THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

by

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ABSTRACT

Notwithstanding challenges facing systems of higher education world-wide, higher education in South Africa has been fundamentally re-engineered since the achievement of democracy in 1994. The University of South Africa (Unisa) emerged as the only dedicated distance education institution and the biggest provider of higher education. Against the background of transformation in higher education policy and practice in South Africa, this study aimed to address the implementation of higher education policy in relation to the provision of distance education in South Africa, with special reference to Unisa. To address the research problem, a literature study investigated theoretical perspectives, recent policy trends in higher education globally and their influence on distance education and the impact of higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa on Open Distance Learning (ODL) provision. A mixed method empirical research design was used to explore how the academic and administrative cohort of top and middle and extended management at Unisa perceive the implementation of higher education policy at their institution in relation to distance education provision. The inquiry comprised two phases: Phase 1, a quantitative component entailed a survey using a self-designed questionnaire. A non-probability purposive sampling strategy was used to select respondents for the survey, and the entire target population (Unisa employees at middle to executive management level) participated. Phase 2, a qualitative component, entailed semi-structured interviews with a purposeful sample: members of top management and two council members. The survey results indicated strong agreement on the need for strategy and planning, more funding and improved levels of service. There was disagreement or ambivalence around sufficient human and infrastructural capacity, the cost of ODL, quality and the efficiency of ICT systems and processes. Four major areas of concern emerged from the interviews: Transformation (the national transformation agenda and mindset change); funding (enrolment planning and capping, the unfunded student issue and salaries); institutional efficiency (strategy, planning, capacity and quality); and the cost of ODL and the need for a dedicated ODL Policy. The study concluded with recommendations to facilitate the enhanced practice and delivery of ODL in South Africa.

KEY WORDS

Higher education

Higher education policy

Distance education

Open and Distance Learning

Mixed method design

South Africa

University of South Africa

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late daughter Debbie, whose dignity and strength in facing her mortality were humbling and life changing, and to my sons Justin and Jonathan who are a constant source of pleasure and pride. I am truly blessed to share my life with you. To my daughter-in-law Vanessa who gave back the joy of a daughter, and for topping that joy with a new baby boy Zander, my grandson - my cup runneth over.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AAU	Association of African Universities
ACDE	African Council for Distance Education
ANC	African National Congress
ANOVA	Analysis of Variance
AVU	African Virtual University
CHE	Council of Higher Education
CoL	Commonwealth of Learning
CPC	Central Product Classification
DoE	Department of Education
DoHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoBE	Department of Basic Education
EGM	Emerging Global Model
FET	Further Education and Training
GATS	General Agreement on Trade and Services
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GUNI	Global University Network for Innovation
HEMIS	Higher Education Management Information Systems
HEQF	Higher Education Qualifications Framework
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
IBSA	India, Brazil, South Africa
ICDE	International Council for Distance Education
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INES	International Indicators of Educational Systems
IOP	Institutional Operational Plan
MIOP	Merger Institutional Operational Plan
MIT	Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MEDUNSA	Medical University of South Africa
MoE	Ministry of Education
MTSF	Medium Term Strategic Framework

NADEOSA	The National Association of Distance Education and Open Learning in South Africa
NCHE	National Council on Higher Education
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NPHE	National Plan for Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSFAS	National Students Financial Aid Scheme
NWG	National Working Group
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ODL	Open and Distance Learning
ODeL	Open and Distance e-Learning
OER	Open Education Resources
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
OU	Open University
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PQM	Programme and Qualifications Mix
PSM	Planning Steering Mechanism
QAAA	Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SAIDE	South African Institute of Distance Education
SAIRR	South African Institute of Race Relations
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SCOP	Standing Committee of Presidents and Vice-Chancellors
TSA	Technikon Southern Africa
UN	United Nations
UNISA	University of South Africa
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
VUDEC	Vista University Distance Education Campus
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

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CHAPTER 1

1. BACKGROUND, PROBLEM STATEMENT AND AIMS

1.1 BACKGROUND

Any thorough investigation of education policy requires a sound knowledge of education theory, as well as the policy actors, that is, those persons, bodies and role players who have contributed, and who continue to contribute to and influence the development of education policy, globally and in South Africa. Such knowledge will contextualise historically, socially and politically the process of policy development and so provide a more informed understanding of the influences and forces that have shaped global higher education and concomitantly, higher education in South Africa, particularly in the post apartheid era.

In identifying the main role players in the pre and post development phase of the new democracy, Jansen (2001: 12 – 24) provides an insight into the socio-political conditions and the influences that prevailed pre 1994 and informed the plethora of new policy initiatives in the new South Africa. He offers some understanding of the difficulties faced by policy makers as they strove to design policy and implementation processes that would reflect the new ethos of broad participation and inclusiveness. These difficulties are also discussed by Manganyi, Nzimande, Mathieson and Donaldson (2001: 25 - 73).

The notion of a new inclusive approach to policy formation, and the democratic right of the individual to be a part of the policy making process is substantiated by Manganyi (2001: 25 - 37) as he traces the dismantling of the former policies and contextualises the drafting process of the new in a transitional environment. Asserting that public policy sets out a government's intention regarding certain matters that have a bearing on the common good and welfare of the people, Manganyi links education policy to macro-economic policies and government expenditure frameworks. These issues have a fundamental bearing on the role and responsibilities of higher education, the relationship between higher education and the state and the

danger for the new South African democracy, of failing to deliver on their education mandate.

The 'stakeholder' approach, which implies broad public consultation and participation in the formulation of policy is of particular relevance to this study. Broad consultation and participation marked the earlier years (approximately 1992 – 2008) of policy formulation in South Africa, but more recent years (approximately 2008 to date) have seen a waning of participation and consultation and an increased tendency by government to steer policy more directly in line with changing socio-economic and political dynamics. Soudien, Jacklin and Hoadley (2001: 78- 91) discuss the roles of power and contestation in this development, while Moja and Hayward (2001: 112 - 123) discuss aspects such as a lack of enthusiasm for change on the part of most formerly 'white' universities, as well as a lack of adequate data.

This theme is taken up by Van Heffen, Verhoefen and De Wit (1999: 275) in their discussion of different types of steering models in higher education. They speak of the model of the "Institutional State" [which] emphasises the responsibility of higher education institutions for the protection of academic values and tradition against one-sided interests of political regimes and interest groups as follows:

> In the field of higher education this model is probably best exemplified through reference to the relationship between the state and the old elitist universities, where there is/was as shared understanding and unwritten conventions of state non interference between state civil service and universities as elite institutions.

Jansen (2001: 272 - 293) asserts that policy making in higher education is politically expedient and orientated, and that the participatory process is flawed. These issues are also addressed by Sayed (2001: 250 - 270) who examines policy in terms of its role as a means of addressing equity, redress and justice, and he comments on its efficacy in that context. This theme is enlarged on by Tickly (1997:199) who identifies discourses of social equality, resource efficiency and social reconstruction, and by Kogan (1985: 20) who states that "education and social values are adjacent to each other…. [and that] the social issues of most concern have been socialisation and equality."

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Wolpe (1991:4) argues that the core structural conditions of apartheid remained in existence in South African higher education and he vocalises the need for "new power to function in an environment of the former power." This speaks to the need for broad change and alludes to the dissonance between higher education policy and socio-economic and political realities. This argument is substantiated by Badat (1991:17) who maintains that "the general tendency has been for educational politics to be propelled by issues external to the immediate educational sphere." These assertions are particularly relevant in the light of ongoing poor enrolment ratios of Africans in higher education (5.6 % in sub Saharan Africa and 16.6% in South Africa compared to 26% in East Asia and the Pacific, 62% in Central and Eastern Europe, and 71% in North America and Western Europe (UNESCO 2009: 10 - 15) and the continued under-performance of African universities, particularly in respect of research outputs.

Emanating from the West and following Western tradition, the model for South African universities has evolved into a neoliberal Humboldian model. This raises questions not only regarding the sustainability in South Africa of this model for a university, and its currency in a drastically reforming global and South African higher education landscape, but also regarding its relevance in the light of the 'Africanisation' of higher education in South Africa (and Africa). While there can be no doubt that neoliberalism has provided a powerful expression of Western philosophy, thought and practice, there is a growing view that their very genesis, their cultural wellspring, is predicated on the assumptions and understandings of societies whose locus is individualism rather than the collectivism of African cultures. It is a dichotomy that is represented in almost antithetical expressions of being: *I think, therefore I am* (Western Rationalism) versus *I am who I am through others.* (African philosophy of Ubuntu). It is therefore a moot point as to whether prevailing models based on these fundamental Western precepts will ever find comfortable currency or successful expression in African societies in the same way in which they have done in the West, and whether they will ever be able to achieve the desired results for Africans.

In order to function efficiently and effectively, South African higher education must carve a new competitive identity and niche within an environment of competing interests and challenges, both internal and external and at micro and macro levels. Mace, cited in Ball (1990:81) notes:

> As to external efficiency, the government clearly considers that education can promote economic development, provided that it is of the right sort. The government's emphasis on vocational and science oriented teaching suggests that this is where it perceives the education system can best serve the needs of the economy.

Although this comment is not made in respect of higher education in South Africa, it nevertheless speaks to the perceived role of higher education in economic development, as well as the focus on science and technology education to that end. This is similarly reflected in the aims of the South African government in regard to higher education, expressed clearly in the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (DoE 1997: *s* 13), as follows:

> ….to address the development needs of society and provide the labour market in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependant society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy.

This is underscored by the Council on Higher Education (CHE) (2004:14) who state that higher education in South Africa has been:

> … charged with ……producing high-level skilled graduates and new bases of knowledge to drive economic and social development, and to enhance the overall levels of intellectual and cultural development.

The emphasis on vocational and science orientated teaching is reflected in the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (DoE 1997).

> [Higher education] must contribute to the development of a critical mass of intellectuals, especially black intellectuals, and researchers, and provide for the training of multi-skilled professionals, in particular, in science and technology.

This is also evident in the imperatives of the *National Plan for Higher Education* (MoE 2001: 5). whose proposed enrolment ratios indicate a clear shift towards science and technology.

> The National Plan proposes to shift the balance in enrolments over the next five to ten years between the humanities, business and commerce and science, engineering and technology from the current ratio of 49%: 26%: 25% to 40%: 30%: 30% respectively.

Fundamental to all of these policy initiatives are the core steering levers, or mechanisms, of planning, quality and funding and the role that they play in steering higher education institutions towards desired behaviours and outcomes. However, when such policies come into opposition, or even conflict, with prevailing and entrenched university cultures, their implementation becomes extremely difficult, or even worse, fails. The statement is made that "Universities only pay serious attention to government policies if these are compatible with the values, beliefs and interests of the dominant coalitions of decision-makers at different university levels" Van Heffen et al (1999:289). This comment provides a useful insight into reasons for the success or failure of policy implementation in higher education, particularly within the context of transformation and institutional culture change.

Although organisational change is not the focus of this study, the impact and influence of policy on an institution's readiness, preparedness and willingness to implement the desired change is affected by its organisational structure and culture. It is in this context that statements such as those made by Van Vught (1995: 249) have credence.

> When [such] an organisation is heavily fragmented, decision-making power will be spread over a larger number of units and actors. A higher education institution therefore becomes a federal system; semi autonomous departments and schools, chairs and faculties act like small sovereign states as they pursue distinctive self-interests and stand over against the whole.

Higher education in South Africa cannot divorce itself from the reality of socio-economic and political issues and the concomitant and ongoing transition and there is a need to determine how current higher education legislation and policy provides, or does not provide for these realities. Ball (1990: 3) states that policies cannot be divorced from interests, conflict, domination or justice. Bauer (1968: 13) underscores this in asserting [that]

> .....any notion of judging a policy by its contribution to an overall system ……poses the possibility and usually the inevitability of an inequity to some person or unit within the system.

This is relevant in the context of distance education in South Africa, especially given that higher education policy in South Africa has been formulated with contact higher education institutions in mind (in this context, a contact higher education institution can be defined as a traditional face-to-face residential higher education institution), and has consequently provided scant guidance and support for the changes and impact of the merging process and emerging trends in higher education on distance education.

This study therefore explored the nature, role and impact of higher education policy on the delivery of distance education in the transitional global and South African environment since 1994.

1.1.1 The global context

The last decade of the twentieth century was marked by significant changes in the global environment, as evidenced by the Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) revolution, the emergence of the global citizen who could ply his or her trade and skills in the global labour market, the spread of democracy on one hand and social devastation in the form of HIV/AIDS, crime, corruption and violence on the other, and, most importantly for the purposes of this study, the increasing prominence of knowledge production as the foremost driver of growth and change in the global economy (World Bank 2002:7-23). These changes have contributed to a phenomenon that has been termed *Globalisation*.

In keeping with the neoliberal, capitalistic underpinnings of globalisation (Rai 2005), profit is the primary driver and increasingly national economies are being subsumed into a global economy whose fluidity and flexibility facilitate the sourcing of labour, technology and raw materials from countries that can provide such requirements most cost effectively.

The paper, *Transformation and Restructuring: A New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education* (RSA 2002: 4) acknowledged the direct implications of globalisation on higher education when it included the need to address its impact as one of the three fundamental objectives (the other two being social justice and the

effective utilisation of available resources) necessary to "achieve the vision of a transformed, non-racial, non-sexist, and democratic higher education system."

> Second, to address the challenges associated with the phenomenon of globalisation, in particular, the central role of knowledge and information processing in driving social and economic development. The higher education system must be transformed to enable it to produce graduates with the skills and competencies required for participation as citizens in a democratic society and as workers and professionals in the economy, as well as to contribute to the research and knowledge needs of South Africa. It must contribute to the development of a critical mass of intellectuals, especially black intellectuals, and researchers, and provide for the training of multi-skilled professionals, in particular, in science and technology. The role of higher education in contributing to developing our skills base is a central element in the Government's Human Resource Development Strategy, which as the President stated in the opening of Parliament "is the surest guarantee to sustainable employment and economic growth".

A mere two years later, globalisation's impact had assumed increasing prominence in higher education policy decisions. The Council on Higher Education's report entitled *South African Higher Education in the First Decade of Democracy* (CHE 2004:18) asserts the following:

> It has been eminently clear to policy-makers that an inability to compete globally will increasingly marginalise the South African economy, have profound effects on its rate of growth, and negative consequences for the social well-being and stability of South African society. For instance, the potential threats and opportunities on the "network society," as conceptualised in Manuel Castells, may imply from a South African perspective that the acquisition of knowledge and ready access to new knowledge and technology create global power relations to our disadvantage; those countries that can rapidly access knowledge and ICTs and adapt their demands ("the network") will dominate those countries that cannot. The knowledge capacities of higher education, properly supported by an enabling policy environment and inter-sectoral partnerships, can enable South Africa to stay on the competitive side of the digital divide.

This suggests that the need for multi-skilling and multi-tasking, which require workers to be technologically literate, adaptable, reliable, creative and quick learners will continue to grow, rendering the more traditional view of single qualification or skill, and a 'job for life' increasingly redundant. Furthermore, global citizenship facilitates the existence of a workforce that is free to ply its trade to the highest bidder. One of the most visible manifestations of this is the so called 'brain drain',

which is marked by the flight of well-qualified graduates, mainly from developing nations, to developed nations in pursuit of upward mobility in their careers and lives.

Increasingly, globalisation is being perceived as posing direct threats to the knowledge systems of developing countries who are unable to compete on equal terms and who are reliant on the developed nations for their technology and information needs. Indigenous knowledge systems in the developing nations are in danger of being 'swallowed up' in the drive for the massification of education (Moore 1994: 188 – 192, 194). In addition, the technological revolution and the relentless drive for profit are resulting in education offerings becoming a marketable commodity and this has led to a growing concern world-wide about the so-called "commodification" of education (cf. Par. 2.4.4). This has implications in terms of the quality and value of education offerings, the viability of indigenous knowledge systems, the role of academic institutions, and academic hegemony and autonomy, amongst others.

It is in this context of globalisation that distance education is assuming growing importance. This study investigated these global trends and their impact and influence in relation to higher education and especially distance education, globally and in South Africa.

1.1.2 The South African context

Education in South Africa has undergone a radical and fundamental change since the advent of democracy in 1994. Prior to 1994 education was fragmented along racial and language lines with deliberately imposed inferior standards of education being the norm for all disenfranchised South Africans. This disparity did not only apply to educational resources, but also to the number and calibre of educators, a legacy that endures to the present (DoE 2006: 6 - 9). These same inequalities were reflected in higher education, which was also split along demographic, language and cultural lines. Essentially, while education prior to 1994 purported to reflect and serve the cultural and linguistic diversity of South Africa, there were legislated divisions and distinctions aimed primarily at ensuring the survival of apartheid ideology Bantu education (Mnguni 1999:150, Barnes, Baijnath, Sattar 2010).

As the international community joined in the growing opposition to apartheid and wide-ranging sanctions became an everyday reality, higher education institutions found themselves having to operate in isolation, often against the state and without any support from, or interaction with, their global peers. Furthermore, given the levels of fragmentation and disparity, there was a significant lack of coherence and dialogue amongst higher education institutions within South Africa, which only served to increase their isolation. This inevitably led to stagnation and a lack of currency, especially with regard to such vital areas as research and international trends in higher education. Considering all of these factors, it could be asserted that by the time South Africa became a new democracy in 1994, higher education in South Africa was deeply divided and fragmented, isolated and to some extent, alienated from prevailing national and international higher educational trends. This was the situation inherited by the new government, and which would have to be addressed within a framework of similar disarray and redress needs, nation-wide.

The White Paper, *Education and Training in a Democratic South Africa: First Steps to Develop a New System* (RSA 1995) asserts the direction for education in the new democratic South Africa, as increasing access and retention of black students, achieving equity in public funding, eliminating illegal discrimination, creating democratic governance, rehabilitating schools and raising the quality of performance. This would be achieved by means of a new policy and regulatory framework that would give content to the ideals expressed in the Freedom Charter (Congress of the People 1955) and the Bill of Rights as reflected in Section 29 of the new Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (No. 108 of 1996) (RSA 1996), as amended, as well as an entirely new higher education structure that would reflect and address the realities of a new South Africa.

Accordingly, a flurry of higher education policy initiatives were launched and completed in the ensuing years. Key among these were the adoption of the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act No.101 of 1997) (RSA 1997), the establishment of the Council on Higher Education in May, 1998 (in terms of the Higher Education Act, 1997) (RSA 1997), National Quality Assurance initiatives such as the Higher Education Qualifications Committee, established in terms of the Higher Education Act 1997 (RSA 1997), which was formally launched in 2000, the incorporation of

colleges of teacher training into the higher education sector (DoE 1998), a new Language Policy Framework for South African Higher Education (CHE 2001), a new Funding Framework for Public Higher Education (MoE 2003a), requirements for a new National Qualifications Framework linked to outcomes based criteria (RSA 2008), and, important for the purposes of this study, the restructuring of the higher education landscape, commencing with the CHE Task Team "Size and Shape " exercise in 1999, which resulted in the Policy Report *Towards a New Higher Education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-first Century* (CHE 2000) and culminating in the NPHE in 2001 (MoE 2001).

Since then, the regulatory and policy framework for higher education has continued to be adjusted and amended as the restructuring of the higher education landscape has unfolded and as higher education seeks to establish its niche and address the needs of a society that is itself in an ongoing process of reconstruction and development.

The NPHE (MoE 2001) announced, among others, the intention to reduce the number of public higher education institutions from 36 to 23 by means of a number of mergers and incorporations. Included in this number were six new "comprehensive" institutions, a new institutional type created through the mergers of universities and technikons. (The programme mix of the newly formed comprehensive universities reflected their respective academic and vocational heritages.) The largest of these mergers entailed the merging of the former University of South Africa (Unisa), the largest distance education university in South Africa since 1946, with Technikon Southern Africa (TSA), similarly, the largest distance education technikon in South Africa, and the simultaneous incorporation of the Vista University Distance Education Campus (VUDEC). Because of its strong national and international brand, it was decided to retain the name the *University of South Africa* for the newly merged institution, and accordingly, the 'new' Unisa emerged as the only dedicated distance comprehensive education institution in South Africa, its increased size making it the largest on the continent and one of the world's mega universities.

1.1.3   The 'new' University of South Africa

The restructuring of the higher education landscape was a daring and quite radical exercise, for while there had certainly been numerous corporate mergers in South Africa, there had been none in the higher education sector, particularly those imposed externally. In an attempt to offer higher education institutions some assistance with the merging process, in April 2003 the Ministry of Education (MoE) provided higher education institutions with a set of guidelines entitled *Guidelines for Mergers and Incorporations,* which it stated "mapped out the generic tasks and processes the merging institutions would have to deal with" (MoE 2003d: 94). The guidelines were a support resource for higher education institutions and a tool for the Ministry, which it could use in assessing the progress of merger implementation.   The guidelines motivated the establishment of a Merger Unit within the Higher Education branch of the Department of Education and set out the Unit's responsibilities, which were aimed at managing the restructuring process and offering additional support to higher education institutions (MoE 2003).

As the merger process unfolded it became apparent that Unisa was evolving into an institution that could not simply be classified alongside other higher education institutions and subject to the same policy criteria. This is particularly true in regard to the key steering levers of planning (particularly enrolments), quality and funding. Besides the obvious increase in student numbers (the newly merged institution had a headcount of 206 187 in 2004 [Unisa 2008: 13]), the mode of delivery and administrative processes, Unisa's student profile and its role also began evolving within the context of the socio-economic transformation of the country, and in line with its vision to be "*the* African University in the service of humanity" (Unisa 2005: 6), necessitating adaptations and adjustments in all of its operations.

Sixteen years of democracy have seen much broader access to higher education in South Africa and to distance education in particular, and this has brought with it a wide variety of problems ranging from ever increasing student numbers, under-resourcing, systems and structure congestion and inefficiencies, capacity dilemmas, concerns regarding the appropriateness of course offerings in relation to market needs and continued poor throughput rates (Unisa 2008: 5-44). The merger implementation

at Unisa was guided by a comprehensive strategic plan entitled *2015 Strategic Plan: An agenda for transformation* (Unisa 2005), which was reviewed in 2009, in line with the institution's growth and development. The resultant reworked strategy is entitled *Unisa 2015: Revisited* (Unisa 2010). The institutional strategy is supplemented by an Institutional Operational Plan (IOP), which currently spans a three-year rolling planning framework and sets out the objectives that the institution must accomplish each year in pursuit of its strategy. This is supported by sound financial management, which has ensured that Unisa remains financially stable and viable, as evidenced by operating surpluses reported in Unisa's post merger Annual Reports (Unisa 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010).

From the inception of the higher education restructuring process there were some tensions between the Department of Education (DoE) and higher education institutions with regard to policy and the implementation thereof. It is common cause that the higher education fraternity did not fully support the NPHE and that the precursor report drafted by the National Working Group (NWG) entitled *The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa: Report of the National Working Group to the Minister of Education* (also known as the "Macozoma Report") (MoE 2002a) was received with muted enthusiasm, concerns and some criticism. In his response to the expressed concerns, then Minister of Education, Kader Asmal (MoE 2002a: 7 -11) notes the following in the report:

> It is also important to clarify, at the outset, two concerns raised by the higher education sector in response to the NWG report. First, that the NWG has focused too narrowly on mergers rather than considering the full spectrum of potential institutional arrangements, in particular, programme collaboration and rationalisation…Second that the NWG's consultative process was inadequate…[also] the Ministry has noted the criticisms levelled against the NWG report in relation to the accuracy of the institutional data used, as well as the utility and limitations of the performance indicators and benchmarks. The Ministry does not agree with these criticisms.

Nevertheless, the forged ahead and set the process in motion. Given the urgency, necessity and the political imperative to implement change in higher education, it is perhaps understandable that government might increasingly drive or 'steer' policy so as to achieve its political goals and its social responsibility, especially in the face of ongoing resistance and objection. However, such steering does offer evidence of a tendency to deviate from the process of consultation, inclusivity and transparency that

had marked the formulation of new legislation and policy in the period just before democracy and for a while thereafter; a process that had become a hallmark, or new tradition of 'the South African way of doing things.' De Satgé (2009:6) states the following:

> In South Africa the Constitution guarantees citizen's rights to participate in policy and decision making which impacts on their lives. Participation in the policy and governance process are cornerstones of South African democracy.

Given the current state imperative to grow and develop the skills that will be needed to meet for example, targeted infrastructure development projects over the next ten years, and the increasing prominence of the notion of South Africa as a developmental state, higher education, and distance education in particular, will have to re-affirm its role as educator in alignment with its responsibility as a state partner in development, or it stands a chance of compromising its fundamental role as set out in the Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997 (RSA 1997: *s* 13), namely:

- To meet the learning needs and aspirations of individuals through the development of their intellectual abilities and aptitudes throughout their lives
- To address the development needs of society and provide the labour market in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society, with the ever-changing high-level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern economy
- To contribute to the socialisation of enlightened, responsible and constructively critical citizens
- To contribute to the creation, sharing and evaluation of knowledge

In the case of Unisa, engagement with the MoE, reflected in the HEMIS circulars 1, 2 and 3 (MoE 2002b, 2003b, 2003c) has centred on challenges around the definition of an "active student" (in South Africa, state funding for students relies on proof, by a specified date, of a student's academic activity, hence the term "active student"), as well as enrolments targets and ratios and perceived inequalities in funding. Policy decisions in this regard impact directly on the institution not only in terms of finance, but also in terms of the efficiency and quality of its operations and offerings, student numbers, course viability, staffing and even the continued existence of certain departments. Furthermore, Unisa is currently the institution of choice for many young post-matric unemployed students who regard their Unisa studies as full-time and who need a significant amount of learner support (Unisa 2010: 15). This, together with a

new National Senior Certificate (NSC) that provides for greater ease of access to tertiary study, implies rapidly increasing enrolment rates, which has in fact been the case during the last five years. For example, by the end of 2009 provisional formal headcount enrolments had risen to 297 744 and it was estimated that this number would increase to 308 892 by the end of 2010 (Unisa 2010). This has caused a tension in regard to controlling student admissions in relation to funding allocations in such a manner as to redress past imbalances, grow research and research outputs, and improve significantly retention, success and throughput rates. All of this needs to be done within the framework of negotiated DoHE&T enrolment targets for the institution.

Given Unisa's capacity, resources and reach, it is understandable that its role on the continent and internationally should be gaining prominence. Increasingly Unisa is being seen by government and by other higher education providers on the continent as an institution whose resources and reach could and should be used to a far greater degree in the service of social upliftment and development (Unisa 2005: 2). Clearly this resonates with Unisa's stated vision to be *the* African university in the service of humanity (Unisa 2005: 6) but problems around policy requirements and regulatory constraints continue to affect and constrain the effectiveness of Unisa as the largest single dedicated distance education provider in South and southern Africa and on the continent. These impediments will need to be resolved in order for Unisa to achieve its full potential and promise.

Within the framework of the above discussion, this study interrogated these dynamics and their impact on the provision of effective distance education delivery in South Africa. The term "distance education" is now generally regarded as being too restrictive, even outmoded, stressing as it does the distance between the teacher and the learner. 'Open and Distance Learning' (ODL) on the other hand, captures the evolutionary changes to distance education provision wrought by increased access and openness to students of all ages and walks of life, and by technology and its concomitant systems, and is increasingly the preferred term. In this study the term 'Open and Distance Learning' has been clarified and used in reference to Unisa's mode of delivery, post merger.

1.2   THE NEED FOR RESEARCH

In 1994 the new democratic South African government was faced with the task of building a completely new society based on democratic principles that were alien to a majority of those citizens who had practised and implemented apartheid policy for more than forty years. Yet, in the higher education domain, it continued to be these very people (in the main) who would have to implement the new policy.

This paradox is acknowledged by scholars such as McLaughlin (1987) and Giacquinta (1994) who have written extensively on why policies fail to be implemented as planned, particularly at institutional level. Besides the various "actors" (Badat 2006: 92-93) and factors in the policy formulation and implementation process that impede successful implementation, unsuccessful policy implementation can also be ascribed to a failure to ensure restructuring, with its focus on "changing the use of time, space, roles and relationships to improve learning" (Fink and Stoll 1998:308) and 'reculturing', which focuses on "the process of developing new values, beliefs and norms" (Fullan 1996:420). Where proposed new structures, cultures and ethos' demand efficiencies that are lacking in targeted institutions, transformation is impeded. Put simply, where an institution's infrastructure and systems are inefficient and insufficient, restructuring will be constrained, and restructuring without the concomitant reculturing (that is, achieving a mindset that is not only amenable to, but is also enthusiastic about and embraces change), will further militate against transformation.

If one locates this understanding within the broader context of comprehensive national reconstruction and development and dynamic global change, then the gravity of the challenges faced by the higher education sector in South Africa becomes apparent, as do the serious systemic and psychological challenges that must be overcome on a variety of levels, to ensure successful and enduring transformation. Where policy places additional constraints on an institution in transformation, then every effort needs to be made to identify such constraints and offer possible solutions. It is in this context that this research could be justified.

This research is aimed at providing some insights into the challenges facing South African higher distance education as it grapples with current realities in higher

education globally and in South Africa, and with policy implementation and higher education institution management in an environment of transformation.

Furthermore, at a time when Unisa enrols more than one-third of all higher education students in South Africa, it seems anomalous that there continues to be no distance education policy to provide for the particular needs of distance education provision in South Africa. Pityana (2009) asserts:

> In 2003, recognising that the absence of an ODL Policy Framework was affecting ODL operations in South Africa, then Minister of Education Prof Kader Asmal sought advice from the CHE the report of whose investigation was presented to him before he left office in 2004. His successor Minister Naledi Pandor, however, did not act on this matter until 2008 when she requested the CHE to prepare an ODL Policy. That exercise has not yet been completed. This is unfortunate for ODL in South Africa. It means that regulations meant to apply to higher education in general are being applied to ODL programmes at Unisa. There is inadequate appreciation of the demands of 5th generation ODL practice: appropriate resources, learner support, admission criteria, assessment and flexible learning.

Given the continued lack of a South African distance education policy, this study aimed to make a contribution to the higher education policy debate by providing a comprehensive contextualisation of the higher education environment in relation to existing policy, offering an exposition of the policy impediments in relation to distance education, and possibly, identifying gaps that continue to impede effective distance education delivery.

