

**THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS ON THE
EMPLOYEES DURING THE MERGER INTEGRATION AT THE
MAFIKENG CAMPUS OF THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY**

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the mini-dissertation submitted for the Masters of Business Administration degree at the Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University is my own unaided work.



B.E. Monchonyane

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ABSTRACT

Whereas the merger as a restructuring strategy has long been used to address problems and challenges facing the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in various countries, this dissertation takes its cue from the historical fact that the restructuring of the HEIs in South Africa only gained momentum in 2002. The vision of the government of South Africa, broadly stated, is to have a coordinated educational system without racial and resource inequalities brought by the segregation policy. This proclamation dictated the type of restructuring and accordingly determined and profiled merging partners. Such a dispensation has forced all the HEIs to merge according to the new educational framework. Therefore, a case study research was conducted to determine the impact of this radical organisational change and, specifically, change implementation on employee behaviour in a merged South African HEI environment. The merger under discussion here was between institutions that served mainly Black or White students.

Although the survey sample for this research study is small, the study findings tend to suggest that limited participation and lack of effective communication and management have contributed to the negative perceptions of the change management process. Furthermore, more management efforts are required to demonstrate the real benefits of the current change management strategy. For any institution with campuses that are large distances apart, and that were formerly established on racial lines, it is very important to offer training and support to align stakeholders with the new vision. Through full employee participation, effective communication and management; the cultural, racial and geographical differences can be bridged. These change process interventions were identified in the general change management literature as good strategies that can promote readiness for change, make stakeholders to view the change favourably, soothe attitudinal and behavioural reactions to change, and influence change acceptance. To the existing body of thought this dissertation adds a bolder inflection, i.e., the thesis that effective communication and management are more critical to the South African HEI mergers, especially when the senior management is located at the campus that could be perceived to have benefitted out of the segregation policy. All the decisions that are taken without full participation of the stakeholders are most likely to be met with resistance which is detrimental to the organisation as a preferred institution of higher learning.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The pressure to restructure higher education institutions in South Africa was a government initiative under the Education Minister, Professor Kader Asmal. This dictated reshaping of higher education institutions (HEIs) to address among others, inequalities in resources between black- and white dominated institutions, increase student access and high-level research capacity (Hay & Fourie, 2002:116). These institutions were to be established consistent with the vision and values of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society (SA Government Minister of Education, 2001).

According to Arnolds & Boshoff (2004:11) organizational commitment and professional commitment have a significant interactive relationship. This view is supported by Schalk, Campbell & Freese (1998:158) that the psychological contract influences employee attitudes such as organizational commitment. Previous research shows that transformational leadership positively influences employee's organizational citizenship behaviour, performance and organizational commitment (Tyler & De Cremer, 2005:529).

Wan (2008:12) agrees and suggests that internal factors like managerial and individual behaviour play a predominant role in actually shaping and restructuring the new organization. That personal, interpersonal, group and intergroup dynamics are significant determinants of merger success or failure (Ibid, 25). Govender, Moodley & Parumasur, (2005:79) assert that a change management process needs strong leadership.

This is what motivates the researcher to determine the impact of a change management process on employees at an institute of higher education. This will give an understanding of their concerns and problems as well as perceptions on the change management process.

The study starts with the background of the study highlighting mergers in other countries and South Africa and a review of relevant literature, thereby identifying existing gaps or problems by previous researchers that need further research. This is followed by the statement of the problem, justification for doing the research, the aim of the study, specific objectives and questions. These are followed by scope and limitations of the study, significance of the study, and definitions of key terms, structure of the mini-dissertation and ending with a conclusion.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.2.1 Meaning and definition of mergers

Mergers refer to a consolidation of two companies into one larger company with a new company name (Wikipedia: 2). According to Harman & Harman (2008:99) “strategic mergers are formal combinations or amalgamations of higher education institutions with the aim of enhancing competitive advantage or merging for mutual growth”.

1.2.2 The different types of organisational mergers

Eastman & Lang (2001:107) identified the following types of mergers:

- Horizontal merger - HEIs in the same field that provide similar offerings.
- Vertical merger - HEIs in the same field but providing different offerings.
- Diversification merger - institutions in different fields of study but offer similar types of programs.
- Consolidation - separate institutions combine to form a new institution.
 - Federal model - institutions combine but keep their respective autonomy while being managed by a central head office (Arnolds, 2005:22).
- Pure acquisition – one institution (strong) absorbs another (weak) resulting in an increase in size or breadth, but with no fundamental changes in its structure, systems, resources and culture (Eastman & Lang, 2001:109).
- Transformative acquisition - one institution absorbs another leading to substantial changes in structure, policies, processes and culture.

- Semi-autonomous acquisition – one institution absorbs another, retains its governance and systems, but the acquired institution is allowed to use policies relevant to its situation (Ibid: 110).
- Subsidiaries - the acquiring institution absorbs another and still retains institutional governance but the smaller partner may continue to enjoy a considerable local autonomy of systems, policies and procedures except for certain institutional requirements (Ibid: 111).
- Privatisation - the entire educational duty is given to the private agencies (Arnolds, 2005:22).

1.2.3 The motives for mergers

Corporate sector mergers were stimulated by the need to increase shareholders' wealth while those in the non-profit sectors were motivated to increase market share, "better access to capital and enhanced ability to win government contracts" (Harman & Harman, 2008:101). According to Knappenberger (2000:291) organizations merge to get synergy and growth, diversification and achieving economies of scale (Schraeder & Self, 2003:511). HEIs mergers are driven by competitive global market for higher education services and external research funding (Ibid: 99). According to Mok (2005:59) economies of scale to be gained in merging universities are the most important driving force for university mergers because HEIs were facing many challenges such as declining government grants (Curri, 2002:50), diminishing resources, declining student enrolment and financial challenge (Jansen, 2003:28). Other motives include increasing administrative and managerial efficiency and effectiveness (Wan & Peterson, 2008:684). The widening access (Harman & Meek, 2002:1) and improvement in technology and communication increased the demand for distance teaching while changes in socio-political spheres stimulated the need to redress inequalities and disparities brought about in pre1994 by the apartheid socio-political system (Schoole, 2005:162).

1.2.4 Preliminary review of international HEIs merger literature and experiences

Mergers in countries such as Canada, Great Britain, Germany, the Netherlands, and Norway came as a national policy by governments to restructure higher education. The national policy aimed to:

- increase efficiency and effectiveness, especially in coping with rapid and substantial growth in student numbers which in turn brings heavier demands on institutions;
- deal with problems of non-viable institutions and institutional fragmentation;
- widen students access and implement more broad scale equity strategies;
- differentiate course offerings to cater for greater student diversity and to improve the quality of graduates; and
- increase government control of the overall direction of higher education systems, especially to ensure that higher education institutions serve more directly national and regional economic and social objectives (Harman & Meek, 2002:1).

The Netherlands' situation is similar as the major restructuring of university education began after the *Two Tier Act* was passed through parliament with objectives such as to stimulate shorter programmes, decrease actual duration of studies, stimulate planning and monitoring of study-load, and integrate university and institutes for higher vocational education (Goedegebuure & Westerheijden, 1991:498). The agreement is that a certain amount of change occurred (Ibid: 504) and that "the degree and extent of change in a complex system such as higher education, are dependent upon the interaction of interests, strategic behaviour, preferences, and ideologies of all involved" (Ibid: 517).

According to Mahony (1994:301) and Curri (2002:131) mergers in Australia were the federal government policy initiative through its Employment, Education and Training Minister, John Dawkins to restructure higher education institutions. The goal of the restructuring was efficient use of resource and preparing students for the labour market. The education system was changed from binary to unitary. Research funding incentives were given for voluntary merging and penalties for those institutions that failed to comply. The lesson learned was that tertiary institutions did not voluntarily practice the

principle of efficiency in managing their business; that there was little evidence that restructuring higher education by itself produces greater efficiencies without leadership and providing staff training and development (Ibid:146).

The restructuring in United Kingdom led to the adoption of a unitary system of higher education with efficient use of resource being top of its objectives (Kloss, 1985:271).

According to Wan & Peterson (2007:684) higher education institutions chose voluntary restructuring in USA as a response to reduction in state and federal financial allocation as well as shrinking in the high school graduate pool. The long-term goals of education reforms in China were to decentralise education and minimize government control allowing HEIs more flexibility and autonomy to respond as well as compete in the global market (Mok, 2005:71).

1.2.5 The South African merger experience

During the apartheid era, all levels of education (from crèche to tertiary) were segregated on the basis of race, language and ethnicity (Jansen, 2003:31). Therefore, restructuring of higher education institutions was a national policy to redress among others, inequalities brought by the apartheid system within black- and white dominated institutions of higher education and create a coordinated system without racial and resource inequalities. The South African Council on Higher Education (CHE) report identified broad goals to be achieved by the National Plan including:

- increased and broadened participation within higher education to meet person power needs and advance social equity.
- co-operative governance of the system, institutions and partnerships.
- curriculum restructuring and knowledge production which is responsive to societal interests and needs.
- promotion of quality and quality assurance through accreditation and assessment of programmes.

- incorporation of higher education programmes and qualifications within a National Qualifications Framework designed to promote articulation, mobility and transferability.
- improved institutional planning and management and the development of three-year institutional plans (CHE, 2000:13).

The government policy dictated the merging of institutions and technikons becoming universities of technologies, (Tshwane University of Technology a product of Technikon Northern Gauteng, Technikon North West and Technikon Pretoria), a single distance teaching education (UNISA, a result from the merger of University of South Africa, Technikon South Africa & Vista University Distance Education Centre) and other combinations of institutions to serve a particular province such as North-West University (NWU) which became an entity on the 1st January 2004 as a result of a merger between a historically black university, University of North-West and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, a historically white university. The Staff and students of Sebokeng Campus of Vista University were also incorporated into the university (SA Government Minister of Education, 2001 & 2002; NWU, 2009).

Schoole (2005:162) acknowledges that international experience could apply in other national context, but cautioned transferring 'lessons learned' from mergers originating in stable economies like those of Norway, Australia, England, the United States of America to South African which had apartheid (segregation). Jansen (2002:177) asserts that a merger outcome is contingent on factors such as strong and reliable institutional leadership, strong government, staff participation, strong institution, setting clear objectives to be achieved, developing post-merger plans as well as thinking contingently for possible future HEIs restructuring.

1.2.6 Areas that need further research

There are concerns among researchers that there is little research conducted in other countries on the human side of mergers (Schraeder & Self, 2003:511, Appelbaum, Lefrancois, Tonna & Shapiro, 2007:197); the effect of organizational change and

especially change implementation on employee behaviour (Schalk *et al*, 1998:157) or the psychological experiences of academic staff in a merging or merged institutions in South African (Hay & Fourie, 2002:120). Wan (2008:37) argues that human integration is the most difficult yet the least examined post-merger integration problem.

Previous research reveals that intended benefits for merging takes longer to be achieved due to negative emotional and psychological experiences of employees such as prolonged anxiety, stress and depression (Hay & Fourie, 2002:120), identity loss (Schraeder & Self, 2003:516), incompatible culture and turnover (Appelbaum *et al*, 2007:192), lack of consultation and participation in the decision-making (Wan & Peterson, 2007:693). Effective communication and leadership are said to be essential strategies in the pre-, during, and post-merger process (Locke, 2007:96).

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Employees are an important component of a business (Appelbaum *et al*, 2007:192) and a company's greatest asset (Jones, Staub & Powers, 2004:2), yet the impact of mergers on employees has received few research reviews. Researchers acknowledge that a merger is a complex phenomenon (Wan & Peterson, 2008:685; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006:581) and affect cultural compatibility (Appelbaum *et al*, 2007:197), integration of people and processes (Carr, Hard & Trahant, 1996:38; Weber, Shenkar & Raveh, 1996:1217; Schraeder & Self, 2003:520; Cartright & Cooper, 1995:40). The individual and organisational factors contribute to change resistance (Van Schoor, 2003:3; Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003:407). Research shows that any negative impact of merger on staff will have a negative impact on institutional performance because job efficiency, job security and employee needs are especially vulnerable during a major organisational change (Knappenberger, 2000:291). Wan (2008:47) argues that the long-term success of the newly merged organisation is dependent on shared identity and that work attitudes, job satisfaction, organisational commitment will in turn lead to the success or failure of merger.

