positive about their future. It is up to the
institution to formulate a strategy to keep them positive and motivated during and after
the merger or incorporation. Obviously staff is influenced by the way in which
information is disseminated, how frequently information is communicated to them and if
there is an effective communication strategy in place. Management respondents had to
indicate if they were of opinion that staff had to be retrained for new purposes.

8.9.4.13   Retraining of staff

A new, merged institution may have different needs and staff may have to be retrained.

Table 8.36   Retraining of staff

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
YES	18	51,4
NO	5	14,3
UNCERTAIN	2	5,7
NO ANSWER	6	17,1
TOTAL	31	*

*   Not all the respondents answered this question

This question followed management's reaction regarding the future of staff (Table 3.31) and how to deal with redundant staff members (Table 8.32). Respondents who indicated that there would not be any retrenchments, lowering of positions and/or lowering of salaries, answered this section. Most of the respondents indicated that they expected their institutions would retrain staff for new purposes (51,4%). Only 14,3% indicated that staff would not be retrained, and the rest were either uncertain or did not answer. If management views the retraining of staff to be important, it is an indication that they are willing to improve and promote the staff component of the new institution.   The following question focuses on where staff will be placed in the newly merged institutuion.

8.9.4.14   Placement of staff after the merger/incorporation

During the higher education mergers and incorporations in South Africa, different types of institutions are merging or are being incorporated into one another (*vide* 2.3). There may be enormous differences in programmes offered at these merging institutions. Will it be possible for such a newly merged institution to accommodate all the staff members of the merging institutions?

Table 8.37   Placement of staff after the merger/incorporation

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
NO STAFF WILL BE ACCOMMODATED	1	2,9
OTHER INSTITUTION'S STAFF HAVE TO APPLY FOR A LIMITED NUMBER OF AVAILABLE POSTS	3	8,6
CERTAIN KEY STAFF MEMBERS WILL BE RETAINED	9	25,7
ALL STAFF WILL BE RETAINED	8	22,9
MANAGEMENT OF NEW INSTITUTION WILL DECIDE	10	28,6
UNCERTAIN	1	2,9
NO ANSWER	3	8,6
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

When an institution merges or is incorporated into another, the dominant institution may decide not to employ the incorporated institution's staff. There may be various reasons for such a decision. The staff may also have to apply for new posts at the new institution. This creates a sense of uncertainty. The dominant or new institution may also only retain key staff members. Most of the respondents indicated that they were uncertain. This may be because the merging or incorporation process has not unfolded to the point of deciding about staff's future yet.

The management of the new institution is very important. The team with that responsibility will have to steer the new institution with a new, combined mission and vision. This is the ideal, but does it work that way? It depends on the type of negotiations during the merger or incorporation or on the seniority of the different institutions. It also depends on whether it is a merger or an incorporation.

8.9.4.15   Management of new institution

Staff may want to know who will lead or manage the new institution.

Table 8.38   Management of the new institution

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
An appointed merger facilitator	2	5,7
Your institution	2	5,7
Their institution	6	17,1
Your institution and their institution	12	34,4
Uncertain	11	31,4
Look at act	2	5,7
TOTAL	**35**	**100**

The response to the question about who will manage the new institution was very interesting. Only 5,7% of the respondents indicated that the "other" institution would manage the new institution, while 17,1% stated that their management would be leading the newly merged institution. The majority of respondents answered that management would or should be a combination of both institutions. The ideal would be that both institutional leaders be absorbed in the management of the new institution. The new leadership of the merged institution is very important, thus bias towards one institution's management should be tolerated. The choice of a leader for the new institution should be based on merit to secure a successful merger. The second highest response rate indicated that they were uncertain as to who would manage the new institution (31,4%).

8.9.5 The psychological effect of mergers/incorporations on staff and management

A merger/incorporation will have certain psychological effects on staff. With certain staff these effects may be enormous, while with other staff it would be minute. It would depend on how the merger/incorporation process proceeds. The impact of the merger or incorporation on staff depends a great deal on the dominance of the higher education institution during the merger/incorporation. The following section describes the responses from institutions that are merging or are being incorporated.

8.9.5.1 Merger/incorporation experiences by staff and management

Management and staff may experience various feelings and have different viewpoints on mergers or incorporations. Table 8.39 depicts staff's experiences, while Table 8.40 gives the responses of management respondents.

Table 8.39   Merger/incorporation experiences of staff

	Totally agree				Totally disagree		
ITEM	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**No answer**	**Total**
I may lose my job.	2	4	8	2	8	1	25
It affects my future career prospects.	8	6	6	3	2	0	25
Uncertainties about my job assignment.	6	5	6	5	3	0	25
It means the establishment of new relationships with new supervisors.	11	7	5	1	1	0	25
It implies a change in organisational culture and procedures.	11	8	5	1	0	0	25
I fear a decrease in academic quality.	7	3	1	7	7	0	25
It might lead to animosity among new colleagues.	3	9	6	4	3		25
It will lead to a cost-effective higher education system.	10	4	5	3	3	0	25
It implies improved services to staff and students.	4	6	7	4	4	0	25
It will establish an expanded pool of staff talent.	5	6	5	7	2	0	25
It will lead to improved quality and accountability of higher education.	6	5	6	4	4	0	25
It will lead to institutional growth.	7	5	9	3	1	0	25
It will lead to improved academic programmes.	8	7	5	4	1	0	25
It will provide me with new challenges/opportunities.	8	7	5	4	1	0	25
It might lead to power clashes in management.	8	5	6	4	2	0	25
It will strengthen the regional higher education system.	9	5	6	2	3	0	25
It will not lead to staff losing their jobs.	3	2	10	5	5	0	25
OTHER COMMENTS							
Need other alternatives							
Too early to comment							

As with staff, management respondents were also asked how they perceived the merger
or incorporation.

Table 8.40   Merger/incorporation experiences of management

	Totally agree				Totally disagree		
ITEM	1	2	3	4	5	No answer	Total
I may lose my job.	4	5	6	8	12	0	35
It affects my future career prospects.	6	7	7	7	6	1	35
Uncertainties about my job assignment.	11	10	5	5	3	1	35
It means the establishment of new relationships with new supervisors.	23	4	6	1	1	0	35
It implies a change in organisational culture and procedures.	21	5	3	4	2	0	35
I fear a decrease in academic quality.	8	1	9	6	11	0	35
It might lead to animosity among new colleagues.	7	11	11	2	3	1	35
It will lead to a cost-effective higher education system.	7	7	4	11	5	1	35
It implies improved services to staff and students.	6	9	8	7	5	0	35
It will establish an expanded pool of staff talent.	11	7	5	7	5	0	35
It will lead to improved quality and accountability of higher education.	9	7	9	6	4	0	35
It will lead to institutional growth.	11	6	6	9	2	1	35
It will lead to improved academic programmes.	12	7	7	6	3	0	35
It will provide me with new challenges/opportunities.	13	6	10	1	3	2	35
It might lead to power clashes in management.	10	7	13	4	1	0	35
It will strengthen the regional higher education system.	14	6	8	5	2	1	35
It will not lead to staff losing their jobs.	3	2	10	5	14	1	35
OTHER COMMENTS							
Leads to better work ethics, better control							
Make us proud again							

The respondents were asked to indicate on a Likert scale how they perceived the statements made in Table 8.39 and 8.40. Staff and management's responses are discussed simultaneously. Table 8.39 and 8.40 can be divided into seven sub-sections that describe how the merger or incorporation affects staff and management personally and professionally.

- **Effect of a merger and incorporation on a personal level**

Staff was uncertain or disagreed totally with the statement that "I would lose my job", and the same applied for the items in which staff was asked if the mergers or incorporations would lead to staff losing their jobs. Management respondents were also uncertain. This correlates with staff and management's earlier response where they were asked if they would be declared redundant (*vide* 8.9.4.9).

When staff and management were asked if the merger or incorporation might affect their future career prospects, staff agreed, but with a certain degree of uncertainty. Management, on the other hand, was uncertain whether the mergers or incorporations would affect their future careers.

Both staff and management indicated that the merger/incorporation processes created uncertainties regarding their job assignment/job description.   The management respondents indicated that they were more uncertain than the staff respondents about their future job assignments. The reason for staff and management's uncertainty may be that they still have to formulate the new job descriptions.

When staff and management were asked if the merger/incorporation provided new challenges and opportunities, both parties agreed. More management respondents than staff agreed that a merger/incorporation would provide more opportunities. It is also interesting to note that the management respondents were more uncertain about whether the merger/incorporation would provide new challenges and opportunities.

- **Quality**

Five of the statements related to quality in one way or the other. The first question asked if the respondents feared a decrease in academic quality of the institutions in general. Some staff and management respondents agreed strongly, while others disagreed strongly, stating that some of the respondents at certain institutions felt that there might be a decrease of academic quality, while others disagreed.