The scope of this study has been limited mainly to post democracy South Africa, that is, from 1994 to the present, but it is sufficiently broad as to provide additional insights into distance education and its role nationally, continentally and globally.

1.3   PROBLEM STATEMENT

Against the background of transformation in higher education practice and policy in South Africa, this study poses the following research question within the context of distance education provision in South Africa: *What is the role of higher education policy in relation to the provision of distance education in South Africa?* As the only designated distance education provider in South Africa, Unisa has been used to

demonstrate the role of higher education policy on the provision of distance education.

In seeking to answer the above research problem, the following sub-questions were investigated:

➢ What are the more recent policy developments and trends in higher education globally, and how do they affect distance education as portrayed in the literature? (Chapter 2)

➢ How has higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa impacted on distance education provision in South Africa as portrayed in the literature? (Chapter 3)

➢ How does the academic and administrative cohort of top and extended management at Unisa perceive and experience the implementation of higher education policy in relation to distance education provision as determined through an empirical enquiry using a survey and interviews? (Chapters 4 and 5)

➢ Based on the findings of the literature review and empirical enquiry, what observations and recommendations can be made for the improved practice of distance education in South Africa? (Chapter 6)

1.4   AIMS OF THE STUDY

This study aimed to address the role of higher education policy in relation to the provision of distance education in South Africa with special reference to Unisa, as stated in 1.3 above.   In answering the above mentioned questions, this study aims to:

➢ explore the background and complexities of recent policy development and trends in higher education globally, and in relation to distance education;

➢ discuss the main challenges facing distance education as posed by policy development and implementation in South Africa since 1994, as part of the global higher education community and in an ever changing socio-economic

and political dynamic, and interrogate the feasibility of a distance education policy to address the identified problems;

➢ determine by means of a mixed research design comprising a survey and interviews with selected expert informants from Unisa, current perceptions, attitudes and experiences of higher education policy in relation to distance education provision; and

➢ in light of the findings of the foregoing research, make recommendations that could contribute to the improved practice of distance education in South Africa.

1.5 METHODOLOGY

The study made use of a literature survey and mixed method empirical research design.

1.5.1 Clarification of terms

The definitions and nomenclature of distance education delivery have changed over the past decades to reflect changing global dynamics and trends and the growing reliance on technology in its delivery and support of its students.

In this study 'distance education' is used in the context of the definition provided by Keegan (1995:5) who asserts that distance education and training result from the technological separation of teacher and learner, which frees the student from the necessity of travelling to a "fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a person in order to be trained." This supports the traditional generic notion of distance education, and is often, but not specifically, linked to the older 'correspondence' mode of delivery.

The term 'Open Distance Learning' (ODL) is used in the context of the definition provided by the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL) (2000: 1):

> A way of providing learning opportunities that is characterized by the separation of teacher and learner in time or place, or both time and place; learning that is certified in some way by an institution or agency; the use of a variety of media including print and electronic; two-way communications that allow learners and tutors to interact; the possibility of occasional face-to-face meetings; and a specialized division of labour in the production and delivery of courses.

The University of South Africa has adopted ODL as its business model, or mode of distance education delivery.

The two definitions provide evidence of the historical progression of distance education provision. Thus, in this thesis the two terms are closely interrelated, but not synonymous, and they have been used according to the context of the discussion.

1.5.2 The literature review

A regular literature review offers an informed assessment of the existing research on the topic under study. It is a critical synthesis of existing research that demonstrates that the researcher has read extensively and intensively on the subject. The goal of a literature review is to identify limitations in existing research on a subject in order to justify the proposed research (Vithal and Jansen 2001: 16).

A literature search was conducted of relevant literary sources, legislation and policy, reports, research reports and articles, journal and press articles, Internet sources and other relevant information on issues relating to higher education policy and transformation globally and in South Africa, as well as the role and function of distance education globally and in South Africa. Literary sources and articles relating to socio-economic development issues in South Africa and on the continent were also interrogated as these not only highlight additional challenges facing higher education and distance education provision, but they also provide the framework within which such challenges are occurring, particularly in terms of socio-economic, technological and communication dynamics, locally and globally.

1.5.2.1 Statistical data in the literature review

The statistics used in this study were largely derived from existing statistics concerning higher education globally, in South Africa and particularly Unisa, and were used mainly for the purposes of comparison, for identifying or emphasising trends or discrepancies, for establishing benchmarks, for information purposes or purely for ease of reference. In most cases, comparisons drawn in statistical data related to inequalities in higher education provision between the developed and developing worlds and to the *status quo* of higher education in South Africa. These comparisons facilitated an understanding of the impact and efficacy of the higher

education policies, particularly with regard to aspects such as funding, enrolment targets, and access and throughput rates.

In sourcing statistical data for this study, information sources such as the United Nations Educational and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the CHE, DoE, MoE, the South African Government, Statistics South Africa, South African universities, Unisa, the United Nations (UN), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) and the African Union (AU) amongst others, were consulted. The statistical information and findings were integrated into this study at various points, where relevant and appropriate.

1.5.3 Empirical enquiry using a mixed method research design

To explore the research questions, Unisa, as the only designated distance education provider in South Africa, was used as the site of enquiry for the empirical study, with the aim of demonstrating the role of higher education policy on the provision of distance education in South Africa. To achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the research problem and outcomes, the literature survey was supplemented by a combined, or mixed method research design incorporating the use of questionnaires (Phase 1) and interviews (Phase 2) with core stakeholders at Unisa (as the selected institution of enquiry) to solicit their views, perceptions and opinions. The aim in adopting this methodology was threefold: to emphasise the convergence of results; to highlight contradictions and unearth fresh perspectives on the issues at hand; and to apply the findings to the higher education domain.

There are several types of mixed method research. Gall, Gall and Borg (2010: 464-470) list these as follows:

- Sequential-explanatory research design
- Sequential-transformative research design
- Concurrent-triangulation research design

In this study a concurrent-triangulation mixed method research design is used. This is defined as:

a design that involves collecting qualitative and quantitative data at approximately the same time and then determining whether the findings by analysis of each type of data corroborate the other (Gall, Gall and Borg 2010: 469)

This design approach finds legitimacy in motivations that have been advanced by a number of authors for a combined research design. Creswell (1994:175) lists these as:

- triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results;

- complementary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge (e.g., peeling the layers of an onion);

- developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method;

- initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge; and

- expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study.

1.5.3.1 The survey

The purpose of Phase 1 was to determine by means of a survey, the views and perceptions of all middle and executive management staff (both administrative and academic) at Unisa, on the impact of higher education policy on distance education provision, with particular reference to the three core policy steering mechanisms, namely, planning, funding and quality.

a) Selection of respondents

A non-random comprehensive sampling strategy was used to select respondents for the survey. In other words, the entire target population (employees at middle to executive management) were targeted to participate in the survey. A comprehensive sample aimed to ensure the best possible representation of views. Thus, 136 staff members were invited to participate in the study.

b) Data collection: The questionnaire

An anonymous questionnaire comprising five sections (sections 1,2,3,4 and 5) was designed and piloted. Sections 1, 2 and 3 comprised 101 variables using a Likert Scale. Section 4 dealt with biographical data and section 5 provided for

further comments. The aim of the survey was to quantify, through the collection of numerical data, the variation, causal relationships, characteristics and perceptions of a specific population. The questionnaire was in an electronic format and was distributed (via a dedicated survey link) by email, to the respondents. Ninety fully completed responses were received; thus, a response rate of 66% was achieved.

c) Data analysis

Phase 1, namely the survey responses, were analysed by a statistician, by means of the SAS software package. The 101 variables under each of the three constructs of planning, funding and quality were ranked in order of the mean score levels of disagreement or agreement that they displayed. Further data analyses included pertinent one-way frequency distributions on the response data and biographical attributes, scale reliability testing on rating values of subsets of questionnaire items to verify internal consistency reliability, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicating significant levels of biographical attributes identified as influential, and Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of means tests on perception construct category-mean scores for constructs where the effect of biographical attribute/s were indicated as having a statistically significant effect on the particular construct (in the analysis of variance).

All analyses were finally presented in table and figure format alongside the narrative interpretation for each corresponding research construct.

d) Measures taken to ensure reliability and validity of data

In ensuring the reliability and validity of data, the possibility of non response was controlled by contacting all respondents telephonically (personally) prior to them receiving the survey and requesting that they participate in the survey, sending out the survey three times and following up with respondents via email. Other strategies used to maximise the response rate (and thus the reliability) included ensuring the accuracy of the contact data of the respondents, constructing a user-friendly survey questionnaire format and having a sound understanding of the survey population.

A pilot survey was also conducted to ensure the best possible question formulation in relation to the survey sample (and concomitantly the reliability and validity of the survey sample). Appropriate changes were subsequently effected to the survey questionnaire.

Reliability means that a scale should consistently reflect the construct that it is measuring. In this study, three constructs were included, namely planning, funding and quality. To test whether the research results were consistent, a Cronbach Alpha (α) measure of scale reliability test was conducted, and scale reliability testing was conducted on rating values of subsets of questionnaire items to verify internal consistency reliability.

1.5.3.2 The research interviews

The qualitative component of this mixed method design, Phase 2, allowed for a deep and rich exploration of higher education policy developments post 1994 (more particularly policy relating to planning, funding and quality in higher education), and took the form of in-depth, face-to-face interviews with identified participants.

a) Selection of elite informants

Thirteen elite informants, or interviewees, were selected on the basis of their sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of distance education/ODL and the various facets of policy and its implementation across the range of institutional operations. Eleven identified members of top and executive management at Unisa were selected including the Vice-Chancellor, the pro Vice-Chancellor, five vice-principals, the Registrar and deputy Registrar and two executive directors. All have played a pivotal role in steering the institution through the merger process, and in drafting and implementing the strategy, planning and quality processes at Unisa in alignment with national policy imperatives. Two members of the Unisa Council who are accomplished higher education and/or ODL practitioners in their own rights were also selected. All thirteen identified informants agreed to be interviewed and the interviews were subsequently conducted over a two-week period.

b) Data gathering: The interviews

Use was made of in-depth face-to-face interviews, which were aimed at engendering in the interviewees an articulation of their lived experience and knowledge of higher education policy, implementation and management from their various perspectives. The interviews offered the opportunity to collect data in a standardised manner, using a standard interview protocol and with minimal interference from the interviewer.

After ethical clearance had been given by Unisa, and permission granted by the Vice-Chancellor to approach the identified expert informants, the expert informants were requested personally and by email to participate in an hour-long interview that would be conducted face-to-face, using a standard interview protocol which was sent to them in advance. The protocol contained the appropriate ethical assurances and provided a rationale for the research. It explained that the interview questions had been derived from the themes that emerged from the survey questionnaire on the three steering constructs of planning, funding and quality. The individual interview questions were set out under the three steering constructs. There was a total of twelve questions. However I also posed further probing or clarifying questions and encouraged the interviewees to speak freely or enlarge on the questions posed as they saw fit.

Appointments were made and individual interviews were held with the participants in their natural setting, that is, in their offices, and in the case of the Council members, the interviewer's office. The interviews were recorded using a voice recording device and hand written notes were taken during the interview process. Some interviewees consented to using *Dragon* voice recognition software, allowing the raw data to be translated immediately into text. This facilitated the transcription process.

c) Data analysis

I transcribed all recordings, and the data were analysed by means of content analysis. Neuman (2000:34-35) asserts that content analysis is a technique that can be used to examine information, or content, in written or symbolic

material (e.g. pictures, movies and song lyrics). Content analysis entails the identification of a body of material for analysis and the creation of a system for the recording of specific aspects thereof. Such a system might include recording the occurrence of certain words or themes, as well as the material itself. Mouton (2001:166) states that a particular strength of content analysis is that the analysis of texts and documents is non-reactive, which means that errors associated with the interaction between researchers and subjects are avoided.

In analysing the data from the interviews a coding methodology was used that entailed firstly transcribing the interviews, then conducting a textual analysis to identify numerous codes, clustering these into code 'families', identifying several emergent themes from the code families, linking the identified themes to the literature study while locating them within the theoretical framework of the study, making findings and finally, offering recommendations.

d) Measures taken to ensure credibility of data

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 20) propose four criteria that are considered appropriate for qualitative studies, and that should establish the trustworthiness of the research, namely: c*redibility, transferability, dependability and conformity*.

Credibility refers to the fact that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. This study was located within the policy framework of the higher education environment and it aimed to identify problems and challenges and make recommendations in relation to the difficulties being experienced by Unisa in a policy environment that is becoming more tightly steered and that is designed for contact institutions. In establishing credibility the parameters were defined in the research questions of this study and in the selection of the respondents and participants.

The credibility of qualitative research is problematic in that both the interviewer and the interviewees operate within a framework of subjectivity. The most significant danger in this regard is the bias of the interviewer and the

participant, and the content of the questions. These biases relate to personal attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer and interviewee; the interviewer seeking answers to support his/her preconceived ideas; misinterpretation and misconceptions about what the interview participant is saying; and misunderstanding of the questions by the interviewee. Aspects such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, status and social class and age could contribute to bias. (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2002: 121). To this end, in approaching the interviews, every effort was made to ensure that the interviews were properly structured. An interview protocol was prepared (and sent in advance) of the interviews to ensure familiarity with the interview protocols and eliminate as far as possible, the interviewer biases mentioned above.

As regards the content of the interview questions, the pilot study conducted prior to the survey in Phase 1 ensured a satisfactory measure of reliability and validity for Phase 1. This provided a sound foundation for the credibility of the interview questions which were derived from the emergent themes of the survey. It could therefore be asserted that the interview questions had a reliable basis and that this informed their content and thus ensured credibility.

1.5.3.3 Presentation of the findings from Phase 1 and Phase 2

The data from the survey (phase 1) and interviews (phase 2) were presented in tabular or graphical representations and in narrative form respectively. The findings of the literature review were drawn into the presentation of findings to support, compare or highlight pertinent points or relevant issues and to ground, or locate the study in a theoretical framework. The discussion concluded with an evaluation of the most relevant findings against the research questions, after which recommendations were made.

1.6   CHAPTER OUTLINE

This chapter provides a background to the study. The study was located within the global and national higher education environment, and more specifically the environment of Unisa, the only dedicated distance higher education institution in

South Africa. The need for the study was explained in terms of its relevance, contribution and results, not only in regard to the higher education body of knowledge, but also in regard to the broader higher education policy debate. The problem statement was articulated, and questions and aims of the investigation relating to the statement were stated. The research design was discussed and motivated by way of an explanation of the methodologies employed to achieve the aims of the study.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of policy development and trends of higher education policy worldwide, with specific reference to distance education. This was done by means of a comprehensive literature review which supported and developed the theoretical framework of the study. The theoretical underpinnings and policy precepts were examined and interrogated, as were policy formulation and its application in the higher education environment. Global trends were identified and these were discussed in relation to their impact on higher education globally, on the African Continent and in South Africa.

Distance education in South Africa, as represented by Unisa, is facing challenges that are peculiar and quite distinct within the context of the current policy framework and the broader national socio-economic transformation framework. By means of a thorough investigation and analysis of the higher education policy, regulatory and legislation framework, as well as other pertinent documentation and records, Chapter 3 identified, investigated and analysed these challenges and the implications that they have for distance education in relation to a distance education policy as a means of addressing the problems identified. The investigation also interrogated higher education policy initiatives that are contributing to the quality and efficacy of distance education programmes and provision.

Chapter 4 set out the research design of the empirical investigation, detailing the type of design, the sampling method and procedure, data collection, interviews and interviewing process, data analysis and interpretation, reliability and validity and ethical considerations.

Chapter 5 set out the process and analyses of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the mixed method research design respectively. Phase 1 provided the rationale for the various analytical tests that were conducted, as well as the analyses of the findings. Phase 2 set out the process of the textual coding, of the interviews, the emergent themes and the analyses thereof. The chapter concluded with integrated findings that incorporated both Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the research design.

Finally, Chapter 6 provided an overview of the pertinent points of the study, reflected on the perceived success of the findings in relation to the research questions, and offered suggestions for the improved delivery and practice of ODL in South Africa.

1.7   CONCLUSION

By its very nature, policy is a complex and thorny issue no matter what the field of its application. When it comes to higher education, policy making and implementation have an impact on, and ramifications for, society-at-large. Unisa is not only the only dedicated comprehensive distance education provider in South Africa, but it is also the biggest education provider, nationally and continentally. More than one-third of all South African students are Unisa students, and accordingly, policy which hampers throughput in distance education provision will similarly hamper throughput in higher education provision in South Africa. It is therefore imperative that policy concerns, be they real or perceived, should be identified, interrogated and analysed with the aim of finding sensible and workable solutions that will ultimately contribute to quality, efficient and effective higher education provision in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

2. THE GLOBAL CONTEXT OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Globally, higher education is undergoing ongoing and significant transformation and the impact is being felt around the world as rapidly evolving technology propels us into a higher education environment whose boundaries are increasingly porous and whose offerings are progressively being driven by the imperative of profit, and informed and crafted by the power of dominant, and some even assert, hegemonic policies. This transformation is being fuelled by a host of political, technological and socio-economic factors, some of which will be interrogated below.

In education, change is facilitated, managed, driven and steered by policy, which in turn is informed amongst others, by philosophies and theories, for example, of developmental psychology and human development, especially where these exert an influence across the entire social spectrum. It is therefore important for the purposes of this study, to understand the complexity of theory and policy, their interrelatedness, and their influence and impact on higher education and education research.

In this chapter I shall provide a brief introduction to education theory and discuss its role and impact on the formulation of policy. I will provide a synopsis of the most predominant education philosophies and theories in recent time. Given its current dominance in Western higher education models and practice, neoliberalism will be interrogated in greater depth to ascertain its role and influence in higher education today. This will be followed by a discussion of policy formulation and implementation. Thereafter I will examine global trends in higher education and their influence on distance education. In conclusion I will summarise the findings of the chapter and indicate their alignment with higher education in South Africa, and more especially distance education.

2.2. THEORIES AND EDUCATION

2.2.1 Theory and influence

There appears to be little consensus amongst educationists about the meaning and value of theory. This is problematic given the emphasis placed on theoretical literacy for the scholar, academic and researcher, because it posits a view that exhorts an acknowledgment of the validity and essential role of education theory in educational enquiry even as it cautions us to be selective and discriminating in our selection and application thereof. Ball (1995:268) for example, warns against "theory by numbers" and firmly rejects the notion that "any theory will do".

In his paper, *What's the Use of Theory?* Thomas (1997:75) questions the allure of theory in education and the central place that it holds in educational enquiry. Thomas argues that theory circumscribes methods of thinking about educational problems and inhibits creativity among researchers, policy-makers, and teachers. He (1997:76) further argues that educational theory has drawn epistemological legitimacy from the success of theory in other fields and that in the minds of educationists:

> Theory represented the clearest distillation if intellectual endeavour, the conceptual and epistemological cream of the various disciplines from which it had been borrowed.

There can be no doubt that the nexus of theoretical knowledge holds a great deal of intellectual allure and fascination for educationists. While Ball (1995: 269) asserts that the role of theory should be to liberate us from the "discourses, dispositifs and epistemes from which we wish to escape," Thomas (1997:88) states that the problem with theory, particularly theory as the word used in education, is that it accretes procedures and "correct" methodologies. It pays too much attention to that which is established. In saying this Thomas is insinuating that we cull insights or propositions from those theories which already exist, add further insights of our own, and then 'superimpose' them as merely another layer of the existing theory. In so doing theory becomes a wheel-within-a-wheel, a cycle of accretion that gives rise to little that is genuinely new. In this view theory actually inhibits the production of new and original thought.

The widely divergent and conflicting views on the precise nature of theory serve to underscore the fragmented genesis of, and contributions to education theory. Cause for concern is that where a theory begins to achieve canonical status and where its originator begins to achieve a concomitant iconic status, the influence it wields increases exponentially. Such a theory then becomes a dominant view of knowledge, and it can become revered and followed dogmatically, irrespective of its genuine merit and its currency, sometimes with deleterious and far-reaching consequences. Acknowledging this danger, Thomas (1997:89) asserts:

> We should be concerned about the methods and consequences of theory since those consequences are in the real world of classrooms and the real lives of teachers and children. Theories are not simply playthings of bored academics.

The example Thomas uses is that of Piaget's influential theory of early childhood development, which continues to enjoy a large following despite it having been proven to be flawed and outmoded. Thomas asserts that the theory has influenced two generations of early childhood educators, and that even after the questioning of the last 25 years, it is still revered (1997: 92). Criticisms around Piaget's cognitive theory generally relate to the fact that he mainly used his own children as his observation subjects and that his theory did not take into account the vastly differing social environments and influences that children are subjected to and which have a direct bearing on their development and behaviour, and consequently, the research findings. There is also a widely held belief and evidence, that children in fact achieve the Piagetian developmental milestones a lot sooner than Piaget asserted. Accordingly, it is argued that Piaget's findings are not representative of children in general, thus rendering his theory problematic, particularly in terms of its application in education.

One could apply a similar argument to the canonical theory of Freud, which is still hugely influential and discernible in everyday language and reasoning, despite the fact that it has also been shown to be flawed. Thornton (2006: 6) notes:

> The supporters and followers of Freud (and Jung and Adler) are noted for the zeal and enthusiasm with which they espouse the doctrines of the master, to the point where many of the detractors of the movement see it as a kind of secular religion, requiring as it does an initiation process in which the aspiring psychoanalyst must himself first be analysed. In this way, it is often alleged, the unquestioning acceptance of a set of ideological principles becomes a necessary precondition for

acceptance into the movement - as with most religious groupings. In reply, the exponents and supporters of psychoanalysis frequently analyse the motivations of their critics in terms of the very theory which those critics reject. And so the debate goes on.

More specifically, criticisms around Freud's theory range from it being unscientific and not offering causal explanations (it tends to work from behaviour to unobservable causes, which cannot be identified other than through the behaviour), to the efficacy of psychoanalysis as a means of treatment.

To a large extent, theories articulate incipient and current thinking around various aspects of societal dynamics and development in any given period of time. In this way they at once herald change and they also act as catalysts for change. However, given the constant nature of change, it stands to reason that in time any theory must become partially or even largely redundant, and as such its relevance in a changed society must be questioned and its value and application subjected to rigorous and critical scrutiny.

In line with the phenomenon of accretion mentioned above, an even more insidious problem arises when flawed theories inform and influence the creation of new theories, as underscored by Thomas (1997:93) in his view that Habermas's "vast intellectual infrastructure" rests on very shaky foundations as a consequence of his reliance on Piaget's and Freud's flawed theories. This being the case, then it must at the very least call into question an uncritical acceptance of the relevance of theory and the prominence and pre-eminence it enjoys as a tool for education and engagement and transformation.

Feyerabend (1993: 30) sums it up when he states that theory has achieved its influence through the transformation of ideas into "obstacles" to thought.

> The theory becomes acceptable as a topic for discussion; it is presented at meetings and large conferences….[it] enters the public domain. There are introductory texts, popularisations; examination questions start dealing with problems to be solved in its terms. Scientists and philosophers, trying to show off, drop a hint here and there, and this often quite uniform desire to be on the right side is taken as a further sign of the importance of the theory…..[But] problematic aspects which were originally introduced with the help of carefully constructed arguments now become basic principles; doubtful points into slogans; debates with opponents become standardized [and] only serve as a background for the splendour of the new theory.

Despite the fact that educational theory is a disputed and contentious domain and fraught with acknowledged weaknesses, it nevertheless occupies a central place in academic endeavour, engagement and research and as such it wields a powerful influence on higher education. This highlights the challenges faced by African countries and South Africa in particular, as they increasingly turn to and engage with the growing imperative for the creation or revitalisation of uniquely African epistemologies that are informed by indigenous knowledge systems, in pursuit of an African expression and practice of quality education that is as globally acknowledged, as it is relevant to Africans. This trend will be dealt with in greater detail below.

2.2.2   Influential education epistemologies and movements

Education epistemologies represent dominant views of knowledge. The most influential of these in our time include: empiricism, positivism, functionalism and structural functionalism and behaviourism; hermeneutics, interpretivism phenomenology, constructivism; critical theory, Marxism, neomarxism, reproduction theories, resistance theories, progressivism; identity politics, race-class-gender, queer theory; postmodernism, poststructuralism, deconstruction, postcolonialism; neoliberalism, new managerialism, the state markets and performativity; and globalisation, transnationalism, knowledge economy and third way society. Most theories form part of larger knowledge traditions, or movements (cf. **Table 2.1** in Par.2.2.2.6).

Five of the most significant knowledge traditions to have emerged from the aforementioned, are positivism, interpretivism, critical theory, postmodernism, and neoliberalism. Each of these traditions has exerted an influence, not only on educational policy and practices, but also on the attitudes, perceptions and behaviours of their time. This section will provide a brief explanation of these theories. Given its current dominance, neoliberalism and its role and influence in higher education today, will be examined in greater depth (cf. Par. 2.2.2.5).

2.2.2.1 Positivism

Positivism has its origins in Auguste Compte's attempts to apply the same scientific approaches to society as those which have been applied to the natural world, the ultimate aim being to arrive at a comprehensive understanding of both the natural and social orders (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2002:8).

Positivism is of the view that all true knowledge is scientific, that all things are ultimately measurable and that entities of one kind are reducible to entities of another. It also contends that processes are reducible to physiological, physical or chemical events, and that social processes are reducible to relationships between and actions of individuals, or that "biological organisms are reducible to physical systems" (Bullock and Trombley 1999: 669 –737).

Hacking (1981:1-21) suggests that this view asserts the existence of a real world, whether it is observable or not, and a correct way of describing that world. Through a process of accretion and accumulation, science improves on existing knowledge and scientific interrogation is held to be superior to commonsense knowledge. Positivism makes a distinction between observation and theory, in terms of which observation allows for the collection of facts without being affected by the belief systems of the observer. Interpretation and theory flow from, and are subordinate to, observation.

Positivism also has a particular view on conducting research, in terms of which the hypothesis should be tested prior to the data collection phase. This involves an experimental process that entails a comparison of two similar settings, with an intervention being introduced into one of the settings. The variables are measured before and after the experiment and where the variables have been appropriately controlled, any consequent difference in the scores indicates the efficacy of the intervention, be it positive or negative (Hacking 1981:1-21).

Under positivism words have fixed meanings, concepts can be defined unambiguously and a distinction is drawn between the way in which 'truths' are arrived at and how they are justified (through differing criteria). Usher (1996:26) states that a positivist science of education activities would be of the view that:

> ..observation is theory-neutral and a-theoretical; experience is given; a
> univocal and transparent language is possible; data are independent of

these interpretations; there are universal conditions of knowledge and criteria for deciding between theories.

The idea that facts can be collected about the world, free of the value assumptions and belief systems of the collector is important in that it allows for an objective and rational measurement and assessment of data that is deliberately neutral. In this view a statement made by a researcher is true when it has a one-to-one correspondence with the reality that exists beyond the human mind (Scott 2000:51).

It could be deduced that in its insistence on neutrality and objectivity, and the subordination of theory for objectivity, the positivist approach somewhat paradoxically excludes much of the nuance that informs and gives meaning to the world which it seeks to quantify. This deduction is supported by Weber (1949 :72 - 81) who argues [that]

> There is no absolutely 'objective' scientific analysis of culture . . . [because] . . . all knowledge of cultural reality . . . is always knowledge from particular points of view.

Furthermore, in arriving at an objective reality, the researcher has to adopt one or the other theory about the instrument to be measured or researched, perhaps even about the process itself (a scientific methodology) and this renders the approach problematic. This is supported by Gouldner (1971) who asserts that all sociologists commit themselves and are directed by a particular set of domain assumptions. This implies that logically, positivism cannot be "theory- neutral and a-theoretical" (Usher 1996:26).

This criticism find's resonance in Wittgenstein's (1974:149) famous comment that "when all possible scientific questions have been addressed they have left untouched the main problems of life." It could also be posited that the difficult and complex processes that need to be embarked on to ensure neutrality, speak to a weakness in the theory in that it implies a deliberate exclusion of 'non-neutral' information and variables, and these cannot be deemed to be invalid purely on the grounds of their supposed subjectivity, particularly since such information could imbue the research with a richness that could impact on the reader's judgement of the findings.

The positivist theory of knowledge is a social construct, and it could therefore be argued that it is ephemeral in nature, a transient reality and hardly a foolproof means

of deriving an immutable reality or truth. In this view the fundamental premise of the research could be called into question.

2.2.2.2 Interpretivism

Interpretivism is located at the core of the great quantitative/qualitative (or positivism/interpretivism) debate and deals with the fundamental importance and impact of the use of numbers *versus* words as the most appropriate means of conducting research. The main point is not so much the choice of research methodology, but the implications that such choice will have in regard to the version of reality that each presents to the reader. Weber (2004: viii) asserts:

> Interpretivists subscribe to a notion of truth whereby a researcher's initial interpretation of some phenomenon conforms to the meaning given to the phenomenon through the researcher's lived experience of it.

Interpretivists believe that the reality and the individual who observes it are inseparable, and that our perceptions of the world are fundamentally influenced by our life experiences. Husserl (1970: 1936) refers to this as our "life-world," which has both subjective and objective characteristics. The subjective characteristics reflect our perceptions or views on the meaning of our world, while the objective characteristics reflect the meaning that we negotiate with others and which then becomes a shared reality.

While positivists believe that human experience of the world reflects an independent reality which provides the foundation for human knowledge, interpretivists intentionally constitute knowledge through their experiences of their life-worlds. Interpretivists both affect, and are affected by their research objects. It is a subjective, interdependent relationship. In a critique of Interpretivism, Giddens (1976) asserts that no one person can possess a detailed knowledge of anything more than the particular sector of the society in which he participates and that the actors' knowledge will therefore always be partial and relative. Giddens (1987: xxxvii) speaks of the *double hermeneutic* which challenges the notion that social life proceeds in terms of regular patterns and that we can discover what those patterns are and use them to construct law-like explanations of social life. He further suggests that while researchers may be able to derive some truth from what has already happened they will never be able to provide any degree of certainty about what will happen because

the researchers are incorporated into the meaning-making structures of human beings who have choices and are consequently able to change, amend and transform them.