Therefore, the study seeks to determine the impact of change management process on employees at a merged institution of higher education.

1.4 JUSTIFICATION

Merged HEIs are experiencing campus disruptions to academic activities, violence, intimidation and destruction to properties. North West-University is portrayed as 'a successful merger' (NWU, 2009). However, it experienced disruptions in its three campuses last year leading to the appointment of a Ministerial Committee chaired by Prof Crain Soudien to investigate 'the nature and extent of discrimination in public higher education institutions' (NWU, 2008; TUT, 2008).

Limited research has been conducted on the human side of mergers of educational institutions (Schraeder & Self, 2003:511; Schalk *et al*, 1998:157). Hence this study will explore the effect of organisational change and specifically change implementation on employee behaviour (Schalk *et al*, 1998:157) in a merged South African institution of higher education.

1.5 THE AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The general purpose of this study is to determine the impact of the change management process on employees of North-West University.

1.5.1 The Specific objectives

The study was delimited by the following specific objectives:

- a) to determine the employees' awareness of the change management process at Mafikeng Campus of the NWU;
- b) to identify the challenges of the change management processes in the institution;
- c) to identify the procedures used by the management to deal with concerns raised by the stakeholders;
- d) to determine the employees' perception on the merger process; and
- e) to make recommendations based on the findings of the study.

1.6 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- a) What were the major factors that led to the merger at NWU?
- b) What are the major problems of the integration process?
- c) What procedures are used by management to deal with concerns raised by stakeholders?
- d) What change management strategies were used in the integration process?

1.7 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The research will contribute to knowledge regarding the impact of the organisational change management process on employees in an institution of higher education and identify major challenges during the integration process for effective change management.

1.8 THE DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Change – means to alter the behaviour of “individuals and organisations from the current state to a desired future state” (Wikipedia).

Change management – refers to “the task of managing change in a planned and managed or systematic fashion, an area of professional practice where independent consultants proclaim that they manage change for their clients, a body of knowledge which consists of the models, methods and techniques, tools, skills and other forms of knowledge that go into making up any practice” (Nickols, 2004:1,2).

CHE - Council on Higher Education

Higher education institutions (HEIs) - colleges and universities

NWU - North-West University

TUT - Tshwane University of Technology

1.9 THE STRUCTURE OF THE MINI-DISSERTATION

The mini-dissertation comprises the following chapters:

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background - the chapter gives introduction and motivation for doing the research on the impact of change management process in a merged institution of higher education. This is followed by the statement of the research problem, justification for the study, general purpose and specific objectives of the study. This in turn is followed by the scope and limitations as well as significance of the study.

Chapter 2: Theoretical foundation and review of literature – this chapter covers an appropriate review of relevant theory of change management practices in order to provide a suitable foundation for approaching the issue of merger integrations in HEIs. Published journal articles on merger and change management will also be reviewed with a view to classifying trends and schools of thought as well as identifying possible knowledge gaps or what other researchers might have left out.

Chapter 3: The Research Design and Analysis – the chapter addresses aspects relating to case study research, sampling procedure, questionnaire design, the use of descriptive statistics for qualitative data analysis, how the issue of data reliability and validity, ethics as well as limitations of the study are approached.

Chapter 4: Results and discussion of the study finding- The chapter deals with the interpretation and integrating of the data obtained from the survey questionnaire.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations – from the data analysis the outcome of the study is discussed with cross reference to the research questions and objectives of the study, and ending with some recommendations.

References - contains the list of all sources used in the research including journal articles, books, dissertations, internet, and/or newspaper.

Appendices – consists of the self-developed questionnaire and list of tables used in the research study.

1.10 SUMMARY

This chapter provided an introduction to the complex issue of mergers as pertaining to change management in higher education institutions. International and South African mergers were discussed. Journals articles, thesis and online sources were used to identify gaps from previous research. Justification and significance of the study were provided; the research problems and research questions were formulated, followed by the structure of the mini-dissertation.

Chapter 2 will cover a theoretical foundation and review of literature. An appropriate review of relevant theory of change management practices will be presented in order to provide a suitable foundation for approaching the issue of merger integrations in HEIs.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Research and change management literature attributes most failed mergers to the human aspects or employee problems (Appelbaum, Lefrancois & Tonna, 2007:192, Schraeder & Self, 2003:511; Schalk, Campbell & Freese, 1998:157). The chapter presents theoretical models on mergers by a review of relevant literature.

2.2 THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

According to Worrall, Cooper & Campbell-Jamison (1998:616) research shows that there are models that explain causes and effects of change and restructuring, but tend to concentrate on the technical and procedural issues. Although different theories have different perspectives on how change and restructuring models can be used to handle the human side of mergers, this study is informed by the views of theory of reasoned action that attitudinal and behavioural components are predictors of employee actions (Wikipedia). It can be assumed then that, when people have stronger intentions and positive beliefs about a situation they will act more positively.

2.2.1 Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA)

Fishbein & Ajzen's (1975) behavioural theory and model proposes that "a person's behavioural intention depends on the person's attitude about the behaviour and subjective norm" (Edu TechWiki). In this case, people use available information, then decide to act or not act on the basis of perceived outcomes. Appelbaum *et al* (2007:197) suggest that 'resistant attitudes are hypothesized to predict behavioural resistance'. Kavanagh & Ashkanasy (2006:86) noted that "an individual's reaction to change will be influenced by situational appraisals that will reflect the individual's cognitive evaluation regarding how a situation or event will affect his or her level of wellbeing". Jones, Aquirre & Calderone (2004:1) assert that major transformation creates "people issues" and must be addressed systematically.

Literature on organisational change and change management identified communication, participation and trust in management as variables of the change process characteristics that shape employee reactions to change. According to Wanberg & Banas (2000:133), context-specific variables including receipt of information about the change, participation in the change process are potentially more responsive to organisational intervention efforts than individual-differences variables. There is very little empirical research that incorporates all the three variables in the context of an actual organisational change except the recent work of Van Dam, Oreg & Schyns (2008), Kavanagh & Ashkanasy (2006), and Appelbaum *et al* (2007).

Van Dam *et al* (2008:314) noted that 'extant studies tie employees' reactions to change to characteristics of the change process' and that 'empirical research on the psychological processes involved in organisational change is only recent' (Ibid: 316). Specifically, Van Dam *et al* (2008:327) studied reactions to a merger among employees of a large Dutch housing corporation and the results revealed significant relationships between resistance to change and the provision of information, opportunities for participation and trust in those managing the change.

In their work, Kavanagh & Ashkanasy (2006:96) through a longitudinal study of a merger involving three large multi-campus tertiary institutions used some of the context-variables such as leadership, communication, transparency and trust. Their study attributed negative perceptions by individuals about the merger to the leadership's lack of appropriate communication or change management skills to manage the merger process.

Appelbaum *et al* (2007:197) developed and tested a model that predicted that "successful management strategies can attenuate negative attitudinal and behavioural response to change". Using trust, communication, participation, job security and procedural justice as variable of employees from two merged corporations, their result highlighted the importance of honest, frequent communication and involvement of staff.

The results of the above studies attest to the importance of timely information, employee participation, transparent and trustworthy management in the merger process. Therefore, these three variables are used in the study to address the research questions, namely:

- availability of timely information about the change
- employee participation in the change process, and
- trust in management

Information

Employees who received quality information about change were found to view change favourably as indicated in a study of restructuring within a national insurance company (Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1993:59). Employees can make informed decisions only when official information addressed, among others, reasons for change; the structure and process to be implemented; their role in the restructured organization, and the implications of the change (Ibid: 64).

According to Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder (1993:682), when employees are ready for change, this can preempt the likelihood of resistance to change, thus increasing the potential for change efforts to be more effective. The results of their study suggest that active participation of employees in the change process as well as both oral and written persuasive communication promote readiness for change (Ibid:688).

Wanberg & Banas (2000:136) in a study of large-scale restructuring of public housing authorities noted that, perceived information was associated with increased change acceptance. In summary, it is important for change management to provide employees with honest and timely information about the change because it was found to soothe attitudinal and behavioural responses (Appelbaum *et al*, 2007:197). In addition, that the manner of communicating the information is also likely to influence change acceptance (Oreg, 2006:94).

Employee involvement and participation

Research shows that involvement and participation of employees in the change process allows them to express their views and concerns about the change. In their work, Wanberg & Banas (2000:136) found that a higher level of participation was related to a more positive view of the changes.

Trust in management

Organisations need cooperation from their employees to achieve their mission and objectives. According to Van Dam *et al* (2008:317) trust is important for effective and satisfactory relationships among employees, which is necessary for employee's cooperation with the change. The empirical research that focused on a model of resistance to organisational change (merger) in the defence industry, found that trust had a stronger impact on employees' cognitive evaluation of change (Oreg, 2006:93).

Procedural fairness - Oreg (2006:78) and Gilliland (1993:696) found evidence that the manner in which organisational decisions are made had an impact on employees' behavioural responses to the change process. Appelbaum *et al* (2007:197) assert that fair treatment encourages trust which is important to change success. Tyler & De Cremer (2005:529), argue that followers can be motivated to accept change by leaders who exercise their authority through fair procedure.

It is therefore, expected that in the context of organisational change, the change management process that incorporates accurate information about the change; allows active participation in the change, and has a competent and trustworthy management; will have a positive impact to employees' behavioural acceptance of change (Appelbaum *et al*, 2007:197); Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006:99; Tyler & De Cremer, 2005:529.)

2.2.2 A brief history of the development of the concept Change Management

Many individuals have contributed greatly in the early concepts and practices from the industrial revolutions to the present era. Operating practices were developed and used to deal with organisational challenges. Early practices of the Industrial Revolution,

Scientific and Classical Schools were work-oriented because emphasis was placed on productivity and performance. Notably are Frederick W. Taylor's four and Henri Fayol's fourteen principles of management. This led to the Human Relations School that proposed a people-oriented approach (Carr, Hard & Trahan, 1996:179; Robbins, Odendaal & Roodt, 2003:235). According to Carr *et al* (1996:182) change management practices emerged as a solution to introducing organisational change without causing psychological and process disruptions. Kurt Lewin's (1947) three-stage change model: Unfreezing-Change-Freezing has an influence on change management (Change-management-coach.com). This suggests that effective communication, employee participation and involvement in all phases of the organisational change in turn will increase efficiency and acceptance of change.

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous literature on the issue of change management applicable to organisational change and restructuring of higher educational institutions was reviewed highlighting among others, the term change; merger as a strategy for restructuring, change strategies and approaches used in effectively managing change before, during and after a merger.

2.3.1 Change in Perspective

2.3.1.1 Forces of change

According to Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopsaske (2009:488) and Robbins *et al*, (2003:404) assert that environmental forces such as economic, technological, social/political forces can drive organisations to change. The internal forces relate to process problems that include breakdown in decision making and communication, as well as behavioural problems relating to low levels of morale, high levels of absenteeism and turnover.

2.3.1.2 Types of change

Change can either be planned such as changing structure, technology, physical setting and people while an unplanned change occurs accidentally in an organisation (Robbins *et al*, 2003:406). Van Schoor's model of change indicates that change occurs in four areas,

namely, organisational processes, grouping or regrouping of processes that may result from external demands, changes in values, beliefs and human behaviour as well as change in power relationships (Van Schoor, 2003:2).