Staff and management were uncertain whether the mergers or incorporations would improve support services to staff and students. The reason may be because the newly merged or incorporated institutions were not yet in place. Management and staff were also uncertain of the effect of the mergers/incorporations on the establishment and expansion of staff talent.

Most of the respondents, both staff and management, agreed that the mergers and incorporations would lead to improved quality and accountability of higher education in general. Staff and management also agreed that the mergers and incorporations might lead to institutional growth and may lead to improved academic programmes.

- **Relationships**

Staff and management agreed that a merger and incorporation would mean the establishment of new relationships with new supervisors and staff. They also agreed that these new relationships might lead to animosity amongst new colleagues, but were uncertain about the animosity that might occur between the staff members of the merging/incorporating institutions.

- **Organisational culture**

Staff and management also agreed that a merger and incorporation would imply a change in organisational culture and procedures.

- **Cost-effectiveness**

There was a difference in the reaction of staff and management when asked if a merger or incorporation would lead to a cost-effective higher education system. 40% of the staff respondents totally agreed that the new institution would lead to a more cost-effective higher education system. 20% of the management respondents also agreed totally and 20% agreed, while 31,4% totally disagreed with this statement.

- **Governance**

Management and especially staff, agreed that the mergers and incorporations would inevitably lead to power clashes in management. This may be negative towards the new higher education institutions, because it might cause uncertainty amongst staff and students. Management and staff also felt that the mergers and incorporations would strengthen the regional higher education system.

- **Other**

A management respondent indicated that a merger or incorporation would lead to better work ethics, better control and would make them proud (of the new institution?) again.

The next question relates directly to the emotions of the respondents. Most of the emotional statements were derived from the Kübler-Ross model (*vide* 6.3) in which she describes how people perceive loss (Kübler-Ross 1969). This model was used, because the author describes the different steps mourning people go through after a loss. In this book a loss is defined as the loss of a loved one, but, according to her, it could be applicable to the loss of a job or something that provides a sense of belonging and security.

8.9.5.2   Management and staff's emotional responses regarding a merger or incorporation

Management and staff may experience various emotions during and after the mergers or incorporation process.   The following table attempts to ascertain how severe the respondents experienced the following emotions.

Table 8.41   Staff's emotional responses regarding a merger or incorporation

EMOTION	TOTALLY AGREE 1	2	3	4	TOTALLY DISAGREE 5	No answer	Total
SHOCK	2	3	6	4	12	2	29
DENIAL	1	4	5	2	15	2	29
HELPLESSNESS	5	5	0	5	13	1	29
BLAME	2	2	3	3	16	2	29
FEAR	2	4	3	4	14	2	29
ANGER	4	6	4	2	11	2	29
SADNESS	7	2	4	1	11	4	29
ACCEPTANCE	7	6	4	5	4	3	29
RELIEF	4	3	6	1	13	2	29
INTEREST	7	10	6	3	2	1	29
LIKING	4	6	7	2	7	3	29
EXCITEMENT	3	6	8	3	7	2	29
ANXIETY	5	4	5	3	9	3	29
STRESS	3	6	3	5	9	3	29
DESPONDENCY	1	0	6	9	9	3	29
NEGATIVITY	1	3	3	5	13	4	29
CHALLENGE	6	12	5	2	3	1	29
POSITIVELY	3	8	9	1	5	2	29
RESISTANCE	1	2	5	6	12	3	29

As with staff, the management respondents had various emotional reactions towards the mergers and incorporations.

Table 8.42   Management's emotional responses regarding a merger or incorporation

EMOTION	TOTALLY AGREE				TOTALLY DISAGREE		
	1	2	3	4	5	No answer	Total
SHOCK	4	2	5	12	12	0	35
DENIAL	3	2	5	10	14	1	35
HELPLESSNESS	4	6	4	5	14	2	35
BLAME	4	2	3	4	21	1	35
FEAR	4	4	9	5	11	2	35
ANGER	4	5	4	7	13	2	35
SADNESS	5	4	3	11	10	2	35
ACCEPTANCE	11	10	5	3	4	2	35
RELIEF	6	4	8	2	13	2	35
INTEREST	12	10	6	3	3	1	35
LIKING	8	4	8	3	10	2	35
EXCITEMENT	8	7	6	5	7	2	35
ANXIETY	7	11	4	4	7	2	35
STRESS	9	7	3	6	8	2	35
DESPONDENCY	3	4	8	5	12	3	35
NEGATIVITY	3	4	4	2	19	3	35
CHALLENGE	11	10	6	3	4	1	35
POSITIVELY	6	5	11	7	4	2	35
RESISTANCE	3	2	4	11	13	2	35

The first seven emotions of shock, denial, helplessness, blame, fear, anger and sadness refer to the reactional stage of employees. Most of the staff and management respondents denied that these emotions were present (indicated disagreed totally). It may be that most employees went through the first "shock" of change that accompanies a merger or incorporation.

Most of the respondents, it seems, had already moved on to the acceptance phase. Staff, but more so management respondents, agreed that their emotional state was that of accepting the merger or incorporation. During this stage staff and management could also experience interest, a neutral measure of excitement, challenging expectations for the newly merged or incorporated institution and could also feel neutrally positive. Other positive responses that support acceptance of the merger and incorporation processes are the denial by the respondents of resistance, negativity and despondency.

It should be added that the respondents in general were not experiencing relief yet. They disagreed to experiencing relief. Staff and management agreed with the experience of liking (enjoyment of the situation). Most of the respondents were almost neutral, but tended to disagree that a feeling of liking was present. An interesting difference between the staff and management respondents was that staff disagreed with experiencing anxiety and stress, while management agreed with these emotions. This may be because of the responsibility of steering the merger or incorporation process successfully. Both staff and management respondents were neutral on being positive towards the merger or incorporation process.

8.9.5.3 Availability of counselling for staff

To overcome the anxiety and stress during and after a merger/incorporation process, staff will need help. The following question wanted to ascertain if any type of counselling was provided to help staff cope with the change during the merger or incorporation. If counselling is made available to staff, it may reduce the amount of stress and anxiety experienced by staff.

Table 8.43   Availability of counselling for staff

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
YES	1	3,4
NO	27	93,2
TOO EARLY IN PROCESS	1	3,4
TOTAL	**29**	**100**

The result clearly indicates that the respondents who returned the questionnaires were either not informed about any counselling to cope with the merger or incorporation process, or it did not exist at all. The respondents that answered that there was counselling available, indicated that regular meetings were held to discuss problems relating to the merger or incorporation process. It is alarming that there was no counselling office available to assist staff in dealing with the merger/incorporation process.

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The same type of question appeared in the management questionnaire. Management was asked if they had put in place any plan of action to help staff to cope with the merging or incorporating process.

8.9.5.4 The availability of a management action plan to assist staff to manage emotionally

Management may also draw up an action plan to assist staff in coping with the change during and after the merger/incorporation.

Table 8.44   The availability of a management action plan to assist staff regarding emotional needs

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
YES	16	45,7
NO	15	42,9
PREMATURE	2	5,7
NO ANSWER	2	5,7
TOTAL	35	100

Almost half (45,7%) of the management respondents answered that their institutions had a plan, while 42,9% stated that they did not have a plan. Two respondents answered that it was still too early for such plans. To accommodate staff a management plan should be one of the first strategies that have to be planned and implemented by management.

To see what type of plan was available, the management respondents were asked which topics should be addressed in a staff development programme in order to assist staff in coping with the merger or incorporation. The answers were divided into six categories that describe possible ways of assistance to staff:

- **Academic development**

Management respondents felt that a new academic structure should be developed. Within this new academic structure, the focus should be on curriculum development. A positive aspect of the merger or incorporation would be programme rationalisation due to existing duplication in programmes offered. Research should be a priority and a new academic

policy should be developed for the new academic structure. According to the respondents, some important aspects that had to be considered during the merger/incorporation process might be to focus on enhancing the quality delivery of services to staff and students, for example library services, information technology, and support services to staff. The retraining and academic development of staff therefore should, be prioritised, especially where two different types of institutions merge/incorporate, for example a technikon and a university (*vide* 6.5.1, 6.5.4).

- **Professional development**

The qualifications of staff would inevitably differ when institutions merge or incorporate. An example is that technikon staff may have lower academic qualifications and also a lower research output. These staff members would need retraining or to improve their academic qualifications.

- **Merger or incorporation involvement of staff**

Some of the management respondents were of the opinion that staff should be involved in planning the merger or incorporation process. Staff's involvement should include aspects such as consulting staff on their views regarding the merger or incorporation, involving staff in formulating new ideas and processes and including staff in different task teams investigating and facilitating the merger or incorporation process.