This is a valid observation about the transience of our perceived life-worlds and it suggests an additional dimension to the interpretivist notion of reality. The manner in which human beings construct meanings about their life-worlds changes constantly, rendering the previous reality obsolete and paving the way for new constructions.

2.2.2.3 Critical theory

Where traditional theory is orientated towards understanding and explaining society, critical theory aims not only to critique social theory, but also to change society as a whole. This implies an interrogation of all of the major social sciences, such as history, economics, political science, anthropology, sociology and psychology. As such, critical theory is intimately associated with socio-political issues such as feminism, racism, ethnicity and class. Scott (2000:54) asserts that critical theorists believe that research should be about identifying and unmasking those human beliefs and practices which limit freedom, justice and democracy. This approach is clearly in tension with the positivist approach, which, in its quest for objective, scientific truth, conceals or masks those elements which critical theorists believe speak to discriminatory attitudes and practices.

Jurgen Habermas was one of the most influential critical theorists, and much of his work underpins and informs more recent curriculum theory. Scott (2000:55) explains Habermas's views as follows:

> …any claim to validity must be able to assert that what is being claimed for is intelligible and meaningful; what is being asserted propositionally is true; what is being explained must be justified; and the maker of these claims must be sincere.

Habermas also developed the notion of an ideal speech situation in terms of which agreement is possible between researchers when it satisfies the aforementioned criteria and has been reached through critical discussion. This speaks to an agreement that is not based on custom, faith or coercion; a substantial departure from both the positivist and interpretivist approaches (Scott 2000:55).

Arguably the greatest difficulty with this approach is that it is based on socio-political aspirations which have to be justified and agreed upon through critical discussion,

irrespective of their perceived merit or lack thereof. Given the inherent emotiveness of the socio-political issues that it drives, it is probably naïve to expect absolute justification for them, or agreement on them, and this could cast some doubt upon the validity of the research. Similarly, given the political nature of the critical approaches, the danger exists that the evidential bases of the claims might be undermined, especially where the political issues find broad resonance. This suggests that the political agenda might take precedence over the rigour and integrity of the research methodology. However, Scott (2000:33) correctly asserts that what is also clear is that the political nature of the critical approaches marked an important and definitive move away from authoritarianism and elitism, and towards social democracy. This assertion highlights the enormous influence that an epistemology or movement can wield on the course and direction of human growth and development and as such its contribution to social discourse should not be underestimated, irrespective of its perceived merit of lack thereof.

2.2.2.4 Postmodernism

Strictly speaking, postmodernism is not so much an epistemology as it is an eclectic and elusive movement characterised by its anti-theory stance and its concern with group and individual identity. Spiro (1996: 759-780) explains the basic tenets of postmodernism as follows:

> The postmodernist critique of science consists of two interrelated arguments, epistemological and ideological. Both are based on subjectivity. First, because of the subjectivity of the human object, anthropology, according to the epistemological argument cannot be a science; and in any event the subjectivity of the human subject precludes the possibility of science discovering objective truth. Second, since objectivity is an illusion, science according to the ideological argument, subverts oppressed groups, females, ethnics, third-world peoples.

Postmodernism seeks to undermine the power-knowledge relations that underpin conventional research and the binary oppositions that pervade much of Western metaphysics and humanism. Although critics of postmodernism allude to its seemingly nihilistic or relativistic tendencies and to the seeming abandonment of meaning and authority, postmodernists posit an opposite view of openness to meaning and authority and to the centrality of the discourse as the ultimate source of authority (Scott 2000: 55).

Jean-Francois Lyotard (1979: 24 – 25) says the following:

> Simplifying to the extreme, I define postmodernism as incredulity towards metanarratives. This incredulity is undoubtedly a product of progress in the sciences; but that progress in turn presupposes it. To the obsolescence of the metanarrative apparatus of legitimisation corresponds, most notably, the crisis of metaphysical philosophy and of the university institution which in the past relied on it. The narrative function is losing its functors, its great hero, its great dangers its great voyages, its great goal. It is being dispersed in clouds of narrative language elements - narrative, but also denotative, prescriptive, descriptive and so on… where after the metanarratives can legitimacy reside?

This view is supported by Raduntz (1999:14) who notes that postmodernism "constitutes a sterile theoretical cul-de-sac with no political programme for transformative change."

Scott (2000: 55) postulates that in the tradition of Lather (1991) the postmodern approach to research seeks to undermine the traditional agendas of the powerful and to make space for alternative voices. It attempts to show how powerful discourses are constructed; it questions how authors construct texts and organise meanings to show how language works to show certain kinds of truths; it challenges realist assumptions that there is a world "out there" waiting to be discovered and reasserts the idea that research acts to construct the worlds; it explores various ways of constructing alternative realities; it is concerned with the power and politics of research and it reintroduces the researcher into the picture and locates the researcher within those frameworks which act to construct them as researchers and as human beings.

Probably the most telling criticism of the postmodern tradition is that its anti- realist and anti-foundational stance and its rejection of ethical and knowledge frameworks, renders suspect any judgement that might be made about research and social arrangements. More paradoxically, since they deny the authority of the researcher, they must logically deny the authority of their own research (Scott 2000:56).

2.2.2.5 Neoliberalism

The post-war period marked the emergence of an era of optimism and the concomitant creation of the Keynesian welfare state, with its promises of work and benefits for all. But in the 1970's the world experienced an economic recession triggered to a large extent, by the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries

(OPEC). The economic recession necessitated extensive cutbacks on government spending, including education, and gradually, as politics and policies were developed to accommodate new social realities in a world where the notion of the welfare state could no longer be sustained, neoliberalism took root and began to dominate the political arena in Western countries (Griffin 2002:17).

Neoliberalism offers a description of a dominant mode of conducting political and economic organisation in a globalised world. Under this mode, the knowledge economy is pre-eminent. It promotes a positive role for a state that creates the optimal conditions for capitalist expansion, control and exploitation (as opposed to classical liberalism that signified a negative view of the state) and focuses on the rules of a free market economy. Neoliberalism is associated with a form of state that seeks to reduce public spending, increase efficiency and effectiveness, and which elevates the market as the primary instrument for determining the distribution of social good. As such, its fundamental role in the phenomenon of globalisation is inescapable (Potgieter 2009 :6).

Ball (2006:11) offers some explanation for this shift in focus:

> The critique of state planning and provision and the advocacy of the market form, which are fundamental to the politics of public sector reform, draw directly upon the philosophy and economics of neo-liberalism and in particular, the work of Hayek. From the neo-liberal perspective, both unionism, and bureau-professionalism are seen as contributory factors to the 'failures' of systems of planned public provision and as major obstacle in the way of the development of effective social markets.

Neoliberalism in other words, implies that the state should not provide welfare to its citizens, but should primarily facilitate free trade. The ensuing growth of the economy will provide jobs. Citizens should pay for services such as health and education, thus enabling them to take responsibility for their own welfare. Jessop (1994:30) explains:

> In narrow economic terms, the neo-liberal strategy demands changes in the *regulation* (governance) of both the public and private sectors. For the public sector it involves privatisation, liberalisation and an imposition of commercial criteria in any residual state sector.

Neoliberalism is currently dominant in education policy in much of the world, and although it might be viable in the economic sphere, the application of quasi-market

principles to education has raised serious questions and challenges. Griffin (2002:17) states that such questions relate to:

> …equality of opportunity within education, the application and availability of choice in education (and for whom), measuring of 'quality' in education, and the 'quality' or ability of the chosen indicators to measure education outputs.

Griffin's view raises the spectre of the elitist, so-called exclusionary triangle of access, affordability and quality in higher education which, it could be argued, has been entrenched by neoliberal philosophy and practice and which excludes people who do not have the means to participate in higher education. At a more macro level Griffin's views can also be applied to the kind of exclusion that results because of a country's inability to compete socially, economically and politically in a competitive global higher education environment. However, these dynamics are in direct tension with the demand for the kinds of skills that are required to drive a knowledge economy that is marked by accessibility, availability (or abundance), marketisation and internationalisation. These competing demands have given rise to new education influences and trends which are examined in the ensuing discussion.

Firstly, the rapid, compounded growth and dominance of technology as a driver of the global economy has given rise to a realisation of the need for a suitably skilled workforce to meet the associated human capital needs. Concomitantly there has been, and continues to be an ever increasing demand for higher education, especially from people who have previously been excluded because of their socio-economic circumstances and status. These factors have contributed to the massification of higher education. Furthermore, many students, by dint of personal circumstance (be it age, location or financial) are unable to attend traditional universities and in response, technology-driven distance education, or as it is more commonly referred to nowadays, ODL (which offers the possibility of education, anywhere, any place, any time and at an affordable rate), has assumed increasing importance and prominence. In this view, it could be argued that the same philosophy and practices that entrenched exclusivity, access and quality are now contributing to its demise.

Secondly, in a market-driven society, individual interests are asserted and self-interest comes to the fore, hence the emphasis on quality and results. To achieve these, higher education institutions have begun to adopt business principles in their management

and operations, resulting in a form of 'managerialism', which some would argue, has seen the gradual dissolution of the traditional professional academic ethos and ethic, towards a more entrepreneurial and success orientated, market-focused model, and the substitution of a sense of professional pride and satisfaction for "incentives and rewards aimed at stimulating self-interested responses" (Ball 2006:11). As a result, "Teaching and learning…… are reduced to processes of production and provision that must meet market goals of transfer efficiency and quality control" (Boyles cited in Ball 2006:13).

Neoliberalism's impact on education, and in this case, higher education, is direct and significant because of the central role that education plays in the development of the knowledge economy. This impact has seen higher education evolve from a distinct, elitist, relatively small sector in most nation states to what is arguably just another state sector with a tradable commodity that generates vast amounts of income. Education is employed to a greater or lesser degree in the service of the state towards the generation of human capital and skills that will drive the economic agenda and promote socio economic development. Many higher education institutions face the ongoing tension of trying to reconcile the rather soulless generation of human capital with the traditional long-held and deeply rooted notions of academic life and ethos, in a world that is now focused on science and technology and that has seen a dramatic decline in the status of the humanities. It could be argued that the days of face-to-face critical educational engagement and debate and the so-called 'sage-on-the-stage' (Skiba and Barton 2006:1) notion of teaching are being subsumed into the technological tide, to be replaced by a student cohort that is motivated by tight timelines and an ageing lecturing corps that is struggling to adapt to the practice of a profession that is comparatively poorly paid, and that now includes a significant executive function requiring knowledge and skills more suited to business (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2). Neoliberal influences continue to shape and impact on higher education globally and there is no clearer evidence of this than in the relation between public policy and education policy, which will be discussed in greater detail below.

2.2.2.6 Summary of five main knowledge traditions

For clarity, the main knowledge traditions and their main precepts are tabulated as follows in **Table 2.1**.

Table 2.1   Five significant knowledge traditions influencing education practice

DOMINANT MOVEMENTS AND RELATED EPISTEMOLOGIES	MAIN PRECEPTS
POSITIVISM • Empiricism • Functionalism • Structural Functionalism • Behaviourism	• Only objective, observable facts can be the basis for science • Facts are value-free and theory independent and so the truth can be determined or discovered • Theology (the supernatural) or the metaphysical (abstract) must yield to the positive – that which can be explained in terms of scientific laws
INTERPRETIVISM • Hermeneutics • Phenomenology • Constructivism	• Emphasises the meaning that individuals or communities assign to their experiences • Intersubjective meanings are crucial to achieving understanding and meaning • The facts do not speak for themselves: Behaviour is constituted by social conventions and therefore interpretation, or interpretivism, is needed • There is no distinction between the subject (researcher) and the object (the event being studied) • The social context, conventions, norms, and standards of a particular person or community are crucial elements in accessing and understanding human behaviour (the truth is relevant and subject to these subjective elements)
CRITICAL THEORY • Marxism • NeoMarxism • Reproduction theories • Resistance theories • Progressivism	• Concerned with the critical meanings of experiences as they relate to gender, race, class and other kinds of social oppression • Conflict, such as the class conflict of Marxism, and inequality and crucial to understanding the dynamics of human relations • Society reproduces inequalities from one generation to the next (reproduction theory) and resistance becomes an important part of the response to these injustices (resistance theory) • Increasingly, the multiple identities of individuals (black, rural, third world, women) means that these kinds of oppression "intersect in their effects on persons and society
POST MODERNISM • Poststructuralism • Deconstruction • Postcolonialism	• A broad term that encompasses many different approaches, most of them valuing uncertainty, disorder, indeterminacy, regression (rather than progress) • Assigns value to multiple meanings rather than the single authoritative voice of the expert/the scientist • Values "voice", the subjective and multiple voices of individuals and communities rather than the predetermined rules for action • Applied mainly in the artistic and social sciences
NEOLIBERALISM • New Managerialism • The State markets and performativity • Globalisation • Transnationalism • Knowledge Economy • Third Way society	• The dominant mode of conducting political and economic organisation in a globalised world • Whereas classical liberalism signalled a negative view of the state, neoliberalism conceives of a positive role for a state that creates the optimal conditions for capitalist expansion, control and exploitation • Associated with a form of state that seeks reductions in public expenditure, increases in efficiency and effectiveness, and elevates the market as the primary instrument for determining the distribution of social goods (asset based theory).

2.3 HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

Policy is a highly contentious terrain, incorporating as it does a multiplicity of socio-political influences and agendas within timeframes that are circumscribed by forces that are at best, rather unpredictable and of limited duration, and at worst, rather tenuous. This attests to one of the central difficulties around policy, namely, ensuring the kind of continuity required in terms of time frames that will allow for its proper and timely implementation.

This is particularly relevant in the current global environment, which is marked by a pace of change that has generated its own rapid momentum and seems set to continue. This understanding is not new, but it remains contentious and relevant. Marx and Engels (1969: 98-137) captured this sense of inexorable change in their famous lines on capitalism in their 1847 *Communist Manifesto*, when they asserted:

> All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, *all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify* (my emphasis). All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man is at last compelled to face with sober senses his, real conditions of life, and his relations with his kind.

Policy at once informs, and is informed by the broader governance process and can be broadly defined as follows:

> A set of interrelated decisions taken by a political actor or group of actors concerning the selection of goals and the means of achieving them within a specified situation where these decisions should, in principle, be within the power of these actors to achieve (Jenkins 1997:30).

It should be noted that this definition does not include the process of policy implementation (but merely the decisions and the means), which is a broadly acknowledged barrier to success in the entire policy process. This shortcoming highlights a major concern in relation to policy models, and issues around implementation and implementation models and will be discussed under paragraph 2.3.2. The definition can nevertheless be applied to higher education policy, which is subject to similar dynamics and constraints, and which provides the framework within which higher education institutions are obliged to operate.

When it comes to higher education, the issue of policy is a sensitive one in that it has traditionally existed in tension with strongly held notions of academic freedom and institutional autonomy. This section will examine the role of higher education policy and the dynamics that contribute to its formulation, and it will be followed by a discussion of policy implementation and how it impacts on the efficacy of institutional operations and functions.

2.3.1 Higher education policy and formulation

Badat (2006:92-93) cites the following comprehensive view of the term 'policy':

- "That Policy has a wide variety of meanings – authoritative allocation of values, framework, discourse, text, strategies, practice, etc. – that are embedded in differing problematics (Ball, 1994; 1990; Dale and Ozga, 1991; Ham and Hill, 1984; Henry, 1993; Kogan, 1985; Ozga, 1990; Prunty, 1985; 1984; Taylor *et al.,* 1997).
- That policy is closely linked to social goals and objectives.
- That far from being neutral, policy embodies values and principles (Prunty, 1985; 1984).
- That policy is the product of multiple determinations (or is "over-determined") – goals and values, but also economics and policies, social conditions and available personnel and financial resources (Lankshear, 1987).
- That there are different kinds of policies – substantive, symbolic, material, procedural, distributive, redistributive, etc. (de Clercq, 1997).
- That there are different types of policies in terms of scope, complexity, range of choices, arena of decision-making – strategic, multi-program, program, issue specific, etc. (Haddad, 1995).
- That policy has a wide variety of objectives – social equity, institutional provision, governance, financing, research, curriculum, etc.
- That policies focus on many different levels, singly or concomitantly (international, national, regional, provincial, local, institutional, etc.) and
- That policy is pertinent to diverse institutional and organizational settings."

In this view policy can be taken to mean virtually any articulated and formalised view, belief and/or objective, which ultimately exerts an influence on the practice of

higher education at a global, national or local level. Although this would appear to be a very broad view, it nevertheless reflects the myriad complexities which inform policy making, and demonstrates the interrelatedness of higher education in terms of its location nationally and within our global village, the socio-economic and political forces that shape and steer it, and linked to that, the knowledge hegemonies and power relationships that dictate its practice.

There is little discernment of linear progression in policy making. Given the various role players and stakeholders, its interrelatedness with other policies, socio-economic and political imperatives, and its complex, multi-layered and iterative nature, policy making is in truth a convoluted, ongoing attempt to provide a meaningful articulation of, and basis for, sound educational practice. Precisely because policy is so value laden, and given the dynamic environment in which higher education operates, it is not surprising that higher education policy is in a constant state of flux, and that its success is elusive or difficult to measure. Scoufe (1985:116) correctly observes:

> …..the assumption that education policy could be the result of simply
> identifying and choosing the alternative that is 'best', that is relevant,
> or not wasteful, ignores the obvious political fact that the 'best' has to
> be determined in the political crucible of competing interests.

This is supported by Manganyi (2001:28) who asserts that public policy sets out a government's *intention* (my emphasis) regarding certain matters that have a bearing on the common good and welfare of the people, and links education policy to macro-economic policies and government expenditure frameworks. These issues have a fundamental bearing amongst others, on the role and responsibilities of higher education, and the relationship of higher education and the state. However, when that intention is subsumed into the "political crucible of competing interests" (Scoufe 1985:116) then its successful implementation, and by extension, its goal, can become compromised.

In the current environment of swiftly changing global economic and social dynamics policy is not the sole driver of education practice, in the sense that it is influenced and moulded by issues that fall outside of the education domain. Policy formulation is directly informed not only by a government's intention, but also by external dynamics. Probably one of the best examples of the impact of these external dynamics is the integral role that technology has assumed in significantly influencing

and directing policies on modes and models of education provision, education management, education boundaries and borders, the nature of courseware and access thereto and in fact, the entire spectrum of education provision.

When it comes to policy, the role of major stakeholders in global education, in particular the OECD and the World Bank is under ongoing and increasing scrutiny because of their perceived influence on higher education policy and provision, through amongst others, the prescriptive allocation of funding, research and influential higher education publications. (UNESCO 2009; World Bank 2009; OECD 2009) This view is particularly pertinent in regard to developing countries, and will be discussed under 2.3.4 below.

A further interesting development that I have observed in my professional capacity, is the emergence of entirely new education phenomena from external issues. The development and pre-eminence of technology for example, has not only given rise to the phenomenon of Open Educational Resources (OERs), in terms of which educational resources, comprising amongst others, education courseware (content), software, and implementation platforms are made freely available, 'free-of-charge' or under a variety of licensing agreements, on the Internet, but it has also facilitated its provision. In this sense technology has been both the genesis and driver of what can be regarded as a quite revolutionary development in education provision in recent times (notwithstanding the many and justifiable criticisms of this development, which it must be acknowledged, is in its infancy). There is currently much debate on the pros and cons of OERs and a growing body of knowledge is being generated, particularly through numerous conferences, at both national and global levels. Similarly many new policies are currently being developed around various aspects of OERs, at both state and institutional levels. However, in my view, there is as yet, limited appropriately researched evidence of the efficacy and impact of OERs in higher education and more particularly in ODL (especially in Africa), and while the potential of OERs is undeniable, it is not yet possible to offer a firm opinion on their general efficacy and concrete benefits for higher education.

Another more recent example of an external dynamic can be found in the global recession, which began in earnest in 2008 and which is influencing to a greater or lesser extent the policy making process of governments as they seek to realign their

national strategies to emerging global trends. Logically this should result in a cascading down of new policy decisions and austerity measures to higher education.

Many higher education institutions' financial reserves have been seriously depleted, particularly where investments have been negatively affected by stock market fluctuations. Several have lost millions in investments almost overnight, plunging them into precarious financial predicaments (Maslen 2008). This has resulted in a number of institutions having to implement restrictive cost saving measures to ensure their longer-term sustainability. In his article in the University World News, entitled *Universities lose billions as recession deepens* Maslen (2008:1) states the following:

> Few higher education institutions around the world appear to have escaped the collapse of financial markets. In Asia, Africa, North America, Europe, Britain and down under in Australia and New Zealand, universities have been hit hard as the value of their investments in property and shares and, in many cases, their income from diverse sources crumples. How to counter, or at the very least cope with, this alarming situation - unique in the experience of university managers - will be the great challenge in the year ahead. ….With the worldwide collapse in financial markets, the result has been catastrophic.

Maslen goes on to cite very significant financial losses incurred by specific institutions, as well as the various measures that have been planned or already implemented to offset them, including amongst others, retrenchments, freezing of staff appointments, reductions in budgets, shelving of research projects, and the sale of assets such as property.

It is logical and feasible to deduce that as a direct consequence of job cutbacks and redundancies occasioned by the recession, adults who find themselves jobless and in need of more contemporary skills to be able to compete for available job vacancies, may well turn to higher education institutions for the requisite training and education. This could place an additional burden on higher education institutions in terms of access, which has to be balanced with the increased demands for places in universities from increasing numbers of new entrants accessing higher education for the first time (UNESCO. 2009: 21).

It also follows that measures adopted to ameliorate the effects of the recession will have a knock-on impact on institutional strategies, planning and operations.

Adjustments will need to be made in regard to the prioritisation of projects, the allocation of resources, and timelines for project completion, amongst others. The more immediate implications include reductions in subsidy, disruptions in operations, delays in project implementation and cutbacks in spending to accommodate only the most fundamental and necessary requirements. It could be postulated that financial shortfalls could be offset to a degree, by increased student funding or even an accelerated move to more private provision of education, a move that would affect those who are least able to afford education. At best, these measures will slow down institutional growth and development. At worst, they could result in student protests, the growth of private higher education provision, higher education stagnation, and possibly, decay.

Currently at a global level, economic policy is to a large extent dictated and driven by the West, although other role players such as India, China and Japan are emerging as increasingly influential alternative voices and powers. This situation is similarly reflected in higher education policy where one finds Western dominance and even hegemony in education theory, knowledge systems, practice and policy. Where a country does not have the resources and capacity to compete in, or adapt to the global arena, they inevitably lag behind and in so doing they reinforce the existing disparities between the so-called 'haves' and 'have-nots' of the North and South respectively. This is particularly relevant in regard to developing countries, particularly those in the South, including South Africa (Imade 2003:1).

Clearly, a variety of social actors and dynamics exert to a greater or lesser degree, an influence on the policy making process. In the case of higher education, such social actors include "higher education institutions, representative bodies, student organisations and movements, academics, business and political organisations, etc." (Badat 2006:97). Accordingly, what is intended by government and what actually transpires in terms of the envisaged policy and its adoption and implementation will be shaped by social actors and issues that reside outside the education domain. Policy research and conceptualisation therefore needs to accommodate the whole picture; not just the initial research and conceptualisation, but also the reality of its implementation, and the monitoring, evaluating and reporting on what is actually

achieved. Ultimately, the success of policy is shaped by the effectiveness of its implementation. Ball (2006: 15) asserts:

> [Policy] research is thoroughly enmeshed 'in' the social and 'in' the political and developments and innovations within the human sciences, like education, are intimately imbricated in the practical management of social and political reforms.

Policy implementation is widely acknowledged as a barrier to successful policy outcomes, and since the early seventies this has prompted a significant number of implementation analyses and the concomitant development of a variety of policy implementation approaches as discussed below.

2.3.2   Higher education policy implementation

One of the most common concerns in regard to policy relates to the lack of, or slow, implementation. The same dynamics that influence policy formulation, mentioned above, impact on its implementation, but these are further exacerbated by constraints such as capacity, skills and resources, amongst others.

The efficacy of policy implementation and outcomes depends to a large extent on sufficient resources and structural and systems efficiencies driven by a skilled, appropriately capacitated and competent workforce. Where such systems and competencies are not in place, where they do not function properly, and where there is a lack of appropriate leadership to drive them, policy lags are created. Higher education institutions are then unable to implement policy effectively and in good time, thus negating the intended impact and outcome of the policy and calling into question the entire rationale of the exercise. In this view there can be no guarantee of the policy outcome. This lack of certainty is underscored by Loasby (1976:89) who asserts in regard to policy: "It is dangerous to assume either that what has been decided will be achieved, or what happens is what was intended".

Until the early 70s there was little research into policy implementation. When Pressman and Wildavsky coined the term "implementation studies" in political science with their seminal book *Implementation* in 1973, it was argued that a well-founded and theoretically based implementation analysis, that is, what happens after

decisions have been made and policies are put into action, was a missing link in policy studies conducted at that time (Gornitzka, Kyvik and Stensaker 2005:36). Despite over two decades of implementation studies, it does not seem that much has changed in terms of finding a model that will ensure overall, greater levels of success in implementation, although the most comprehensive studies on policy implementation, conducted by Cerych and Sabatier (1986: 242-254) and which focused mainly on a top-down approach, concluded that centrally initiated reform initiatives were possible, and that such initiatives could also be characterised as a success under certain conditions. However, such successes have tended to be in relation to individual projects or initiatives and not larger scale implementation initiatives.

This suggests that the process of implementation is still impeded by obstruction, misdirection and delays amongst others, and that the concomitant impact on the intended benefactors of the policy can be quite debilitating. It could therefore be reasoned that the implementation process shapes policy as much as its conceptualisation and as such, any policy process must include a thorough evaluation of its implementation to ensure that there are no barriers to impede the process. This contention brings to light the problem of the disjuncture in policy, between conceptualisation and realisation. Put simply, those who conceptualise policy are seldom required to implement it, thus bringing into play the competing interests mentioned above.

The divide between conception and realisation is explored in great detail by Good (2003: 182-188). In discussing implementation Good states:

> Ministers do not want to be told that they cannot do something because it is not administratively feasible…….Although administrative reforms are usually designed by a few people, invariably they are implemented by many. It is through implementation and not the design that the issues, contradictions and dilemmas rise to the surface and become grounded in the reality of administration and politics. And it is often the implementers, not the designers, who are called upon to reconcile them.

This view is supported by Pressman and Wildavsky (1984: 180) who assert that:

> Implementation is worth studying precisely because it is a struggle over the realisation of ideas. It is the analytical equivalent of original

sin: there is no escape from implementation and its attendant responsibilities.

Given the influences that impact on the policy process and the additional dynamics that positively or negatively affect its implementation, it is not surprising that analyses of policy implementation have yielded a number of models which aim to address all of these dynamics.

In this regard Gornitzka et al (2005:36) make a valid point when they argue firstly, that the amount of resources being expended on public higher education and the concomitant social expectations warrant analyses that will inform the public and higher education stakeholders of the effectiveness of the policy processes that distribute the resources; secondly, that despite ongoing policy and reform-initiating activities, it is likely that the current globalisation 'technification' and 'marketisation' process in the sector will influence the policy implementation process in new and less known ways (c.f. Par 2.3.1); and thirdly, that new stakeholders, such as new categories of students, new forms of knowledge producing actors and new types of consumers of higher education are impacting on higher education policy in ways that are as yet largely unexplored and untested, hence the need for thorough implementation analysis.

A brief elucidation of the three most influential policy implementation approaches to have emerged from implementation analysis debate since 1973 provides an indication of the complexity involved in its successful execution. I am indebted to Gornitzka et al (2005: 19 - 45) for the following three synopses of the various approaches as discussed in paragraphs 2.3.5.1 to 2.3.5.3.

2.3.2.1 The top-down approach

The essential features of a top-down approach were developed by Pressman and Wildavsky (1973) who asserted that policy implementation entailed the execution of a policy decision. According to Mazmanian and Sabatier (1983), this approach starts with a policy decision by governmental (often central government) officials and then questions the alignment and consistency of implementers' actions with the policy decision; the consistency in the impacts with the objectives over time; the principal factors affecting outputs and impacts (that is, those having both official policy and political significance); and the reformulation of policy over time, based on

experience. The Sabatier and Mazmanian (1979: 481-504) framework identified a variety of legal, political and "tractability" variables affecting the different stages of the implementation process. It then sought to synthesise the variables into six conditions necessary for the effective implementation of legal objectives, namely: clear and consistent objectives; adequate causal theory; implementation process legally structured to enhance compliance by implementing officials or target groups; committed and skilful implementing officials; support of interest groups and sovereigns over time; and changes in socio-economic conditions which do not substantially undermine political support or causal theory. In short, the first three conditions can be dealt with by the initial policy decision (e.g., a statute) whereas the latter three are largely the product of political and economic pressures during the subsequent implementation process.

Some successes in this approach were achieved where projects were structured to provide reasonably consistent objectives, a good causal theory, relatively few veto points, sympathetic implementing officials, access of supporters to most decisions and adequate financial resources. However, criticisms of the approach relate amongst others, to the feasibility of ensuring clear and consistent policy objectives, and to the fact that the model does not provide a good conceptual vehicle for looking at policy change over periods of a decade or more (Sabatier 2005: 19-20).

2.3.2.2 The bottom-up approach

In contrast to the top-down approach, the bottom-up approach starts with a mapping of the network of actors at the bottom of the implementation chain, asking them about their goals, strategies, activities and contacts. These contacts are then used as a means of identifying the network of actors involved in the execution of a public policy at the local level. A key proponent of this approach is Elmore (1980, 1985) who challenges the mythology of the top-down perspective on the grounds that it is an inappropriate way of describing real life policy implementation and because central control over processes at the local level is not necessarily desirable. In implementation processes bargaining is claimed to be crucial not only to adjust but also to create the goals of social programmes.

The bottom-uppers' research question is rather different from the top-downers'. They ask how actors go about solving societal problems in different areas and see what role

government measures play in that. The criterion of successful implementation is then not on a degree of match or mismatch between formal intentions and actions of the implementers, or on the possible "deviant behaviour" of the agencies that are trusted to put policy into practice. Their democratic ideal also comes across as different, in the sense that they see the "local" flair in handling societal problems as an expression of a well functioning democracy, and not as undemocratic actions of agencies that run wild or undermine the decisions made by democratically elected bodies (Gornitzka et al 2005:44).