2.3.1.3 Change Management Strategies

There are a number of strategies that can be used in the change management process which can take any of the following formats (Infokit, 16):

- Directive – change is imposed, implementation is relatively fast to use, but the approach ignores the views of those affected by change.
- Expert – change is left to the expert who utilizes small groups with resultant change implemented quickly, but likely to get resistance from those not consulted.
- Negotiating – this strategy allows inputs from change recipients, areas of disagreement are highlighted possibly reducing resistance to change, but it is relatively slow which may require modifying anticipated change.
- Educative – through education people become committed to change, but the strategy is relatively slow and likely to require more resources with cost implications.
- Participative – the strategy requires full participation of all affected by change. As a result the change is more likely to be accepted because more people will be committed to change and there will be more opportunity. However, the strategy is relatively slow to implement, more complex to manage, and will require more resources which ultimately increases costs.

2.3.1.4 Stages of emotional responses to change

Research shows that although emotions do not follow a particular fashion, most individuals' emotional experience to change tend to occur in the following manner (Infokit, 28; Kavanagh & Ashkanasy (2006:86) :

- shock and denial
- anger, then rage and resentment
- emotional bargaining beginning in anger and ending in depression, and
- Acceptance

2.3.1.5 Resistance to change

According to Van Schoor (2003:3) resistance is an emotional experience associated with stress and anxiety. Factors that contribute to change resistance were identified as self interest, psychological impact, tyranny of custom, the redistributive factor, destabilization effect, culture incompatibility and political effect.

2.3.1.6 Strategies for overcoming resistance to change

Gibson *et al* (2009:487) suggest the following methods in reducing employee resistance:

- Education and communication (explaining and informing)
- Participation and involvement (involving employees in the process)
- Facilitation and support (retraining and providing a range of support)
- Negotiation and agreement (discussions with resisters and negotiation)
- Manipulation and co-optation (bringing in supporters to guide others)
- Explicit and implicit coercion (threats, taking away rewards, job loss)

According to Schalk *et al* (1998:157) effective communication reduces uncertainty, speculation and unfounded fears. Support can make employees less defensive and more willing to share their concerns as well as increase employee participation in the planning and implementation process of change.

2.3.1.7 Adoption of change

According to Robbins *et al* (2003:410) and Gibson *et al* (2009:482) a successful change process consist of three phases, namely:

- unfreezing the status quo
- movement to a new state, and
- refreezing the new change to make it permanent

Unfreezing the status quo

Gibson *et al* (2009:482) relate the first step to unfreezing old learning dealing with resistance to change and recommend that employees be shown why they should want to

change. This is in line with Vakola & Nikolaou (2005:163) that a highly committed employee will accept change when he/she perceives it to be beneficial to his/her well-being.

Movement to a new state

The second step requires training, demonstration and empowerment of both superiors and non-managerial employees that foster new behaviour in a careful and sensitive manner (Gibson *et al*, 2009:482).

Refreezing the new change

According to Gibson *et al* (2009:483) the last step involves giving rewards and feedback. They suggest using positive rewards to achieve successful change. Another version is that an organisation or a person goes through eight stages when becoming committed to a change goal. The phases start with preparation, acceptance and then commitment. Therefore, successful change is dependent upon successful completion of each phase before advancing to the next phase; otherwise, the result will range from unawareness to aborting change after extensive utilisation (Infokit, 37).

2.3.2 Merger in Perspective

According to Wan (2008:13) literature on merger as a strategy is more concentrated on the business sector than on higher education. There have been developments nationally and internationally to restructure higher education with some countries such as South Africa using a merger model for HEIs restructuring (Arnolds, 2005:22).

2.3.2.1 Drivers of mergers

Eastman & Lang (2001:3) are of the opinion that internal and external 'waves' have driven companies to mergers and acquisitions (M&A). Companies were faced with huge changes in the environment such as changing customer needs and demands, fierce competition for scarce resources, globalization, new technologies, as well as economic and political variables. M&A were used as a strategy to achieve synergy and economies

of scale which allowed companies to “develop new products and services for changing customer needs and remain competitive in the global market”.

Most HEIs mergers were government initiatives to achieve broad goals, namely, create colleges of advanced education and polytechnics (Australia and Britain in 1960s); rationalize teacher education (Australia, the Netherlands and Britain 1970 – early 1980); change binary to unitary education systems (Australia and Britain mid 1980s) (Eastman & Lang, 2001:6); decentralise education in China (Wan & Peterson, 2008); to address post-apartheid challenges in South Africa (Schoole, 2005).

2.3.2.2 Benefits of mergers

Some organisations used mergers to derive benefits associated with this strategy, which include synergy (Knappenberger, 2000:291), growth, diversification and achieving economies of scale (Schraeder & Self, 2003:511). Others hoped for improved processes, new goals, integration of different functions and learning new skills (Ibid, 514), for gains in technology, hard assets and customers (Larsson, Driver, Holmqvist & Sweet, 2001:614) and an increased operational efficiency of the organization being anticipated (Makawatsakul & Brian, 2003:52). Nguyen & Kleiner (2003:447) state the reasons for mergers to include maintaining or increasing market share and increasing shareholder value by cutting costs and initiating new, expanded and improved services.

According to Wan (2008:47) and Harman & Meek (2002:1) benefits in higher education mergers include among others, administrative, managerial efficiency and effectiveness; improved academic performance in learning, teaching and research as well as improved service to the community.

2.3.2.3 Reasons for merger failures

The literature shows that the human side of organisations contributed to some merger failures. A research conducted in an Australian HEI identified negative psychological experiences identified by academics such as job loss, frustration, stress, anxiety, depression, demoralisation, de-motivation, destabilisation caused by student and staff

protests, uncertainty and feeling of disempowerment (Hay & Fourie, 2002:121) while the emotional experiences identified were disequilibrium, denial, bargaining, chaos, resignation, openness, readiness and re-emergence (Vakola & Nikolaou, 2005:162).

According to Schraeder & Self (2003:516) employees exhibit strong negative reactions upon the announcement of a merger ranging from grief and shock, associating merger with bereavement, fearing layoff, loss of control, possible relocation, losing their identity or work reputation, unknowns associated with their new responsibility and the loss of peers. This is supported by Makawatsakul & Kleiner (2003:54) who found that survivors become less creative and open to change. Their dissatisfactions lead to organizational inefficiency, high customer turnover and decreased profitability with ultimately deterioration of service quality and a resultant loss of revenue. This is supported by Knappenberger (2000:289) who concludes that mismanagement can result in poor morale, employee stress, high labour turnover and lower productivity.

Other major factors include lack of effective communication and strong leadership, the difficulties in merging diverse culture, the reaction and resistance of faculty and staff, lack of employee consultation and participation in decision making, the financial implications, concerns about institutional identity and reputation (Wan & Peterson, 2007:685).

2.3.2.4 Conditions for improving successful merging

According to Locke (2007:90) for a merger to succeed effective leadership and management from the top is very important. This view is supported by Cartwright & Cooper (1997:36) that merger success is dependent on the physical, procedural and socio-cultural integration of the operations of the combining organisations.

Hay & Fourie (2002:120) state that successful merging is dependent upon the following aspects:

- A shared vision endorsed by effective governance and management

- Effective communication strategies that will keep staff and students informed at every step of the way before, during, and after the merger had taken effect
- A strong commitment to merging by all participants
- A shared view of threat facing the current institutions and/or shared vision of the future potential benefits from merging
- Guarantees given as soon as possible to staff about security of employment
- Ensuring students will continue with courses
- Strong efforts to build a sense of loyalty and a common culture for the new institution
- A corporate identity
- Sufficient time for institutional change to occur
- The provision of resources to those whose roles and relationships will change
- The provision of professional staff development and training.

Schraeder & Self (2003:522) support this view and advance other strategies such as anticipating employee reactions, planning for possible task challenges, developing a flexible and comprehensive integration plan, enhancing commitment by establishing relationships and building trust, as well as managing the transition through training, support and socialisation.

2.3.2.5 Strategies before and during a merger

Researchers agree that an effective communication strategy is crucial throughout the entire process of merging because it can ease uncertainty, defuse speculations and unfounded fears (Schalk *et al*, 1998:157). This view is supported by Appelbaum *et al* (2007:197) that honest and frequent communication with employees is very important. Other emphasis are on employee counseling and relocation assistance, setting up morale committees, education programmes as well as training of staff for new job requirements and relationships between groups and department (Makawatsakul & Kleiner, 2003:57).

2.3.2.6 Post-merger integration strategies

Locke (2007:96) states that communication, consultation, effective leadership and management are important after the merger. This view is supported by Nguyen & Kleiner (2003:450) who maintain that the solution to post-merger integration is dependent on directors been visible, not confined to their offices; setting direction for the new business; understanding the cultural, emotional and political issues pertaining to the change, providing clarity around roles and decision lines; and continued focus on customers and flexibility.

According to Carr *et al* (1996:38) ‘organisations that make real changes pay attention to managing the human, systems, and strategic factors that affect people’s willingness and ability to change’ and that ‘the success of the change depends on all players understanding their part and becoming committed to playing it well’ (Ibid, 154).

2.3.3 Linkages of Change Management with Organisational Variables

According to Vakola & Nikolaou (2005:163) research shows that organisational commitment plays an important role in employee’s acceptance of change, especially when the change is perceived to be beneficial, and change may be resisted if perceived to be a threat.

Worral *et al* (1998:617) assert that different managerial styles and the way organizational change processes were implemented have significant impact on employee attitudes, perceptions and behaviour which are dependent upon support for the change programme, leadership and empowerment.

2.4 SUMMARY

This chapter covered a discussion around the human aspects of merger and change management theory and models in an educational setting. A variety of sources were examined to identify theories and reported findings from previous studies pertaining to merger and change management aspects that may be relevant to the higher education environment. It was found that the literature does not contain much information regarding

mergers between educational institutions whilst most of the published studies reported findings from research studies that were predominantly executed within business organisations.

The key aspects forming the heart of a change model process can be summed up as the following:

- a shared vision that clearly shows the aspirations of the new organisation in the long-term and the anticipated benefits for both the organisational and stakeholders;
- the organisational culture that all the stakeholders identify with, which is clearly shown in their work and actions;
- a strong transformational leadership that can provide the necessary governance and gain the trust of stakeholders in steering the organisation to a better situation.
- a participatory management that allows the stakeholders to share their views on all change process matters that directly affect them;
- an effective communication programme that frequently informs the stakeholders throughout the change process in a transparent manner;
- provision of training and support to both management and workers to acquire the necessary skills needed in the new organisation; and
- the total commitment needed from all the stakeholders to make the organisational change a success.

It can be safe to argue that the reported findings found in the literature review on change and mergers within business organisations are more than likely also applicable to mergers and change within higher education institutions. The following key model processes appear to be the most common one:

- **Acculturation / culture fit model** proposes that transition is easier for organisations with similar culture but difficult for incompatible culture. Corporate culture clash brings stress, distrust, annoyance on the acquired team ultimately, affecting cooperation and commitment to the integration process (Weber *et al*, 1996:1217).

- **Herzberg's two-factor model** proposes that 'motivational factors' stem from those things intrinsic to the actual work and have an influence on job satisfaction while dissatisfaction arise from those extrinsic to the work environment. Research into higher education supports that Herzberg' model could be successfully applied to academic staff in higher education. The principal sources of satisfaction could come from teaching and research while dissatisfaction from salary, fringe benefits and administrative features (Lacy & Sheehan, 1997:307).
- **Organisational justice model** emphasises the importance of fairness of organisational outcome distribution (Gilliland, 1993:695) and fair treatment of followers (Tyler & De Cremer, 2005:529), surviving and displaced works (Makawatsakul & Kleiner, 2003:55) to promote change acceptance as well as success.
- **Kurt Lewin's change process model: Unfreezing-Change-Freezing** proposes that by following these three steps, the desired change can be acceptable and maintained in the long-term (Robbins *et al*, 2003:410, Wikipedia).
- **Social-Psychological model** recognises that large-scale change brought by merger or acquisition contributes to stress and is associated with bereavement, but its impact is now viewed in a holistic manner (Cartwright & Cooper, 1995:35).
- **The complex adaptive system model** is viewed as a better model for change in an education setting (Infokit, 5).