- **Communication**

According to the responses, most of the respondents felt that communication with staff regarding the merger and incorporation process was of vital importance and that staff should be regularly informed about new developments and processes that might have an impact on them. Communication strategies may include discussions regarding the merger or incorporation, debates on the National Plan for Higher Education and the Higher Education Act, explaining the processes of the mergers and incorporations. Workshops should be arranged where each institution can discuss its unique situation during the merger/incorporation.

The respondents accentuated the importance of communication regarding the impact and relevance of mergers on the growth and development of staff. It would probably assure staff of their future job positions, creating an improved working environment. Communication between staff of different institutions will help to establish mutual interests that may help the staff to cooperate. One respondent felt that communication strategies would be developed after the minister had announced if their institution was to be merged or incorporated.

- **Coping strategies**

Some management respondents indicated some coping strategies for staff. These respondents stated that regular information session would calm down staff and counter their uncertainty about the whole process. They suggested that management should facilitate workshops on conflict management and cultural diversity, and how to perceive the merger and their future in a positive manner. Management should also provide psychological advice. These services may help staff with self-actualisation and assertiveness. It might make people feel positive about themselves and their future and help them to focus on a new beginning, rather than the end of an era.

- **Staff's future**

According to the respondents, one of the most important uncertainties for staff seems to be staff's future. Staff respondents also felt that management should inform staff about their future. This may include information about possible lay-offs, financial advice, possible redeployment options, and on whether job descriptions will be revisited; even if the process had not proceeded that far, it will be reassuring to staff if they knew which plans were on the table to deal with possible retrenchments.

The following question reiterates comments made by management regarding staff's future. The question asked staff if they felt that they had a future in the newly merged or incorporated institution.

8.9.5.5 Staff's expectations of the future

Staff may be more motivated towards their careers if they perceive that they may have a bright future in higher education or at their present higher education institution.

Table 8.45   Staff's future expectations

CATEGORY	TOTAL	%
YES	22	75,9
NO	4	13,8
UNCERTAIN	3	10,3
TOTAL	**29**	**100**

If management receives a response of over 75% that staff wants to be part of the new institution, they have to try to help staff to adapt. This clearly shows that staff are willing to adapt to a new higher education environment. However, to achieve this, they need sufficient support.

8.9.5.6 Staff's needs during a merger or incorporation

It is important that management assesses the needs of staff. The following (staff) question asked staff respondents what should be done (by management) to let staff feel more secure in their working environment. The staff respondents' comments were categorised into seven sub-sections:

- **Consultation**

Staff wants management to consult them about their feelings regarding the merger or incorporation process. This may help management to strategise on how to allay fear and anxiety regarding the change that is occurring when two or more institutions are merging or being incorporated.

- **Ethics**

Management should be open and honest to staff regarding the merger or incorporation and their position. This means that staff wants to be assured that management does not have a "hidden agenda" with the merging/incorporation process. If management is able

to portray an image of trust to its staff, it would assist in assuring a successful merging/incorporation process.

- **Security**

Staff will feel uncertain about their future. The staff respondents stated that they wanted management to allay their fears by securing their jobs so that they did not feel threatened.

- **Future**

The staff respondents indicated that staff's future working conditions should be communicated to them. They also felt that retrenchment was not an option. Respondents stated that the merging and incorporation process should be finalised as soon as possible.

- **Staff support**

In cases where an institution's staff should be retrained or trained for new programmes, support should be available to staff, where necessary. Where there is a merger or incorporation, certain staff members may have to teach more students and/or classes than before. These respondents indicated that management should provide assistance with work overloads.

- **Political influence from government**

Government should stop interfering in the merging or incorporation process. Some respondents indicated that government had too much say in the merging/incorporation process and that institutions should be able to facilitate some of the choices themselves.

8.9.5.7 Building of staff morale by management after a merger/incorporation

Management respondents were also asked how they intended building staff morale after the merger or incorporation process. This question can be read with the previous statements by staff. The responses of management are divided into seven categories:

- **Academic**

Some of the management respondents indicated that appropriate academic standards should be set. This may ensure that positive, quality work is done. Academic staff development programmes will help all staff members to adapt to the new academic culture of the new institution.

- **Staff morale**

One respondent stated that he/she wanted to keep doing his/her job as best as possible. If this respondent has to change his/her way of doing his/her job, the individual may develop stress and his/her morale may be low. Various respondents stated various ways in which to enhance staff morale. Some of these proposals were that management should work on a positive state of mind by team-building exercises, transformation workshops, and road shows to introduce the new institution to the community and staff, and informal social events. Everyone should be involved in this team-building exercise. It would ensure that the merger or incorporation process is more open and will allay most people's fears.

Staff morale will also be built by considering staff as the most important resource of the merging or incorporating and the new institution. Such an approach will emphasise the importance of staff during the merger or incorporation deliberations and negotiations.

If staff is empowered by reskilling, retraining and the improvement of academic qualifications, staff will inevitably be motivated. It is also important that the new institution employs staff according to labour friendly conditions of service. Such practices would show trust in the staff component and build morale.

- **Practical strategic planning**

Staff should know what the main functions of the new institution are, especially where a university and a technikon merge. It would improve staff morale if staff could share the mission, vision and goals of the new institution. It would also make staff feel part of the new institution if they were part of drafting the strategic plan of the new institution. It is

important for staff that frequent evaluation or quality assurance exercises be conducted to give an indication of the needs, shortfalls and successes of the new institution.

- **Togetherness**

Some of the management respondents felt that staff morale would be improved when opportunities were created where staff of different campuses could come together, professionally and socially, to build bridges and to foster mutual acceptance. One respondent stated that all staff should wear the same t-shirt at different occasions to enhance the feeling of togetherness. All stakeholders, for example the community, alumni, staff, students, trade unions, to name but a few, should also be involved in the merging or incorporating process. This includes a participating management team of both institutions.

- **Development**

Management also felt that skills development would build staff morale and reward staff for quality work done.

8.9.5.8 Priority issues for a staff development programme

Both staff and management were asked to identify priority issues for a staff development programme. Comments by staff and management will be discussed simultaneously to provide a comprehensive understanding of what is required. These comments were arranged into eight subsections:

- **Staff development and support**

Both staff and management respondents stated that the academic qualifications of staff should be improved. Before any development programme is conducted, studies should be conducted in order to see where there is a need.

All staff should undergo an orientation/induction programme for the new institution. Such an orientation programme should promote teamwork amongst staff and also help

staff to manage change successfully so that staff does not panic during and after the merger or incorporation process.

Staff who will be redeployed should also be trained. Such training may include skills upgrading and in-service training programmes. According to management respondents, staff will need training in communication skills, computer literacy and project management. Management should be trained in management skills workshops where aspects such as change management, transformative skills, negotiation skills and teamwork should be addressed. Most of the training should be in-service training programmes. It would inevitably increase staff's performance.

- **Staff orientation**

Staff orientation could also be named communication to staff, because staff should become conversant about various topics relating to the new institution. Some of these topics may include staff orientation to their new contracts and positions, salary structures and workloads. Staff should exactly know what is expected of them. This will ensure continuity.

Regular information on the procedures and processes of the merger or incorporation would also empower staff. This may help in forming new partnerships between the different institutions. With the forming of new relationships, workshops on cultural diversity may be held so that staff should be able to understand the differences between individuals.

- **Institutional development**

Most respondents felt that teaching, learning and research should be improved at their present institutions and that teaching, learning and research should receive priority in the newly merged institution. This means that quality and standards should also be improved. An effective quality assurance programme for teaching, learning and research may help to improve standards.

Students should also have better access to institutions. A career development system may be introduced where students may be assisted in finding a career after their studies have been completed.

Different campuses and staff should cooperate and there should be adequate staff support. Staff support may also include administrative support for staff and students. This means that all support structures should be in place at the newly, merged or incorporated institution.

- **Establishment of new institution**

With the establishment of the new institution it is important that all structures should be in place to ensure a smooth transition. To ensure the smooth running of the new institution, a new programme structure should be developed for students. The new institution should also decide on the teaching and research delivery modes.

In order to ensure the smooth running of the institution, a new corporate identity should be developed by establishing a single, unified organisational culture. This should start with strategic planning to establish the mission and vision of the new institution, as well as a decision on who will manage the new institution.

- **New research developments**

In the academic field, some of the management respondents felt that a post-graduate supervision and promotion system should be developed where it did not exist already. These respondents also stated that departmental research projects should be developed if such projects were not yet part of the institution. For the enhancement of administration, new, improved financial and general rules and regulations should be drafted for the new institution. Students should also have new rules and an improved access structure.