2.3.2.3 An Advocacy Coalition Framework approach

The Advocacy Coalition Framework was the fifth of a number of similar attempts, developed in the late 1980s, to combine the best features of the top-down and bottom-up approaches. In short, the synthesis adopts a bottom-upper's unit of analysis (a whole variety of public and private actors involved with a policy problem) as well as their concerns with understanding the perspectives and strategies of all major categories of actors, and not simply programme components. It then combines this starting point with top-downer's concerns with the manner in which socio-economic conditions and legal instruments constrain behaviour. It applies this synthesised perspective to the analysis of policy change over periods of a decade or more. This time-frame is required to deal with the role of policy-oriented learning. Finally, the synthesis adopts the intellectual style (or methodological perspective) of many top-downers in its willingness to utilise fairly abstract theoretical constructs and to operate from an admittedly simplified portrait of reality (Sabatier 2005: 26).

Despite the three approaches summarised above, policy implementation analysis seems to have made a limited impact on the problem that it seeks to address. The application of the various models to a variety of projects has enjoyed limited success suggesting that the models themselves are subject to the very constraints and dynamics which they seek to resolve. This calls into question the currency and efficacy of higher education policy in a global environment that appears to be generating and directing at an astonishing speed and in a relatively unpredictable manner, changes that are impacting fundamentally on higher education provision. In addition, the influence of international organisations on policy and its implementation needs to be investigated, not only as a force that is purportedly directing policy on a

global scale, but also as a possible barrier to policy implementation at national and regional levels. It must also be borne in mind that in essence, policy implementation in an institution is a governance function and as such the implementation models will to a large extent be reflective of institutional governance practices, which are discussed in greater detail below.

2.3.3   Governance

Neoliberalism encompasses the supremacy of the market and the efficient allocation and utilisation of available resources. By its nature, neoliberalism presupposes a form of governance that is more participatory than prescriptive (cf. Par. 2.2.2.5). This has presented higher education institutions with a variety of challenges, some of which are discussed below.

Van Vught (1993:18) asserts that nowadays, the governance of higher education institutions is to a large extent influenced by five major "forces," namely:
- the impact of market forces on higher education systems;
- the steering strategies that can be used by governments;
- the organised influence of the "academic oligarchy";
- the management processes in higher education; and
- the issue of quality.

These multiple "forces" echo Badat's (2006:97) assertions of a variety of "actors", all of whom influence and impact on higher education to a greater or lesser degree. Each forms a specific entity of the overall system that is perceived to be higher education.

Within the context of the various implementation models discussed above, it could be asserted that in a 'top-down' centrally funded national system of higher education, government is a highly significant actor, but without absolute power since they themselves are part of a system that is influenced by a variety of actors. In terms of governance, the 'top-down' approach entails institutions merely responding to government-inspired policy initiatives which are enforced by the power of the state (Van Vught 1993:20). In a 'bottom-up' system government policy follows rather than leads a change process initiated at the departmental, faculty or institutional level. 'Bottom-up' institutions are characterised by high institutional autonomy and control

mechanisms that rest more on a competitive market than on state legislative authority, while 'top-down' systems are characterised by the opposite (Van Vught 1993:20).

Neave and Van Vught (1991: x-xii) highlight two extremes of governmental involvement in higher education, drawing a distinction between the "facilitatory state" and the "inventionary state".

> The "facilitatory state" involves government underwriting higher education as an opportunity for those duly qualified to have access to higher learning, without actually directing policies at the heart of academia. Patterns of participation, governance, and authority are not addressed in the facilitatory state model. The inventionary state on the other hand refers to a government actively involved in attempts to influence such dimensions as the nature of student output (e.g., an increase in technological graduates), the internal affairs of the institution (improving efficiency), and the relationship between an institution and its environment (closer links with industry).

The above mentioned extremes of governmental involvement imply varying degrees of government intervention or strategies along the continuum, from very direct involvement to much more subtle involvement. Closer adherence to market principles suggests that government will assume a less direct role in institutional governance. A more direct involvement introduces the notion of government steering (to a lesser or greater degree) or even close or direct management, in terms of which government attempts to be in charge and to influence the other higher education actors in pursuit of policies that ultimately support, or further, specific government agendas. While steering implies the structuring of decision making through the setting of objectives via government instruments, the market supposedly allows for freedom of choice amongst an array of possibilities.

However, given the long, traditional and conservative history and character of higher education and its involvement with the state (and socio-economic development), the varied and competing interests, the various actors involved and its status as a public good, it would seem unlikely that higher education could ever be purely market-driven and coordinated. In fact, the 'idea' or theoretical construct of the market is quite at odds with the reality of the role of higher education in a global market economy. Thus, despite the fact that education has undoubtedly become a marketable commodity, its provision remains intertwined with, and constrained by, a whole

plethora of influences and dynamics. Van Vught (1993: 25) underscores this when he asserts:

> Even in those instances where markets appear to exist, there is always an element of public or government control over them through e.g. anti-trust policies set up to counteract possible negative effects of a certain market, such as monopoly power. Higher education is no exception to this, and quite possibly is even a case for the argument that in fact it would be better to speak of "market-like" behaviour and the existence of quasi-market structures.

This is substantiated by Birnbaum (1991:137) who states:

> If autonomy is in many ways a reality in the private sector it remains an institutionally desired but unachievable myth in much of the public sector. In both sectors the golden rule of institutional finance and governance prevails: Those who have the gold, rule. The saving grace is that while state steering mechanisms can sometimes be highly intrusive into institutional affairs, the higher education policies of most governments appear focused primarily on fiscal accountability rather that ideology or social policy.

While it can be accepted that most governance models have elements of both the facilitatory and inventionary approaches, large differences nevertheless exist in the governance of higher education institutions overall. It is where ideologies and political agendas begin intruding directly on higher education provision that the danger exists of higher education being totally subsumed into the state apparatus with a concomitant loss of autonomy and importantly, academic freedom. In developing nations especially, there is a constant struggle and endeavour to balance the complex matrix of influences that impact on higher education provision in a manner that will facilitate quality, relevant education. Some of these influences are discussed below.

2.3.3.1 Governmental steering

One of the main characteristics of so-called *steering* is that government, in its endeavour to be in charge, attempts to direct and influence the behaviour of the various higher education stakeholders. Within this understanding, Van Vught (1993:27) has identified two primary traditions of state steering, that is, the "state control model" and the "state supervising model." The state control model does not recognise the multidimensional and interactive character of higher education, and is characterised by a view of higher education as a homogenous enterprise, with government trying to regulate all aspects of the higher education system, including

access, curriculum degree requirements, examinations, staff appointments and remuneration. The state supervisory/facilitatory model on the other hand, is characterised by weak state influence and greater institutional autonomy over aspects such as curriculum, degrees, staffing and finance. Under such a model the institution operates within broad parameters set by the state, but will for example, decide on its own vision, mission and goals.

The rapid changes wrought by globalisation and ever growing socio-economic pressures have seen a weakening of the state control model over time. The state supervisory model appears to be gaining currency and support and given this model's characteristics, this suggests a more creative and innovative approach to higher education and higher education management than has previously been the case. This needs to be evaluated within the context of unabated demand for access to higher education, decreasing subsidisation, a changing student profile, changing higher education requirements, the rise of private higher education providers and a host of other societal factors (some of which have been discussed above) that have similarly compelled higher education practitioners to become more innovative and businesslike in their management of higher education. These views are substantiated by Weiler (2006: 76 -77) and Brennan and Naidoo (2006: 221 -232).

There is a growing voice which suggests that the increasing focus on managerialism in higher education has impacted negatively on its core business of teaching, learning and research. While institutions may appear to enjoy greater autonomy, that autonomy is circumscribed by demands for sound corporate governance, increased internal efficiencies and effectiveness and strict quality controls, which in some cases, have rendered their core business vulnerable to stagnation and redundancy. This, together with factors such as access, affordability and privatisation, has impacted on the quality of higher education, an assertion that is underscored by the current global focus on quality in higher education (Holmes 1993: 4-8).

There can be no doubt that globalisation, driven by technology, is changing the face of higher education provision at an unprecedented rate, particularly amongst the developed nations. While in the West, steering may be becoming less intrusive, the instruments used by the state, that is, funding, planning, evaluation and deregulation

are compelling a change in education practice, the benefits of which for education in the purest sense, have yet to be fully interrogated.

2.3.3.2 Managerialism

Alluding to the impetus towards managerialism in institutional governance and management, Van Vught (1993:10) states:

> The move away from the governmental steering strategy of state control towards the strategy of state supervision involves a substantial strengthening of the management of higher education institutions. Such a strengthening is accomplished by several means: through changes in the composition of governing bodies to make them similar to company-like boards, through the streamlining of decision-making within institutions, providing greater authority to chief executive offices, and through changing the nature, task and role of the democratic institutional senates and councils. This model of *"managerial professionalism"* brings along several features, especially the increased influence of external interests (regional industry, social partners), the growing attention for strategic management approaches and the extension of management accountability.

This statement is echoed and reinforced in Article 13 of the *World Declaration on Higher Education for the Twenty-first Century: Vision and Action* (UNESCO 1998) which states:

> ..... the management of higher education requires the development of appropriate planning and policy analysis capacities, and strategies based on partnerships established between higher education institutions, state and national planning and coordinating bodies, so as to secure appropriately streamlined management and cost-effective use of resources." ....higher education institutions should adopt "forward-looking management practices that respond to the needs of their environments. Managers in higher education must be responsive, competent and able to evaluate regularly, by internal and external mechanisms, the effectiveness of procedures and administrative rules.

It could be argued that managerialism in higher education is an inevitable consequence of neoliberal policy. As higher education institutions are increasingly required to operate as businesses, and according to business models and management principles, they are obliged to develop a concomitant understanding of business practices, which include amongst others, financial management, strategy and planning, monitoring and evaluation, and quality assessment and assurance.

However, the burden of "forward looking management practices" is being borne by both academic and administrative staff alike, with academic staff increasingly being required to fulfil both an academic and executive function. This has generated some resentment amongst academics in particular, who appear to be struggling to accommodate the increased workloads occasioned by ever-increasing student numbers, the commodification of knowledge, the impact of managerialism, and the use of new technologies whose applications are now linked to a wide variety of academic practices such as assessment, tutoring and courseware development, and innovations such as OERs. These changes are perceived to have impacted on traditionally held notions of academic practice, freedom and institutional autonomy. It would appear that academics find themselves in an invidious position, assailed from all sides by the kinds of change that require the obligatory acquisition of new skills which they may not have an aptitude for, which they may not be interested in or support, and which ultimately, appear to be at odds with that which they were trained to do, namely, teach. I would suggest that the term *executive academic* would not be a misnomer in the current higher education climate.

2.3.3.3 The Developmental State

Abe (2006 :6) provides some insight into the origins of the notion of the development state as follows:

> Some East Asian states provide different models from those of Western capitalism. After the Second World War, Japan and the so-called "four little tigers": South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Hong Kong, showed rapid economic development through their instinctive development models. In these countries, the state played a crucial part in fostering rapid national development. These countries can be defined as developmental states

The developmental state as defined by Leftwich (2000: 155) is one whose politics have concentrated sufficient power, autonomy, capacity and legitimacy at the centre to shape, pursue and encourage the achievement of explicit developmental objectives, whether by establishing and promoting the conditions of economic growth (in the capitalist developmental states), by organising it directly (in the 'socialist' variants), or by a varying combination of both.

Mkandawire (1998:2) asserts that the development state has an ideological 'developmental' underpinning, as well as a structural component, the nexus of which

distinguishes it from other forms of states. Its mission is to ensure sustained economic development, evidenced in steady, high economic growth rates. To achieve its success, the developmental state ideology requires that the nation supports and adheres to it voluntarily.

Given the strong influence of the state in the economy and the harnessing and directing of education in pursuit of socio-economic growth and development, it is a model that has a fundamental impact on higher education, and as such it merits some interrogation.

Although, in terms of the most recent Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) South Africa now refers to itself as a developmental state (MTSF 2009 :4), there is as yet no clear definition or model of the development state in the South African context. Additionally there is no explanation of how the characteristics of the development state (as defined below) can be applied to South Africa, which has in place a Constitution and incorporated Bill of Rights that seem to contradict many of the basic tenets and assumptions of the developmental state. (For example, given the definitions above, a developmental state assumes that institutions such as universities are fully in the service of, directed by, and supportive of the state in pursuit of its developmental objectives. However, South Africa's Constitution and incorporated Bill of Rights confers freedoms, including institutional and academic freedoms that stand in opposition to the implied 'subordination' of the university in the developmental state model.) While there is a growing body of research (Mkandawire 1990; World Bank 1981, 1989, 1993, 1994, 1995; Marwala 2006) on the developmental state in Africa, it is likely that its articulation will vary quite widely, given the various forms of government that exist on the continent.

Adrian Leftwich (1995:405) has arrived at six major defining characteristics of a typical developmental state model. These include:
- a determined developmental elite;
- relative autonomy;
- a powerful, competent and insulated bureaucracy;
- a weak and subordinated civil society;
- the effective management of non-state economic interests; and

- legitimacy and performance.

Additional characteristics of the developmental state include an emphasis on market share over profit, economic nationalism, protection of fledgling domestic industries, a focus on foreign technology transfer, large government bureaucracy, alliance between the state, labour and industry (called 'corporatism'), scepticism of neoliberalism and the Washington Consensus, priority of economic growth over political reform, legitimacy and performance, and an emphasis on technical education (Marwala 2006 : 2).

Viewed from a Western, neoliberal perspective, it could be asserted that in the developmental state, development is achieved in a somewhat repressive, non consultative environment, reminiscent of the socialist command culture. Yet not all developmental states have entirely socialist forms of government. South Africa is a case in point. Furthermore, world-wide, the idea that higher education should contribute directly to socio-economic development is widely accepted, but in a developmental state, higher education is harnessed directly by the state in pursuit of socio-economic goals and development. This view is supported by Marwala (2006: 3) who asserts:

> …..the foundation to building a developmental state is to develop: (1) an educated population with high levels of numeracy and computer skills; (2) a knowledgeable society with high levels of scientific literacy that appreciates the role of computers in building a knowledge economy; (3) a harmonious society with a strategic partnership amongst labour, government, industry and society; and (4) a society that efficiently allocates and distributes resources.

It is unlikely that South Africa, which, in terms of higher education governance has gravitated quite firmly towards the facilitatory/supervisory steering approach, would be able to implement a model of the developmental state that has the characteristics defined by Leftwich (1995) and Marwala (2006) above. In South Africa any such model would need to be balanced with the rights and freedoms enshrined in the Constitution and reflected in current higher education policy, particularly those relating to institutional autonomy and academic freedom. Although it is likely that the recently restructured Department of Higher Education and Training (DHE&T) will make changes to higher education policy in the near future, current policy and steering instruments suggest that for South Africa, tighter state control will be

achieved through fiscal measures, linked to more directed planning, monitoring and evaluation and accountability. South Africa's higher education policies and governance model will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

2.3.4   The Influence on policy of the OECD, UNESCO and the World Bank

There is a growing body of literature that is interrogating the role and influence on higher education policy, of international organisations such as the OECD, UNESCO, the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) (Abugre 2001; Fraser 2003; Heyneman 2003; Moura Castro 2002). Given the global eminence of these organisations and the centrality of higher education policy to this study, it is important that their role is examined in greater depth to determine the veracity and validity of the various arguments put forward.

For more than 40 years, the OECD has been one of the world's largest and most reliable sources of comparable statistics and economic and social data. As well as collecting data, the OECD monitors trends, analyses and forecasts economic developments and researches social changes or evolving patterns in trade, the environment, agriculture, technology, taxation and more. The OECD is one of the world's largest publishers in the fields of economics and public policy and OECD publications are a prime vehicle for disseminating the organisation's intellectual output, both on paper and online (OECD 2009). Over the last decade, the influence of the OECD has grown exponentially, particularly in regard to education policy, primarily through its indicator project and its peer reviewing practices (OECD 2009).

Twenty countries originally signed the *Convention on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development* on 14 December 1960. Since then a further ten countries have become members of the organisation. Three of these countries could be classed as relatively well-off while the remaining 27 can be classed as wealthy. The member countries include: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovak Republic, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom and the United States (OECD 2009). (More recently discussions are underway to invite

several developing nations to join the organisation, including South Africa.) As a block these countries represent the most powerful and the wealthiest nations in the world and as such their patronage of and influence on the OECD cannot be underestimated.

The above information offers a cameo of the membership and functions of the OECD. What it does not do is speak to the power and influence that the OECD wields, particularly in terms of global policy, sanctions and research, as well as the niche interest group that it seemingly serves and promotes, and which funds it, promotes it and ensures its existence.

From its initial establishment as a forum for the discussion of economic adjustment and reform the OECD has evolved to a position where it currently has more 'clout' than UNESCO in regard to education policy coordination among Western capitalistic countries. The OECD also supersedes the World Bank as the main multilateral provider of cross national education statistics and research in the North. Of some concern is that membership of the OECD is confined primarily to the wealthy North, who obviously have a vested interest in ensuring that the tenets of democracy and the free market are maintained and advanced. The OECD is funded by its members as listed above. Supporting and enlarging on this view, Mundy (2007:28-29) argues that through its various programmes, the OECD has not only played an influential role in reordering the domestic politics of education in Western welfare states, but that together with the World Bank, it has also developed and diffused a menu of neoliberal policy reforms for education.

In addition, the establishment in 1998 of the *International Indicators of Educational Systems* (INES) contributed to a more regular, scientific and rigorous analysis of education statistics, as contained in the now famous annual OECD publication *Education at a Glance,* which provides comparative data (on 36 indicators) of member states. What is important to note however, is that the nature of the indicators has evolved in line with emerging economic trends, and have been agreed upon by the OECD member states. Furthermore, where in previous decades indicators focused on input expenditure related to government and individual investment in various aspects of higher education, the focus is currently on outcomes, that is, efficiencies and performance measures (Mundy 2007: 339-357). Also, programmes such as the

Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), an internationally standardised assessment of 15-year olds in school, to test "how far students near the end of compulsory education have acquired some of the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in society," have been developed (OECD 2005). PISA covers reading ability as well as mathematical and science literacy and is conducted in cycles of three years. Martens (2007: 47) states:

> More and more countries are joining the PISA project: whereas in 2000 the survey was conducted in 43 countries, 57 countries participated in the third assessment in 2006. The reach of PISA goes thus far beyond the OECD membership – almost half of the participating countries for 2006 were non OECD members……PISA has triggered enormous discussions about the quality of educational systems.

This statement underscores the reach and influence of the OECD, and highlights the fact that all participating countries are being assessed against criteria agreed upon by member states only. Martens (2007:47) further asserts the power and influence of PISA by citing examples of countries that have taken deficits or shortcomings identified by PISA so seriously that they have been made national priorities, engendered national debate and even in some cases, instigated the reform of entire educational systems. Countries mentioned in this regard include Germany, Denmark and the UK.

While the positive aspects such as the pursuit of quality in higher education should not be underestimated, these contentions question the independence and ability (and by extension, the freedom) of nation states to formulate and implement with any great degree of autonomy and effectiveness, their own 'custom-made' policy options. Implicit in the assertions is the suggestion of the growth and development of internationalised economic and education policy that compels nation states and higher education practitioners to 'conform' through the allocation of funds, the structuring and dissemination of statistics with accrued and incremental status and acknowledgement, the possible application of sanctions, and the spectre of relegation to the lower ranks of the global higher education arena. In this view OECD and the World Bank (discussed below) achieve a hegemonic status in regard to policy formulation and in some instances, implementation.

When it comes to Africa, one of the most influential social actors in regard to policy is the World Bank. In the late 50s and 60s when most African countries gained their independence, higher education institutions, as inherited from their former colonial 'masters' were largely intact infrastructurally. Cause for concern though, was the human capital that would be required to ensure the continuity of the academe over time. Accordingly, during this time it was believed that the most important task was to ensure that higher education in Africa was properly skilled, and human resource development or "manpower planning" thus occupied a central place in World Bank policies on lending (Samoff and Carrol 2006: 133).

Barely a decade later and aligned to the strong emergence of neoliberal philosophy, there was a discernible shift to the use of rate of return analysis as a central lending criteria and assessment tool. Rate of return analysis measured the cost per student, against the perceived benefit of the educational investment for society. Put bluntly, the rate of return policy demanded optimum return on investment, in purely financial terms. Compared to basic education, producing university graduates is an expensive exercise. Furthermore, once qualified, graduates have a personal benefit that is a marketable commodity and that can be transferred out of Africa, which under such circumstances would render the expense incurred in their production wasted and of little benefit to the socio-economic development of their country. In such instances, there would be no return, or value for money (Samoff and Carrol 2006: 133 - 134).

In light of this criteria and given the neoliberal push for decreased state spending, increased student fees and privatisation, the World Bank (and the IMF) felt that more value would be gained from channelling lending to basic education, which would not only provide the foundation for further education and socio-economic development, but would also ensure that the benefits remained in the country. It must also be said that this policy direction was supported by global calls and commitments for a basic education for all (including females), which thus lent it credence and authority. Accordingly, World Bank lending shifted its focus to basic education, with deleterious consequences for higher education. Samoff and Carrol (2006:135) provide the following harsh critique:

> …as the World Bank assigned high priority to spending on basic education, it told everyone - from its own operations staff to other funding agencies, to African governments, to non-governmental

organizations - that higher education was too costly, too inequitable and marginal to national development goals. Accordingly resources were to be redirected from higher education to basic education. Decay was the result.

This view is corroborated in the so-called Blair Report: *Our Common Interest* (2005:27) which asserts that the IMF and the World Bank took little account of how these policies would potentially impact on poor people in Africa.

As African nation states grappled with a wide variety of competing socio-economic and financial demands, education assumed an increasingly lower priority in regard to state spending, and it has suffered accordingly. Although most African governments subsidise students to some extent, very little funding is provided for infrastructure and other resources. Up to 80 % of African education spending, for example, goes on teachers' salaries (Blair Report 2005:58) leaving a mere 20 % to service other vital education needs and requirements such as building maintenance, the purchase of textbooks, accommodation for students and other education resources.

Although foreign aid does not represent a significant amount of most African governments' education budgets, its lure lies in the fact that it may only be utilised for discretionary allocations and not for recurring education costs. It has therefore become common practice throughout Africa, that education and development initiatives that offer the prospect of national and global relevance are funded by foreign aid. Over time this has not only increased dependence on foreign aid, but it has also made borrowers increasingly susceptible and subordinate to the borrowing terms and consequently, the policy determinants of the lending agencies (Samoff and Carrol 2006: 139 - 144). The World Bank is arguably the most prolific lender. This is also problematic in that it has engendered over time a focus and reliance amongst African states on education facilities, resources and programmes rather than on content and learning, some increasingly argue, at the expense of learning, which ultimately lies at the foundation of education (Samoff and Carrol 2006: 147). This has impacted on the quality of education and graduates.

Although the foregoing discussions clearly indicate that a significant matrix of trends and influences are impacting on higher education, speculation must arise as to the extent of World Bank influence in this regard. Samoff and Carrol (2006:147) assert:

> ….three metaphors predominate in World Bank writing about education: investment (for which the tools of investment banking are appropriate), production (with efficiency as the principal focus), and delivery systems (with attention to the nature and characteristics of service provision). All three relegate learning to a subordinate, dependent role, or ignore it entirely. In part this orientation reflects the difficulties in quantifying learning. In part learning's lower priority is a manifestation of the tension between a bank's preference for precision and certainty and the fact that learning is locally contingent and continually renegotiated…

There is general agreement that by the late 1990s higher education in Africa was in crisis. An example of this collapse is the well known case of Makerere University which exhibited in extreme form the resource constraints facing universities throughout Africa in the 1990s (Musisi and Muwanga 2003: 10).

Inevitably, the ill-informed direction of education finances and the sustained neglect of learning in favour of efficiencies, must impact on education quality. The current trend towards the re-introduction and regulation of quality in all of its facets, in higher education tends to support this assertion. However when it comes to Africa, a recurring theme in many World Bank analyses seems to be that countries need to choose between growth and quality; each is seen as an obstacle to the other (Samoff and Carrol 2006: 148). Implicit in this view I believe, is a continued colonial mindset that assumes to know what is best for Africa, the dismissal of African culture as an impediment to the kind of economic policy that works so well for the West, and the belief that African nations must, and in fact will, choose an alternative that will provide a lesser outcome than that which Western countries enjoy. This relegates Africa to a subordinate position and assumes that Africa will find it acceptable. Equally, the ongoing educational disarray that prevails in most African countries provides the basis for the continued educational hegemony and elitism of the developed nations and in so doing continues to bedevil meaningful and sustained educational and socio-economic growth and development on the continent.

Obviously countries that seek to borrow money will be more constrained by World Bank lending requirements than those who do not, but there is a more insidious level of influence that affects all higher education institutions, that is, the prolific amounts of education research and publications commissioned and released by the World Bank (World Bank). These include the annual *World Development Report*; statistical

surveys and analyses on education, reviews on any number of development issues and domains and impressive bank studies, which are regarded as authoritative sources and quoted extensively. Thus the influence of the World Bank can be seen to extend beyond its lending function to the extent that it influences and indeed informs not only global higher education policy and practice, but also literature. Mundy (2007:27) asserts:

> The World Bank became not only the largest single financer of international educational development, but also its most powerful ideologue and regulator, ready to propagate a new view of how public education should be organized that conformed more closely to neoliberalism than to the ideal that had developed in the industrialized world between 1945 and 1975.

The OECD, the World Bank, the IMF and UNESCO are demonstrably powerful role players and stakeholders in global higher education and as such they wield significant influence on higher education policy and by extension, higher education practice. The extent of this influence is evident not only in the increasing global uniformity of higher education policy, but also in its neoliberal orientation and practice.

2.4 GLOBAL TRENDS AND INFLUENCES IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Although there have been numerous trends in higher education since the second World War that have impacted on and influenced higher education to some degree, there have been some major trends that have had a fundamental and irreversible impact on the nature of higher education and its delivery. This section will examine some of those trends.

2.4.1 Globalisation and Internationalisation

Probably the most significant post war influence on our global society has been the veritable 'explosion' of Information Communication Technologies, or, ICTs. There is hardly an aspect of our lives and our living that has not been influenced to some extent by this phenomenon. Its influence has been so pervasive that is has contributed to, and it could be argued, driven a growing global interdependence across a whole spectrum of spheres, including for example, the socio-economic, political, technological, socio-cultural, educational and labour spheres. This global interdependence, exchange, interaction and circulation of economics, politics,

technologies, thoughts and ideas has been termed *globalisation* and knowledge production is at the forefront as the foremost driver of global growth and transformation.

Some, such as Held and McGrew (2002) assert that globalisation is a myth, with the real political agenda being the creation of a global market that furthers capitalism, Americanisation and neoliberalism. This view has credence when one considers that the collapse of communism, the unification of East and West Germany and the fragmentation of the USSR in the 1980s resulted in the dissolution of any meaningful opposition to the capitalistic, market-driven agenda of the USA, thus providing space over the ensuing decades for the sustained growth, promotion and development of neoliberal ideology. However, while there is undeniably some truth in this view, it is probable that the factors that have contributed to the phenomenon of globalisation have become so comprehensive and intertwined that it is difficult to isolate a single agenda as the genuine impetus for globalisation. What cannot be denied is that there is an increasing interdependency between different nations' economies and societies and that globalisation as a phenomenon has legitimacy in all forms of discourse. As stated at the Universal Forum on Cultures (2004) in the Global University Network for Innovation (GUNI) (2008: xxx):

> Globalisation is not news anymore. Globalisation *is* (my emphasis) the current state of the world. In times of globalisation, human rights are – and will continue to be – the main challenge and the major aim of society and governments worldwide.   And the path to be taken is education. This is surely the most important assertion that can be taken from the debates.

In keeping with the neoliberal, capitalistic framework of globalisation, profit (the market) is the primary driver and increasingly national economies are being subsumed into a global economy whose fluidity and flexibility facilitate the sourcing of labour, technology and raw materials from countries that can provide such requirements most cost effectively. However, Evans (1995: 16/2) observes that "Globalization presents nations with a dilemma: they access the world, but the world invades them." This observation speaks to another acknowledged outcome of globalisation, namely, cultural homogenisation and the so-called 'Americanisation' of less powerful nation states (as mentioned above) accompanied by their continued economic subordination

and ongoing impoverishment. This is substantiated by Gabel and Bruner in Coulby and Zambeta (2005:8).

In this view, rather than free up the world economy to the benefit of all its citizens, globalisation has in fact facilitated and advanced the power and prosperity of the few, at the expense one could argue, of the many. Sawyerr (2004: 5) asserts the 'myth' of the inevitability of the neoliberal agenda and highlights its profound impact on contemporary life and development. More particularly, he intimates that globalisation's negative impact on the typically marginalised and dependent states has contributed to the destabilisation and/or collapse of many national economies in Africa, in so doing, plunging all institutions, including higher education, into crisis. This view is supported by Diarra (2004: 122).

When it comes to higher education, those governments who are able to utilise the knowledge economy to its fullest extent are able to reap its rewards and exert concomitant measures of power and influence. Those higher education institutions whose governments are wealthy and powerful remain the most influential, as evidenced in the various university ratings, discussed briefly below. Add to this influences such as the world-wide recession, the general decline in state funding and ever growing demands for access, affordability and flexibility from a student corps whose profile, identity and needs are changing fundamentally, then it is not surprising that universities the world over find themselves under pressure and in a constant state of flux that one could argue, is impacting on their core identities.

Globalisation has been accompanied by a process of internationalisation in higher education. This implies amongst others, that students are in effect, free to become global scholars and that knowledge and expertise may be bought, sold or shared across borders. Many scholars believe that globalisation and internationalisation are one and the same, but Knight (2003:33) argues that while globalisation entails the flow of technology, economy, knowledge, people, values, and ideas across borders, it is a process that impacts on internationalisation. Internationalisation is changing the world of education and globalisation is changing the world of internationalisation.