The next chapter will cover a discussion on research design and methodology to set the foundation for this dissertation research project.

CHAPTER 3

THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the design and methodology applicable to a case study research. It covers, among other things, the study population and how the sample was selected. This is followed by the data collection method and procedures used for this study as well as discussions surrounding the type of questions included on the self-developed questionnaire. It also covers issues pertaining to data reliability and validity, ethics and limitations of the study.

3.2 THE RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

In this research, a case study is used. According to Cooper & Schindler (2006:142), “case studies place more emphasis on a full contextual analysis of fewer events or conditions and their interrelations.” Collins & Hussey (2003:68, 69) support this view and highlight the following characteristics of case study research:

- The research aims not only to explore certain phenomena, but to understand them within a particular context
- The research does not commence with a set of questions and notions about the limits within which the study will take place
- The research uses multiple methods for collecting data which may be both qualitative and quantitative.

Participants’ perspectives are sought on the change management process at an institution of higher education, hence, the approach being appropriate to clarify the research problem. The organizational change affects the lives of employees. It is for this reason that a case study research is conducted using academic and administrative staff. It is believed that any negative perceptions of the change management process especially integration will hinder the institution in achieving its vision and objectives.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLE

3.3.1 Population

Mafikeng Campus of the NWU is used as the study population. The NWU has four campuses: Mafikeng, Potchefstroom, Mankwe and Vanderbijl Park. Mafikeng campus has four Faculties offering both under-graduate and post-graduate programmes, namely, Human and Social Studies, Education, Commerce and Administration, Agriculture, Science and Technology and Law. Mafikeng Campus was selected for the following reasons: the campus is servicing the second largest enrolled student component of 6955 from the total of 49 864 and the top management structure is based at Potchefstroom (NWU, 2009). Although there were disruptions in all the campuses of the NWU, protests at Mafikeng Campus were marred with violence. Some properties were destroyed and the campus was closed on more than one occasion. This led to the appointment of an enquiry by the Department of Education (NWU, 2008; TUT, 2008).

3.3.2 Sampling procedures

Maasen & Potman (1990:401) reveal that “stakeholders’ perceptions are an important aspect of HEIs environment in many countries”. For the purpose of this study, a sample is drawn from permanent academic and administrative personnel because they play a vital role in the execution of programmes in HEIs. A random number of 102 (34%) respondents are selected from the staff list of 302 permanent staff members of Mafikeng Campus. According to Neuman (2003:232), “one principle of sample sizes is, the smaller the population, the bigger the sampling ratio has to be for an accurate sample.” He further suggests that “for a small population under a thousand, a researcher needs a large sampling ratio of thirty percent or more”.

The main reasons for choosing this specific method are to reduce bias and enhance the accuracy of samples (Babbie, 2005:196, 197). When respondents are randomly selected from the sampling frame, the researcher cannot personally choose who should participate in the research project. Secondly, the information obtained from the study can fairly represent the characteristics of all the members of the population (Collins & Hussey, 2003:56).

This study uses a stratified random sampling technique. In a stratified random sampling the population is divided into different groups or strata and random samples are drawn from each group using either the simple or systematic sampling method (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:91; Neuman, 2003:223). Each element in a stratum has equal opportunity of being selected and this decreases the probable sampling error (Babbie, 2005:212). Also, the technique eliminates the problem of under or over representing some members of the population. The subpopulation can be stratified by occupation, race, gender, and age (Collins & Hussey, 2003:157).

The staff list received from the NWU Human Resources provides personnel information, job position and gender (NWU Human Resources Operations, 2009). Therefore, this study uses firstly, occupational function and then gender as stratification variables to select participants (Table 3.1). The academic personnel are further classified by faculty because Kerlin & Dunlap (1993:369) affirm that "... severe economic retrenchment affects all faculties and has specific implications by discipline area, by rank and tenure status and by sex".

TABLE 3.1The sample of permanent staff at Mafikeng Campus

Job position	Stratified by occupational function N* = no. in the population						Stratified by gender		Total no. of staff	The no. in the sample n
	Agric, Science & Tech.	Admin.	Commerce & Admin.	Education	Health & Social Sciences	Law	Admin.	Females		
Professors	7	3	1	3	-	-	0	14	14	5
Associate Professors	6	3	4	1	6	-	1	20	21	7
Senior lecturers	18	15	6	15	3	-	22	37	59	20
Lecturers	26	20	13	27	10	-	41	55	96	32
Junior lecturers	5	4	-	2	-	-	9	1	10	3
Administrative personnel	-	-	-	-	-	64	32	32	64	22
Secretaries	-	-	-	-	-	38	38	-	38	13
Total	62	48	24	54	13	102	143	159	302	102

3.3.3 Method of Data Collection

According to Watkins (2008:67) and Babbie (2005:253), a questionnaire is “a list of carefully structured questions, chosen after considerable testing with a view to elicit reliable responses from a chosen sample.” For this reason, a questionnaire was designed with structured questions to determine the perceptions of staff on the implementation of the change management process. Information collected from relevant journal articles, books and internet was used to guide in the design of questionnaire as a measuring instrument.

3.3.4 Procedures

The researcher with the assistance of the Business School requested relevant research information through the office of the Vice Chancellor, NWU. The Human Resources Operations at Potchefstroom Campus provided personnel details including among others, faculty, gender and job position (NWU Human Resources Operations, 2009). The staff list is used as a sampling frame. A covering letter was designed specifying the purpose of

the research and invited selected employees to participate in the research with clear instructions on how to respond to a structured questionnaire (Babbie, 2008:264; Neuman, 2002: 282, 283; Babbie, 2005:266). The questionnaires were personally delivered to the selected respondents at Mafikeng Campus. The researcher collected completed questionnaires after a week.

3.3.5 The Questionnaire Design

This study employs a self-developed questionnaire with mainly closed-ended questions to gather information from respondents (Babbie, 2005:253; Collins & Hussey, 2003:173).

The greatest advantage of using a questionnaire lies in its versatility. This method is appropriate for obtaining public opinion or attitude because respondents answer freely without any pressure from the researcher. Also, the anonymity is assured and the responses cannot be traced back to them. Its shortcoming lies in the quality of information received from respondents. Some returned questionnaires may have been left unanswered because the respondents were either unwilling to answer or the phrasing of questions was unclear (Babbie, 2005: 254).

For these reasons, this study incorporates the following guidelines for constructing the questionnaire, posing questions, and the ordering of items in a questionnaire:

- each subsection on the questionnaire is introduced with a short statement and purpose
- demographic information such as age, gender, race, and occupational status are placed at the end of the questionnaire
- uses closed-ended questions because of its greater uniformity of responses and ease to process
- ensures that items are clear
- avoids ambiguous questions
- asks only questions that are relevant to the participants
- assures respondents voluntary participation and anonymity
- avoids negative items

- avoids biased items and terms (Babbie, 2005: 254-264)
- uses Likert (1932) scale items with five-point response categories such as strongly agree, agree, disagree, uncertain and strongly disagree (Ibid, 174)
- codes the questions to facilitate the use of computer programmes to process and analyse responses (Ibid, 394; Collins & Hussey, 2003:188) and
- thanks the respondents for participating in the research study (Neuman, 2002: 285).

3.3.6 The Self-administered Questionnaire

The questionnaire has been divided into three sections. Each section is introduced with a short statement and purpose (Babbie, 2005: 254). Section A covers the key organizational change factors which are considered critical for the success of the change effort. Section B covers the academic environment, that is, issues that are perceived to enhance a climate for teaching, learning and research (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002: 529). Section C is included to gather demographical information of the respondents. The main purpose is to determine whether the challenges and experiences of the change management process are unique to a specific race, gender, rank or faculty. Therefore, a variety of statements were included in the questionnaire to address these key organisational factors discussed below.

The key aspects of the change model process

Researchers regard the openness of communication and full participation of employees in decision-making as necessary conditions for change effort and acceptance. The other key characteristics of organisational change are identified in the People Centered Implementation (PCI) model as critical success factors. They include among others, shared vision; strong leadership; effective middle and front-line management; employee consultations; total commitment of staff and management; as well as employee support (Wikipedia). Effective management is considered useful in reducing change-related stress and enhancing commitment (Hay & Fourie, 2002:120; Terry & Jimmieson, 2003:93; Tierney, 2000:121).

1. A shared vision – This aspect addresses the aspirations of the organization by identifying the core functions and values. It establishes the overall direction of the organization, in terms of the necessary attitudes, behaviour, relationships, policies and practices. For this vision to be realised, all stakeholders must have a common understanding about the principles and practices of the organisation. It is the responsibility of top management to give stakeholders the reasons, benefits and the need for a change and convince them that the organisation has a viable future (Jones, Aguirre & Calderone, 2004:3).

The following statements investigate the employees' level of understanding and orientation towards the vision of the university, as well as the part played by the NWU leadership to educate and align the employees with the vision of the university:

2. There was a lot of transparency about the benefits of adopting the current multi-campus structure.
3. Workshops were conducted to educate staff about the new vision, values and mission of the university.
25. Treating campuses as business units will accelerate transformation within the university.

2. The organisational culture – It reflects the type of attitude, behaviour as well as interpersonal relationships that are necessary to convert the organisational vision into reality. It spells out the direction, the reasons and benefits anticipated. It is also likely to affect trust, transparency and co-operation as well as operational freedom within the organisation (Tierney, 2000:129). Schraeder and Self (2003:520) suggest that a stress management workshop could alleviate some hardship of culture integration.

A set of questions probe the organisational culture of the NWU in line with its values and human right culture of “equality, freedom, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and justice”. The university campuses are managed as business units, whereas the merged universities were from a black- and white-dominated culture (NWU, 2009).

- 4. I am clear about how to live to the values and human rights culture of the institution.
- 18. There was a lot of co-operation between colleagues.
- 28. I am actively involved in designing the instructional programmes.
- 30. There is enough time to conduct research.

3. A strong transformational leadership – It is a leadership style that is considered relevant to lead the change, motivate followers to accept the change, as well as giving appropriate rewards and punishment. It provides effective governance by developing structures with clear policies and procedures governing human resource practices (Cartwright & Cooper, 1997:36, Terry & Jimmieson, 2003:93). The credibility of the leadership is crucial in establishing relationships and building trusts (Schraeder & Self, 2003:519; Jansen, 2002:177).

The following statements assess the type and aspects of leadership at the NWU:

- 3. The university used fair procedures to deal with staff grievances and complaints.
- 15. I feel that I am fairly rewarded for my work performance.
- 22. The student assessments are consistently applied in all the university campuses.
- 24. There are no disparities in the resource allocation among campuses.
- 29. The university disciplinary measures are clear in dealing with unruly student behaviour.

4. A participative management – This is the kind of management style that allows all the stakeholders to participate fully in the change process, either through open debates or special committees. It listens to different views and opinions of the stakeholders and considers them in the decision-making process. Literature research shows that fair treatment encourages trust and mutual respect which are important to success (Tierney, 2002:121; Oreg, 2006:78; Wan, 2008:25). Knappenberger (2000:289), notes and suggests that, mismanagement can result in poor morale, employee stress, high labour turnover and lower productivity.

A set of statements probe the management of the change process at the NWU because of its perceived impact on organisational variables such as cooperation (Van Dam, Oreg & Schyns, 2008:317), morale (Kerlin & Dunlap, 1993:361), job performance and desire to stay with the institution (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004:11).

6. The management was able to address issues and concerns sincerely.

7. The senior management was accessible to listen to the concerns of staff.

12. The senior management considered the suggestions of staff before making final decisions.

5. Effective communication – communication plays a vital role in informing and educating all the stakeholders about change-related matters. The management is expected to have a communication programme which will allow for transparent discussions about the change. The programme is expected to address various aspects of the change process, among others, the reasons for the change, the structure and process to be implemented (Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1994:64). Schraeder & Self (2003:520) recommend that the management provide stress management workshops to deal with prolonged stress and anxiety.