- **Stress management**

Staff would need support during the merger or incorporation process. Such support may come in the way of information (communication) where staff will be induced into

procedures and processes of the new institution. A staff support unit may also be established. Such a unit should assess staff morale and needs. It should then address staff's fears and uncertainties by identifying their roles, responsibilities and positions. Possible topics that may be addressed, are stress management, positive thinking, assertiveness, coping strategies, enhancing commitment, having social tolerance, being proud of who you are, identifying your values, understanding your feelings, to name but a few.

- **Transformation issues**

Most of the institutions that are merging or being incorporated have different cultures. These cultures have to be combined and function as a unit. In order for such a process to be successful, staff and management came up with various ways to solve possible cultural problems. Organising inter-cultural team-building exercises and having cultural diversity workshops may accommodate cultural diversity.   Racial acceptance is also of high priority and may be addressed in these cultural diversity workshops, particularly in the case of HDIs and HAIs' mergers or incorporations.

In order to transform successfully, a sense of ownership has to be created. This may involve the establishment of new policies, for example academic, admission, administrative, language and financial policies. The merging or incorporated institutions should cooperate in creating and transforming the old policies.

8.9.5.9 Other comments by staff

Staff respondents were asked if they wanted to make any other comments regarding the newly merged institution where they are involved in. The responses in this question were divided into ten sections.

- **Communication**

Staff respondents stated that Government should communicate information regarding mergers/incorporations more timeously to institutions, because the slow communication frustrated staff. It seems staff wants the process to be completed as soon as possible.

Staff also indicated that honest communication between the merging or incorporated institutions was of vital importance.

- **Timeframe**

One respondent indicated that the mergers and incorporations happened too soon, while another respondent indicated that the institutions should merge as soon as possible.

- **Political**

Some staff respondents did not trust Government's intentions with the transformation of higher education institutions. These respondents commented that Government's goal was equity, while others stated that it was the Government's way of cleaning up institutions that performed poorly. One respondent commented that the transformation of institutions was a bad idea by Government.

- **Management**

Some management respondents indicated that mergers/incorporations might result in an improvement of management at subordinate institutions. On the other hand, strong leadership is needed to steer the mergers and incorporations.

- **Status**

Some institutions felt that their status would decrease if they merged with an institution with a lower standard. Mergers or incorporations should not be used as a tool to assure quality at lower quality institutions.

Another important comment was that the mergers or incorporations would not affect the staff at dominant institutions as much as the staff at subordinate institutions. Some staff and management at one dominant institution were not interested in the incorporation with another institution, while the staff at the subordinate institution wanted to be informed, because their future positions were dependent on the incorporation.

- **Costs**

The mergers will be costly and may have a negative impact on some institutions. It
would not be a cost saving exercise.

- **Culture**

It is difficult to merge or incorporate different cultures.

- **Endure**

The merging process would be difficult for a long time to come, but staff should endure.
Institutions should cultivate endurance.

- **May lose their jobs**

Lots of people will lose their jobs.

All these feelings are a reality for staff and management individuals and have to be
addressed. Some individuals know themselves well enough to seek professional help, but
what about the majority of staff members? It is of vital importance that the institution
provides support in one way or the other.

8.10 CONCLUSION

A fair distribution of respondents in respect of sex, age and position completed the
questionnaires. The majority of respondents were male. Most of the respondents did not
think that their positions would change dramatically after the mergers or incorporations.

Most staff was not involved in the merger negotiations. Staff involvement would
certainly allay some fears and reduce anxiety amongst staff members. To merge or
incorporate different institutions certainly has an enormous impact on the physical
functioning of the future institutions. Most respondents indicated that there were various
differences, for example the visions and missions of the merging/incorporated
institutions, that needed to be addressed. Most staff members are willing to change, but

to neutral organisational characteristics, rather than to that of the merging/incorporating partners.

Although the respondents to the questionnaires were from both dominant and subordinate institutions, most respondents regarded their positions as equal. In most cases it seems that staff representatives were involved in the negotiation process of merging/incorporating process, but the degree of involvement differed.

This leads to another aspect, namely how information about the merger or incorporation was communicated to staff. According to staff and management, the information concerning the merger or incorporation process was regularly communicated to the relevant stake-holders by means of open discussions, information sessions and letters.

One of the concerns was that most of the management respondents indicated that there was no planned support for staff during the merger or incorporation. This may have a negative effect on staff morale and, eventually the quality of work done at the respective institutions. The respondents were also uncertain about their future position at the new institution. A majority of management respondents indicated that staff would be retrained if necessary.

Staff and management in general did not perceive the mergers and incorporations in a negative way. They were very uncertain, though, about the future outcome and its effect on their individual positions and lives. This may result in feelings of anxiety, fear and depression about the future. Although most staff accepts the process, they do not know what the future holds. As stated earlier, almost no institution is providing assistance for staff, or any counselling to cope with the mergers/incorporations.

Most respondents indicated how staff might be assisted in the merging/incorporation process. Some of these categories include academic development, professional development, and involvement in the process, improved communication and coping strategies. Management also agreed that, after the merger or incorporation, staff's morale

should be built by development, information about their future and creating a sense of togetherness. The most important issue throughout the questionnaire was that of improved communication between staff and management. Staff wants to be informed about their future and their institution's future. The following chapter makes further recommendations on how staff may be assisted during and after a merger or incorporation process.

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Chapter 9

A staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions

9.1 INTRODUCTION

Every higher education institution has unique characteristics. If two or more institutions merge/incorporate, each institution will have different needs. In order to deal with all the emotions, fears and practicalities, it is important for institutions to formulate a strategy for approaching the merger/incorporation process. A staff development programme should be part of such a strategy in order for the institution to assist staff in the transition of a merger/incorporation. All staff components should be supported, for example academic, support and administrative staff. The goals of such a staff development plan should focus on staff motivation, the training and retraining of staff according to the needs of the new merged institution, dealing with possible institutional culture differences and also psychological help for staff. Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:56) reiterate the importance of staff support in asserting that most mergers in the corporate sector are not concerned with people, but financial and infrastructural issues. This is a big oversight, because people problems are more likely than financial problems to affect the long-term success of a merger. It is thus proposed that a staff-centred approach be followed when a merger/incorporation strategy is formulated.

It is important that staff support and communication strategies should be planned for during the merger/incorporation processes. The guidelines in this chapter stress the importance of communication and provide assistance to management and staff through all the different phases of the merger/incorporation. The aim of this chapter, thus, is to provide guidelines on how to involve, support and develop staff in adapting to the changing organisational climate resulting from the merging/incorporation.

9.2　A PROPOSED STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR MERGED/INCORPORATED SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

As known by now, the primary aim of the research was the drafting of a staff development programme to assist higher education institutions' staff to deal with a merger, or incorporation process. The drafting of a staff development programme required the researcher to follow different research approaches. The following section describes these approaches.

9.2.1　Background information to the proposed staff development programme

To draft a staff development programme required a thorough literature review on the development history of higher education in South Africa, the different merger programmes in higher education, mergers of higher education institutions in other countries, the merger/incorporation process in South Africa and the impact thereof on staff. After the literature review, the research process was explained and also why a mixture of quantitative and qualitative approaches was followed. It provided the study with the necessary background to conduct research on merged/incorporated higher education institutions.

Management and staff at these higher education institutions had the opportunity to express how they perceived the merger or incorporation process at their specific institutions. These views, preferences and needs, as well as the literature review of the study, were used in drafting the staff development programme for merged/incorporated higher education institutions in South Africa.

In order for the staff development programme to benefit management and staff, it should emphasise a staff-centred approach to mergers and incorporations. Some of the outcomes identified by the respondents are:

- the support of staff;

- the empowerment of staff in order to adapt to the new merged institution with its new culture;

- the integration of staff from different merged/incorporated institutions;

- a proactive approach in application, rather than crisis management;

- the motivation of staff;

- the establishment of a productive workforce; and

- the assurance of quality in the world of work, students, the international higher education community, donors, alumni and Government.

It should be emphasised that the aim of the programme is not to provide a programme for mergers or incorporations in general, but a programme focussing on staff development and support before, during and after a merger/incorporation at a South African higher education institution.

9.2.2 Functioning of the staff development programme

The programme functions in a vertical, as well as in a horizontal way. Vertically the programme represents the initial planning phase of the merger and comprises the following:

- The Government initiated the mergers/incorporations.

- This merger/incorporation initiative by the South African Ministry of Education forced individual institutions to meet with their Senates, as the highest authority, to decide on a specific merger/incorporation strategy. The result of this meeting(s) will result in the first meeting between the merging/incorporating institutions.

- The merging/incorporating institutions should establish a merger office and may decide to appoint an external merger/incorporation facilitator to assist them with aspects of the merger/incorporation.

Horizontally the programme describes the interaction between the merger/incorporation planning unit and staff. The horizontal axis has four main focus areas:

- Staff needs are described. Staff members are defined as staff not involved in driving the actual merger/incorporation and may include staff members in managerial positions.