This view is supported by the UNESCO/OECD Guidelines for Quality Provision in Cross-Border Higher Education (UNESCO/OECD 2005), which defines cross border higher education as:

> .....higher education that takes place in situations where the teacher, student, programme, institution/provider or course materials cross national jurisdictional borders. Cross-border education may include higher education by public/private and not-for-profit providers. It encompasses a wide range of modalities in a continuum from face-to-face (taking various forms from students travelling abroad and campuses abroad) to distance learning (using a range of technologies and including e-learning).

These definitions clearly encapsulate the significant effects of globalisation on higher education and speak to the many challenges faced by higher education providers in the 21st Century. What is evident is that globalisation is both driving and facilitating increased global access to higher education through internationalisation. The importance of this cannot be underestimated, because in so doing it has removed education from the purview of the upper and middle classes of the developed world, and placed it firmly into the international domain, thus increasing higher education access and participation throughout the world to all classes, and contributing to the massification of higher education. Education is no longer the preserve of the elite, and various modes of education delivery, particularly ODL, are opening up access even further. However, while internationalisation may have increased opportunities for the acquisition of new knowledge and skills, and the exchange of scholars and faculty, there are also inherent risks (particularly for countries in the developing world), associated with the commodification of knowledge and hegemonic practices arising from international monopolies and the inability to compete on equal terms. These risks pertain amongst others, to educational marginalisation and decay, dependence on external sources of funding and assistance, the subordination or loss of indigenous knowledge systems, a decline in research, and the brain-drain.

In the light of the above discussion it is clear that the socio-economic and political strategies adopted by governments who are competing in the global economy, are impacting increasingly on the provision of higher education. The report, *Third Stream Income at South African Universities* (2009:11) lists some of these strategies as:

- "tighter state steering in which the state uses a variety of steering mechanisms to direct and 'enforce' the implementation of policy;

- the notion of the Developmental State in which public higher education is subordinate to and in service of the state;

- market forces which influence the kinds of qualifications and graduates that higher education institutions need to produce to meet socio-economic demands, and which impact on the research profiles and curricula of higher education institutions;

- the 'mismatch' between the graduates that higher education institutions are currently producing and what is required in the market place;

- declining staff numbers as a result of poor salaries, a lack of attention to professional development and a disregard of the importance of teaching as a profession; and

- a reduction in public funding that has seen third-stream income become a growing reality. In South Africa for example, it is estimated that the average South African university now gets more than a quarter of its income from third stream sources."

There is general acceptance world-wide, that education is a primary driver and catalyst of socio-economic development (UNESCO 1998: 1). It could therefore be argued that education must willingly or unwillingly, take some degree of direction from the state. Probably one of the most obvious examples of this is the drive in many countries to produce more students in science and technology to support the growing knowledge economy, to the extent that a growing number of states have set enrolment targets in these disciplines. Where the capping of student numbers is exercised, enrolment targets that favour one discipline are likely to do so at the expense of another and so it is that there has been a noticeable decline in registrations in the humanities in the interests of more marketable qualifications (Moore 1994:188).
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Although there continue to be dissenting voices in the ongoing globalisation debate, there is overwhelming evidence that globalisation has changed fundamentally, and is continuing to change, international relations and relationships and similarly, higher education practice. Probably one of the most widely acknowledged consequences of

globalisation for higher education is the ongoing demand for access to higher education, which has manifested in the massification of higher education.

2.4.2 Massification

In his speech at the World Conference on Higher Education (UNESCO 1998:1) Dr Kenneth Edwards, President of the Association of European Universities, encapsulated the central challenges confronting higher education as:

- "The massification of higher education with numbers of young people entering universities and increasing participation of people of all ages in lifelong learning. This market trend towards mass higher education reflects both the increased demand from potential students and the recognition of the need of societies for a skilled and well educated population.

- The greater expectations of governments and societies of the contributions which universities can make to the economic, social and cultural development of these societies."

The most tangible evidence of the massification of higher education can be found in tertiary growth, enrolment and graduation statistics, which reflect significant and continued growth. On the one hand this provides affirmation of efforts to broaden globally, access to higher education, and on the other hand it confirms the influence of the knowledge economy as the foremost driver of globalisation. One would expect that the developing world would benefit from the generation of newly qualified graduates, but the growing porousness of national and international borders, as well as statistics on student mobility and the brain-drain tend to indicate that thus far education gains for the developing world and particularly sub-Saharan Africa remain negligible.

Globally, in 2004, 132 million students were enrolled in tertiary education, up from 68 million in 1991(UNESCO 2006: 21). Most recent statistics indicate that globally, there were almost 153 million tertiary students worldwide in 2007, a 53% increase since 2000 and a fivefold increase in less than 40 years. This expansion has been particularly intense since 2000, with 51.7 million new tertiary students enrolled around the world in just seven years (UNESCO 2009:10). The pace of growth in tertiary enrolments has also increased. It is estimated that over the last two decades

global growth in tertiary enrolments has averaged at 5.1%, per annum while in Africa, this percentage is 8.7% (World Bank 2008:11). The demand for higher education is predicted to expand from 97 million students in 2000 to over 262 million students by 2025 (UNESCO 2009:10).

Student enrolments in East Asia and the Pacific have risen twelve-fold, from 3.9 million in 1970 to 46.7 million in 2007, and since 2000, the number has grown by an average of 10% each year. After the year 2000, the region became the global leader in terms of student numbers, surpassing North America and Western Europe. This is primarily due to China, where the student body has grown on average by almost 19% each year since 2000. There can be no doubt about the impact that China is making on higher education. What took 37 years to achieve in sub-Saharan Africa in terms of student numbers, occurred in recent years on average every two years in China, or five years in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO 2009: 10).

Sub-Saharan Africa has experienced the highest average regional growth rate. For more than three decades, student numbers have risen by an average of 8.6% each year. Between 2000 and 2005, expansion peaked with an annual growth rate reaching 10%. Yet, despite this achievement, the region still lags behind other regions in terms of total tertiary student numbers. Recent statistics suggest that there are 20 times more students in sub-Saharan Africa than there were in 1970, with an additional 3.9 million (UNESCO 2009:10).

North America and Western Europe have evidenced the slowest rate of change, probably as a consequence of historically high participation ratios and declining birth rates since the 1970s. Recent statistics suggest that the number of tertiary students in the region is 1.6 times that of 1970 (UNESCO 2009:11).

When making regional comparisons, it is interesting to note the time required for student numbers to double. According to average growth rates reported since 1970, this occurred every 27 years in North America and Western Europe compared to 8.4 years in sub-Saharan Africa and 9.3 years in the Arab States. Student numbers doubled every 10 years in East Asia and the Pacific as well as in Latin America and the Caribbean. Again, the growth rate has been slower in South and West Asia, where it took 13.6 years for student numbers to double (UNESCO 2009: 11).

What these statistics reveal is a decided shift in the distribution of the world's tertiary education students. In 1970 almost every second tertiary student in the world studied in North America or Western Europe, but recent figures indicate that it is now just one out of four students. This means that their regional share of global enrolment is now one-half of what it used to be, falling from 48% to 23% between 1970 and 2007. On the other hand, East Asia and the Pacific's share of global tertiary education students now exceeds 30% of global enrolment (which is up from 14% in 1970) and the share of enrolment in Latin America and the Caribbean doubled from 6% to 12% between 1970 and 2007. Although the growth was low in comparison, the share in South and West Asia increased from 10% to 12% in the same period (UNESCO 2009: 13).

From my own cursory analysis, these data indicate that the 'balance of power' in terms of tertiary student enrolment has moved decisively from the combined 'north' (or the developed nations) which previously enrolled two out of every four students (now one out of every four), to the developing nations which collectively enroll 3 out of every four students, representing an approximate 25%: 75% ratio. This provides clear evidence of the impact of increased access to higher education, and portends difficult challenges around quality higher education provision in a harsh socio-economic environment.

The shift in the global distribution of tertiary students is also apparent when grouping countries by their national income levels. Today, a great majority of tertiary students live in low-and middle-income countries while just three decades ago the opposite held true: the majority of students lived in the small group of high-income countries. In 1970, 57% of tertiary students were from high-income countries even though these nations accounted for only one-fifth of the global population within the tertiary age range. The shift was apparent by the 1990s when the pace of enrolment accelerated in lower middle-income countries. In 2007, these countries accounted for 42% of tertiary students compared to 22% in 1970. Nonetheless, low-income countries cannot sustain the same pace of expansion, causing their share of tertiary enrolment to grow more slowly than their share in population (UNESCO 2009:13).

While enrolment ratios are indicating decisive new trends, participation continues to reflect more traditional patterns, with high participation continuing in the developed

world. However there can be no doubt that participation rates are on the march in the developing world, and once again China is the leader of the pack, contributing substantially to figures that are up from a mere 3% in 1970 to a very significant 26% in 2007 (UNESCO 2009 :14).

Participation rates in higher education (UNESCO 2009:14) are indicated as follows:

- North America and Western Europe, reaching 71% in 2007.
- Central and Eastern Europe have a relatively high participation rate of 62%.
- Latin America and the Caribbean reached 34% in 2007.
- In East Asia and the Pacific, the participation rate rose from 3% in 1970 to 26% in 2007.
- As noted earlier, the number of tertiary students in sub-Saharan Africa has dramatically increased since 1970. But actual progress is tempered by population growth. Over the same period, the 'tertiary age group' population has grown by an average annual rate of 3%. Consequently, participation rates only rose from 0.8% to 5.6% during this period.

At the same time public funding for tertiary education has declined in real terms, especially in low-income African countries (who have ironically experienced the higher enrolment rates) and despite the acknowledged GDP growth on the continent in recent years. In Sub-Saharan Africa for example, GDP growth for the period 2002 - 2007 accelerated to an average 6.0 % (UNESCO 2006: 20), but tertiary public financing, which averaged US$6 800 per student annually in 1980, dropped to US$981 in 2005 for 33 low-income countries (World Bank 2008:11).

The massification of higher education has meant that higher education nowadays is obliged to deal with every conceivable computation of learners with very diverse ranges of needs and demands. Higher education as we know it is changing rapidly to accommodate a new virtual society whose needs and demands can no longer be accommodated fully in traditional ways.

Technology has both generated, and has the potential to meet these diverse needs and demands, increasingly through ODL, whatever its form and shape. Side-by-side with, and aligned to the technological evolution and the various demarcated 'generations' of students discussed in 2.4.2.1, changes have also been discernible in regard to their

movements in relation to their places of study. It is important to take cognisance of these characteristics and patterns of mobility as they provide valuable information for use in the correct choice of learning technologies, courseware development, teaching and learning, and learner support. The evolving characteristics and mobility of students is discussed briefly below.

2.4.2.1 The changing student profile

Succeeding waves or 'generations' of students have been identified, particularly in the West, whose characteristics to a greater extent reflect the technological and socio-economic development of the developed world and to a lesser extent, the emerging economies (such as China).

It should be remembered that although there are pockets of first world development amongst developing nations (including the African Continent) to which the American and European generational characteristics might apply, it would be incorrect to generalise the characteristics to a global population. Significant disparities exist in student cultures, characteristics and challenges, between the developed and developing nations and these should be taken into account in determining the most appropriate model and methods of higher education delivery.

Literature appears to identify seven main generations linked to specific time periods, although the nomenclature and time periods can and do differ slightly. Mastrodicasa (2007:3) identifies these as follows:

- Lost Generation (born 1883-1900)

- GI Generation (born 1901-24)

- Silent Generation (born 1925-42)

- The Boom Generation (born 1943-60)

- Generation X (born 1961-81)

- Millennials (born 1982-now)

Given the relevance and time span of this study only the most recent generation will be considered, namely, the *Millennials*, also commonly known as *Generation Y*.

Howe and Strauss (2000:9) provide seven unique characteristics of Generation Y as follows: special; sheltered; confident; conventional; team-oriented; achieving and pressured. These are supported by Broadbridge, Maxwell and Ogden (2007: 523-544) whose key signifiers for the Millennials include being independent, well educated, confident, upbeat, open-minded, sociable, technically-literate, adverse to slowness, highly informed, and 'likely to rock the boat'.

When it comes to differences between the various generations and their conduct in the classroom, Coates (2007:4) asserts that while Boomers like to be in charge of their own learning and the Generation Xers prefer to work independently with self-directed projects, Generation Y is in some ways very traditional and prefers learning that provides interaction with their colleagues. They enjoy reading, although they are completely comfortable with technology. They value interpersonal skills and are polite, well mannered, moral and civic minded. They regard education as an important means to making money, which is a priority for them.

I am of the view that a number of observations and lessons can be derived from the above characterisation. Firstly, the role of the lecturer (or faculty) is changing. Where "the traditional teaching paradigm, prevalent in higher education for many years, focused on the role of instructor as the 'sage-on-the-stage' who disseminated knowledge through lectures and PowerPoint slides," (Skiba and Barton 2006:1), the changing paradigm requires a type of instruction that is more facilitatory and less instructional in nature. I would suggest that this seeming erosion of the traditional role and function of educators may in fact be a contributing factor to the exodus of educators out of the profession and the worryingly low uptake of education students. It is possible that those who see teaching as a calling and who thrive on the face-to-face interaction with their students may feel slightly alienated by their students' increasing independence, and by the reduction of the close interaction and supervision that characterises traditional methods of teaching. I would further suggest that this sense of alienation may well be exacerbated by the rising tide of managerialism in higher education institutions (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2).

Millennial students are more hands-on, independent and self-motivated (Broadbridge et al 2007: 523-544) and accordingly, experiential and interactive learning should deliver better results. Many traditional, face-to-face higher education institutions are

struggling to adjust or adapt traditional teaching methods to a student corps whose lived experience is very different from their classroom experience, and it could be argued that in this regard ODL has an advantage over face-to-face institutions, given that ODL faculty largely play a facilitatory role and that ODL students must be able to work independently and in a focused, proactive and disciplined manner.

Given the above, I would suggest that ODL is particularly well placed to accommodate changing higher education dynamics. Many ODL institutions such as Unisa, already incorporate experiential, or work integrated learning (WIL) (aligned to students' qualifications), as well as study groups or learning communities which can be in the form of interactive web sites such as Facebook or individual institutions' dedicated student websites. ODL courseware is developed in an innovative and creative manner and is often at the cutting edge of higher education courseware and content development. A variety of technologies are employed to communicate with and teach students, and to provide effective support and assistance to facilitate learning (Unisa 2008: 27).

A further characteristic of ODL is that it requires its students to be independent, organised, proactive and disciplined, all of which typify Millennials. ODL provides education without the constraints of time and location, and as such it suggested that it has a growing role to play in higher education provision to an education-hungry world that is characterised by a diverse and constantly changing student population.

In more recent literature and articles, for example, Tapscott (2008: 15-16) mention has been made of the so-called Z generation, the next generation, which comprises children born in the First World between the mid 1990s and the late 2000s. These are children who have been born and are growing up in a technology-rich and sophisticated environment. They have in effect, cut their teeth on technology. Given their relative youth, one can but speculate as to their future relationship with technology in a world that is becoming increasingly dominated by environmental issues and a growing imperative towards social responsibility, common values and ethical considerations. I am of the view that in a world where sophisticated technology is the norm, technology may lose some of its thrall and lustre for generation Z students who are likely to regard it merely as a means to an end. The impact of such a paradigm shift (which may feasibly be aligned with the emergence of

a new social order) on education is difficult to imagine given the current fluid and quite volatile nature of international political dynamics.

There is another group of students who do not follow the traditional educational route and who may be classed as 'non traditional learners'. Many of these are students who cannot afford to attend university immediately after completing their schooling, who by dint of personal circumstance (for example, family obligations or single parenting) have to work full-time and cannot attend university, who are entirely dependent on financial aid to fund their education, who enter into higher education at a later stage in life, and who lack the appropriate entrance requirements or qualifications to gain entrance to face-to-face, or contact, universities. This is supported by Oblinger and Oblinger (2005:2).

Considering the diverse student profile of Unisa (2010 : 15- 16), which is not only the largest ODL institution on the African continent, but one of the mega distance institutions in the world, there is probably a very significant group of students, especially those in developing nations, whose domicile (lack of proximity to any higher education facility) precarious financial circumstances, historical disadvantage, lack of support, fragmented schooling, lack of exposure to higher education, lack of exposure to technology, and language constraints similarly preclude them from attending university full-time or at an early age. Furthermore, given the plethora of constraints faced by such non traditional learners, it is reasonable to assume that they will be less likely than full-time students, to succeed or persist with their education over the longer term. It seems logical that such learners are also likely to gravitate to those institutions that have the will and the means to accommodate them and provide them with appropriate levels of support.   ODL, with its flexibility and inbuilt support systems, provides an attractive option for such learners and indeed, if Unisa is used as an example, this assertion has proven to be valid.

The evidence and argument provided above attest to the influential role of the student profile in higher education. In addition, student mobility has emerged as an influential trend that is impacting on higher education globally and concomitantly, the socio-economic development of many poor nations through phenomena such as the brain-drain and the commodification of knowledge. This will be discussed briefly below.

2.4.2.2 Student mobility

Increased attention to the phenomenon of student mobility in recent times can be ascribed to the increasing internationalisation of higher education as a result of globalisation, which has resulted in growing numbers of students electing to study at higher education institutions in foreign countries. While some students are motivated by the desire to travel and attend what they perceive to be quality universities of international repute, others are driven by the absence or poor quality of higher education institutions in their own countries. It can be assumed that most, if not all such students believe that they will receive a benefit from studying abroad that is superior to that which they could receive at home.

However, while individual students may benefit from studying abroad, the socio-economic impact on their home countries can be severe and even debilitating. Many students do not return home, which exacerbates the related phenomenon of the brain-drain of qualified people leaving for 'greener pastures' and contributes to the chronic lack of national growth and development. Host countries on the other hand, derive significant benefits in the form of student fees (for example), to the extent that some countries, including the United Kingdom, budget funds to campaign actively for foreign students as a means of generating foreign income. In the article entitled *UK Universities plan to become world leaders in on-line distance learning* (PublicTechnology.net 2009 :1) reference is made to the announcement by the Higher Education Minister David Lammy, of the creation of a new task force to ensure that UK universities become the first choice across the world for on-line distance learning:

> It will be backed by a new Open Learning Innovation Fund aimed at helping universities build on their existing world class reputations to access and engage future markets that are expected to value around 15b in the future.

In this view education has truly become a commodity. A further unfortunate consequence of student mobility is the entrenching of the North/ South educational divide that is reflected quite clearly in the global participation rates discussed under 2.4.2 above.

There has been a dramatic increase in the number of mobile students. In 2007, over 2.8 million students were enrolled in educational institutions outside of their country of origin. This represents 123,400 more students than in 2006, an increase of 4.6%.

The global number of mobile students has grown by 53% since 1999 (with an average annual increase of 5.5%), and by 2.5 times since 1975 with an average annual increase of 11.7% throughout this period (UNESCO 2009:36).

China sends the greatest number of students abroad, amounting to almost 421,100. The other major countries of origin are: India (153,300), the Republic of Korea (105,300), Germany (77,500), Japan (54,500), France (54,000), the United States (50,300), Malaysia (46,500), Canada (43,900) and the Russian Federation (42,900). These ten countries account for 75% of the world's mobile students, reported by 153 host countries with such data (UNESCO 2009:36).

The United States hosts the largest number and share of the world's mobile students at 595,900 and 21.3% respectively. This is followed by the United Kingdom (351,500), France (246,600), Australia (211,500), Germany (206,900), Japan (125,900), Canada (68,500), South Africa (60,600), the Russian Federation (60,300) and Italy (57,300). These 11 countries host 71% of the world's mobile students, with 62% of them studying in the top six countries (UNESCO 2009: 37). However, the global share of mobile students has largely remained the same at approximately 1.8%. Globally, student mobility has kept apace with student enrolment (UNESCO 2009: 37).

The aforementioned statistics indicate quite clearly the dramatic global growth in mobility. While the mobility patterns attest to the ongoing internationalisation of higher education, they also speak to the continued dominance of Western education models and concomitantly, neoliberalism. Until such time as alternative education options of equal or similar status are offered by countries of origin, the hegemonic status of neoliberlaism and Western education is likely to continue.

However, given the emerging dominance in enrolments of developing nations, it is likely that this hegemonic status may come under ever increasing pressure and that new partnerships forged between developing nations (for example, South-South partnerships such as the India, Brazil and South Africa (IBSA) partnership (and more recently the addition of China to those three) may see the faster emergence of new power bases that will be able to challenge in a more viable manner, the dominance of Western neoliberal models and Western canon.

While the above mentioned discussion and statistics provide affirmation of the massification of higher education, they also highlight the changing profile of students and the disparities in enrolments between the North and the South that are mirrored in the socio-economic status of the two hemispheres. Similar disparities are evidenced in higher education research, and will be discussed below.

2.4.3   The changing face of research

Traditionally, research universities are dedicated generators of new knowledge and Ph.Ds, which are vital for the social and economic development of any country. This role has gained prominence and influence in the globalised knowledge society. However, the ongoing influence and impact of technology as a driver of the knowledge economy and the increasing and cumulative sophistication of its various applications across an array of fields has contributed to a growing link between, and focus on, science and research. The types of research required to support the growth and development of the globalised world are extremely costly and have given rise to a relatively small and select, but highly influential group of universities whose funding streams are diverse, whose focus and reach are global and whose aim is to produce innovative, cutting edge research. These universities have been named the *Emerging Global Model* (EGM) research institutions by Mohrman, Wanhua and Baker (2007:1).

In the view of Mohrman et al (2007: 146), EGM research universities are characterised by an intensity of research that far exceeds past experience, as well as worldwide competition for students, faculty, staff and funding. With the EGM universities, everyone is expected to conduct research, with professors being evaluated in part, on their success in getting external funding for scholarship, and on the publication of research results. Research projects are often global rather than national in reach, and they look beyond the boundaries of the countries in which they are located to define a transnational scope and sometimes, impact.

Mohrman et al (2007: 146) further assert that research in an EGM university is meant to have a high impact on disciplines, as well as on larger concerns in the production of the good society globally. In this view, higher education, and especially the EGM institution, is a key driver of managed socio-economic development and progress. By aligning the role of the research university with the neoliberal view of education as a

marketable commodity, the EGM University creates a new dynamic around the role and influence of research as a directed, saleable commodity. Although there are only a few dozen fully developed EGM universities, they are the institutions that head virtually every list of leading universities world-wide. EGM Universities include Harvard, Cambridge, Stanford, California-Berkley, MIT, Caltech, Columbia, Princeton, Chicago, Oxford, Yale and Cornell.

Table 2.2 below reflects the top 20 universities globally, as derived from a study by Times Higher Education and QS Top Universities (2009), and clearly demonstrates the pre-eminence of universities in the northern hemisphere. These findings are supported and to a large extent echoed by the *Shanghai Jiao Tong* rankings which compare and evaluate universities on the basis of six quantitative criteria, with the main emphasis being on research.

Table 2.2   The world's top universities

The world's top universities			
2009 Rank	2008 Rank	School Name	Country
SOURCE: THES, QS			
1	1	HARVARD University	United States
2	3	University of CAMBRIDGE	United Kingdom
3	2	YALE University	United States
4	7	UCL (University College London)	United Kingdom
5	6	IMPERIAL College London	United Kingdom
5	4	University of OXFORD	United Kingdom
7	8	University of CHICAGO	United States
8	12	PRINCETON University	United States
9	9	MASSACHUSETTS Institute of Technology (MIT)	United States
10	5	CALIFORNIA Institute of Technology (Caltech)	United States
11	10	COLUMBIA University	United States
12	11	University of PENNSYLVANIA	United States
13	13	JOHNS HOPKINS University	United States
14	13	DUKE University	United States
15	15	CORNELL University	United States
16	17	STANFORD University	United States
17	16	AUSTRALIAN National University	Australia
18	20	MCGILL University	Canada
19	18	University of MICHIGAN	United States
20	24	ETH Zurich (Swiss Federal Institute of Technology)	Switzerland
20	23	University of EDINBURGH	United Kingdom

The rankings indicate overwhelmingly that the top 13 Universities are in North America with the remainder in the United Kingdom (5), Zurich (1) and Australia (1). There are none from developing nations. Although the ranking of higher education institutions remains highly contentious and notwithstanding the fact that different

criteria are used in their compilation, the close correlation of results across the various rankings speaks to the generally perceived and accepted status of the rankings as a measure of excellence and performance among higher education institutions, as well as their relative status in the global higher education domain. The rankings also serve to highlight the significant divide between the North and the South, and the difficulty faced by the vast majority of other universities in competing in any meaningful way, against the top performers. This view is supported by Badat (2010:1).

Virtually all of the research conducted by these institutions tends to employ scientific methods of enquiry, even in disciplines outside of the sciences. Geiger cited in Mohrman et al (2007:146) asserts that at the heart of the EGM is an expansion of the older functions of teaching, research, and service into an organisation that can best be described as a "knowledge conglomerate."

Pau cited in Mohrman et al (2007:151) explains that much of the funding for this type of research comes from the private sector and a large number of the research projects are in fact done in partnership with business, to the extent that many EGM institutions, through their partnerships and funding, conduct specific types of research for their funders alone. This indicates that in this model, research has moved beyond the goal of knowledge acquisition in the purer academic sense, to the commissioned acquisition of specified kinds of knowledge for the purpose of exploiting their global applicability and marketability. It can therefore be argued that in such cases, the end goal of the research would appear to be money and that a process of "dual integration" exists, in terms of which the traditional system of creating knowledge contests with the new priority of pushing the whole process to the end state of the market.

In this view research and concomitantly, new knowledge , is a tradable commodity in a globalised market. This is supported by the fact that in some EGM universities faculty academics may not teach at all, but are instead engaged to work on contracted projects consulting businesses, research institutes, and governmental agencies. They are busy "commercialising their knowledge" (Pau cited in Mohrman et al 2007:151).

As mentioned above, research implies the creation of new knowledge and where this is absent, stagnation must set in. This is evident in the fact that when compared to

their wealthier cousins in the North, research has become an 'endangered species' at many other institutions, especially the poorer institutions in the developing world, its demise fuelled amongst others, by lacks in infrastructure and funding and a dearth of appropriate skills. The casualties in this decline in research activities are the generation of new knowledge, teaching, knowledge transfer and socio-economic development. Those institutions that cannot, and never will be able to compete with the EGM universities, find themselves at a disadvantage in terms of attracting top researchers and garnering the requisite funding. In addition, they are obliged to live with the ongoing possibility of losing their top researchers to better endowed institutions.

Altbach in Mohrman et al (2007:151) summarises these tensions, asserting the prestige and dominance of "scientific" research over non "scientific" fields of enquiry; the advantage of English speakers over non English speakers when it comes to accessing the most prestigious research publications; the inferior status of teaching in relation to research in the institutional hierarchy; the scorning of more esoteric disciplines and research initiatives in favour of the more practical, fund-generating initiatives that find favour with research partners and government; the inability of nations or institutions with limited financial resources to compete in the very expensive research "game"; the stagnation or decline in currency of higher education institutions or campuses that are not currently research-intensive; the preservation of language and culture not being seen as competitive with those who are discovering new knowledge; the necessity of accepting the methods, norms and values of the universities in Western Europe and north America that currently dominate the system in order to join the international marketplace of ideas, especially in science; and the adherence to established research paradigms, irrespective of whether or not the themes and subject areas of interest to leading scientists are relevant to universities at the periphery.

It appears that there is a widening gulf between the top research institutions and the rest, which is based on wealth and privilege. The research funding provided to state funded universities in developing nations is declining and insufficient for local needs, thus rendering the notion of global competition nonsensical. It could also be argued that the continued dominance and orientation of the sciences in these kinds of

research, is contributing to the declining status of other fields such as the humanities, underscoring the assertions of knowledge hegemony advanced by Ball (2006:15) and Badat (1999:17).

The market orientation of the research underscores the phenomenon of the commodification of knowledge, discussed below, and emphasises the way in which neoliberalism has impacted on all areas of higher education in a linked and interdependent manner.

2.4.4. The commodification of knowledge

The term *commodification of knowledge* implies that knowledge is transformed into consumable commodities such as textbooks, books, software, hardware and a host of other related products with the ultimate aim of generating a profit. Given that knowledge is currently accepted as the foremost driver of the world economy, and viewed from a neoliberal perspective, it is not surprising that the commercial viability of knowledge should become an important economic consideration. Even OERs which are purportedly 'free' are beset amongst others, by ongoing wrangling over licences, patents, password access charges, the vagaries associated with a reliance on private funding, and the generation of new sources before their predecessors have even been tested fully for their usefulness and longer-term efficacy.

Higher education has accordingly become a multinational export industry comparable to tourism, to the extent that it now merits it own category in the General Agreement on Trade and Services (GATS). In GATS, trade in educational services is based on 5 sub-sectors of education as categorized by the United Nations Provisional Central Product Classification (CPC). These sub-sectors are: primary education, secondary education, higher education, adult education and other (UNESCO).

UNESCO provides the rationale for education's inclusion in GATS as follows:

> Trade in higher education is a million dollar business. The demand for higher education, on the one side, is growing, while on the other side, trans-border education (e.g. private or for-profit higher foreign university campuses, IT Academies, twinning arrangements with other universities, corporate universities, virtual universities, open universities, e-universities etc.) is increasing. The capacity of the public sector has not kept up with this demand. This coupled with the

recent developments of ICTs and the ensuing growth in online learning has resulted in the creation of this very lucrative market.

It should be noted however that education overall, is one of the least committed GATS sectors. Only 44 of the 144 World Trade Organisation members have made commitments in education, and only 21 of these have included commitments to higher education: (UNESCO)

Sawyerr (2004:1) reiterates the impacts of globalisation discussed above, and suggests that they have led to a steady shift from the importance of acquiring a particular body of knowledge, to developing the skills for acquiring new knowledge and the capacity for using knowledge as a resource in addressing societal needs. He suggests that demands for new kinds of knowledge, new modes of knowledge production and dissemination, as well as greater possibilities for effective networking and partnership have resulted in a complete transformation of the environment of knowledge institutions such as universities and other higher education organisations.

Universities are being forced to move out of their historical cloisters and into the market place. Education is a service that can be bought and sold, rather than a fundamental human right and a moral and social obligation to every person. Students are called 'clients', we buy and sell intellectual 'property', and those who cannot afford education are largely excluded. Thoughts and ideas which generate transformational knowledge and innovations are patented or copyrighted and sold at the best possible price rather than used for general human edification or wellbeing, or put differently, the 'public good.' In fact, the traditional notion of the university as a public good and the primacy of academic freedom and institutional autonomy are being challenged by the relentless demand for marketable knowledge and skills that will grow economies and make profits. Thus, 'public good' has come to mean a good return on investment. This view is supported by Naidoo (2003: 250).