The following statements assess the change-related communication issues at the NWU:

1. I always received relevant information about the merger.

8. The management provided reliable feedback about the progress of the merger.

9. I am clear about my job responsibilities in the new institution.

6. Employees consultation and participation – a literature review shows that proper consultation and participation give the employees chances to voice their views, opinions and concerns on major issues affecting conditions of service and rewards (Wanberg & Banas, 2000:136). Lack of employee consultation and participation in decision making are considered among the major factors to merger failure (Schraeder & Self, 2003:518). Therefore, the management can negotiate and reach agreements with staff on an individual and group levels.

The following statements assess the level of employee consultation and participation during the merger at the NWU:

- 5. Employees were given a platform to openly voice their concerns.
- 10. I fully participated in the merger process.
- 11. All the changes affecting my conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated through representatives/union.

7. Facilitation and support – most organisational change necessitates changes in the job characteristics, new peers as well as superiors (Tierney, 2000:122). Therefore, the employees need to have the necessary skills, capacity, confidence and resources to execute their duties and responsibilities. The financial and emotional management support can assist them to deal with individual and work-related issues. Sensitivity training, on-site consulting, information feedback, group dynamics as well as counseling procedure are regarded as useful strategies to change individual attitudes and intergroup relations (Baldrige, 1972:4). Arnolds & Boshoff (2004:11) conclude that collegial relations, training and development enhance organisational commitment and job performance.

The following set of questions probe facilitation and support issues at the NWU:

- 14. There are better provisions for staff development and training.
- 16. I received a lot of support from management during the merger.
- 17. I experienced a lot of frustration with the merger.
- 19. I was regularly stressed by the merger.
- 21. Facilities are equipped with advanced educational equipments.
- 26. The individual workload is reasonable to allow for student consultations.

8. Total commitment – According to Carr, Hard & Trahan (1996:38) commitment can only occur when all the stakeholders understand their part and become committed “to playing it well”. Lack of operational freedom or autonomy evokes stress and negative attitude toward the merger, ultimately, affecting commitment to change (Tierney, 2000:121).

The following statements assess the issue of total commitment of the staff at the NWU:

20. I devote most of my working hours to do the university work.
23. The current structure allows for academic freedom.
27. I use student evaluations to improve the quality of teaching.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis techniques are employed to analyse opinions and attitude generated from the responses. Basic descriptive statistics are used to analyse demographical data because of its quantitative nature. The results are presented in tables to facilitate better interpretation of responses (Collins & Hussey, 2003: 202).

3.5 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

The issue of reliability deals with the accuracy and consistency of the measurement techniques. According to Babbie (2005:145), reliability is “a matter of whether a particular technique, applied repeatedly to the same object, yields the same result each time”. There are two ways to create reliable measures, namely, that the researcher asks only questions that respondents are likely to know the answer to, and are relevant to them (Ibid, 146). Watkins (2008:68) supports this view and suggests using methods such as test-re-test, split-halves and internal consistency to test the trustworthiness of the responses to questions in questionnaires.

Validity deals with whether the data truly reflects what is being studied (Collins & Hussey, 2003:58; Watkins, 2008:67-68). Therefore, to balance reliability with validity, great attempts must be made to find a technique that is adequate in terms of both reliability and validity. For these reasons, the questionnaire was given to the supervisor to ensure that it was valid while the trustworthiness was addressed by giving questionnaires to a selection of both academic and administrative staff at the NWU.

3.6 ETHICS

Researchers suggest that the following ethical issues relating to research be adhered to, namely, protection from harm, informed consent, right to privacy and honesty with professional colleagues (Watkins, 2008:69-70; Babbie, 2005:62-65; Collins & Hussey, 2003: Neuman, 2003:130). Therefore, a covering letter was designed and accompanied the questionnaire. The letter gives the details of the research and the nature of the required information. Complete anonymity was guaranteed and the completed responses would be kept strictly confidential. The findings of the study would be reported in a complete and honest way.

3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The NWU has four campuses at Potchefstroom, Mankwe, Mafikeng and Vanderbijl Park, but only one campus is used which present problems to generalize the results of the study to cases beyond those examined (Collins & Hussey, 2003:59). There are possibilities of some respondents not responding at all and others not responding within the given time-frame. This will affect the actual response and the final research result.

3.8 SUMMARY

This chapter addressed the broad issues that are relevant to this research, specifically the case study approach used for this study as well as the methodologies governing the study population and sampling techniques. It also gave an overview of the questions included in questionnaire which are relevant in addressing the research objectives presented in Chapter 1. The discussions of the critical factors of the organisational change process highlighted the need for effective management to curb possible negative impact on the overall organisational efficiency and effectiveness. Lastly, the issues of validity and reliability, ethics and limitation and delimitations of the study were discussed.

The next chapter deals with the integration of data from the study results obtained from the self-administered questionnaire.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The main focus of this chapter deals with the analysis of data obtained from the survey questionnaire and the interpretation of the results. This chapter starts with a discussion of the method used to distribute and collect questionnaires from the respondents. This is followed by the analysis of the questionnaire data and the interpretation of the findings of the study.

4.2 THE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Hundred and two (102) questionnaires were personally delivered for two days to the offices of the selected permanent staff members at the Mafikeng Campus. The completed questionnaires were then collected after a week. Another two days were spent collecting questionnaire at Mafikeng Campus and only 49 of the 102 respondents submitted completed questionnaires. Those that did not complete the questionnaires, especially the academic staff, indicated that they were busy marking examination papers. Therefore, the response rate is only 48%. The results are presented below.

4.3. THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic information was needed to determine whether the challenges and experiences of the change process were unique to a specific gender, race, job position, age or academic faculty.

4.3.1 Gender

Table 4.1 below indicates the distribution of the respondents according to gender. Two respondents did not indicate their gender status.

Table 4.1 Gender of respondents

	Gender	Frequency	Percent
	Males	24	51.06
	Females	23	48.94
Total		47	100.00

The above table shows that the gender composition of the respondents comprised 24 males (approximately 51%) and 23 females (49%).

4.3.2 Race

The racial composition of the respondents is indicated in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Racial groups

	Race	Frequency	Percent
	Black	43	87.76
	Indian	3	6.12
	White	3	6.12
Total		49	100.00

Table 4.2 reveals that the staff profile of the respondents were predominantly Black, which was approximately 88%, while the remaining respondents were equally distributed between the Indian and White racial groups.

4.3.3 Job position

Table 4.3 below indicates the distribution of the respondents according to job position.

Table 4.3 Job positions of respondents

	Position/Rank	Frequency	Percent
	Professor	3	6.12
	Associate Professor	2	4.08
	Senior Lecturer	10	20.41
	Lecturer	14	28.57
	Administrative personnel	13	26.53
	Secretary	7	14.29
Total		49	100.00

The staff profile of the respondents comprised of 59% academic staff and 41% non-academic personnel. The majority of the respondents were senior lecturers, lecturers and administrative personnel.

4.3.4 Years of service at the university

The table below shows the distribution of the respondents by the number of years at the university.

Table 4.4 Year of service of respondents

	Years of service	Frequency	Percent
	1-5 years	8	16.33
	6-10 years	5	10.20
	11-15 years	8	16.33
	16-20 years	9	18.37
	21-25 years	16	32.65
	26 and more years	3	6.12
Total		49	100.00

The above results indicate that about 16% of the respondents have served the university for less than five years and 84% of the respondents have been working at the university for more than six years. It can be concluded that most of the respondents who

participated in this study have more work experience and have been serving the university for more than 16 years. Therefore, it is safe to assume that most of the respondents were present when the NWU became an entity in 2004 and that the university appears to have a very experienced staff. However, because the sample is not fully representative, the results may be partially skewed.

4.3.5 Age

The age profile of the respondents is presented in table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5 Age of respondents

	Age	Frequency	Percent
	21-30 years	2	4.08
	31-40 years	8	16.33
	41-50 years	18	36.73
	51-60 years	15	30.61
	61 and more years	6	12.24
Total		49	100.00

Table 4.5 shows that approximately 20% of the respondents are younger than 40 years and 80% of the respondents are 41 years and older. It can be concluded that an overwhelming majority of the respondents are mature employees.

4.3.6 Academic faculty

Table 4.6 below displays the distribution of academic staff by faculty. The academics were requested to indicate in which faculty they worked for the purposes of answering the questions on the academic environment.

Table 4.6 Academic faculty

	Faculty	Frequency	Percent
	Agriculture, Science & Technology	12	41.38
	Commerce & Admin.	6	20.69
	Education	1	3.45
	Human & Social Sciences	8	27.59
	Law	2	6.90
Total		29	100.00

The above table shows that the academic staff members were distributed in the five faculties of the Mafikeng Campus. The majority of the respondents were working in the Faculty of Agriculture, Science & Technology and Health & Social Sciences.

4.4 FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF THE KEY ASPECTS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS STATEMENTS

The purpose of this section was to determine the type of methods and practices that were used during the implementation of the merger as well as to identify experiences relating to the change process that may influence the employees' performance abilities. There were twenty (20) statements and their results are attached as Annexure B.

Item 1- I always received relevant information about the merger

Approximately 31% of the respondents agreed that they always received relevant information about the merger and 56 % of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 13% of the respondents were uncertain about this statement.

The above results suggest that although there were those that received information about the merger, the majority of respondents felt that they did not receive adequate information about the merger. It would thus appear that communication of the merger strategy has not been properly executed and needs to be taken into account as indicated in the literature surveyed on change management. The availability of proper information reduces uncertainty amongst stakeholders, promotes readiness for change (Armenakis,

Harris & Mossholder, 1993:688) and allows the employees to make the right decisions (Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1993:64).

Item 2 - There was a lot of transparency about the benefits of adopting the current multi-campus structure

Approximately 21% of the respondents agreed that there was transparency about the benefits of adopting the multi-campus structure and 65% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 15% of the respondents were uncertain about the statement.

It can be inferred that the majority of respondents felt that there was insufficient or no transparency in adopting the current multi-campus structure. This in turn can impact trust and support which management needs to gain from employees. If the employees have a clear picture about the real reasons and benefits anticipated for selecting a particular direction, then they will make the right choices, and is likely to improve the chance for the merger integration to have a desired impact (Oreg, 2006:98).

Item 3 - Workshops were conducted to educate staff about the new vision, values and mission of the university

Approximately 38% of the respondents agreed that educational workshops were conducted and 43% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Another 19% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

The above results suggest that although some form of workshops were conducted to educate staff about the new vision, values and mission of the university, not all the respondents were aware of them or utilised them. The sample respondents thus remain divided and it can be argued that the workshops were poorly conducted as a process strategy for change. The literature review has shown that the use of workshops can motivate and promote enthusiasm for the new vision of the organisation (Jones, Aguirre & Calderone, 2004:6).

Item 4 - I am clear about how to live to the values and human rights culture of the institution

When all the stakeholders are aware of what are acceptable attitude and behaviour within the organisation, there is a better chance for the organisation to achieve its stated mission. About 53% of the respondents agreed that they were clear about how to live to the values and human rights culture of the institution while 18% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 29% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

The captured results suggest that slightly more than half of the respondents were clear on how to live according to the values and culture of the organisation. It can be construed that this result may also indicate that there was limited or no follow up and reinforcement to ensure commitment to the making of this desired cultural practice alive. The change management literature show that, failure to address corporate culture thoroughly, can have negative consequences such as employee stress (Knappenberger, 2000:289); distrust (Martin, 2007:40) and commitment to the integration process (Weber, Shenkar & Raveh, 1996:1217).

Item 5 - Employees were given a platform to openly voice their concerns

About 25% of the respondents agreed that there were some structures to voice their concerns and 55% of the respondents disagreed. The remaining 19% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

Clearly, it can be inferred that the majority of the respondents felt that the employee were not given enough mechanisms to raise their concerns. The change management literature recommends the use of open and honest engagement (Habeck, Krüger & Träm, 2000:10). This allows all the stakeholders to share ideas, give opinions and criticisms about the change process. Furthermore, it was found that “allowing individuals to express anger can even strength relationships” (Schraeder & Self, 2003:518).