- Management is part of the merger/incorporation planning process and has to portray a positive outlook regarding the merger/incorporation and also has certain needs. Their focus areas are also training, psychological services and workshops on how to adapt to cultural diversity, but they have to train staff, but also receive training themselves, as management.

- The setting up of proper communication channels between management and staff is also very important. The type of communication strategy followed will depend on how the merger/incorporation is managed.

- Another essential component for the proposed staff development programme is continuous monitoring.

Figure 9.1 is a visual presentation of the staff development programme for South African higher education institutions and is followed by a description of the various components of the programme. The first action, according to the staff development programme, is when Government initiates the merger/incorporation.

INITIATION OF THE MERGER/INCORPORATION BY GOVERNMENT			PRE-MERGER PHASE	MONITORING
MEETING OF THE HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS (HIGHEST AUTHORITY)				
ESTABLISHMENT OF A JOINT MERGER OFFICE AND APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL MERGER FACILITATOR				
ADDRESSING MERGER/INCORPORATION ISSUES AS A WHOLE				
STAFF NEEDS	C O M M U N I C A T I O N	**MANAGEMENT NEEDS**	MERGER AND POST-MERGER PHASE	
TRAINING ←		→ TRAINING		
PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES ←		→ PSYCHOLOGICAL SERVICES		
CULTURAL DIVERSITY ←		CULTURAL DIVERSITY		
←		→		

Figure 9.1   Proposed staff development programme for merged/incorporated South African higher education institutions

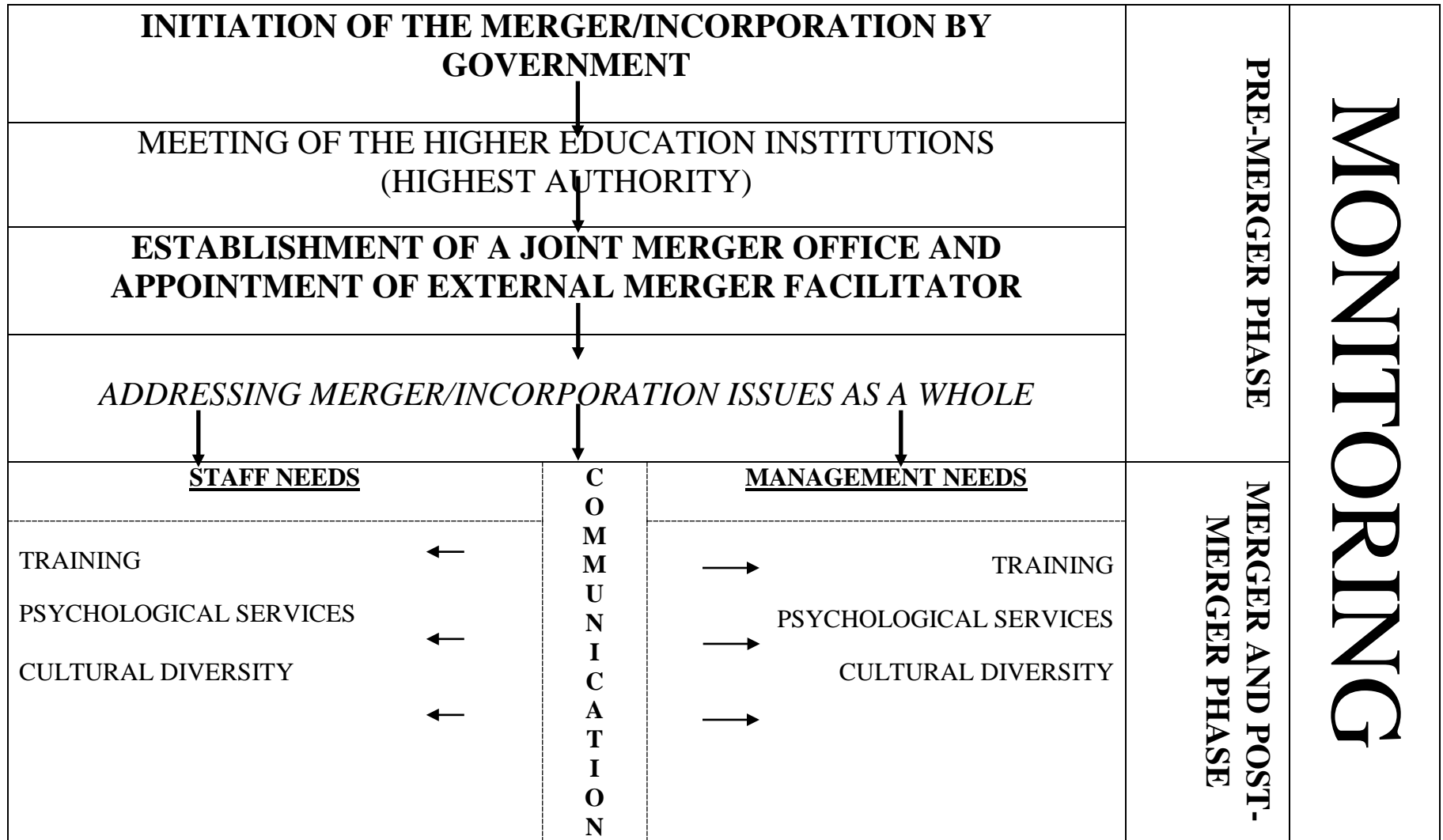Chapter 9   A staff development programme for merged and
                            incorporated South African higher education
                            institutions
9.2.3 Initiation of the merger/incorporation by Government

Mergers and acquisitions in the corporate sector are usually the decision of private companies. The reason why these companies decide to merge may be to increase their markets or for financial gain (Bjorkquist 1992:70). In the higher education sector, governments are usually the initiator of the mergers or incorporations, but voluntary mergers do occur, for example the merger of ML Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, to establish the Durban Institute of Technology in 1992 (*vide* 5.2.3.6). The reasons for the mergers and incorporations, in the South African higher education sector, were to consolidate the fragmented higher education sector and to provide equal opportunities for all the citizens of the country (*vide* 5.2.2, 5.2.3). The merging/incorporating institution had to accept the proposed merger/incorporation and comply with Government policy, although they could respond to the Minister's proposed merger/incorporation. These institutions had to facilitate and drive the merger/incorporation processes and negotiate the best 'deal' possible for their institutions and ultimately their staff.

If two institutions are incompatible, would Government be willing to change or divorce a merger or incorporation, as described by Harman (2000)? According to the Ministry of Education the responsibility for driving the mergers/incorporations rests with the institutional leadership, who must ensure that the process is not brought to a halt over issues where there are high levels of contestation (RSA MoE 2003:13). In situations where it seems that conflict cannot be internally resolved, institutions should consider seeking assistance from the DoE Merger unit, including the Reference Group, or bringing in external facilitators to enable movement and progress to be sustained (RSA MoE 2003:13). The Ministry of Education also assists the higher education institutions through the establishment of a merger unit within the higher education branch of the Department of Education in the following areas:

- Academic and research issues;

- information systems;

- human resource policies and procedures, staffing and industrial relations;

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                                            incorporated South African higher education
                                            institutions**

- administrative and financial matters, including properties and services
  administration;

- legislation and legal matters;

- governance, management and decision-making issues; and the

- merger implementation process (RSA MoE 2003:10).

After the announcement of the mergers and incorporations, the merging/incorporating
institutions should start strategising the merger/incorporation approach. This will lead to
meetings at the highest level at the universities and, eventually, the meetings of the
merging/incorporating institutions.

9.2.4 Meeting of the higher education institutions

The merging institutions themselves are responsible for implementing the mergers within
the policy, planning and legislative frameworks (*vide* 5.2.3.1). Within the context of the
principles of inclusivity and stakeholder participation, the process should be consultative
and inclusive by using the existing governance structures established for this purpose,
particularly senates, student representative councils and institutional forums. According
to the Ministry of Education's guidelines for mergers and incorporations (RSA MoE
2003:12), institutions would do well to consider the particular contributions that can be
made to the merger process by their various constituencies, especially the staff and
students.

During the first meetings between the merging/incorporating institutions, they should
decide on a possible way forward. They have to draw up a Memorandum of Agreement
(*vide* RSA MoE 2003:93-95) well before the actual date of the merger, which will form
the basis for all interactions and negotiations. At this stage the merging/incorporating
higher education institutions should communicate the merger/incorporation information
to their staff.