The commodification of knowledge has far broader implications for higher education than mere financial considerations. Once knowledge enters into the global arena as a commodity, then aspects such as quality come to the fore, and linked directly to this, practices such as benchmarking. Benchmarking would apply not only to courseware content, but also to educational practices, such as teaching and assessment. Pursuing

this line of reasoning, benchmarking and measures of quality would extend to the calibre of graduates produced by higher education institutions, thus impacting on the reputation of both the institutions and their graduates. In line with prevailing practice, the best resourced and most reputable universities will be used as benchmarks (this is supported by the various university rankings as indicated in **Table 2.2** above), thus perpetuating and entrenching the privileged status they already enjoy and possibly establishing quality norms that are beyond the capacity of lesser endowed institutions.

In such an environment, networking and partnerships between higher education institutions also assume a growing significance in terms of the sharing of knowledge, skills and resources, as well as building up a support framework that will assist higher education institutions, especially those in developing nations, to navigate the growing complexities of higher education provision in a globalised world. For many higher education institutions in the developing world, the commodification of knowledge has introduced a plethora of dynamics which, rather than alleviating their already onerous burdens, have added yet another layer of complexity to the pressing demand for higher education provision.

All of the abovementioned trends and dynamics have contributed to the emergence of private higher education providers, which will be discussed very briefly below.

2.4.5 The privatisation of higher education

Currently, private education institutions represent the fastest growing sector world-wide. These institutions range from the for-profit to the quasi-for profit and they currently represent approximately 30% of global higher education enrolments (UNESCO 2009:1). Given the pace of massification and the ongoing demand for access to education, especially from students in developing nations, it is not surprising that the existing infrastructure cannot accommodate the demand (UNESCO 2009:1). In addition, the kinds of skills that are in demand may not necessarily be provided for in many traditional tertiary institutions. Add to this the various generations of students that now need to be educated, the relative inflexibility that characterises many public institutions and the serious reductions in state funding for higher education in many countries following the global recession then it is not surprising

that private education has emerged so strongly. Education is a commodity and private education institutions are trading in that commodity.

One of the more positive developments in addressing the need for increased access to quality higher education and the use of emerging technologies has been the emergence of ODL as an influential force in global higher education provision.

2.5   OPEN AND DISTANCE LEARNING

2.5.1   Distance education

In our modern world distance education can be recorded back as early as 1728 when an advertisement was placed in the Boston Gazette by Caleb Phillips, teacher of the new method of Short Hand as "seeking students for lessons to be sent weekly" (Holmberg 2005:13). One Isaac Pitman taught shorthand via correspondence in Great Britain in the 1840s (Moore and Kearsley 2005:33-36). However, distance education only really began gaining ground in the late 1960s and 1970s, a decade which marked the demise of the welfare state, the advent of a world economic recession and an explosion in the generation of information technology (which continues unabated today). This convergence of circumstances forged an education trend that has impacted on, and revolutionised higher education provision.

In 1971 the Open University of the United Kingdom (OU or "Open University") began teaching its first cohort of 25,000 students (OU 2009:4). (Although Unisa predated the UK Open University by 25 years, it only began modernising its operations post apartheid, more particularly with the restructuring of the higher education landscape occasioned by the NPHE (2001)). By 1980 student numbers at the OU had grown to 70,000 with some 6 000 graduates each year. Currently the OU has more than 180 000 students (OU 2009:4). The OU's obvious success inspired other governments, constrained by recession-related cutbacks in government spending and swayed by the advantages of economies of scale, access and flexibility, to adopt this new model. The OU asserts that the success of Britain's Open University stimulated the development of open universities in other countries, such as America and Japan (OU 1996). This is supported by Gerrity (1976).

Any interrogation of distance education should properly be prefaced by a definition of the concept 'Distance' to enable a clearer understanding of what it is that distinguishes it and makes it so unique and different from the more traditional notions of education. Numerous definitions of distance education have emanated from the various stages of its evolution and over the course of its development, but all definitions are consistent in their assertion of one main characteristic of distance education, and that is that teacher and learner are separate. Keegan (1995:7) (cf. Par. 1.5.1) offers one of the most modern and generic definitions when he asserts that distance education and training result from the technological separation of teacher and learner which frees the student from the necessity of travelling to a "fixed place, at a fixed time, to meet a fixed person, in order to be trained".

What makes distance education so unique and enduring is its flexibility. It is a mode of delivery that constantly reinvents itself and is capable of being adapted to the peculiar circumstance of the institution or country that adopts the model. For example, despite the giant strides that have been made in technology, correspondence systems, which originated at the end of the 19th century are still the most widely used in less developed societies, and yet even in these less developed societies, where sophisticated facilities do exist, they are quite easily harnessed in the service of innovative and creative programmes that enjoy international recognition and endorsement. This reinforces the notion that distance learning is indeed flexible and that its application is constrained only by externally imposed financial constraints or self limiting-mindsets, and perhaps even a reluctance to move out of traditional 'comfort zones' into new territory.

2.5.2   Open and Distance Learning

An analysis of the evolution of distance education indicates four main phases (Moore and Kearsley 2005: 23-24). A closer examination will reveal that each of these phases has coincided more or less, with the evolutionary development of technology at that time. Each phase has been informed by, and derived its organisational form from the predominant mode of communication at that time. This phenomenon continues even today and speaks to three other characteristics of distance education,

that is, its inherent link with and dependence on technology, its evolutionary nature and its ability to adapt to prevailing conditions.

The term *distance education* is now generally regarded as being too restrictive, even outmoded, because of its emphasis on the distance between the teacher and the learner. ODL on the other hand, captures the evolutionary changes to distance education provision brought about by increased access and openness to students of all ages and walks of life, as well as technology and its concomitant systems, and is increasingly the preferred term. The body of ODL learners includes mature learners, post graduate learners, lifelong learners, occasional learners, employed learners, unemployed learners and school leavers.

Moore and Kearsley (2005: 23-24) list the four main phases in the evolution of ODL as follows:

- **Phase 1:**

  "Correspondence systems originated at the end of the nineteenth Century, and are still the most widely used form of distance education in less developed countries. Based around a study guide in printed text and often accompanied by audio and video components such as records and slides, interaction in the correspondence method is by letters and other written or printed documents sent through postal systems

- **Phase 2:**

  This phase is characterised by educational television and radio systems using various delivery technologies (terrestrial, satellite, and cable television and radio) to deliver live or recorded lectures to both individual home-based learners and groups of learners in remote classrooms where some face-to-face support might be provided. Some systems offered limited audio or video-conferencing links back to the lecturer or a moderator at a central point.

- **Phase 3:**

  Multimedia systems encompass text, audio, video, and computer-based materials, and usually some face-to-face learner support delivered to both individuals and groups. In this approach, which is that used by the open universities, instruction is no longer the individual's work, but the work of teams of specialists - media specialists, information specialists, instructional design specialists, and learning specialists. Programmes are prepared for distribution over a large number of learners, usually located across a whole country.

- **Phase 4:**

Internet-based systems in which multi-media (text, audio, video and computer-based) materials in electronic format are delivered to individuals through computers, along with access to databases and electronic libraries, and which enable teacher-student and student-student, one-to-one, one-to-many interactions, synchronously or asynchronously, through e-mail, computer conferences, bulletin boards, etc."

Taylor (2001) makes mention of a 5th generation ODL Model entitled the *Intelligent Flexible Learning Model*, which is based on the 4th generation mentioned above, but which aims to capitalise on the features of the internet and the web. The characteristics of the 5th generation Intelligent Flexible Learning Model can be compared with those of the previously mentioned four generations in summarised form in **Table 2.3**, which includes and reflects some of the characteristics of the quality of teaching and learning (Taylor, 1995) as well as an indicator of institutional variable costs (Taylor, Kemp and Burgess, 1993).

Table 2.3   Models of Distance Education - a Conceptual Framework

Models of Distance Education and Associated Technologies	Characteristics of Delivery Technologies					
	Flexibility			Highly redefined Materials	Advanced Interactive Delivery	Institutional Variable Costs Approaching Zero
	Time	Place	Pace			
FIRST GENERATION **The Correspondence Model** • Print	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
SECOND GENERATION **The Multi-media Model** • Print • Audiotape • Videotape • Computer-based Learning (e.g. CML/CAL/IMM) • Interactive video (disk and tape)	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes Yes	No No No Yes Yes	No No No No No
THIRD GENERATION **The Telelearning Model** • Audioteleconferencing • Videoconferencing • Audiographic communication • Broadcast TV/Radio and Audioteleconferencing	No No No No	No No No No	No No No No	No No Yes Yes	Yes Yes Yes Yes	No No No No

FOURTH GENERATION **The Flexible Learning Model**						
• Interactive Multimedia (IMM) online	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Internet-based access to WWW resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Computer media communication	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
FIFTH GENERATION **The Intelligent Flexible Learning Model**						
• Interactive multimedia (IMM) online	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Internet-based access to WWW resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Computer mediated communication using automated response systems	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
• Campus portal access to institution processes and resources	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

The interpretation and application of ODL differs from country to country. In some countries in the developed world (for example, the USA) ODL is characterised by virtual classrooms, in which teacher and students are able to interact in real-time, via computers. However in the developing world, where students' access to technology is far more limited, where infrastructure may also be limited or even nonexistent, where learners are widely dispersed and often in deep rural areas, and where there may only be access to occasional satellite lectures and contact sessions (depending on their location and financial means), teaching is mostly asynchronous and takes place through the assessment of assignments that are submitted by students (digitally or manually) in line with the requirements of the courseware that is sent to them (also digitally and manually) (Unisa 2008: 306).

Despite the above identification of the various generations of ODL, most ODL institutions continue to utilise systems of delivery that one could call 'cross generational' that is, suited to the particular capacities, constraints and student profiles of the respective countries and institutions. It is this freedom of access and flexibility of ODL that gives it such universal appeal. The evolution and practice of ODL on the African Continent and in South Africa will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.6 CONCLUSION

Taking into consideration the discussions above, it would not be implausible to suggest that in our rapidly changing global environment, there is a disjuncture between prevailing higher education policy and higher education practice. Policy does not appear to have kept pace with changing educational dynamics, and the core business of teaching and learning is currently attempting to accommodate increased demands for access from new and different kinds of learners in a policy environment that was designed with more traditional forms of education in mind. While ongoing attempts are being made to address the situation, technology-driven changes and entirely new innovations such as OERs, are outpacing policy development. Furthermore, the growing global focus on sustainability in all of its forms suggests a possible shift towards a new global social order in which technology will become subordinate to an imperative towards heightened environmental consciousness and increased social responsibility that may be characterised by a global emphasis on human rights and the inculcation of common ethics and values that are associated with ensuring the survival of the planet and some even argue, the human race.

If one accepts that globalisation *is* the state of the world today, and indeed, the evidence in support of such a statement is overwhelming, then any changes to education policy would have to be made with the above mentioned global paradigm in mind, and educationists would need to look at new and innovative ways of ensuring that higher education is responsive to the needs of society in a way that ensures socio-economic development in a far more equitable manner than has hitherto been the case. It is suggested that higher education is at the crossroads of a very significant change which will be marked by an intensification of the current state of flux in global dynamics and which will require creative and innovative higher education policy that has the flexibility to weather short-term fluctuations and the foresight to provide a sound basis for long-term development.

With this in mind, Chapter three will examine higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa and its impact on distance education provision. Unisa, which is the only dedicated distance education provider in South Africa and which enrols just over one-third of all South African students will be used to

demonstrate the difficulties inherent in trying to operate a distance education institution without a distance education policy, in a policy framework that is designed for contact institutions and in a policy environment that is undergoing a significant amount of change and transformation.

CHAPTER 3

3. HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN SOUTH AFRICA AND IMPACT ON DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Worldwide, higher education is being shaped by a number of influential trends that are impacting on the efficiency, quality and traditional role of higher education provision. Some of the most influential trends include globalisation and internationalisation, massification, changing learner demographics and demands, changing management practices, rapid technological development, and the growing role of distance education, which were discussed in Chapter 2.

These trends are fundamentally linked to higher education policy and in this study, it is suggested that globally and nationally, swiftly changing higher education dynamics are outpacing policy development and that consequently there is a disjuncture between prevailing policy and the diverse demands of higher education practice, to the detriment of various aspects of higher education delivery.

It is in this context that ODL comes into its own. Characterised by flexibility and the ability to adapt, ODL provides a viable alternative to contact education in meeting the diverse demands of a changing learning environment, in a more equitable manner than has hitherto been the case.

On the African Continent higher education provision is not only impacted by global trends and influences, but it is also beset by a long legacy of problems that include infrastructure and capacity constraints, problems of access and serious funding constraints, amongst others. ODL is potentially able to accommodate and ameliorate these problems in a manner that offers viable, quality education outcomes. However, ODL functions within the same policy environment as face-to-face, or contact, institutions in Africa and South Africa and has additional and different challenges to face, especially in relation to the peculiar requirements of the ODL mode of delivery and the profile of ODL students.

This chapter will examine higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa and its impact on distance education provision. Unisa, which is the only dedicated distance higher education provider in South Africa and which enrols just over one-third of all South African students, as well as the largest proportion of foreign students on the continent (cf. Par. 3.4.2), will be used to explore the challenges inherent in operating a dedicated distance education institution without a dedicated distance education policy, in a policy environment that has been primarily designed for contact institutions and that itself is undergoing a significant amount of change and transformation

3.2 THE EVOLUTION OF ODL ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT: A BACKGROUND STUDY

The definitions and nomenclature of distance education delivery have changed over the past decades to reflect changing global dynamics and trends and the growing reliance on technology in its delivery and support of its students (cf. Par 2.5.2). The definitions of distance education and ODL as they pertain to this study were provided in 1.5.1. In this section I will discuss ODL in greater depth.

Expanding on CoL's definition of ODL (cf. Par 1.5.1) Unisa (2008: 27) defines ODL as follows:

> ….. a multi-dimensional concept aimed at bridging the time, geographical, economic, social, educational and communication distance between student and institution, student and academics, students and courseware and student and peers. ODL focuses on removing barriers to access learning, flexibility of learning provision, student centredness, supporting students and constructing learning programmes with the expectation that students can succeed.

Unisa's definition of ODL acknowledges the multidimensionality of ODL as per the CoL definition, and it introduces a socio economic dimension and focuses on access and student support. This speaks to the perceived role of ODL as a means of providing access to higher education to a broad and diverse range of students irrespective of their circumstance.

The potential of ODL as an affordable means of higher education and a generator of economic growth and development has long been acknowledged. The World Bank's *Perils and Promise* report (2000:13) asserts:

> Distance learning has great potential in the developing world, offering a powerful channel for bringing education to groups that have previously been excluded. In the future it is almost certain to take place increasingly across borders. Already over 12 percent of the United Kingdom's Open University students are resident outside the country. It is also easy to conceive of high-quality developing country institutions offering educational programs and degrees in other parts of the developing world. While a desirable development, this would create a variety of problems relating to quality control and other forms of supervision.

The veracity of this assertion should not be underestimated, not only in terms of the potential of ODL but also in terms of the challenges in regard to ODL provision in the prevailing policy environment (globally, continentally and nationally), as well as the socio-economic and political conditions in most of the developing world. The most recent gross enrolment ratios show that the pace of massification is continuing and even increasing, and that enrolments in developing nations are outpacing enrolments in the developed nations. However, participation rates continue to reflect the dominance of the developed nations (cf. Par. 2.4.2). As discussed in Chapter two, there is also a growing concern with, and focus on, quality in education provision.

The statistics provided in 2.4.2 are revisited and expanded on, to highlight the divide between the developed and developing nations and to assert the promise of ODL as a means of addressing education shortfall in developing nations.

To reiterate briefly, recent statistics indicate that globally, there were almost 153 million tertiary students worldwide in 2007, a 53% increase since 2000 and a fivefold increase in less than 40 years. This expansion has been particularly intense since 2000, with 51.7 million new tertiary students enrolled around the world in just seven years (UNESCO 2009:10). The pace of growth in tertiary enrolments has also increased. It is estimated that over the last two decades global growth in tertiary enrolments has averaged at 5.1%, per annum while in Africa this percentage is 8.7% (World Bank 2008:11). The demand for higher education is predicted to expand from 97 million students in 2000 to over 262 million students by 2025 (UNESCO 2009:10).

However, participation in tertiary level education in low income countries has improved only marginally from 5% in 2000 to 7% in 2007, emphasising the continued North-South education divide (UNESCO 2009: iv). This status, or divide, is

supported by recent statistics. A participation rate of 40 – 50% for young people in higher education is considered by the OECD to be vital for economic growth. However the *2009 World Conference on Higher Education: Reacting to New Dynamics* (UNESCO. 2009:1), stated:

> Regional participation is 71% in North America and Western Europe, 26% in the East Asia/Pacific region, 23% in the Arab States, 11% in South and West Asia and, despite rapid growth, only 6% in Africa.

Compared to participation rates in developed countries, African figures, and particularly those for sub Saharan Africa, are dismal, and the consequent and sustained negative impact of the lack of education on economic growth and development on the continent is inevitable.

If one factors in the plethora of constraints (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2; 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.2.1) that impede higher education delivery then ODL emerges as possibly the most viable and affordable means of mass education. This potential has been seized on by developing nations, and on the African Continent in particular there is clear evidence of its growth and development.

Open and Distance e-Learning (ODeL) has also been mooted as a solution to the education delivery challenges of developing nations, but while many proponents of ODeL assert this mode of delivery as being potentially more viable than ODL, e-learning is confronted with the same problems as those faced by ODL and thus far its success appears to be fragmented and relatively limited. This aspect of higher education delivery will be discussed in 3.2.2 below. It is likely that the best choice for the African Continent would be forms of ODL delivery that include the most viable and affordable options selected from the various generations (cf. Par. 2.5.2) and aligned to individual institutions' capacities.

The growing acknowledgement, promise and prominence of ODL on the continent are reflected in its evolution, as set out in **Table 3:1**.

Table 3.1   The evolution of open and distance education on the African Continent

THE EVOLUTION OF OPEN AND DISTANCE EDUCATION ON THE AFRICAN CONTINENT	
MILESTONE	**RESOLUTION/OUTCOME**
The African Ministers of Education: Durban 2002 and UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII) in Dar es Salaam, December 2002	At the Durban meeting the African Ministers of Education put forward the idea of the first ever all-Africa ODL conference, to be hosted by South Africa. In December 2002, the UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education of African Member States (MINEDAF VIII): Dar es Salaam, accepted the offer.
The All-African Ministers Conference on Open Learning and Distance Education, Cape Town, 2 February 2004	Resulted in the *Cape Town Declaration*, which mooted cooperation and partnership between distance education providers and those who shape public policy and higher education in government, especially public servants, experts, legislators and Ministers of Education.
The Founding of the African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) : Egerton University in Njoro, Kenya in 2004.	The idea for the ACDE was conceived of at the Standing Committee of Presidents and Vice-Chancellors (SCOP) at the International Council for Distance Education (ICDE) held at the Unisa in October 2002, to further the aims of ODL provision in Africa, which at that time did not have its own association of distance education providers. African participation in the activities of the ICDE was very limited. The ACDE is committed to expanding access to quality education and training through ODL.
The Second Decade for Education in Africa, April 2005.	Resulted in the adoption of the *Algiers Declaration* by the Second Conference of African Ministers of Education, in April 2005. (The Algiers Declaration emanated from a review and assessment of the first Decade for Education, proclaimed by the OAU in 1996 for the period 1997 – 2006. The First Decade of Education for Africa focused on equity and access to basic education; the quality, relevance and effectiveness of education; complementary learning modalities; and capacity building.) *The Algiers Declaration* saw Ministers committing to amongst others, the allocation of increased financial and other resources to education, the development of an action plan for the Second Decade for Education in Africa (with appropriate monitoring and evaluation mechanisms), the mobilization of support for the strengthening of regional economic communities and other African institutions involved in education and the freeing up of ICT resources, particularly control of bandwidth and connectivity in Africa. The Declaration also acknowledged the role and contribution of UNESCO in African development efforts (COMEDAF II: 2005).
10-12 August 2005: 1st Conference of the African Council for Distance Education (hosted by the Unisa)	The ACDE sought to establish itself, with a secretariat in Nairobi supported by the Kenyan Government, as a coordinating centre, networking with all providers, ensuring available expertise in policy and training and as a resource to African governments and institutions. The ACDE also planned to provide a network of scholarly activities through its proposed African Journal of Distance Education and regular ODL conferences across the continent.
The Second Decade of Education for Africa: Revised Plan of Action (2006)	Prioritised gender and culture; education management information systems; teacher development; tertiary education; technical and vocational education and training; curriculum, and teaching and learning materials and quality management. The guiding principles for the implementation of the *Second Decade Plan of Action* clearly articulates the intention to: • garner political support at all levels; • concentrate on strategic issues whose implementation will make a significant difference within member states and at a regional level; • enhance mutual assistance; • enhance the capacities of Regional Economic Communities and national implementation mechanisms;

	• establish strong and effective monitoring and oversight mechanisms at all levels; • avoid the creation of new structures by capitalising on existing structures; • institutionalise the exchange of documentation, sharing and celebrating positive experiences and promising initiative among member states; and • Institutionalise collaboration and mutual support between countries, avoiding unnecessary duplication. (AU: 2006:2)
ACDE Stakeholders Workshop. Unisa, 21 – 23 February, 2008.	In February 2008, the ACDE held a stakeholders' workshop on an African agency for accreditation and quality assurance in ODL, as well as consultations on a Pan African Consortium of Open Universities. These initiatives were met with enormous enthusiasm and it was agreed that this matter would be further developed at the 2nd ACDE General Assembly and Conference in Lagos, Nigeria in July 2008.
The 2nd ACDE Conference and General Assembly held in Lagos, Nigeria, at the National Open University of Nigeria, from 8 – 11 July 2008	Re-emphasized Africa's reliance on and commitment to ODL and reflected a sense of realism and practicality, as well as congruence with African thinking on the educational priorities for our continent. Six sub themes were highlighted, namely: • ODL and Teacher Development • Meeting the Challenge of the Millennium Development Goals: Role, Potential and Impact of ODL • Capacity Building in ODL • Quality Assurance in ODL • Collaboration and Partnerships in ODL: Models, Challenges and responses • E-learning and ODL in Developing Nations: problems and prospects.
African Council for Distance Education (ACDE) Workshop for Vice Chancellors of ACDE Member Institutions from August 21- 22, 2009 at the Hilton Hotel, Nairobi, Kenya.	Aimed to update the Vice Chancellors of member institutions on a number of projects including: • Establishment of a continental Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (QAAA) intended to enhance quality open and distance delivery in ACDE member institutions; and • Curriculum development, creation of collaboration and partners for materials and programmes, facilitation of student mobility and portability of credit between institutions and enhancement of institutional capacity to deliver quality programmes. • The new ACDE Strategic Plan covering the period 2010-2014 • To receive and consider the proposed ACDE priority areas for collaboration for the next four years, indicating the activities in which their institutions wished to participate (AAU 2009).

Source: Much of the information for this table was derived from research conducted for a keynote address delivered by Professor N Barney Pityana, Principal and Vice Chancellor of Unisa, at the 5th Pan Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning of the CoL held in collaboration with London University and UNESCO, London, 14-16 July 2008, under the theme: Access to Learning for Development. The speech is entitled: A DECADE OF DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION IN AFRICA: *The Promise of ODL*

Although there is consensus among Africans on the need to improve access to education and for Africans to chart their own education destiny, the challenges they face are so considerable that meaningful progress is slow and quite limited.

While the ACDE is determined to advance open and distance education on the continent, it must do so under less than desirable circumstances. Although clear progress has been made, many governments, while committing to the notion of increased resources to education are yet to show evidence of that commitment in any

consistent, tangible form. Education, including ODL, remains in dire straits in many countries. Available resources are sparse and overstretched and there is the perennial problem of what I would term a *shot-gun* project approach to delivery in terms of which education provision projects are adopted in an arbitrary and ad hoc fashion, often in conjunction or partnership with external funders and in isolation from an overall strategy (where such strategies do in fact exist). While it is probable that many such projects are motivated by dire necessity and a lack of any alternative, to date they have delivered minimal results and had a negligible impact on higher education delivery overall, as evidenced in very low continental growth and participation rate statistics discussed above (cf. Par 2.4.2).

I would suggest that what is needed on the continent is a more coherent, collaborative, systematic and strategised approach to higher education delivery that focuses on common needs and that has a realistic chance (given the collective capacities of the continent) of succeeding. Initiatives such as the ACDE's Strategic Plan for the period 2010-2014 with its focus on quality assurance and curriculum development offer some direction on the way forward, as does its prioritisation of areas for collaboration for the four-year period (AAUE-Courier 2009:1).

Open and distance e-learning is also regarded by many as a viable form of delivery for very much the same reasons as those that pertain to open and distance education. However, while ODL is focused firmly on the delivery of quality education and has generated a momentum that is set to continue and grow, e-learning appears to encompass a menu of education services, mostly via e-learning platforms, and does not focus solely on the core education business of teaching and learning. The role of e-learning, as represented by the most notable e-learning initiative in Africa, that is, the African Virtual University (AVU), will be discussed briefly below.

3.2.1 The African Virtual University

The AVU was established in 1996 as a project of the World Bank and launched officially in Addis-Ababa in February 1997, although its operational headquarters were based in Washington DC. Juma (2006:3) states the purpose of the AVU as follows:

AVU was originally conceptualized as a technology-based distance education network to bridge the digital divide in Africa, especially by building capabilities in science and engineering. The delivery model integrated satellite and Internet technologies, allowing the provision of quality content from all over the world, while taking into account the technological and infrastructure limitations prevailing in Africa. Grants of close to US$200,000 were provided by the World Bank to each of the six participating countries for the implementation stage. The grants were used to purchase AVU satellite receive terminals and basic equipment to start up the AVU project in twelve universities. Universities that joined subsequently did not all receive grants, which resulted in diverse development among sites.

Briefly, the original objectives of the AVU were to complement and strengthen the ongoing efforts to increase access to tertiary and continuing education in Africa; improve the quality of education; contribute to bridging the digital divide; serve as a catalyst for new investments and economic development; and build the capacity of African tertiary education institutions and their faculty for better management, financial sustainability and extension of their reach through delivery of distance education (Juma 2006: 3-4).

Had the initial well-intentioned ideals of the AVU come to fruition, it would have resulted in their establishing a significant presence on the continent and graduating a large number of learners (in both French and English), particularly in computer sciences, electrical engineering, nursing, business studies and teacher training. The intention was for the AVU to transition from a donor-funded project to an "independent self-funding university with all programmes generated by African universities by 2004" (Hicks 2007:160). This did not happen and by 2002 this aim had been relinquished in favour of the AVU redirecting its role from direct service provider of accredited programmes to architect, facilitator and integrator of an education network that matches student needs to university supply (Juma 2006:20).

In 2002, the AVU transferred from the World Bank in Washington to Nairobi, Kenya where it transformed into an inter-governmental institution that currently has over 34 learning centres in 17 countries. This period was marked by some consolidation and some gains (for example, in the number and range of courses on offer), increased enrolments, growth in a global network of universities and the establishment of a digital library. Importantly the Open Education Resource dimension gained

prominence in AVU activities in 2005, via collaboration with the Massachusetts Institution of Technology (MIT), the aim being to increase the use of Open Courseware in African institutions of higher learning (AVU 2009).

While the AVU regards its greatest asset as its "ability to work across borders and language groups in Anglophone, Francophone and Lusophone Africa" (AVU 2009) it is that same perceived strength that presents one of its greatest challenges. It is extremely difficult to find any concrete evidence of the number of e-learning graduates from the various institutions in which the AVU has a presence. AVU websites refer the researcher to the collaborating institutions' links, which in turn, often refer the researcher back the AVU website. As such, current information and statistics on the success or failure of its various initiatives are virtually impossible to determine. There is however, evidence that in the first decade of the AVU's existence there was limited progress in terms of graduates. The slow pace of progress is evidenced in the humble outcomes, which are very different from initial expectations. Hicks (2007:165) asserts:

> The first diploma (not degree-level) graduates did not appear until March 2005, when 140 students across Africa graduated with diplomas in business studies or computer science – a small percentage of the more than 24,000 students who had registered for courses with the AVU by that time.

However, the scope of AVU activities now extends beyond its original aims and accordingly the success of the AVU cannot be measured purely in terms of graduate outputs. The AVU is currently rolling out e-learning systems in more than 10 African countries and has raised funds for the project via collaborations and partnerships. The training of mathematics and science teachers is one of the main objectives of the project, as is the attempt to stem the flow of expertise out of the continent. It would seem that the initial aim of the AVU to become an "independent self-funding university with all programmes generated by African universities by 2004" (Hicks 2007:160) has transformed to the extent that the AVU is now a "Pan African Intergovernmental Organization whose aim is to significantly increase access to quality higher education and training through the innovative use of information communication technologies" (AVU 2009). Evidence thus suggests that the AVU has become a facilitatory agency rather than a self-funding university.

The difficulties experienced by the AVU, which scuttled the original project and saw it evolve into its current shape speak to the complexity of education delivery on the continent. Having lost the financial support of the World Bank the AVU has consistently struggled to acquire sufficient funds to pursue its objectives, hence its current emphasis on collaboration and funding partnerships. Under these circumstances it is unlikely that the AVU could be regarded as a significant potential force for higher education delivery on the continent in the same way and to the same extent that ODL can.

Currently, any open and distance initiatives in Africa are eclipsed by the role of the Unisa, which is not only the largest distance education provider on the continent, but also has the highest enrolment of foreign students. Unisa is ideally positioned, particularly as a key partner of the ACDE and a member of the ICDE, to make a meaningful contribution to open and distance learning in South Africa and on the continent. Unisa does however face a number of challenges, particularly in regard to the national policy framework for higher education in which it operates, and this will be discussed in greater detail below.