Item 6 - The management was able to address issues and concerns sincerely

Approximately 8% of the respondents agreed that the management was able to address the employees' concerns sincerely and 65% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The other 27% of the respondents were doubtful about the statement.

The above results suggest that the majority of respondents felt that the employees' concerns were not sincerely resolved. This response may also be linked to item 5 and furthermore suggest that management may be insufficiently experienced and lack the skills on how to address and confront issues of concern. It is imperative that the management demonstrate that it has the competence and appropriate change management skills to address issues properly, otherwise its credibility will be questioned which may contribute to negative perceptions about the change (Kavanagh & Ashkanasy, 2006:96; Schraeder & Self, 2003:519).

Item 7 - The senior management was accessible to listen to the concerns of staff

Approximately 10% of the respondents agreed that management was accessible to staff whilst 67% (the overwhelming majority) of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 23% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

The above results suggest that the majority of respondents felt that senior management did not avail itself to listen to the concerns of the staff. Again, it may be due to lack of experience in how to deal with radical change processes and a poorly conceived strategy. For something as drastic as organisational change requires the presence of senior management and their ability to be accessible to staff to clarify issues and concerns (Nguyen & Kleiner, 2003:450; Jones *et al*, 2004:6). Research shows that, by being accessible to all staff during the change process, the leadership will earn the stakeholders' trust and co-operation to steer the organisation in the chosen direction.

Item 8 - The management provided reliable feedback about the progress of the merger

The statement determines whether the NWU management used a communication programme that had a feedback mechanism. Approximately 19% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 55% of the respondents disagreed with it, while 26% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

Clearly, the response by the majority of the respondents tends to indicate that management had no clearly developed communication feedback strategy to keep people informed about the merger progress. A literature view shows that effective communication reduces uncertainty, speculation and unfounded fears (Schalk, Campbell & Freese, 1998:157).

Item 9 - I am clear about my job responsibilities in the new institution

Approximately 74% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 20% of the respondents disagreed. The remaining 7% of the respondents were not clear about their job responsibilities at NWU. Those that disagreed were mainly males.

The above results suggest that the majority of the employees knew what was expected of them at NWU and that job responsibilities were clearly defined. The vision, mission and objectives of organisation can only be achieved when all the stakeholders have a clear understanding of the roles and responsibility to support the new organisation (Carr, Hard & Trahant, 1996:38).

Item 10 - I fully participated in the merger process

About 9% of the respondents agreed and 67% of the respondents disagreed that they participated fully in the merger process. The other 21% of the respondents had no opinion on the matter.

The above results suggest that only a few of the respondents fully participated in the merger process and that management may not have had a clearly devised change strategy for engaging full employee participation. Furthermore the change process may have been only driven from the top management level. An opportunity to participate in the organisational change increases ownership to the decisions that were made during the change process (Jones *et al*, 2004:5).

Item 11 - All the changes affecting my conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated through representatives/union

About 6% of the respondents agreed that changes affecting their conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated through unions and 56% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 31% of the respondents were doubtful about the statement.

The above results suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that not all changes to their conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated with the labour unions. In turn, this result could also be interpreted that respondents felt unsure whether or not union representatives needed to be involved. The change management literature recommends that management use proper consultations and procedures for all the changes that may affect the employees' conditions of employment (Wanberg & Banas, 2000:136). This is more likely to preempt ugly confrontations with the labour unions. Lack of employee consultation and participation in decision making are considered among the major factors to merger failure (Wan & Peterson, 2007:685).

Item 12 - The senior management considered the suggestions of staff before making final decisions

Part of a participatory management is to allow the employees to give inputs to the organisational change process. Approximately 6% of the respondents agreed with the statement, 69% of the respondents disagreed while 25% of the respondents were neutral that management considered the suggestions of staff before making final decisions.

The above results suggest that the majority of the respondents perceived that the suggestions of staff were ignored by management. Alternatively it could be argued that if management did consider staff suggestions, there was no feedback received regarding any of the suggestions made. Communication appears to be a major problem. A literature review shows that “communication problems and related conflict undermine the commitment required for effective implementation of merger related integration strategies” (Schraeder & Self, 2003:516). Furthermore, that stakeholders embrace change decisions that utilise both the top-down and bottom-up inputs, than decisions that are orchestrated from the top.

Item 13 - The University used fair procedures to deal with staff grievances and complaints

Healthy deliberations and fair representations can be achieved by establishing fairly representative forums or committees to deal with staff grievances and complaints. About 13% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 51% of the respondents disagreed that the university used fair procedures to deal with staff grievances and complaints. The other 35% of the respondents were uncertain about the statement.

The above results suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that the procedure followed to address staff grievances and complaints were not fair. It could also be argued that there may not be a fair procedural mechanism in place to effectively deal with grievances and complains. This can be detrimental to the NWU’s vision of equality and justice. The literature review show that the integration challenges could be minimised when the correct human resource management practices are applied (Schraeder & Self, 2003:518). Also, that people can resist change because of their perception of the manner which the change process was implemented (Worral, Cooper & Campbell-Jamison, 1998:617).

Item 14 - There are better provisions for staff development and training

Approximately 35% of the respondents agreed with the statements and the same number, 35% of the respondents disagreed that there are better provisions for staff development and training. The remaining 29% of the respondents were neutral.

The above results suggest that not all of the respondents perceived the new institution to have better provision for staff development and training. Furthermore, the divided perceptions amongst the respondents suggest that there may be a lack of clarity whether provisions for staff development and training are indeed better or not.

Staff development and training programmes can be used to improve the capacity and skills of personnel to ensure their capability to perform their duties properly (Gibson, Ivancevich, Donnelly & Konopsaske, 2009:482). Literature on change management shows that the employees will be less resistant to organisational change that have better opportunities for growth and learning (Van Dam *et al*, 2008:320). Also, training and development enhance organisational commitment and job performance (Arnolds & Boshoff, 2004:11).

Item 15 - I feel that I am fairly rewarded for my work performance

Approximately 19% of the respondents agreed with the statements and 64% of the respondents disagreed that they were fairly rewarded for their work performance. The remaining 17% of the respondents were neutral.

The above results suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that they were not fairly paid for their work performance. This might be indicative that there may not be an effective/acceptable performance appraisal system in place. The use of an acceptable performance appraisal system can ensure that the employees are rewarded according to their individual efforts and for embracing change. The rewards can range from promotion, recognition to bonuses (Jones *et al*, 2004:6).

Item 16 - I received a lot of support from management during the merger

About 6% of the respondents agreed that they received support from management and 45% disagreed with the statement. Approximately 33% had no opinion on the matter. It can be inferred that only a minority received management support. Research shows that a human relations approach is more likely to have a positive impact on organisational climate and employee morale (Schraeder & Self, 2003: 5518). Sensitivity training, on-site consulting, information feedback, group dynamics as well as counseling procedure are regarded as useful strategies to change individual attitudes and intergroup relations (Baldrige, 1972:4).

Item 17 - I experienced a lot of frustration with the merger

Approximately 43% of the respondents agreed that they experienced a lot of frustration with the merger and 45% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 13% of the respondents were uncertain. The disparate results reveal that the merger process did not run smoothly for all employees. Reasons for the frustration could be numerous, some of which already surfaced in some of the preceding analysed questions, - communication, lack of feedback, insufficient transparency, trust and support.

This need to be addressed because a literature review shows that negative psychological experiences of the employees, delay the intended benefit for the merger to be realised (Hay & Fourie, 2002:120). Also, it was also found that, when the change effort considers the employees' reactions, it can prevent resistance and enhance their psychological well-being (Oreg, 2006:316).

Item 18 - There was a lot of co-operation between colleagues

About 35% of the respondents agreed that there was a lot of co-operation between colleagues and 38% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Approximately 27% had no opinion on the matter. It can be concluded that there was less co-operation between colleagues. The disparate results suggest that cooperation amongst colleagues was poor.

Research shows that staff co-operation minimises sabotage to organisational decisions and enhances mutual trust between colleagues. Lack of co-operation on the other side can hinder the change process to have the desired outcomes and the “us vs them” mentality can grow (Schraeder & Self, 2003: 518). An atmosphere of respect, collaboration, academic and political tolerance can improve organisational effectiveness which is the vision of the NWU.

Item 19 - I was regularly stressed by the merger

Approximately 49% of the respondents agreed that they were regularly stressed by the merger and 31% of the respondents disagreed. The remaining 20% appeared uncertain and provided no clear indication how the merger affected them. The cause of the stress for those respondents who answered in the affirmative (agree) could be attributable to numerous causes identified in the preceding questions like, - lack of feedback, no mechanism in place to deal with anxiety related to performance failures, lack of transparency and support, no or poor response from management to raised concerns.

If the merger is not properly managed, then employee stress is more likely to increase. Prolonged stress-related physiological and mental health problem are most likely to have a negative impact on the staff performance (Cartwright & Cooper, 1995:37). This in turn will have negative impact on employee morale, productivity and service delivery.

Item 20 - I devote most of my working hours to do the university work

The purpose of the statement was to assess whether employees used the university time to do the university work. About 94% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 6% of the respondents disagreed. It can be concluded that an overwhelming majority of the respondents devote most of their working hours to do the university work while a minority also do private work.

As part of employment contract, both the employer and employees are expected to fulfill certain obligations. When these obligations are clearly stipulated in the organisational policies, they eliminate confusions and at the same time provide actions for non-

compliance. Ultimately, organisational resources will be properly utilised. There is empirical evidence that job satisfaction is significantly related to organisational commitment. It is believed that when the employees are satisfied with their work, they became more committed to the organisation (Martin, 2007:57). The customer service and customer satisfaction improve, which translates into more revenues for the organisation.

4.5 FREQUENCY ANALYSIS OF THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT STATEMENTS

The purpose of this section was to determine whether there were any practices of the change process that promoted or prohibited the academic staff to conduct teaching and research. There were ten (10) statements and their results are attached as Annexure B.

Item 21 - Facilities are equipped with advanced educational equipments

Approximately 31% of the respondents agreed that facilities are equipped with advanced educational equipments (technology) and 55% disagreed with the statement. The other 14% of the respondents were neutral. It can be inferred from the above results that the majority of respondents felt that some facilities were not adequately equipped with advanced educational equipments. It is import that the academics are provided with good facilities that have advanced educational equipment and technology. The support mechanisms are deemed necessary to foster new behaviour and drive change within the new organisation (Jones *et al*, 2004:5).

Item 22 - The student assessments are consistently applied in all the university campuses

The purpose of the statement was to determine whether there was uniformity in student assessments within the university such as tests, assignments, practical, tutorials and examinations. About 24% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 24% of the respondents disagreed that the student assessments were consistently applied within the university. The remaining 48% of the respondents were neutral. It can be inferred that although students are assessed, it was unclear to most of the respondents that the assessments were similar across campuses.

One of the challenges of a merged organisation is to have unified processes and procedures. Uniformity ensures that students in the same programme are assessed equally across campuses. This is crucial to the NWU as part of its vision of equality; otherwise staff and students' disruptions are bound to occur.

Item 23 - The current structure allows for academic freedom

Approximately 35% of the respondents agreed that the current structure allows for academic freedom and 38% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. The remaining 28% had no opinion that the current structure allows for academic freedom. The disparate opinions may also be attributable to different lecturer teaching styles.

Research shows that lack of operational freedom evokes stress and negative attitude towards the merger, which in turn, affect commitment to change (Tierney, 2000:121). Healthy academic debates will allow academics to share ideas with their professional counterparts and ultimately improve the quality of teaching and research.

Item 24 -There are no disparities in the resource allocation among campuses

About 7% of the respondents agreed with the statement whilst 69% disagreed suggesting that there are disparities in the resource allocation among campuses. Approximately 24% were doubtful about the statement. It can be deduced from the above results that the majority of the respondents felt that disparities existed in the allocation of resources amongst campuses. This need to be addressed because it was found that any perceptions of discriminatory practices or unfairness are more likely to have negative impact on work relations, which in turn will affect cooperation and commitment to change (Gilliland, 1993:696; Oreg, 2006:78).