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                                             incorporated South African higher education
                                             institutions

9.2.5 Establishment of a joint merger office and appointment of external merger/incorporation facilitator

The merging/incorporating institutions should also appoint a joint merger manager that will oversee the merging/incorporation process. This merger manager may be an external merger facilitator to ensure an unbiased merger/incorporation process. One of the merger manager's first tasks would be to set up task teams to perform the work in the areas identified in the Institutional Operating Plan (*vide* RSA MoE 2003:96-108). These task teams should have representatives from each of the institutions involved in the merger or incorporation, and should be given clear terms of reference, work briefs and deadlines may be formed for the completion of each phase of their allocated tasks. Task teams are academic planning, quality assurance and research, student support and administration, human resources (including a special section for psychological support), financial management and administration, information and communication technology, and library and information services.

The next step would be for the merging/incorporating institutions to establish a joint merger office. This is one way of establishing a centre for organisational, logistical and administrative support for merger planning and implementation (RSA MoE 2003:13). The different task teams, as described in the previous paragraph, should report to the merger office. Another important function of the merger office would be information dissemination, which can be done in various ways (*vide* 9.2.7). Successful communication strategies would reassure staff, so that they do not feel like 'victims' of the merger/incorporation, and that their management will not sell them out. During the first meetings an external merger facilitator could be appointed to help facilitate the merger/incorporation, for which the merging/incorporating institutions may lack expertise or capacity, and which fall beyond the scope and assistance of the Ministry's Merger Unit, which is a unit established by the Ministry of Education to assist higher education institutions with mergers and incorporations. Reimbursement for such external professional assistance will be available on application (RSA MoE 2003:17).
.

Hunsaker and Coombs (1988:61) suggest that an outside consultant should be brought in to assist in the merger/incorporation process, because an outside consultant lacks bias, has broad experience, is able to see objectively, and has an arsenal of organisational-change techniques. Such a consultant also, as a counsellor, can help ease the feelings that are sometimes easier to share with someone not in the line of authority. The role of the merger facilitator should be to advise management on how to approach the merger/incorporation. He/she should assist in establishing the different merger task teams. These task teams should be workshopped on staff issues, for example communication, the psychological needs of staff, cultural diversity and the training and development of staff. Resource issues, for example infrastructure, the location of the new merged/incorporated institution, and also the financial sustainability of the newly merged institution are areas where the merger facilitator can render assistance.

One of the main responsibilities of the merger facilitator is to monitor the progress made and to be able to anticipate problems before they occur. Corrective strategies then may be implemented, for example when a rumour starts that some of the staff may be retrenched after the merger. The merger facilitator should be aware of any negative reactions regarding the merger before these actually cause damage and address grievances of staff. In short, the merger facilitator should oversee, advise and monitor the merger/incorporation process. One of the areas of concern during a merger/incorporation is the needs of management and staff. The following discussion will focus on how these needs should be addressed.

9.2.6 Determining management and staff needs

It would be the duty of the human resource task team to determine management and staff needs. Stemming from the literature review (*vide* 6.5) and research conducted amongst staff and management (*vide* 8.9.8.5, 8.9.5.7, 8.9.5.9, 8.9.5.10) management and staff needs can be divided into three broad categories. These categories are training and development of management and staff, establishing psychological services, and dealing

with cultural or institutional diversity issues. Management, however, has another need, namely that of developing negotiation skills. Management has a dual role. First of all, they have to steer the process and, secondly, they have to adapt to the changes resulting from the merger/incorporation. Management training, for example, should be conducted by the external merger facilitator, or consultants specialising in one of the above-mentioned focus areas.

9.2.6.1 Training and development of management and staff

Training of management and staff regarding changes that occur because of the mergers/incorporations should be undertaken throughout the pre-merger, merger and post-merger phases. Some of the identified categories where training needs occur, are:

- Approaching and coping with a changing working environment, for example new post structure, new institutional location, change in institutional leadership, new colleagues and supervisors;

- the psychological aspects of the merger/incorporation, for example fear of retrenchment and/or lowering of position and changing working conditions may cause stress, anxiety and resentment towards the new merged/incorporated institution; and

- cultural or institutional change that may occur because of the merger/incorporation.

During every phase of the merger/incorporation there will be different training and development needs. The following section suggests what type of training could take place during each phase of the merger/incorporation process.

- **Pre-merger phase**

The pre-merger phase is characterised by orientating management and staff with regard to merger/incorporation. A joint human resource task team of the merging/incorporating institutions should be established during the pre-merger phase to coordinate the merger activities of the human resources work team. One of their main tasks would be to undertake an audit of all the human resource issues and should include staff training and development, and determining future human resource requirements.

It is important that management and staff should also be orientated with regard to the implications the merger/incorporation could have on them. Some of the pressing issues during this phase will be:

- **Conditions of service and benefits of staff**

  An example of a pressing issue is the contracts and conditions of service of employees. During merger or incorporation the contracts of staff are transferred automatically to the merged, single public higher education institution as from the date of the merger/incorporation, according to Section 23 of the Higher Education Act as amended by Act 63 of 2002 (compare RSA MoE 2003:53,58).

- **Staff planning and restructuring**

  The establishment of staff (academic, technical and administrative) should be communicated to staff. It should be noted that staff has the right to be consulted on all matters that affect them and their job security, to be given proper reasons for all decisions that affect them and their job security, and all possible alternatives considered before resorting to termination (for example, re-deployment, the offering of voluntary severance packages, etc.). It should be noted that the Higher Education Act does not preclude the new institution from undertaking personnel restructuring for operational reasons, as long as there is adherence to Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act.

- **_Modus operandi_ followed by merging/incorporating institutions**

  The _modus operandi_ or plan of action that the merging/incorporating institutions will follow during the merger/incorporation should be clear to management and staff. Management and staff should know how the merger/incorporation will be approached and what to expect, even if there will be possible lay-offs. This would assist staff in preparing for the future.

The merger facilitator and top management have ample opportunity to allay management and staff fears and negative perceptions regarding the merger/incorporation during the merger phase.

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                                          incorporated   South   African   higher   education
                                          institutions

- **Merger phase**

The merger phase is when the merger is announced and the integration of the different

departments commences. During this phase management and staff should be trained and

developed in various aspects of the newly merged institution as described in this section.

The newly merged/incorporated institution should also provide the Ministry of Education

with an institutional operating plan. The various aspects that will change, and how the

change will be implemented, should be communicated to staff. Changes may occur in the

following areas of the newly established institution:

- Governance;

- the academic, technical and administrative post structure;

- the new vision, mission, goals, targets and strategies;

- financial policy;

- administrative process;

- academic programmes;

- student enrolments and support;

- programme and qualification profiles;

- library and information services;

- information and communication technology; and

- physical distribution of different faculties and schools.

The changes that occur during this phase may be traumatic for management and staff.

During this phase, staff should be trained, developed and assisted to cope with or handle

these changes (*vide* 9.2.4.2). This could be done in various ways, for example through

workshops, information dissemination sessions, networks, to name but a few.

- **Post-merger phase**

The post-merger phase, or period of full implementation begins with the taking of office

of the full council of the new institution and the subsequent appointment of people to

substantive management positions. The full merging of all units and processes takes

place during this period. It is recommended that merged institutions, given the new staff

configurations, undertake a new process of employment equity planning, subsequent to the merger. The Department of Labour should be informed that the existing plans will no longer be valid and will be replaced by a new, integrated plan, within a reasonable period of time. A new skills development plan should also be devised. Unlike the earlier phases, this phase could extend over three or more years before the merger may be said to be completed.

This phase is also characterised by supporting, managing and normalising the merger/incorporation. There will be problem areas that have to be addressed, and training and development should focus on these areas.

Other areas to be addressed are:

- Reskilling of staff where necessary, for example when a university and a technikon merge, there will be differences. The merger of different types of institutions will result in a staff composition with different types of qualifications and, inevitably will lead to training or retraining. Some staff members may need retraining (*vide* 8.9.5.4) in order to upgrade their academic qualifications. These staff members should be provided proper opportunities to improve their qualifications.

- Differences in the salary structures of the merging/incorporating institutions have to be adapted in accordance with promotion criteria.

- A performance appraisal system for staff has to be established/adapted to accommodate the merging/incorporated institutions.

During the post-merger phase senior and middle management should be trained in employee communication, how to cope with large scale change, how to apply evaluation criteria for selecting new management and operation teams, resolution of corporate culture conflicts, team building and organisational design issues.

9.2.6.2 Establishing psychological services

Management and staff should be psychologically prepared for the merger/incorporation. The human resource task team should have a special section with its primary focus to

address the psychological well-being of management and staff. Marks and Philips (2001:13) describe the psychological preparation as raising the awareness of the normal and to-be-expected mindset of the staff involved. Maslow (1987:17-22) describes safety as one of the essential needs for human survival. Preparation alerts staff to the merger/incorporation process and would provide a certain degree of safety. Kenrick (1993:1501) accentuates that the morale of employees should be increased during the merger/incorporation by providing increased job interest, recognition, opportunity for achievement and social esteem (*vide* Chapter 6).