3.3 SOUTH AFRICAN HIGHER EDUCATION LEGISLATION, REGULATION AND POLICY

3.3.1 Policy development

Education in South Africa has undergone a radical and fundamental change since the advent of democracy in 1994. Higher education prior to 1994 was aimed primarily at ensuring the survival of apartheid ideology Bantu education. For example, pre democracy, in terms of population ratios, the number of higher education institutions designated for whites far exceeded those designated for blacks. In addition, all institutions were further split along demographic, language and cultural lines. Barnes, Baijnath and Sattar (2010:1) state the following:

> English-speaking whites had the universities of Cape Town, Natal, Rhodes, and the Witwatersrand. The University of South Africa operated through the medium of distance education. Afrikaans-speaking whites had the universities of Stellenbosch, Pretoria, Rand Afrikaans, Orange Free State and Potchefstroom. The University of Port Elizabeth was officially bilingual in English and Afrikaans. African students were accommodated at the universities of Fort Hare,

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Bophuthatswana, the North, Venda, Zululand, the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa), the Transkei and Vista University. Indian students were served by the University of Durban-Westville and coloured students by the University of the Western Cape.

The period post 1994 has focused on trying to redress the imbalances to arrive at an equitable higher education dispensation. This has entailed the complete restructuring of the higher education landscape, including higher education policy.

The scope of this study focuses on higher education in post democracy South Africa and policy initiatives which began prior to 1994 have accordingly not been addressed in any significant detail. However, it must be noted that in anticipation of the imminent democracy, a concerted process of consultation and policy formulation began pre 1994 with the initiation of the development of policy proposals by the African National Congress (ANC) and the National Education Co-ordinating Committee. The National Education Policy Investigation was undertaken from 1990 – 1992 and in 1994 the ANC released a policy statement on higher education, which established the principles and values for further policy development (Badat 2004:10).

In 1995, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) was established with the broad mandate to advise the Minister of Education on restructuring higher education to contribute towards reconstruction and development. The seminal report entitled *A Framework of Transformation (1996)* (NCHE 1996) was published and informed the subsequent policy and legislative process. It comprised an in-depth investigation into the status of higher education at that time and made comprehensive proposals on a new higher education dispensation. These proposals subsequently informed the Green Paper of 1996, (DoE 1996) which was released for public comment.

The release of the Green Paper in December 1996 was followed closely by the release of the *Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997)* (DoE 1997), which outlined the framework for change into a single national coordinated system. Such a system would incorporate aspects such as equity and redress, democratisation, quality, development, academic freedom, public accountability and efficiency and effectiveness. The White Paper and the Bill on Higher Education in turn informed the *Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act no. 101 of*

1997) (RSA 1997) which established the legal basis of a single national higher education system and repealed in their entirety the former *Universities Act 1955 (Act no. 61 of 1955), Tertiary Education Act 1988, (Act no. 66 of 1998)* and *Technikon Act 1993 (Act no. 125 of 1993).*

The Council on Higher Education was established in terms of the *Higher Education Act 1997, (Act no. 101 of 1997)* and is responsible, amongst others, for:

- advising the Minister at his/her request or proactively on all policy matters related to higher education;
- assuming executive responsibility for quality assurance within higher education and training – including programme accreditation, institutional audits, programme evaluation, quality promotion and capacity building;
- monitoring and evaluating whether, how, to what extent and with what consequences the vision, policy goals and objectives for higher education are being realized, including reporting on the state of South African higher education;
- contributing to developing higher education – taking the lead (or initiative) in providing guidance on key national and systemic issues, producing publications and holding conferences and conducting research to sensitize government and stakeholders to immediate and long-term challenges of higher education; and
- consulting with stakeholders on aspects of higher education (RSA 1997).

Since then the CHE has played a core role in advising the Ministry on a wide range of issues relating to higher education reform and has conducted its own research, published as reports, into a variety of pertinent higher education issues.

The period from 1997 onwards was marked by a slew of discussion documents and policies, including a Funding Framework discussion document, initiatives around private higher education, requirements for a new National Qualifications Framework (NQF) linked to outcomes-based criteria, National Quality Assurance initiatives such as the Higher Education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) which was formally established in May 2001, the National Students Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the incorporation of colleges of education into universities and technikons, a new language policy, and, important for the purposes of this study, the restructuring of the

higher education landscape, commencing with the so-called *Size and Shape* exercise and culminating in the National Plan for Higher Education (MoE 2001).

The NPHE is based on the policy framework and the goals, values and principles that underpin that framework, as outlined in the *Education White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education* (DoE 1997: 1.14). These are intended to develop a higher education system that will:

- "promote equity of access and fair chances of success to all who are seeking to realise their potential through higher education, while eradicating all forms of unfair discrimination and advancing redress for past inequalities;

- meet, through well-planned and coordinated teaching, learning and research programmes, national development needs, including the high-skilled employment needs presented by a growing economy operating in a global environment;

- support a democratic ethos and a culture of human rights through educational programmes and practices conducive to critical discourse and creative thinking, cultural tolerance, and a common commitment to a humane, non-racist and non-sexist social order;

- contribute to the advancement of all forms of knowledge and scholarship, and in particular address the diverse problems and demands of the local, national, southern African and African contexts, and uphold rigorous standards of academic quality"

The vision of the White Paper remains compelling as does the relevance of its central policy goal, namely, the development of a single, national, coordinated higher education system, which is diverse in terms of the mix of institutional missions and programmes (NPHE 2001:12). It should be noted that the new policy of government was (and remains) underpinned by the principles of equity and redress; democratisation; effectiveness and efficiency; development; quality; academic freedom; institutional autonomy and public accountability (DoE 1997: 8 – 10).

The central tenets of the NPHE (2001:3) were to use the interaction between institutional and national planning to make the system more efficient and effective through reducing the number of institutions (but not the number of delivery sites). This transformation would be achieved by a combination of steering (using planning,

funding and quality) and specific legislation (new legislations and amendments to existing legislation). To this end, the MoE asserted that from 2003 it would directly link the funding of higher education institutions to the approval of institutional three-year "rolling" plans, in the place of the "mechanically determined" funding based on past student enrolment practices. This meant that from 2003, approved institutional plans would determine the level of funding of each higher education institution (NPHE 2001: 15). The Ministry also moved to a system of various earmarked funds to realise particular policy objectives such as, for example, research capacity-building and increased access of poor students and the disabled to higher education. However, the effective use of funding as a steering lever required the development of a new funding formula based on the funding principles and framework outlined in the White Paper. It was anticipated that the new funding formula would be phased in from 2003 (NPHE 2001: 16). (A second iteration of the new funding framework is currently being finalized and is planned for dissemination in 2010.)

The combination of planning, funding and quality levers to achieve policy objectives involved a model of implementation in which the Ministry would determine the overall goals for the higher education system and establish incentives and sanctions to steer the system towards those goals. The Ministry would not hesitate in certain limited circumstances to intervene directly in the higher education system in order to ensure stability and sustainability, neither would it hesitate to intervene to ensure the implementation of national policy and transformation goals should this prove necessary (NPHE 2001: 16)

The regulatory and policy framework has continued to be adjusted and amended as the restructuring of the higher education landscape has unfolded in an ongoing process of reconstruction and development. The intense policy activity that began in 1990 and continued for a period of nearly thirteen years (to the time around the inception of the mergers) has slowed down somewhat and has been marked chiefly by amendments to the existing policy, regulatory and legal framework.

Table 3.2 provides a chronological exposition of the most significant policy initiatives since 1990. *Only policy initiatives and legislation pertinent to this study have been included.* **Source:** Badat (2004: 10 – 16) and DoE website.

Table 3.2   A chronological exposition of the most significant higher education policy and legislation initiatives : 1990 – 2009

	ACTION	RATIONALE	DELIVERABLE	RESULT
1990 - 1992	The African National Congress (ANC) aligned mass movement, the National Education Co-ordinating Committee initiatives the development of policy proposals.	"Civil" society initiative to explore options for the development of a policy framework for the new government.	National Education Policy Investigations (NEPI) (1990 – 1992). Publication of a Framework and Post Secondary Education report.	Contributes to ANC policy initiatives and statements and generates considerable internal debate amongst contributors on key issues such as equity development tension.
1992 - 1994	Policy development by ANC and aligned supporting formations.	Further exploration of policy options towards the development of a policy framework for the new government.	Policy proposals developed by the Union of Democratic Staff associations, Education Policy Unit (University of the Western Cape) and other formations.	Generates internal debate among contributors.
1994	Indication of ANC policy as part of its election manifesto.	Establishes principles and values for new government policy and further policy development.	ANC 1994 Policy statement on higher education.	Generates support.
1994	Implementation Plan.	To provide new Minister with a plan of action and identification of priorities.	Implementation Plan for Education and Training.	First agreed priority in HE is the establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE).
1995	Establishment of the Higher Education Branch (HEB) of the Department of Education (DoE).	To provide the bureaucratic infrastructure for policy development and implementation.	HEB undertakes a range of initiatives such as the incorporations of colleges, norms and standards for teacher education, the regulation of private providers, crises management on troubled campuses, the development of pilot 3-year rolling plans and initial work on the new funding framework.	
1995	The establishment of the National Commission on Higher Education.	Consultative process to investigate all aspects of higher education and to make policy recommendations.	A report entitled: *"A Framework for Transformation" (1996)* that reflects the values and principles for the transformation of higher education.	Forms the basis of the MoE's policy and legislative process and receives fairly broad consensus, but disagreement on key issues

				such as the binary divide.
1995	The South African Qualifications Authority Act.	To provide for the development and implementation of a National Qualifications Framework and for this purpose to establish the South African Qualifications Authority; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	*The South African Qualifications Authority Act, No 58 of 1995.*	Provides a uniform qualifications framework for South Africa.
1996	The development of the Green Paper on Higher Education.	Informed by the proposals in the Framework for Transformation and released for public comment. "Symbolic" position papers and legislation – not implemented.	*Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation, 1996*, first government response to the NCHE report.	Informs the subsequent White Paper.
1996	National Education Policy Act.	To provide for the determination of national policy for education; to amend the National Policy for General Education Affairs Act, 1984, so as to substitute certain definitions; to provide afresh for the determination of policy on salaries and conditions of employment of educators; and to provide for matters connected therewith.	*National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996.*	
1997	The development of the White Paper 3 - *A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education.* 1997.	Aimed to achieve broad consensus on a statement of values and principles for the transformation of higher education into a single national coordinated system.	*Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*, 1997.	Informed the subsequent Higher Education Act.
1997	The development of the Higher Education Bill 1997.	The establishment of a legal framework for policy implementation.	*The Higher Education Bill, 1997.*	Broad consensus.
1997	The promulgation of the Higher Education Act, 1997.	The establishment of a legal framework for policy	*The Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act no. 101 of 1997).*	Legal framework for Higher Education, and a basis for

		implementation.		Ministry regulations.
1998	Call for nominations to the Council on Higher Education (CHE).	The establishment of the Council on Higher Education to advise the Minister on all HE related matters to undertake quality assurance activities through the Higher education Qualifications Committee (HEQC) ; to report annually to Parliament on the state of HE, to monitor the achievement of policy goals ;to convene and annual consultative conference of national stakeholders ; and to contribute to higher education development through publications and conferences.	Establishment of the Council on Higher Education.	Advisory body to the MoE.
1998	Draft regulations for the registration of private higher education providers.	To ensure the quality and sustainability of private higher education provision and to align this with national higher education policy goals.	Development of guidelines and manual for the registration of private higher education providers. Development of draft regulations for the registration of private higher education providers. Amendment to *Higher Education Act* in 2000 and 2001.	Registration of all private higher education providers. New regulatory framework for private higher education, April 2003.
1998	Initiative to consolidate and extend student financial aid to needy students.	The consolidation and extension of financial aid to needy students.	The *National Students Financial Aid Scheme Act of 1999 (Act No 56 of 1999).*	Creation of a body to implement support for needy students. Funds enlarged annually and support for about 200 000 needy undergraduate students.
1998	Further education and Training Colleges Act.		*Further education and Training Colleges Act. No 98 of 1998.*	

1998	Initiatives to incorporate colleges (education, agricultural and nursing) into the national higher education system.	To bring colleges (education, agricultural and nursing) into the national education system.	*The Incorporation of Colleges of Education into the Higher Education Sector: A Framework for Implementation (1998).* Reports on agriculture and nursing produced but no final decisions.	No more independent colleges of education – incorporated into universities and technikons. Reports produced but no final decision.
1999	Higher Education Amendment Act.	To extend the period within which the CHE must submit a report to the Minister, to detail aspects of HEI governance; to empower the Minister to appoint an administrator for a public institution where there is financial or other maladministration of a serious nature; to designate the Director-General as the registrar of private higher education.	*Higher Education Amendment Act No. 55 of 1999.*	Amendment approved by Parliament.
2000	Initiatives for the restructuring of the higher education landscape.	Ministry request to the CHE to provide advice on restructuring the HE institutional landscape to achieve efficiency, quality and equity goals.	Release of the CHE "Size and Shape" report entitled: *Towards a New Higher education Landscape: Meeting the Equity, Quality and Social Development Imperatives of South Africa in the Twenty-First Century (2000).*	Extensive debate around proposals for differentiated institutional types.
2000	Higher Education Amendment Act.	To extend the power of the Minister of Education regarding the determination of higher education policy; to provide that a public HEI may not without the approval of its Council, and without the concurrence of the Minister, enter into a loan or overdraft agreement or develop infrastructure; to make further provision for the	*Higher Education Amendment Act, No 54 of 2000.*	Amendment accepted by Parliament.

			registration of private HEIs .	
2000	Initiative to institute national quality assurance via the HEQC.	To regulate quality promotion and capacity building initiatives.	Development of a policy framework for quality assurance in higher education. Draft and final policy Founding Document on Quality Assurance.	HEQC formally launched in May 2001.
2001	National Plan for Higher Education (NPHE).	To provide an implementation framework and plan for the implementation of the White Paper goals.	*National Plan for Higher Education 2001(NPHE) 2001*	Sets various targets and goals, establishes a timeframe and accountability reference points for the Ministry's implementation plan; initiates mergers of some institutions and establishes a National Working Group (NWG) to advise on restructuring.
2002	NWG releases its report (2002) The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa.	Proposes to reduce the 36 higher education institutions to 21 through mergers, but with no loss of sites of provision, so as to achieve greater efficiency, effectiveness and equity.	The Report*: The Restructuring of the Higher Education System in South Africa (2002)*	Ministry releases its own slightly modified proposals on institutional restructuring and requests advice from the CHE and public comments
			Ministry considers public submissions and CHE advice and submits proposals on Institutional restructuring for Cabinet approval.	Late 2002, Government approves the Ministry proposals to reduce the 36 public institutions to 21 through mergers and incorporations. Six new "comprehensive" institutions created through the mergers of a university and a Technikon.
	Ministry creates a Merger Unit.	To assist higher education institutions with their merging processes.	Releases *"Guidelines"* for merging institutions (2003).	Institutions have to draft a Merger Institutional Operating Plan (MIOP).
2001	Initiative around a language policy for Higher Education. Ministry requests CHE for	To investigate an appropriate and inclusive language policy for higher education.	CHE produces a policy advice report in 2001.	Ministry releases a Language Policy for Higher education in late 2002, based essentially on

	advice.		Minister appoints a group to report specifically on the Afrikaans language in Higher education.	the CHE advice.
2001	Ministry initiative to develop a new goal orientated funding framework.	To replace the South African Post Secondary Education (SAPSE) system and to provide the lever to steer higher education towards policy goals.	The discussion document entitled *Funding of Public Higher Education: A New framework (2001).* Ministry seeks advice from the CHE on equalization of C values in the subsidy formula. The CHE advises to equalize and Ministry accepts the advice.	General support and work towards a final funding policy.
2001	Review of the NQF in higher education (2001).	Ministries of Education and labour establish a study Team to review the NQF in education.	CHE and various HE actors motivate for major changes in the implementation of the NQF.	Ministries decisions pending in response to the Study team proposals.
2001	Initiative to review co-operative governance in higher education.	To investigate the state of co-operative governance in the light of various problems at numerous institutions.	*Higher Education Amendment Act 2002, (Act 63 0f 2002).*	Reduces the size of Councils of institutions CHE releases the Research Report and Policy Report with some 20 recommendations for comment CHE advice to the Ministry in late 2003.
2002	Implementation of Quality Assurance System.	To ensure quality in HE through operationalising the HEQC's Quality Assurance Framework.		One-day visits to all public HE institutions and sample of private institutions; institution of pilot audits of 2 public and 1 private institution in late 2003-4; formation of National HEQC Quality Assurance Managers Forum; training of audit chairs and panel members, of programme evaluators and HEQC staff; re-accreditation of private higher programmes;

				launch of re-accreditation of about 50 MBA programmes at 24 institutions.
2002	Ministry requests the CHE for advice on various aspects of the provision of distance education in higher education.	Advice on various aspects of the provision of distance education in higher.	CHE establishes a Task Team comprising national and international specialists which conducts investigations on a range of issues and call for representations from all stakeholders.	CHE advise to Ministry in late 2003
2002	Ministry requests the CHE for advice on the criteria and conditions for institutions to use the terms "University", "Technikon," "College," and to offer/award degrees and postgraduate qualifications.		CHE establishes investigations under the auspices of its Shape and Size Standing Committee.	CHE advice to the Ministry in late 2003.
2002	Higher Education Amendment Act.	To provide for labour and student matters arising out of declarations and mergers of public HEIs; to provide for change in the size of councils and institutional forums; to provide for the appointment of an administrator to take over the functions of a council which is deemed to have resigned; to make new provision for the Minister's authority to make regulations.	*Higher Education Amendment Act No 63 of 2002.*	
2002	Initiative to develop a new academic policy for the structure, duration, nomenclature of qualifications and programmes .	The development of a new academic policy for the structure, duration, nomenclature of qualifications and programmes.	CHE document entitled *A New Academic Policy for Programmes and Qualifications in Higher Education (2001).*	Public comment and steps towards finalisation by the Ministry of New Academic Policy in 2003. Some concern about the concentration of ministerial power.
2003	Review of the NQF .	To provide joint Ministerial response to the Task Team report on the NQF review.		Recommended modifications to the NQF. Some aspects supported but concern about the

				instrumentalist impact of framing the purpose of higher education within the human resource development (HRD) framework.
2003	New Funding Framework.	To explain the allocation of the various grants to higher education institutions.	*A New Funding Framework: How Government Grants are Allocated to Public Higher Education Institution (2004).*	Followed by a statement on higher education funding and information in regard to how government grants are allocated (Feb 2004) .
2004	Development of a Monitoring and Evaluation System.	To monitor and evaluate higher education performance in relation to achievement of national policy goals and developments in society, the economy and policy that impact on higher education.	*Towards a Framework For the Monitoring and Evaluation of South African Higher Education (2004).*	Published for public comment in early 2004.
2004	CHE Institutional Audit Framework and Criteria.	A common institutional audit policy framework for universities, technikons / universities of technology, agricultural colleges, private providers and other providers whose programmes and qualifications fall under the jurisdiction of the HEQC.	*CHE Institutional Audit Framework (2004).*	To guide institutional audits being implemented from 2004 (pilots conducted 2003).
2004	The Higher Education Qualifications Framework.	To take forward the finalization of a new academic policy.	*The Higher Education Qualifications Framework (notice 1322 of 2004).*	The Framework makes provision of higher education qualifications within a single, coordinated higher education sector and provides the basis for integrating all higher education qualifications into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and its structures for standards generation and quality assurance. It improves the coherence of the higher education system and facilitates the articulation of

			qualifications,
2006	Further education and Training Colleges Act.	To establish a national coordinated FET system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based vocational and occupational training.	*Further Education and Training Colleges Act No.16 of 2006.*	

Table 3.2 indicates that there has been a systematic and focused process of policy implementation that has driven, informed and underpinned the transformation of the higher education landscape (particularly since 1994) and that continues to do so. This process has been undertaken within the context of a maturing democracy and very dynamic political transformation and has resulted in some of the initial policy imperatives being reviewed and even called into question. Furthermore, with the restructuring of the former Department of Education into the Department of Basic Education (DoBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DoHE&T) in May 2009, there is likely to be a flurry of new policy initiatives aimed at furthering the agendas of the restructured departments and the state. Chief among these thus far, has been the *Further Education and Training Colleges Act, 2006 (Act no.16 of 2006)* (RSA 2006) which has provided the framework and basis for the DoHE&T's concerted push to have one million FET students by 2015.

In a seminal Budget Speech on 30 June, 2009, the newly appointed Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister Nzimande (2009) alluded to a number of initiatives which signalled a changing policy direction and emphasis for higher education and training. Amongst others he spoke of a concerted drive to increase enrolments in FET Colleges, as follows:

> I also intend to establish a coherent college sector which includes the 50 Further Education Training (FET) colleges and other career specific colleges such as agricultural colleges the latter being crucial for rural skills development. Similarly, in the coming months, I will be working with my colleague the Minister of Basic Education and the nine provincial MECs to ensure the smooth transfer of the FET Colleges from provincial departments to the DoHE&T..... It is still our intention to increase the student enrolment at FET colleges to at least 1 million by 2015. I also intend improving student articulation between the college and university sectors. To this end, my department will be finalising a national policy outlining the minimum entry requirements to university study requiring the national vocational certificate offered at colleges.

The Minister (2009) also spoke of a drive to improve governance and management capacity, as well as the training and upskilling of college, and existing university and industry lecturers. In a rather controversial statement he indicated that he wanted experienced workers without matric, or matriculants without exemptions to study at universities, asserting that there was a need recognise prior learning for adults without

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formal university entrance qualifications to enable them to enter higher education institutions.

> Why should a 40-year-old adult who didn't get a matric exemption, but has 12 years' work experience, go and write matric exams when he has enormous experience? ….The field of adult education and training needs re-invigoration and dedicated focus in the coming period. To this end, my Department will be finalising a draft White Paper towards the end of the year which intends proposing a range of measures to enhance and expand further and higher education and training opportunities for adults. In addition, the department will be finalising a proposed matric equivalent qualification appropriate for adults, through amongst others strengthening policy on recognition of prior learning. In future, the new DoHE&T will be responsible for allocations to higher education institutions (estimated at R19.9 b in 2010), skills development through the SETAs and the NSF (estimated at R21.9 b in 2010) and FET Colleges (estimated at R3.37 b in 2010). Given the enormous challenges facing our youth, it is important that we strengthen and expand our colleges and make them institutions of choice.

The above speech clearly signals not only a number of definitive changes in policy direction, but it also shows evidence of a less consultative approach toward policy formulation and a more direct assertion of an agenda which some might argue, is at odds with prevailing policy. The fact that the Minister of Higher Education simultaneously holds the position of the Secretary General of the South African Communist Party is cause for concern in some quarters, particularly in regard to the loyalties and priorities of these two powerful positions.

What began as a broadly consultative process in pre-1994 where the views and opinions of a variety of stakeholders and the general public were solicited (and used) in informing and formulating policy, appears gradually to have evolved into a situation in which the CHE's advisory and reporting requirements to the Ministry have diminished, and where the public and other stakeholders are less often consulted on envisaged or new policy imperatives. This is supported by de Satgé (2009:6). While it could be argued that the reason for this is that the bulk of the transformation work as set out in the NPHE (2001) has been done, it may also suggest changes in higher education governance that amongst others, may impact on the ideals of institutional autonomy, academic freedom and the social responsibility of intellectuals. This will be discussed in greater depth below.

3.3.2 Governance

In preparing for a new democracy it was clear that a new democratic government would have to redress the inequalities of the past, but that it would be extremely difficult and complex to undo 45 years of the dedicated and legislated social engineering that was Apartheid. Therefore, if it was to succeed, any transformation exercise would require a relatively close and cooperative relationship between the state and higher education. Such a relationship would as a matter of course challenge the existing notions of self-regulation for higher education institutions, as well as state intervention to drive, or steer more purposefully, the necessary transformation. In addition, South Africa's emergence into a democratic dispensation coincided with the increasing globalisation of higher education and the concomitant transformation in the regulatory relationship between the state and higher education institutions, which is still underway and which has similarly exerted an influence on the governance of higher education in South Africa.

Various forms of governance from a global perspective were discussed in Chapter two (cf. Par.2.3.3) and are reiterated below from a national perspective. Cloete (2005:54) refers to the three ideal types of state regulation identified by Moja, Muller and Cloete (1996: 32) as follows:

> • **Model one: State control.** This is premised on effective and systematic state administration of higher education and training, executed by a professional and competent civil service – the 'continental model' characteristic of Western Europe in the 20th century.

> • **Model two: State supervision (steering).** This model is founded on less centrist forms of control in higher education and sees the locus of power shifting from 'centralised control' to 'steering'. In this model, governments provide the broad regulatory framework within which the administrations of higher education institutions are expected to produce the results desired by governments. It is a 'leaner' state because fewer civil servants are required in the central state apparatuses. It is also 'smarter' because state action is less focused on actual administration and concentrates more on defining the parameters of 'steering'.

> • **Model three: State interference.** This is based on control in higher education that is neither systematic (model one) nor 'regulation through

steering' (model two), but which involves arbitrary forms of crisis intervention. These interventions are "either sporadic, or they become an attempt to control through a fairly narrow and rather crude set of measures aimed at establishing acquiescence."

Key characteristics here would include a weak education ministry and education department, and a poorly trained bureaucracy unable to implement higher education policy. Also characteristic of this form of control, unlike the first model cited above, is the conflation of the political (managing institutional crises) with the professional (an independent civil service, freed from political interference, able to implement policy). In this form of control, the bureaucracy is politicized to the detriment of effective administration. The authors refer here to the experiences of higher education and training in certain post independent African countries in the 1980s and 1990s.

Considering these three categories, it could be asserted that the newly democratic South African government, as advised and assisted by the National Commission of Higher Education (NCHE) and latterly the Council on Higher Education has operated in accordance with the so-called *State Supervision Model* of co-operative, interdependent governance. The NCHE stated [that] a relationship of this kind "signals the necessity of a shift away from the traditional opposition between state and civil society to negotiated co-operation arrangements" (NCHE 1996: 57-60).

3.3.2.1 Three core steering mechanisms

Cloete (2005:55-56) states that under the State Supervision model the state is able to steer higher education via three mechanisms (cf. Par 4.3; 4.2.3.1)

> • **Planning**
>
> Planning is used to encourage institutions to outline a distinctive mission, mix of programmes, enrolment targets and overall institutional plan. The process would involve institutions developing three-year rolling plans, while the government would develop a NPHE.
>
> • **Funding**
>
> Funding *inter alia* financial incentives is used to encourage institutions to re-orientate educational provision to address national, regional and local education and training needs and priorities.
>
> • **Quality**

Quality is assured among others by reporting requirements which use performance indicators dedicated to measure, in the spirit of greater institutional accountability, the extent to which the institutional plan and national priorities were being met. In so doing, these performance indicators would be highly influential in shaping the allocation of the next cycle of financial awards. Thus, quality is deemed the third policy steering mechanism and monitoring and evaluation generally form an integral part of an integrated institutional planning framework or "appropriate regulatory framework" (NPHE 2001: 15).

Figure 3.1 shows my exposition of the higher education policy process from its formulation to its implementation, and how it is translated and infused into higher education operations.

Figure 3.1   The higher education policy process from formulation to implementation

The five key policy goals for higher education, as set out in the National Plan for Higher Education (2001) are: providing advanced educational opportunities; equity of access and success; diversity in institutions and programmes; research; and a co-ordinated national higher education system. These will be achieved by steering via funding, planning and quality (amendments to legislation)

Higher education institutions are issued with policy directives /ministerial statements that set out their planning and enrolment parameters and their various funding allocations. There is a concomitant responsibility on higher education institutions to report on progress in all of these areas, in a given timeframe and often according to a specific format.

Higher education institutions formulate plans that set out their institutional strategies, not only in the best interest of institutional efficiency but also in response to, and aligned with, national policy goals. These strategies are then translated into annual Institutional Operational Plans which set out in a systematic, project-based manner, over a specific planning timeframe (rolling 3-years), the operational activities that have to be implemented in order to achieve the set targets and ultimately, the strategic goals of the institution . These activities have to be implemented by academics and support staff under the supervision and guidance of more senior management.

It could however be argued that the entire notion of co-operative governance as envisaged under the State Supervision model is flawed because its success relies on egalitarian assumptions of power, negotiation and policy buy-in.   In a politically volatile environment such as that which marked the advent of democracy in South Africa, it was perhaps naïve to believe that such a radical transformation would be met with much enthusiasm, or that it could be implemented without resorting to increased state intervention.

Furthermore, given the urgency, necessity and the political imperative to implement change and redress in higher education, it is understandable that government might

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turn to increasingly narrow forms of steering to drive policy implementation so as to achieve its political goals and its social responsibility, especially in the face of ongoing resistance and objection. Indeed, the improbability of a mutually agreeable interdependent relationship, and the need for the state to assume leadership was alluded to even as the NCHE (1996:57-60) asserted the shift to co-operative governance:

> A shift in the overall direction of society requires leadership by the government, the only actor with powers of political co-ordination in society. This means there is always a possible tension between central government trying to assert authority directly to implement change, and the more indirect regulation and steering that is the trademark of co-operative governance.

Figure 3.2 shows the system of government steering of the public higher education system in South Africa.