Item 25 - Treating campuses as business units will accelerate transformation within the university

Approximately 25% agreed that by treating campuses as business units will accelerate transformation within the university and 43% of the respondents disagreed with this statement. About 32% of the respondents were neutral. It can be inferred that although

some respondents anticipated that there will be transformation, there are those that felt that treating campuses as business units will not necessarily accelerate transformation within the university.

Item 26 - The individual workload is reasonable to allow for student consultations

About 28% agreed with the statement and 68% of the respondents disagreed. The remaining 4% were uncertain. It can be deduced from the above results that the majority of respondents felt that their heavy workload prevented them to allow for sufficient student consultations.

This matter need to be addressed because heavy workloads do not enhance the climate for teaching, learning and research. The duties and responsibilities of academic staff are to teach, consult with students, supervise postgraduate, conduct research and be involved in community work (Johnsrud & Rosser, 2002:529). When students are given academic support, this is most likely to impact positively on teaching and learning. The NWU's culture of commitment to excellence and scholarly engagement will be realised.

Item 27 - I use student evaluations to improve the quality of teaching

Approximately 82% agreed with the statements and 14% of the respondents disagreed that they use student evaluations to improve the quality of teaching. The remaining 4% of the respondents were neutral. The results suggest that the majority of respondents utilise a student feedback mechanism to improve the quality of teaching.

The more an organisation continues to improve its activities, the greater the chances of improving customer service and ultimately its revenues. This in turn will create a better climate for teaching, learning and research. The NWU's culture of commitment to excellence and scholarly engagement will be positively enhanced.

Item 28 - I am actively involved in designing the instructional programmes

About 86% of the respondents agreed with the statements and 14% of the respondents disagreed that they were actively involved in designing the instructional programmes.

It can be inferred that the majority of the respondents are actively involved in designing the instructional programmes. Involvement will ensure that instructional programmes are designed and executed according to acceptable educational standards. When there are acceptable guidelines for designing study guides with clear specification on the subject content and assessments, the NWU's desired cultural practices will become a reality.

Item 29 - The university disciplinary measures are clear in dealing with unruly student behaviour

It is comforting for all the academic staff to know that they will be able to conduct lectures or give tests in lecture halls and/or laboratories without compromising their safety. About 24% of the respondents agreed that the university disciplinary measures are clear in dealing with unruly student behaviour and another 24% of the respondents disagreed with the statements. The remaining 52% of the respondents were neutral. It can be inferred that whilst there are university disciplinary mechanisms in place within the NWU, the majority of the respondents appear to be uncertain or unclear about these measures when they are applied in dealing with unruly student behaviour.

Disruptive behaviour can hamper effective teaching and learning. Setting boundaries is necessary to deal with intolerance that may arise due to differences in racial, cultural, political, religious and sexual orientation. Ultimately, staff and students will be able to commit to the NWU's cultural practices of respect, tolerance and justice; which are within the broad aims of the Minister of Education to establish institutions that adhere to a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic society (SA Government Minister of Education, 2001).

Item 30 - There is enough time to conduct research

Approximately 24% of the respondents agreed with the statement and 72% of the respondents disagreed. The above results suggest that the majority of the respondents felt that there is not enough time to conduct research. This need to be addressed because when there are opportunities to conduct research, the climate and quality of research within the organisation will improve. This in turn will improve the financial position of

the organisation in the long-term. There should not be a perception that some academics are being marginalised or that the NWU wants to make them redundant especially when this results is linked to item 26, heavy workload. This perception will be in contradiction to the NWU's desired culture of fairness, commitment to excellence and scholarly engagement.

4.6 SUMMARY

This chapter focused on the integration of data obtained from the survey questionnaire and the interpretation of the study results. Each statement was presented, followed by a brief summary of the research findings. Tables were used to show the demographical characteristics of the respondents. The results indicated that the majority of the respondents were mainly males. The staff profile of the dominant groups constituted lecturers, senior lecturers and administrative personnel. The majority of the respondents can be classified as matured and experienced because they were older than forty years and have served the university for more than eleven years. Although the academic staff profile covered all the faculties of Mafikeng Campus, the majority of the respondents were from the Faculty of Agriculture, Science & Technology and Health & Social Sciences. Though the survey sample for this research study is small, the analysis of the summarised data tends to suggest that management did not have a properly conceived transformational change management strategy in place for adequately dealing with the merger which can be classified as a radical change process. Radical change within large institution mergers can take between 5 to 10 years to complete as these do not only require structural change, but also require a shift in attitudes and behaviour, and skills and competency from management in driving this change process.

The next chapter deals with conclusions, the outcome of the analysed results with cross reference to the research objectives of the study, and end with some recommendations emanating from the research study.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter starts with the review of the research topic and what the study investigated. This is followed by a brief outline of the research objectives linking them to the outcome of the analysed results. The last section of the chapter deals with the recommendations that emanate from the research study, then the limitations of the study and ends with the final conclusion.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH TOPIC

Although restructuring of HEIs have been continuing for years in countries such as Australia, United Kingdom, USA, and China; restructuring of the South African HEIs is only in its infancy stage. Furthermore, the South Africa's situation is very unique because all levels of education were segregated on the basis of race, language and ethnicity which resulted in great inequalities in resources between Black- and White dominated institutions. Therefore, the aim of the study was to explore the effects of organisational change and specifically change implementation on employee behaviour in a merged South African HEI. The NWU is a merger of a historically black university, University of North-West and Potchefstroom University for Christian Higher Education, a historically white university.

5.3 THE AIMS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

The general purpose of this study was to determine the impact of the change management process on the employees of Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University.

5.4 LINKING THE STUDY FINDINGS TO THE RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study objectives identified in Chapter 1 have been covered and are addressed individually below:

(1) Determine the employees' awareness of the change management process at Mafikeng Campus of the NWU

The majority of the questions were negatively answered, which means that the employees were not fully aware of the change process at the campus. The study findings suggest that indeed there has been a name change, the organisational structures have been established, but the vision, mission and values have not been satisfactorily articulated. The NUW merger is very unique, in a sense that a multi-campus strategy is used and the campuses are managed as business units. A truly shared identity has to be enthusiastically supported and incorporated into daily interactions by all its stakeholders. To achieve that, the institution has to retain the right people with the right passion and dedication accompanied by the necessary resources.

Therefore, a lot of management effort is still required to harmonise the transition. The employees should be convinced about the rationale for selecting the current structure, and how it will benefit the campuses, its staff and students. When the foundation is unstable, the cracks will emerge, and there is a greater danger of the NWU management using crisis management across its campuses to the detriment of staff and students as a preferred choice among HEIs.

(2) Identify the challenges of the change management processes in the institution

An organisational change brings opportunities and numerous challenges that require effective leadership and management. The following challenges of the change management process were identified and the majority of the questions were negatively answered reflecting ineffective leadership and management:

- a) To have a competent management that will manage and resolve conflicts amicably to redress inequalities in qualifications, research capacity, facilities and equipments.
- b) Use change process interventions such as effective communication, active participation, training, support and rewards to change the attitude and behaviours of its employees.

- c) Earn the trust and co-operation of the employees to have a truly merged institution with less disruption during the transition to the new goals of the institution.
- d) Formulate and apply the same conditions of service to all its employees.
- e) Use fair distribution of resources among campuses to address any disparities in capacity, facilities, equipments and technology.
- f) To have uniformity in the design and execution of learning programmes and assessments to ensure that a high quality of graduates are produced across all campuses.
- g) Accelerate transformation for a better teaching, learning and research climate in line with the institution's values and human right culture of "equality, freedom, tolerance, respect, commitment to excellence, scholarly engagement, academic freedom and justice".

(3) Identity the procedures used by the management to deal with concerns raised by the stakeholders

The majority of the questions were negatively answered, as addressed below.

- a) Accessibility of the management - not all employees were able to have access to the management. There were insufficient platforms or face-to-face communications to engage the employees and address concerns.
- b) Management lacked the ability to listen with great empathy to the concerns of the employees and advise them truthfully.
- c) Use committees or teams constituting a fair representation from both the Management and the Union to handle employment issues such as workload, performance appraisal, salary and other employment benefits. The committees or teams seem to have been ineffective especially in areas of workload and remuneration.
- d) Negotiate with the Union in good faith in all matters pertaining to raised concerns and disputes. There was a limited platform to engage management on change process issues.

- e) Transparency in the implementation of the final decisions that were negotiated and agreed between parties to ensure that they were not unilaterally changed by management. There was not enough transparency and feedback on the progress of the merger process.

(4) Determine the employees' perception on the merger process

Besides using the multi-campus structure with one institutional office, the NWU had a communication strategy that aimed to inform and educate stakeholders about the vision, mission and values of the institution. It was also intended to bridge the geographical distance of campuses spread between Potchefstroom, Mafikeng and Vanderbijl Park. The positive perception that the merger process brings a new lease of life in the form of better opportunities for staff development and training are overshadowed by the majority of questions that were unfavourably answered. This means that there is a negative perception of the change process.

Firstly, the findings of this study reflected the perception that the communication strategy was ineffective because it did not provide frequent, reliable feedback about the merger progress and there are disparities across campuses in resource allocation, facilities and workload. Secondly, the management style was non-participative, less transparent, unsupportive, and lacks conflict resolution skills to address concerns. Furthermore, that the current appraisal system, if any, was not fairly linked to staff remunerations. The teaching, learning and research strategy was unbalanced with a heavy workload that limited opportunities to conduct research and give sufficient consultations to students.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS

What emanates from the above research findings is that, the NWU leadership and management should pay close attention to the identified areas of the change management process in order to accelerate integration in the institution.

1. Review and intensify the communication programme

The study findings suggest that the current communication programme is not effective. It does not provide frequent, reliable feedback on the progress of the change process, nor indicates that staff inputs were considered in organisational decisions. Communication is vital in eradicating rumours, distrust and anxiety among the employees. For the NWU, effective communication is more crucial to lessen the geographical distances between its campuses. It is therefore imperative that the employees always receive timely and accurate information about the change process. It has been found that the employees who receive quality information view change favourably and allow them to make informed decisions (Miller, Johnson & Grau, 1993:59).

2. Maximise employee involvement and participation

The other concerns include limited employee involvement and participation in organisational decisions. The danger of limited participation lead to non-ownership of all management decisions because they will be viewed as unilateral decisions that ignore the demands and aspirations of the employees. Therefore, it is important that all the employees are given more opportunities to participate in the planning and implementation of change because it was found that a higher level of participation is related to a more positive view of changes (Wanberg & Banas, 2002:136).

3. Improve the credibility of the institutional leadership and management

The NWU leadership and management need to present a united front and realise that constructive integration can only occur when they have the trust and support of the employees. This can be gained through transparency in decisions, giving necessary support and being competent in addressing issues and concerns of staff. Lastly, there is a need to review and implement an acceptable performance appraisal system that will reward employees for their efforts. Thus, the behaviour of the institutional leadership and management should be above reproach, reflecting that all institutional decisions are made without fear or favour. Honesty and transparency are everything in any relationship.

4. Offer appropriate training and staff development

The employees need to be aware of training opportunities, for example, whether there is any financial assistance set aside to improve qualifications and acquire new skills, and support to improve the research capacity for less experienced researchers. This will empower and motivate workers to do their work properly. These in turn will improve the quality of teaching and learning as well as increase the research output of the university.

5. Other transformational efforts

There is a need for greater effort to revisit the policies and procedures governing resource allocation to address any inequalities across campuses. This will ensure that the institution have a uniform and balanced policy that governs allocation of facilities, equipment, technology and workload. The problem of under- and over-utilised personnel will be eliminated, and the academic staff can have sufficient time to give struggling students necessary support and guidance, and enough time to conduct better research. All these efforts will improve teaching, learning and research in the institution.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research needs to be conducted at the other campuses of the NWU, constituting a broad representative sample that can truly reflect the impact of the change management process within this institution. Another possible research project can be focused on other merged HEIs that are using multi-campus strategy and which like the NWU, have merged institutions that were historically Black and White dominated.