It is important for the merger facilitator to be a human resource specialist. This would enable him/her to focus on staff needs throughout the merger/incorporation process. In the study, (*vide* 8.9.5.3) 93,2% of staff indicated that counselling services were not available to support them during the merger/incorporation. A counselling support system should be established as part of the merger/incorporation process. Staff should be made aware of the existence of such a support system and what such a system can offer them. It is important that the counselling support system should focus on preventing psychological stress by regularly assessing and measuring staff and managements' stress levels. This assessment should be done during the pre-merger, merger and post-merger phases of the merger/incorporation process for thorough monitoring of the psychological well being of staff. Another function of the psychological support system would be to counsel staff that has difficulty in coping and accepting the merger/incorporation.

During the pre-merger, merger and post-merger phases, management and staff would be required to adapt to the changing working conditions of the new merged/incorporated higher education institution. Some of these changing conditions might be:

- a changed organisational culture of the new entity;
- possible rationalisation of academic programmes, departments, support services and administrative functions;
- possible redundant staff members;
- changing status, for example from a departmental head to a senior lecturer;
- the physical location of the new institution; and

- a new management structure and organograms.

These changes would require management and staff to be supported by the psychological support system. Department heads/managers need to be trained in dealing with staff's psychological needs and also should be able to identify staff having problems accepting the merger/incorporation (*vide* 9.2.4.1). These staff members may be referred to the psychological support system for help. One of the most important aspects of the psychological support system is that the help it provides to staff should be confidential and should not be held against staff, for example, in the case of future promotions.

Staff should be considered as the most valuable resource gained during a merger or incorporation, and this should be communicated to the staff. They should have the necessary support from their institutions to be able to make a smooth transition to the new institution. Staff should be assisted to make a shift from the general feeling of merely accepting the merger/incorporation to feelings of relief, interest, liking and enjoyment *(vide* Figure 6.1).

9.2.6.3 Dealing with institutional or cultural diversity

The merging/incorporating institutions may be culturally diverse in various ways, the first having a bearing on the organisational culture of the institution. A technikon and a university may have different teaching and learning cultures. The technikon usually will have a more a vocational focus, while the university's emphasis might be more on the creation of science (*vide* 1.2.1). The second major difference may be in the staff and student bodies of technikons and universities.

Price (1999:41) describes cultural issues as "soft" issues, and as being perceived as unimportant during a merger or incorporation. Georgopoulos (1999:44) states that one of the key factors that have to be considered during a merger is for cultural differences to be understood. This should be one of the main aims of training before, during and after the merger/incorporation. Marks and Mirvis (2001:8) advice is that thorough screening should take place to determine whether the human and cultural issues of institutions can

be matched or not. A merger plan of action usually is used in corporate mergers where corporations choose their own partners.   If, for example, government chooses the partners, as in the South African scenario, the government should do the screening as indicated by Marks and Mirvis (2001:8), or the merging/incorporating institutions should adapt to the different cultures during and after the merger/incorporation.

A possible solution to cultural integration is, what Engström, Rosengren, and Hallberg (2002:14) calls balancing involvement.   This means that all stakeholders should be involved in the organisation of the merger/incorporation process.   Balancing involvement means that there should be mutual trust, commitment and respect, and the stakeholders should also accept the challenge of the merger/incorporation.

Various aspects need to be addressed during the involvement of staff, for example multiculturalism, cultural tolerance and acceptance (*vide* 9.2.4.3), equity, democracy and how to merge cultures.   This may be attained through cultural diversity workshops (*vide* 8.9.5.9).

9.2.7 Communication between management and staff

Before, during and after the merger/incorporation, staff and management should have regular formal and informal contact sessions about the merger/incorporation.   For these contact sessions different communication strategies should be employed.   Management can support their staff, facilitate team building exercises and training and involve staff in the negotiation process.   This does not mean that management should discuss all pending decisions with staff, but that there should be a certain degree of openness between staff and management.   The Ministry of Education (RSA MoE 2003) reiterates the importance of timely, clear, consistent and full communication with all stakeholder groups and the general public.   Merger and incorporation scenarios have the potential to generate an enormous amount of rumour, conjecture, uncertainty, anxiety and misinformation. Responsive and responsible communication can do much to ameliorate these circumstances and all communication should be sensitive to the fact that people's needs,

interests and values lie at the heart of the change process. The communication function is probably best located within the joint merger office where the accuracy of information can be monitored and checks made that the same information is conveyed to all campuses and external parties.

Most of the respondents indicated that open communication between stakeholders is of vital importance (*vide* 8.9.4.1-8.9.4.5, 8.9.5.4, 8.9.5.7). Devine (*s.a.*:16) describes merger communication as building trust and commitment between staff and management and that management should treat communication as a key component during the merging process.   The management team should communicate the merger/incorporation information to all the relevant stakeholders (*vide* 6.5.2). For effective communication, management should formulate a clear communication strategy for disseminating information to staff at regular intervals, and after new deliberations regarding the merger or incorporation. Staff representation in consultations during the merger process is very important, because these representatives will express the needs of staff. This is where union representatives are of vital importance. These representatives should be part of the negotiations on the highest levels and they can give feedback to their constituents. Management and staff should also decide on a medium for communicating information on the process, for example electronic mail, a regular newsletter, a notice board, information sessions, regular workshops, a chat room on the institution's web page where staff can talk to management, etc.

Another important facet of communication is the communication between the merging/incorporating institutions, especially during the merger phase. It is not only management that should communicate, but also the different departments or units that will merge/be incorporated. Some staff commented that the different institutions should search for mutual interests during first meetings. Communication between staff and management of the same institution and between the merging/incorporating institutions will determine which issues are important and need attention and/or training.

The staff component of the newly merged/incorporated institution should be unified. It is important, for the new management to engage in team building exercises. These team building exercises, first of all should include the top management structure of the new institution and start during the pre-merger phase. It should continue by including management and staff of the merging/incorporating institutions. During the pre-merger phase, the team building exercises' function would be for staff to get to know one another. During the merger phase, the function would be more specific, for example, the establishment of the new mission and vision of the new institution, to establish a single unified culture and to build bridges of acceptance amongst staff. During the post-merger phase, team buildings' function would be to solve problems amongst staff and between management and staff.

The main aim of these team-building exercises would be for management and staff to address areas that need development and also to work on their strong points. Team building exercises, together with successful communication strategies and psychological support for staff, may help staff to adapt to the new merged/incorporated institution.

9.2.8 Monitoring the merger/incorporation process

Monitoring the merger/incorporation process should not be confused with a quality assurance system for programmes, staff and services, but refers to a continuous evaluation of the merging/incorporation process. This means that during the pre-merger, merger and post-merger phases, every aspect of the merged/incorporated institution should be assessed by, for example, the different task teams. The first guideline to be used as a reference is the Memorandum of Agreement (*vide* RSA MoE 2003:93-95), which will form the basis for all interactions and negotiations between the merging/incorporating institutions. The second document that should be used for assessing whether the merger/incorporation is proceeding according to plan, is the institutional operating plan (*vide* RSA MoE 2003:96-108).

All the role-players involved in the merger/incorporation should be monitored in terms of the original goals of the merger/incorporation. The psychological division of the human resource task team should be responsible for monitoring staff perceptions during the merger/incorporation. This monitoring process will provide important feedback to the merger office, or any other designated person, for future training. Devine (*s.a.*: 10) refers to the monitoring of staff perceptions as to "sound the emotional barometer" in order to determine the psychological well-being of staff.

Bjorkquist (1992:76) states that assessment can provide a framework for performance improvement and a goal-oriented plan of action. If applied to this study, it implies that problems identified by monitoring the merger process, should be addressed by means of training. Such training should be conducted through a responsible programme that is proactive, directional, and designed to contribute to the productivity of the organisation, even though major changes might be occurring in the company or higher education institution. In most cases, solutions taking less time to achieve are more responsive to present conditions and changing business objectives and can contribute to the accomplishment of organisational goals, or, with merging/incorporating higher education institutions, the institutional operating plan.

All sectors of the merging/incorporating institutions should be evaluated, especially staff perceptions. The emotional reaction inventory (*vide* Figure 6.2) can provide valuable information of what staff's emotional state is at a given time during the merger/incorporation process. After receiving feedback, the merger strategies and goals can be adapted to accommodate the needs of the institution and staff.

As described in 9.2.4 and 9.2.5 the staff development programme for merged/incorporated institution comprises different components and needs continuous input from all role-players in order to be successful. It is also important that the merger facilitator should be a human resource expert who will be sensitive towards staff needs and perceptions. The following section comprises recommendations on how the staff

development programme can be implemented at a merging/incorporating higher education institution.

9.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations on how staff should be accommodated are structured according to the different phases of a merger/incorporation process. It is important to note that each institution will experience a merger or incorporation differently (*vide* 2.4). The following phases are only guidelines of the merger/incorporation process. These recommendations focus on how staff should be supported during the merging phases.

9.3.1 Pre-merger phase

After planning and setting up structures for the merger or incorporation, the management of the individual institutions and the newly merged/incorporated institution should know what is expected of them. Staff of the merging/incorporated institutions will want assurance from their leaders about their future at the newly merged/incorporated institution. Comunication during the early phases of the merger/incorporation is very important (*vide* 6.5.2, 8.9.4). An effective communication strategy should be implemented, which could start at managerial level and filter down to staff and students and all the relevant stakeholders.

The human resource task team with its psychological division has to provide counselling to staff and management and should also monitor the psychological well-being of staff members through regular surveys (*vide* 6.3, 8.9.5). Human resource professionals should conduct training, as indicated through a needs analysis for management and staff.

During the pre-merger phase it is very important that staff be informed about how the merger/incorporation will affect their future. Staff will need information on the location of the merged/incorporated institution, type of workloads, salary scales, their positions in the new institution and the types of programmes of the new institution. It is important for staff members to be able to talk about the uncertainties and grievances regarding the

future merger or incorporation. Staff members should have the opportunity to consult a counsellor and/or approach their departmental representative regarding their grievances (*vide* 6.5.2, 8.9.4).

9.3.2 Merger phase

During the merger phase, two or more institutions will start to function as one. During this phase the merger office, through the human resource task team, should provide staff support and orientation programmes to minimise the effect of change on staff members. Examples of staff support would be to orientate staff regarding the new institution, retraining if different types of programmes are offered at the new institution, and the upgrading of staff qualifications if some staff members are under qualified (*vide* 6.3, 6.5, 8.9.5).

A single, unified organisational culture should also be established. In order to achieve a unified culture, staff should be orientated to cultural diversity through inter-cultural team building exercises. Staff and management should understand one another and be tolerant of cultural differences, especially where these impact on the work environment. During these exercises, it is important for individual staff members of different cultures and beliefs to view their preferences. Open discussions should follow in order for staff to understand one another, and may focus on a marketing campaign to market the newly merged/incorporated higher education institution. Such a marketing campaign may include a new name with a new corporate identity (*vide* 6.5.2).

The new management of the merged/incorporated institution should address staff on what will be expected of them and provide them with new mission and vision statements. These new vision and mission statements should be the focus areas of task teams and human resource professionals when dealing with staff problems; in other words, the focus of the task teams and the human resource professional should not differ from that of management regarding the future of staff and that of the new institution.

Management should implement various communication strategies to inform staff about the merger or incorporation. Staff should also be able to view their grievances. Some of the communication strategies may include:

- Senior management presentations, including road shows, question and answer sessions;
- regular management cascades;
- question and answer service via electronic mail;
- confidential telephone helplines; and a
- staff newsletter (Devine *s.a.*:16).

The success of the merger or incorporation will depend on gaining the trust and buy-in of staff and key stakeholders so that they will be willing to invest their energy, intellect and creativity into the newly merged/incorporated institution. A well designed merging/incorporating process with effective communication processes is an important way of encouraging intellectual buy-in.

9.3.3 Post-merger phase

The post-merger phase could take three to five years, depending on each merger/incorporation's unique situation (RSA MoE 2003:9). During the post-merger phase the focus should be on consolidation and community building and may be the most important phase of all, because the merging/incorporating higher education institutions should function as one (*vide* 2.4). During the post-merger phase, the newly merged/incorporated institution should be engaged in writing new and adapting old policies. These policies may have a bearing on staff, students, maintenance of the new entity, academic, administrative and governance matters, finances, student fees, to name but a few.

The different task teams would be charged with the responsibility of making the merger/incorporation work during this phase. One important focus area would be the

assurance of quality, especially a self-evaluation system for management and staff. The new institution and different academic and non-academic departments should draft their own quality policies, thus emphasising what is expected from management and staff. Staff and management should also be workshopped on how the self-evaluation system operates and what its specific criteria are.

The psychological task team should assist staff and management to adjust to the new emerging organisation by continuing follow-ups. Staff would feel more positive towards the new institution in an improved working environment. It is important that every member of the new institution should feel important and part of the new institution. Any improvements should be highlighted to staff, and problem areas addressed as soon as possible, for example by conflict resolution actions. This would help if management continue to provide staff with the necessary information regarding the merger and still allow staff to contribute, as stated in the merger phase (*vide* 6.5.1).

9.4   LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

One of the limitations of the study was that not all of the merging/incorporating higher education institutions were able to participate in the research. If all the higher education institutions had participated in the research, a more comprehensive result might have been achieved. It should be stated, though, that the participating institutions were very cooperative and 64% of the respondents returned the questionnaires.

Another limitation of the study was that some of the literature required during the initial phase of the study, were not available, because these books were in transit to the Qwa-Qwa campus of the University of the Free State and, thus, not available. The result was that alternative research material had to be used during the latter phase of the study. Dictionaries used in the study were also early editions (1973), because the newer editions were not available in the University of the Free State Library. This did not influence the quality of the study because the explanations used in the study, were not newly formed terms.

The literature available on the effects mergers and incorporations have on staff in higher education institutions is also limited. Case studies from the corporate or private sector were adapted for mergers and incorporations in higher education. The result was that a more thorough literature review was conducted, because examples of mergers in the corporate sector were included in the study.

9.5   FUTURE RESEARCH

It would be important to conduct research on how staff perceived the mergers/incorporations after the completion of the mergers and incorporations. Such a study may include a psychological study on the way staff adapts to mergers/incorporations. A comparison may also be drawn between institutions that involved staff continuously throughout the process also those who provided psychological support to staff, with those who did not involve and support staff. A distinction could also be made between the dominant institutions and 'subordinate' institutions to determine if the impact on staff during a merger/incorporation differs between these institutions.

9.6   CONCLUSION

The South African higher education sector is transforming from institutions established on the basis of political objectives to one single coordinated system aiming at including all role-players and at providing equal opportunities to all. During such a transition the impact on infrastructure, physical resources, and staff is continuous and vast. To conclude such a transformation exercise may take years or even decades.

The development of a staff development programme for merged and incorporated South African higher education institutions, as the title describes, involves acquiring information from merged international higher education institutions, as well as from mergers within the corporate world. The conclusion drawn after conducting research on

mergers and incorporations of South African higher education institutions is that more emphasis should be placed on the psychological impact a merger/incorporation has on management and staff. This, inevitably, should result in a more successful merger/incorporation. Management and staff have to understand the merger/incorporation, be informed about the merger/incorporation and also be supported during the merger/incorporation process.

Staff forms the backbone of any education institution because they educate and support the future work force. Cognisance should be taken when altering work conditions, working environment and standards staff is used to, because it will impact on the quality of teaching and support staff renders to students.

The planners and executers of mergers and incorporations have an obligation to inform and involve all role-players. It would ensure that a merger/incorporation process is transparent and that staff's needs are addressed. An informed and involved staff component may experience less difficulty to adapt and accept a merger or incorporation process and, in the long run, it would have a positive effect on the institution's performance.

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Appendix A

UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE VRYSTAAT
UNIVERSITY OF THE FREE STATE
YUNIVESITHI YA FREISTATA

SENTRUM VIR HOËRONDERWYSSTUDIES EN -ONTWIKKELING
CENTRE FOR HIGHER EDUCATION STUDIES AND DEVELOPMENT

Hoëronderwysstudies/Programbeplanning
Higher Education Studies/Programme Planning

Dear Colleague

One of our Ph.D. students is currently developing a staff developmental programme for amalgamated/merged higher education institutions. In co-operation with the Unit for Higher Education Studies at the University of the Free State, he is developing a questionnaire that will ascertain the following:

A. Management perceptions and dealing with staff and their fears, anxieties, perceptions, etc. during the merging or amalgamating process.

B. Staff's perceptions regarding the merging and amalgamating process.

The student plans to send out these questionnaires to higher education institutions that are in the process of merging or amalgamating. The questionnaire will be sent out during May this year. I would like to kindly enquire whether you would be willing to assist in co-ordinating and distributing these questionnaires in your institution.

There will not be more than 10 questionnaires per institution and we would like the questionnaires to be sent to the following members of staff:

A. Management
i)   Top management (1)
ii)   Deans (2)
iii)   Directors (non-academic) (2)
iv)   Head of department (academic) (1)

B. Staff
v)   Senior lecturer (1)
vi)   Lecturer (1)

vii)   Senior non-academic staff member (1)

viii)   Junior non-academic staff member (1).

We will appreciate it if you can return the questionnaires to us by the end of May 2003.

We will pay all courier costs and other expenses you might have.

Your help and kind co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you in advance.

Prof. Driekie Hay

Prof. Driekie Hay
(Promotor)