5.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As only one campus from the four campuses of the NWU was used in this study, caution must be exercised not to generalize the results of this study to cases beyond those examined. The analysed results are from a small sample and can shed some light on the impact of change management in a merged HEI, but these need to be used with caution.

5.8 FINAL CONCLUSIONS

What emanates from the entire study is that, the organisational change brings opportunities and great challenges for both the management and the employees. Numerous change process interventions have been found useful to change the mindset of the employees, namely, that all employees receive quality information, take active participation in all decisions that affect them and that the management uses acceptable human resource management practices to address challenges of the change process. Furthermore, it was identified that, when the management gives the support and demonstrates sincerity understanding what the employees are going through, it can gain the necessary trust and support of the employee to drive the vision to reality.

If the negative perceptions of disparities persist or are not adequately addressed they will lead to a series of negative events, with some campuses being unable to produce competent graduates who can contribute to the greater good of the South African economy and the society at large. Some stakeholders, such as the union, staff and students will find reasons to accuse institutional leadership and management of trying to make other campuses inferior to find reasons to close them. In conclusion, it is less likely to have a desired effect to change the attitudinal and behavioural acceptance of the merger process when campuses are not seen as equal partners. Therefore, participation, effective communication and management have been, and remain to be, the essential aspects that can do wonders for the change management process to bear fruits.

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APPENDIX A

November 2009

Dear prospective respondent

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH PROJECT

You are hereby cordially invited to participate in the research study: **The impact of the change management process on the employees during the merger integration at Mafikeng Campus of the North-West University** which forms part of the requirements to complete the MBA programme.

I am an MBA student at the Graduate School of Business & Government Leadership, Mafikeng Campus of North-West University. My study supervisor is Professor Dr Erik Schmickl. The aim of this study is to determine the impact of the change management process on the employees of the North-West University.

It is well documented that major organisational changes affect employees especially during the integration process. Therefore, it is important to get the views of the employees on how the management of the integration has affected them.

Participation is entirely voluntary. You are assured of complete anonymity and your responses will be kept confidential. By completing the questionnaire, participants will not only assist me to complete my studies, but their contribution will increase knowledge and understanding of the impact of change management within a South African context.

If you decide to participate in this study, please use a **pen** to complete the attached questionnaire honestly to give a true reflection of the impact of the merger. Please return the completed questionnaire in the self-addressed envelope. If you have any questions, please contact me at (012) 382 0601 or 082 3551199.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation and assistance.

Best regards,

Bonang E Monchonyane (Mrs)

QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH STUDY: THE IMPACT OF THE CHANGE MANAGEMENT PROCESS ON THE EMPLOYEES DURING THE MERGER INTEGRATION AT MAFIKENG CAMPUS OF THE NORTH-WEST UNIVERSITY

SECTION A: THE KEY ASPECTS OF THE CHANGE PROCESS [All staff]

The purpose of this section is to determine the type of methods and practices that were used during the implementation of the merger as well as to identify experiences relating to the change process that may influence the employees' performance abilities. Please indicate by ticking the appropriate number that best represent your opinion on the statement using a scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1. I always received relevant information about the merger.	5	4	3	2	1
2. There was a lot of transparency about the benefits of adopting the current multi-campus structure.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Workshops were conducted to educate staff about the new vision, values and mission of the university.	5	4	3	2	1
4. I am clear about how to live to the values and human rights culture of the institution.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Employees were given a platform to openly voice their concerns.	5	4	3	2	1
6. The management was able to address issues and concerns sincerely.	5	4	3	2	1
7. The senior management was accessible to listen to the concerns of staff.	5	4	3	2	1
8. The management provided reliable feedback about the progress of the merger.	5	4	3	2	1
9. I am clear about my job responsibilities in the new institution.	5	4	3	2	1
10. I fully participated in the merger process.	5	4	3	2	1
11. All the changes affecting my conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated through representatives/union.	5	4	3	2	1

12. The senior management considered the suggestions of staff before making final decisions.	5	4	3	2	1
13. The university used fair procedures to deal with staff grievances and complaints.	5	4	3	2	1
14. There are better provisions for staff development and training.	5	4	3	2	1
15. I feel that I am fairly rewarded for my work performance.	5	4	3	2	1
16. I received a lot of support from management during the merger.	5	4	3	2	1
17. I experienced a lot of frustration with the merger.	5	4	3	2	1
18. There was a lot of co-operation between colleagues.	5	4	3	2	1
19. I was regularly stressed by the merger.	5	4	3	2	1
20. I devote most of my working hours to do the university work.	5	4	3	2	1

If you are an academic staff, please answer Section **B**.

If you are **not** an academic staff, please go directly to Section **C** on page 3.

SECTION B: THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT [For academic staff only]

The purpose of this section is to determine whether there are any practices of the change process that promote or prohibit the academic staff to conduct teaching and research. Please indicate your views on the following aspects of the academic environment by ticking ✓ the appropriate number that corresponds to your level of agreement or disagreement with the statement using a scale: strongly agree (5), agree (4), uncertain (3), disagree (2) and strongly disagree (1).

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Uncertain	Disagree	Strongly disagree
21. Facilities are equipped with advanced educational equipments.	5	4	3	2	1
22. The student assessments are consistently applied in all the university campuses.	5	4	3	2	1
23. The current structure allows for academic freedom.	5	4	3	2	1
24. There are no disparities in the resource allocation among campuses.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Treating campuses as business units will accelerate transformation within the university.	5	4	3	2	1
26. The individual workload is reasonable to allow for student consultations.	5	4	3	2	1
27. I use student evaluations to improve the quality of teaching.	5	4	3	2	1
28. I am actively involved in designing the instructional programmes.	5	4	3	2	1
29. The university disciplinary measures are clear in dealing with unruly student behaviour.	5	4	3	2	1
30. There is enough time to conduct research.	5	4	3	2	1

SECTION C: THE DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS [All staff]

Demographic information is needed to determine whether the challenges and experiences of the change process are unique to a specific race, gender, rank or faculty. Please indicate your demographic characteristics below with a tick ✓ next to the appropriate number.

1. Gender :

Male	1
Female	2

2. Race

Black	1
Coloured	2
White	3
Other (Please specify)	4

3. Job Position/ Rank:

Professor	1
Associate Professor	2
Senior Lecturer	3
Lecturer	4
Junior Lecturer	5
Administrative personnel	6
Secretary	7
Clerk	8

4. Years of service at the university :

Below 1 year	1
1-5 years	2
6-10 years	3
11-15 years	4
16-20 years	5
20-25 years	6
26 and more years	7

5. Age:

Under 21 years	1
21-30 years	2
31-40 years	3
41-50 years	4
51-60 years	5
61 and more years	6

6. Academic faculty [**For academics only**]:

Agriculture, Science & Technology	1
Commerce & Admin.	2
Education	3
Human & Social Sciences	4
Law	5

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

APPENDIX B

FREQUENCY FOR SECTION A & B

Statement	Frequency & Percent (%)	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree	Total & Percent (%)
1. I always received relevant information about the merger.	Freq.	9	18	6	10	5	48
	%	18.75	37.50	12.50	20.83	10.42	100%
2. There was a lot of transparency about the benefits of adopting the current multi-campus structure.	Freq.	9	22	7	10		48
	%	18.75	45.83	14.58	20.83		100%
3. Workshops were conducted to educate staff about the new vision, values and mission of the university.	Freq.	6	14	9	15	3	
	%	12.77	29.79	19.15	31.91	6.38	100%
4. I am clear about how to live to the values and human rights culture of the institution.	Freq.	2	7	14	21	5	49
	%	4.08	14.29	28.57	42.86	10.20	100%
5. Employees were given a platform to openly voice their concerns.	Freq.	12	14	9	11	1	47
	%	25.53	29.79	19.15	23.40	2.13	100%
6. The management was able to address issues and concerns sincerely.	Freq.	14	17	13	4	0	48
	%	29.17	35.42	27.08	8.33	0	100%
7. The senior management was accessible to listen to the concerns of staff.	Freq.	13	19	11	4	1	48
	%	27.08	39.58	22.92	8.33	2.08	100%
8. The management provided reliable feedback about the progress of the merger.	Freq.	8	18	12	9	0	47
	%	17.02	38.30	25.53	19.15	0	100%
9. I am clear about my job responsibilities in the new institution.	Freq.	1	8	3	23	11	46
	%	2.17	17.39	6.52	50.00	23.91	10%
10. I fully participated in the merger process.	Freq.	18	14	10	4	2	48
	%	37.50	29.17	20.83	8.33	4.17	100%
11. All the changes affecting my conditions of employment were satisfactorily negotiated through representatives/union.	Freq.	13	14	15	6	0	48
	%	27.08	29.17	31.25	12.50	0	100%
12. The senior management considered the suggestions of staff before making final decisions.	Freq.	15	18	12	3	0	48
	%	31.25	37.50	25.00	6.25	0	100%
13. The university used fair procedures to deal with staff grievances and complaints.	Freq.	12	11	16	4	2	45
	%	26.67	24.44	35.56	8.89	4.44	100%
14. There are better provisions for staff development and training.	Freq.	5	12	14	14	3	48
	%	10.42	25.00	29.17	29.17	6.25	100%
15. I feel that I am fairly rewarded for my work performance.	Freq.	10	20	8	9	0	47
	%	21.28	42.55	17.02	19.15	0	100%
16. I received a lot of support from management during the merger.	Freq.	13	16	16	3	0	48
	%	27.08	33.33	33.33	3	0	100%
17. I experienced a lot of frustration with the merger.	Freq.	10	11	6	7	13	47
	%	21.28	23.40	12.77	14.89	27.66	100%
18. There was a lot of co-operation between colleagues.	Freq.	3	15	13	14	3	48
	%	6.25	31.25	27.08	29.17	6.25	100%
19. I was regularly stressed by the merger.	Freq.	4	10	9	15	7	45
	%	8.89	22.22	20.00	33.33	15.56	100%

20. I devote most of my working hours to do the university work.	Freq.	1	2	0	17	28	48
	%	2.08	4.17	0	35.42	58.33	100%
21. Facilities are equipped with advanced educational equipments.	Freq.	4	12	4	6	3	29
	%	13.79	41.38	13.79	20.69	10.34	100%
22. The student assessments are consistently applied in all the university campuses.	Freq.	3	5	14	6	1	29
	%	10.34	17.24	48.28	20.69	3.45	100%
23. The current structure allows for academic freedom.	Freq.	3	8	8	8	2	29
	%	10.34	27.59	27.59	27.59	6.90	100%
24. There are no disparities in the resource allocation among campuses.	Freq.	10	10	7	1	1	29
	%	34.48	34.48	24.14	3.45	3.45	100%
25. Treating campuses as business units will accelerate transformation within the university.	Freq.	6	6	9	4	3	28
	%	21.43	21.43	32.14	14.29	10.71	100%
26. The individual workload is reasonable to allow for student consultations.	Freq.	9	10	1	6	2	28
	%	32.14	35.71	3.57	21.43	7.14	100%
27. I use student evaluations to improve the quality of teaching.	Freq.	0	4	1	14	10	29
	%	0	13.79	3.45	48.28	34.48	100%
28. I am actively involved in designing the instructional programmes.	Freq.	0	4	0	11	14	29
	%	0	13.79	0	37.93	48.28	100%
29. The university disciplinary measures are clear in dealing with unruly student behaviour.	Freq.	4	3	15	7	0	29
	%	13.79	10.34	51.72	24.14	0	100%
30. There is enough time to conduct research.	Freq.	9	12	0	5	3	29
	%	31.03	41.38	0	17.24	10.34	100%