Figure 3.2   The System of Government Steering of the Public Higher Education System (Source: Department of Education 2004)
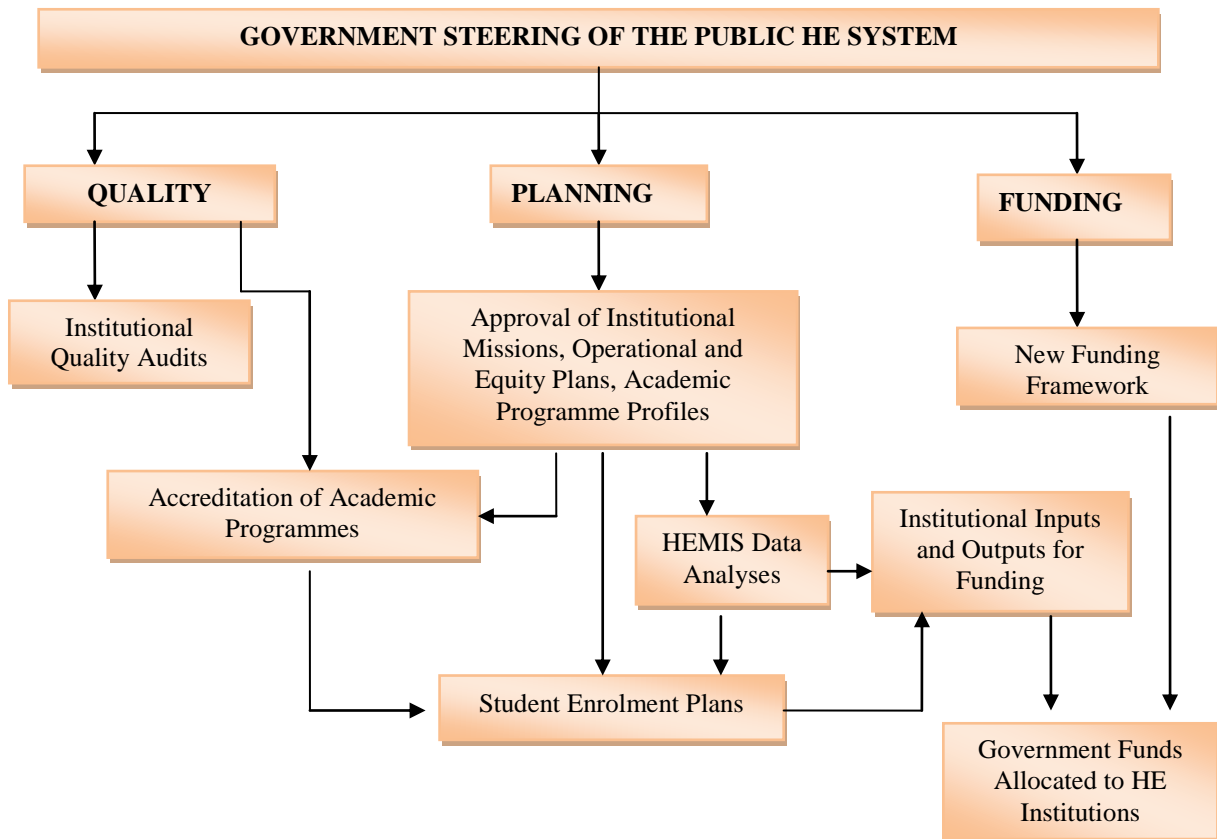
As mentioned, steering tends to deviate from the process of consultation, inclusivity and transparency that marked the formulation of new legislation and policy in the period just before democracy in South Africa and for a while thereafter. Furthermore, the current socio-political environment has introduced the possibility of new policies that challenge directly long-held notions of academic autonomy and intellectual freedoms and that will allow the state firmer control of higher education. These dynamics point to a form of state intervention, which is being increasingly manifested in the notion of South Africa as a developmental state.

The precise nature of a developmental state in South Africa has yet to be defined and there is presently relatively little research on the model as it applies to South Africa in particular. It is a matter that is assuming a growing importance however, and more recently it was for example, announced that the Kingdom of the Netherlands had donated R13 million to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) of South Africa for a two-year research and policy initiative aimed at generating knowledge to help South Africa develop a democratic developmental state (Gabara 2010). Given South Africa's liberal Constitution, it is clear that the developmental state models that characterise East and South East Asia and other developing economies (cf. Par. 2.3.3.3) could not be wholly applied to South Africa. The notion of an emergent developmental state in the South African context will be discussed briefly below.

3.3.3.2 Towards a developmental state

Manuel (2009:5), in referring to Chalmers Johnson's exposition of the developmental state explains the emergence of the developmental state as follows:

> A developmental state was one that was determined to influence the direction and pace of economic development by *directly intervening in the development process*, (my emphasis) rather than relying on the uncoordinated influence of market forces to allocate resources. The developmental state took it upon itself the task of establishing substantive social and economic goals with which to guide the process of development and social mobilization. The most important of these goals, in Japan's case, of course was the reconstruction of its industrial capacity, a process made easier by widespread consensus about the importance of industrial development.....The emphasis has to be placed on the influence over the direction and pace of development by directly intervening in the development process, rather than relying on the uncoordinated influence of market forces.

In his opinion piece, *Reflections on a Developmental state for South Africa*, Habib (2009: 1-5) speaks of the "embedded but relatively autonomous character of the state" in relation to the "structural linkages and social interactions between the political and economic elites". Habib's rationale for the rise of the developmental state seems to point to a nexus of conditions that include a need to counteract the economic and political hegemony of the world elites that rendered developing nations vulnerable on a variety of levels, including the security, political and financial, as well as popular support for the notion of state developmental agendas and outcomes.

What is evident is that the developmental state serves both a political and an economic agenda and that in order to succeed in both, the state systems and infrastructure need to be harnessed in pursuit of the state agenda. If these are to provide the desired levels of support, they need to be properly resourced and capacitated by an efficient and supportive public sector.

From a global perspective South Africa is seen as a leading power in the region and on the continent and is playing an increasingly active role in pursuing strategic alliances such as IBSA (The India, Brazil and South Africa partnership), as well as trade agreements with non Western powers, for example, with India and China. As a member of the G20 countries South Africa is now able to exert some influence against the unfair trade practices that have over the years entrenched the perceived economic hegemony of the global 'elites' (Deen:2011). However, as Habib (2009: 1-5) argues convincingly, any meaningful assertion and protection of rights in the global economy, and against the global elites (and the G7 nations in particular) requires the kind of power that can only be achieved through strategic alliances "both among the South and between Northern and Southern Countries"

Thus, while South Africa is undeniably assuming a greater leadership role in the region and on the continent it must do so in an environment that is fundamentally hostile and obstructionist towards any attempts to change the *status quo*. Furthermore, while South Africa currently enjoys a relatively sound fiscal position, there are serious shortfalls and inadequacies in both the state infrastructure and its human resource capacity. For example, the ongoing concerns and protests around service delivery and education, and the continuous management woes of parastatals such as South African Airways, Eskom, the South African Broadcasting Corporation and Denel that marked

much of 2009 and 2010, have demonstrated management, skills and capacity shortfalls and shortcomings of crisis proportions that point to a state that is currently unable to harness the existing capacity to any great effect (Brooks 2009; SAPA 2010).

Furthermore, an underlying assumption of the developmental state is that the state will in fact be able to gain buy-in from the private sector and harness the capacities of the public sector in pursuit of its developmental agenda. Habib (2009:4) asserts that this will have to be done by means of:

> ...a diffusion of power in both the international and national environments. This diffusion of power enhances the accountability of political elites to their citizens, thereby creating the motivation for their pursuance of a developmental agenda.

Given the capacity and service delivery problems outlined above, and the vicissitudes of the political domain, an envisaged developmental state would have some way to go in acquiring both the capacity and buy-in to pursue effectively, a developmental agenda. Indeed, Manuel (2009:6) argues:

> Implementation will not be realised unless we can transform public servants into a first line cadre of development activists. Some actions from our present and recent past leave so much to be desired in the conduct of public servants. If our public servants are not transformed our ability to "weave formal and informal networks of collaboration" will not be realised and any notion of patriotism will fall by the wayside.

In light of the above statement, there is always the possibility that where there is a failure to "transform public servants into a first line cadre of development activists" more direct intervention may become an increasingly attractive option, with possibly deleterious consequences, particularly for higher education, as will be discussed below.

One of the most obvious means of ameliorating the problem of skills and capacity lacks is through the production of the appropriate skills and expertise and this is where the role of higher education assumes a growing importance in the developmental state. The focus on FET colleges and the aim of one million FET students by 2015 as mentioned above indicates that the state is fully cognisant of this role, and that it is already pursuing a strategy to that end. A FET college can be defined as any college established in terms of the FET Colleges Act (Act No. 16 of

2006) that provides further education and training on a full-time, part-time or distance basis and **"**further education and training" means:

> All learning and training programmes leading to qualifications at levels 2 to 4 of the National Qualifications Framework or such further education and training levels determined by SAQA and contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995), which levels are above general education but below higher education (FET Colleges Act No. 16 of 2006).

However, a developmental state requires that higher education is subsumed in the service of the state to a degree that may not enjoy the support or approval of higher education practitioners, particularly where it begins to infringe on entrenched and accepted notions of institutional autonomy and academic freedom. The notion that the state should "directly intervene in the development process" is anathema to the majority of higher education practitioners.

Evidence of that concern is already beginning to surface and has been articulated in the *Report of the independent task team on Higher Education, Institutional Autonomy and Academic Freedom (HEIAAF): Academic Freedom, Institutional Autonomy and Public Accountability in South African Higher Education* (CHE 2008:1) as follows:

> The Task Team investigation was prompted by concerns and claims that government steering of higher education risked becoming 'interference'. These concerns arose from shifts both actual and perceived in the policy and implementation trajectory particularly from the late 1990s. The enquiry was also informed by recent (largely unresolved) scholarly, sectoral and public debates about the state of academic freedom, institutional autonomy and accountability in South African higher education....... In making an overall evaluation of the regulatory environment (Section 3.3), the Task Team observes that, even if flagrant instances of government interference are hard to pinpoint, government's steering of higher education has in recent years – most sharply between 2001 and 2004 – grown more directive, less consultative, and occasionally prone to hierarchical decree.

If higher education institutions wish to retain and exercise their institutional autonomy and academic freedoms, they will have to ensure that they play a pivotal role in the determination of policy that impacts on their operations. This implies ongoing and constructive engagement with the MoE and the assertion of the rights and responsibilities that are not only the hallmark of cooperative governance, but are also enshrined in the Constitution. This means playing a constructive role in the

development of a South African model of a developmental state. Manuel (2009:5) states:

> .....we must ensure that there is a greater certainty about the role of the state, in other words, we need a greater level of certainty about the developmental state. There are almost as many descriptions as there are analysts. I have observed the debate ranging from those who argue that South Africa already encapsulates most of the key features of a democratic developmental state, on the one pole; to those who argue that the key measure of a developmental state will require much wider state ownership in the economy, requiring that the state does rather than leads..

Higher education in South Africa remains in a state of flux and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. As higher education gets to grips with the changes that are likely to be wrought by the transition into a developmental state, distance education will be increasingly mobilised to accommodate the growing numbers of students who cannot access contact institutions. This assertion is supported by the *State of the Nation Address* on 11 February 2010, in which President Zuma (2010), President of the Republic of South Africa, stated: "We aim to increase the number of matric students who are eligible for university admission to175 000 a year by 2014".

In line with global growth in tertiary enrolments, the year-on-year increase of students into higher education institutions in South Africa seems set to continue and is being fuelled by changed admission requirements and new policy initiatives mentioned above. South African higher education institutions are experiencing capacity problems and at least eight of them have quite controversially, tailored their admission requirements to ensure that they are able to match their capacity with demand, thus ensuring the quality of their educational offerings, the ability of students to cope with university life and improved throughput rates (Govender 2010). In 2008, 133 063 students graduated from the country's 23 higher education institutions. A total of 799 387 students were enrolled in the same year (DoE 2010: 30 – 40). Parliament was informed that less than one-third of students completed their degrees in the stipulated time (Govender 2010:1). Universities expressed the following concerns (Govender 2010 :1):

> Dr Theuns Eloff, vice-chancellor of North West University, said about 20% of first-year students across the country dropped out, either before or at the end of their first year. 'The reasons are finance, not coping with university life and just not being able to make it academically,' said Eloff, a former chairman of Higher Education South Africa (HESA).

Conceding that university graduation rates were low, Mary Metcalfe, the Director-General of the Department of Higher Education and Training, said there would more new enrolments at universities if graduation rates improved. 'If you accept students that are not able to succeed then you will clog up the system." But Metcalfe warned against using mechanisms to exclude top performers from rural and township environments.' It leaves those communities with a sense of injustice," she said.

The University of Pretoria, which received 32000 applications for 8500 first-year students this year, confirmed that overall admission requirements had increased across all faculties, mostly because of the high numbers of would-be entrants. It said that the first-year pass rate had declined by 5% last year, which impacted on the number of places available for new first-year students.

Carol Crosley, a deputy registrar at the [University of the Witwatersrand] Wits student enrolment centre, said the admission points score was being used to limit the number of students in some programmes because of space and staff shortages. 'The university aims to attract academically excellent students and the admission points score is the tool used to determine this,' she said.

Luthando Tyhalibongo, a spokesman for University of the Western Cape, said maths literacy would not be accepted for admission to the science degree because students were not coping with the demands of the course.

Professor Driekie Hay, vice-rector for teaching and learning at University of the Free State, said it had a responsibility to admit students that 'were likely to be successful'.

Stellenbosch University spokesman, Martin Viljoen, said: 'The altered minimum admission requirements makes provision for an increase in the number of students in extended degree programmes and alternative access programmes who otherwise would not have qualified for enrolment.'

Professor Cheryl Foxcroft, senior director for higher education access and development studies at the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, said the drop in pass rates were partly attributable to universities setting their admission criteria 'too low'.

Clearly demand for contact higher education in South Africa is exceeding existing capacity. Theoretically speaking, given the nature of its delivery model, ODL should comfortably be able to accommodate far greater numbers of students than contact institutions and as such, it would seem that there is an underlying belief or assumption amongst some higher education practitioners and certain constituencies in government, that Unisa as the dedicated distance education institution in South Africa, should be a 'catch-all' for those students who cannot be accommodated at contact institutions. Yet Unisa is affected by precisely the same constraints, and to a greater

degree when it comes to the number and calibre of the students wishing to access higher education. Currently ODL enrolments already exceed DoHE&T enrolment targets and yet Unisa is continually exhorted not to turn away any students. The above-mentioned developments are bound to pose additional daunting challenges, both in terms of access and financial management. In the light of this, the role and responsibility of distance education, epitomised more particularly by Unisa, is discussed below.

3.4 DISTANCE EDUCATION/ODL IN SOUTH AFRICA

3.4.1 Distance Education at Contact Universities

Distance education is not confined to the public higher education domain, or to the traditional dedicated distance education institutions. Its promise and possibilities are also being explored and implemented by many schools, contact universities and private higher education providers who are faced with the same kinds of challenges as those that have given rise to its growth and evolution. In South Africa a number of contact universities also offer distance education programmes, most notably, North West University (9,832 students), the University of Pretoria (5,853 students) the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal (3,632 students) and the Tshwane University of Technology (1,207 students) (DoE 2010). It should be noted that these numbers represent Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs) and not actual student headcounts. The notion of a FTE is explained below.

3.4.1.1 The Full-Time Equivalent student

Since distance education students do not study full-time, the actual student headcount enrolment is converted into a full-time equivalent enrolment. Full-time equivalent formulas aim to represent a total instructional load for distance education students in relation to the normal instructional load of full-time contact students. Generally this is done by defining a normal full-time course load and using it as the full-time norm. In distance education the instructional load could vary depending on the mode of course delivery and the resources and support that is provided.

Table 3.3 indicates the FTE enrolments in contact and in distance education at the 23 public higher education institutions in South Africa in 2008. Given the ratio of

383,764 contact to 155,298 distance FTE enrolments, it can deduced that 40.46% of students are enrolled in distance education. Of that percentage, just over 85%, or 132, 560, are enrolled at Unisa, that is, just over 34% of students in South Africa. The approximately 15% of distance education students enrolled at other institutions are concentrated largely in the fields of Education and to a much lesser extent, Science, Engineering and Technology. At Unisa, the bulk of students are enrolled in the Humanities and Business and Management (DoE: 2010).

Table 3.3 Full Time Equivalent Enrolments of Contact and Distance Mode Students in Public Higher Education Institutions in South Africa in 2008

Source: HEMIS 2008 in (DoE 2010: 30 - 40)

FULL-TIME EQUIVALENT (FTE) ENROLMENTS AND UNDERGRADUATE SUCCESS RATES										
Full-time equivalent enrolments of contact and distance mode students in public higher education institutions in 2008										
	Contact					Distance				
Institution	Science, Engineering & Technology	Business & Management	Education	All other Humanities :& Social Sciences	Total	Science, Engineering & Technology	Business & Management	Education	All other Humanities :& Social Sciences	
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	10 051	5 354	2 034	4 364	21 803	28	2	0	0	30
University of Cape Town	6 954	2 972	856	6 935	17 717	0	0	0	0	0
Central University of Technology, Free State	3 828	2 129	651	1 745	8 352	8	52	0	97	157
Durban University of Technology	7 205	5 040	275	3 706	16 225	0	0	0	0	0
University of Fort Hare	1 685	1 398	613	3 870	7 565	0	0	3	0	3
University of Free State	5 941	2 579	2 276	7 468	18 264	47	47	0	844	938
University of Johannesburg	9 941	11 277	2 860	9 704	33 783	0	0	0	0	0
University of KwaZulu-Natal	9 234	3 834	1 795	8 867	23 730	1 129	917	1 579	6	3 632
University of Limpopo	5 421	1 379	1 683	4 801	13 283	0	0	0	0	0
Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University	5 313	4 007	837	5 062	15 218	35	5	1 002	0	1 041
North West University	6 014	3 810	3 257	8 532	21 612	617	66	8 338	811	9 832
University of Pretoria	13 438	5 644	2 348	9 064	30 494	7	0	5 845	0	5 853
Rhodes University	1 300	635	338	3 042	5 314	0	0	11	1	11
University of South Africa				462	462	15 568	47 485	16 949	52 559	132 560
University of Stellenbosch	8 028	4 088	969	6 453	19 537	0	0	0	0	0
Tshwane University of Technology	15 091	10 338	1 196	11 870	38 495	5	18	263	922	1 207
University of Venda	2 776	1 316	675	5 023	9 789	0	0	0	0	0
Vaal University of Technology	5 930	4 013	64	2 217	12 224	0	0	0	0	0
Walter Sisulu University	5 328	6 257	5 215	6 093	22 894	0	0	28	0	28
University of Western Cape	4 272	1 094	766	5 562	11 694	6	0	0	0	6
University of Witwatersrand	8 721	2 667	1 271	6 126	18 785	0	0	0	0	0
University of Zululand	1 315	721	4 343	3 325	9 702	0	0	0	0	0
Mangosuthu Technikon	3 615	1 762	0	1 446	6 822	0	0	0	0	0
Totals	**141 400** **37%**	**82 311** **21%**	**34 319** **9%**	**125 734** **33%**	**383 764** **100%**	**17 450** **11%**	**48 591** **31%**	**34 017** **22%**	**55 240** **36%**	**155 298** **100%**

Source: 2008 HEMIS database, October 2009
Note 1:   Full-Time equivalent (FTE) student enrolments are calculated (a) by assigning to each course a fraction representing the weighting it has in the curriculum of a qualification, and (b) by multiplying the headcount enrolment of that course.
Note 2:   FTE contact students are those who are registered mainly for courses offered in contact mode.
Note 3:   FTE distance students are those who are registered mainly for courses offered in distance mode
Note 4:   Definitions for fields of study employed here are the same as those employed in Table 17
Note 5:   The totals above include undergraduate and postgraduate courses.
Note 6:   As a result of rounding off, numbers and percentages may not necessarily add up.

Table 3.4 The total number of contact and distance mode Full Time Equivalent enrolments in 2008 (HEMIS 2008 in DoE 2010).
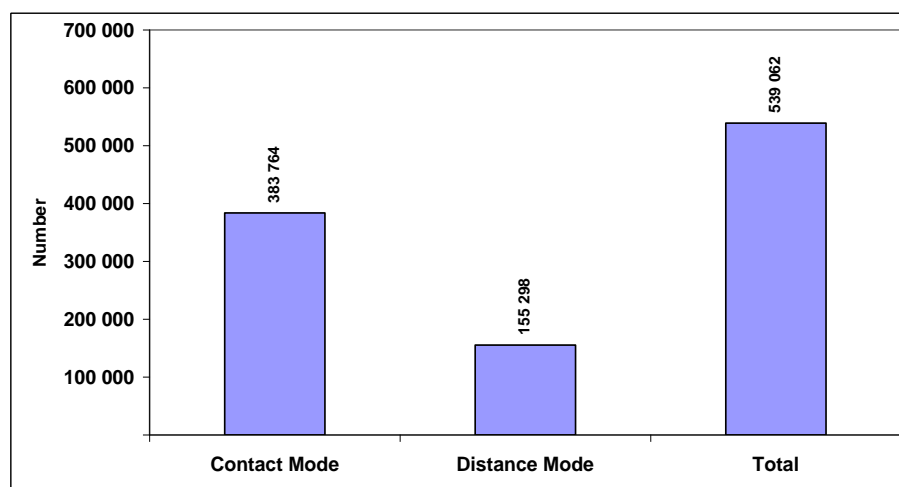
While contact institutions in South Africa do not enrol a significant number of distance education students, they fulfil a valuable role in ensuring continued and growing enrolments in two of the focus areas in the DoHE&T's enrolment planning, namely Science, Engineering and Technology, and Teaching.   However, more recent figures indicate that distance education enrolments at contact institutions are declining CHE (2009:25). Possible reasons could include increased demands for access to contact institutions, which have resulted in preference being given to full time students; harsh socio-economic and employment conditions, which make it difficult for students to afford the higher fees charged by contact institutions for their distance education programmes; the flexibility of ODL study especially for employed and more mature students; and the suitability of Unisa as a provider of courses and programmes aimed at improving qualifications and skills.

As the oldest and largest higher education institution in South Africa and one of the first dedicated distance education providers in the world, the role of Unisa is integral to understanding higher education provision in South Africa as discussed below.

3.4.2   The University of South Africa

The NPHE (2001) (cf. Par. 3.3.1) announced the intention to reduce the number of public higher education institutions from 36 to 23 by means of a number of mergers and incorporations. Included in this number were six new 'comprehensive' institutions, a new

institutional type created through the merger of universities and technikons. It is against this background that the former TSA, Unisa and Vudec, (cf. Par 1.1.2) embarked on their merger and incorporation process in January 2003, the official merger date being 1 January 2004, with the incorporation of Vudec the next day, on 2 January 2004.

The 'new' Unisa emerged as the only dedicated comprehensive distance education institution in South Africa and the largest higher education institution, not only in Southern Africa, but also on the continent with a combined student headcount enrolment: 205 811 students in 2004, to over 262 000 in 2008 exhibiting growth of approximately 26.9% over the five years post merger (Unisa 2009: 17). In 2009 headcount enrolments had risen to 279 744 and in 2010 they were provisionally 308 892 (Unisa: DISA -2010). Approximately 90% of Unisa students are South African nationals, just over 9% are African nationals, and just less than 1% is other foreign nationals. In 2009, Unisa had 12 514 students in 44 African countries other than South Africa, mostly from Zimbabwe (3 410), Namibia (1 747), Botswana (1 709), Kenya (965) and Swaziland (1 397). There are 2 802 Unisa students in the rest of the world, mostly from the United Kingdom (718), the USA (286), the United Arab Emirates (237) and Australia (247) (Unisa 2009: 43).

Almost half of Unisa students are employed, which confirms Unisa's status as an institution of choice for lifelong learning and advancement (Unisa 2010: 16). The largest cohort of Unisa students (47%) falls into the 19 – 29 age bracket while approximately 31% of students are in the 30 – 39 age bracket. Approximately 19% of students are 40 years and older (Unisa 2009: 41).

Since Unisa accounts for just over 34% of total headcounts in South Africa (cf. **Table 3.3.**) it has a key role to play in providing affordable, widely accessible higher education to a broad spectrum of South African society. Furthermore Unisa's vast infrastructure and resources have been consolidated and grown since the merger, endowing it with an impressive knowledge base and excellent potential as a comprehensive university.

There are differing views on the notion, "comprehensive." The former DoE asserted the following in a letter to the Principal and Vice-Chancellor of Unisa on 23-01-2007:

> The Plan refers to the "comprehensive" character of Unisa and implies the use of a much wider definition of "comprehensive institution" than the definition my department has previously discussed with Unisa. *Our interpretation of "comprehensive institution" refers simply to an institution that is able to offer technikon type programmes and university programmes* [my emphasis]. The spread may be from undergraduate certificate to doctoral studies with work

experience for designated technikon type programmes. The programme mix suggested in the new size and shape of UNISA should not, however, be taken to imply that UNISA should now offer programmes in all fields or plan growth in areas in which the University or former Technikons were not academically successful.

In 2005 Unisa (2008:32) arrived at its own definition of comprehensiveness as follows:

> The University of South Africa is a leading, responsive, public ODL higher education institution in Africa committed to student-centredness through offering an affordable and comprehensive range of articulated certificates, diplomas, degrees and short learning programmes related to technical, vocations, professional and general academic qualifications with disciplinary and multi-/inter-/and transdisciplinary emphases at undergraduate and postgraduate level in a flexible, blended mode, conducting pure and applied research, and engaging with and serving our urban and rural communities to their benefit and that of our lecturers and students in accordance with current best practice and in partnership where strategically appropriate.

Unisa's definition of comprehensiveness appears to encompass the broader institutional character and its social mandate, but it is clear that the most pertinent feature of comprehensives in both instances is the fact that they offer both academic and vocational qualifications.

Unisa is fundamentally characterised by its ODL orientation, its identity as a comprehensive African university and its dedicated focus on teaching and learning, research and community engagement. Unisa offers a very broad range of qualifications via a mixed semester/year module tuition delivery model. The Programme and Qualifications Mix of the institution initially comprised more that 1 200 qualifications, but this is being managed down on an ongoing basis (Unisa 2010). Similarly, the number of modules has been managed down from approximately 7 000 at the onset of the merger to the current approximate 3 200 (Unisa 2010).

The significant number of modules offered by Unisa has been identified as an impediment to the successful rollout of its ODL model, particularly in terms of sufficient funding, the efficient administration of registrations, the design and production of quality course materials, appropriate levels of learner support and assessment. As such the institution is engaged in an ongoing process of rationalising the PQM towards a curriculum that is leaner, more effective and that nevertheless continues to reflect Unisa's social mandate and its aspirations. In line with Unisa's strategy, the programme content is also undergoing revision and development to arrive at greater consonance with its African identity and knowledge systems.

Unisa also offers approximately 300 Short Learning Programmes (SLPs) which draw an estimated additional 60 000 enrolments (approximately) annually (Unisa 2010). The SLPs are complementary to the formal qualifications and are subjected to rigorous quality scrutiny. These programmes not only support the notion of lifelong learning, but in keeping with the ODL ethos, they also provide access to higher education academic programmes for the wider population. Furthermore, the credits earned by some of the short learning programmes facilitate access to the formal qualifications. (It should be noted that SLPs are also sometimes credit-bearing, and not just for access purposes.) SLPs also provide a valuable source of third-stream income for the institution.

Given the range and size of its qualification and programme offerings, its enrolment numbers, the number of graduates it produces and its research outputs, Unisa clearly makes a significant contribution to human resource development, to meeting labour market needs, to socio-economic development and to the enrichment of intellectual and cultural life in South Africa and on the continent (SAIRR 2011). Its role and profile on the continent and internationally is gaining prominence. Increasingly Unisa is seen by government and by other higher education providers on the continent as an institution whose resources and reach could and should be used to a far greater degree in creating more universal access to higher education and in the service of social upliftment and development (Unisa 2005: 2).

The establishment of an official Unisa Learning Centre in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in January 2007 could be seen as an expression of this view. This resonates with Unisa's stated vision to be *the* African University in the service of humanity (Unisa 2005: 3), but concerns remain about the capacity of Unisa, particularly in terms of appropriately skilled staff and increasingly sophisticated technologies, to meet adequately the ever increasing demands that are being placed on the institution.

3.4.2.1 Planning at Unisa

In line with policy imperatives and requirements discussed above, Unisa has developed an institutional strategy and planning regime that not only ensures that it fulfils its obligations to the state in a proactive and professional manner, but also the efficient management and operation of the institution.

Unisa's strategy and planning process is a key instrument for change and innovation and it also paves the way for the infrastructural and operational improvements and advances that are

needed to provide a quality learning experience to Unisa's students. In regard to Unisa's planning, retired Vice Chancellor and Principal of the University of South Africa (November 2001 – December 2010) Prof N B Pityana (2009) asserts:

> It is a pragmatic process that carefully assesses the rate and degree of change that can be absorbed by the institution, and is linked to the institution's integrated performance management system. The integrated planning approach seeks alignment of all levels of planning with the allocation of financial, infrastructural and human resources, as well as Unisa's ODL delivery model. This is further supported by policies, processes, systems, and capacities needed to achieve planned outcomes. Key among the systems put in place is a quality assurance regimen. Critical capacities in management information, business intelligence, monitoring and evaluation, institutional research planning and methods, and quality assurance and promotion place Unisa at the leading edge in planning nationally and abroad.

Unisa's planning has been guided by a comprehensive strategic plan entitled *2015 Strategic Plan: An agenda for transformation* (Unisa 2005). (In 2010 the 2015 strategic plan was revised in line with the university's maturation and progress and the second iteration, namely *Unisa 2015 Revisited* was produced.) The Strategic Plan is supplemented by an Institutional Operational Plan over a three-year rolling timeframe, which sets out the objectives that the institution must accomplish each year in order to achieve the overall institutional strategy. Each year the IOP identifies specific focus areas which need to be addressed in order to meet overarching institutional goals, which in turn are linked directly to the institutional strategy. A number of objectives, actions, performance measures, and targets/milestones are provided to guide implementation. Overall accountability and responsibility for the actions is assigned to identified executive managers whose task it is to oversee, monitor and ensure that implementation takes place at the required rate. The planning process is linked to the institution's budgetary process and is aligned to that of the DoHE&T to ensure the appropriate synergies in regard to planning timeframes and reporting requirements.

The responsibility at the Unisa, for the implementation of the annual IOP resides mainly with the directors, both academic and administrative together with, and under the supervision of their Executive Deans and Executive Directors who in turn report to the various Vice Principals and the Registrar. Monitoring and evaluation form an integral part of the planning cycle and occur at both operational and institutional levels. Regular progress reports are provided to executive management and Council and necessary improvements and adjustments are factored into the next iteration of the planning.

Figure 3.3 shows how the three-year planning framework translates Unisa's 2015 strategic plan into operational planning outcomes down the line. While the IOP sets out broad institutional outcomes on a three-year planning horizon, departmental plans detail how these outcomes will be realised at a functional level.

Figure 3.3   Framework for the translation of the Unisa 2015 Strategic Plan into operational outcomes.
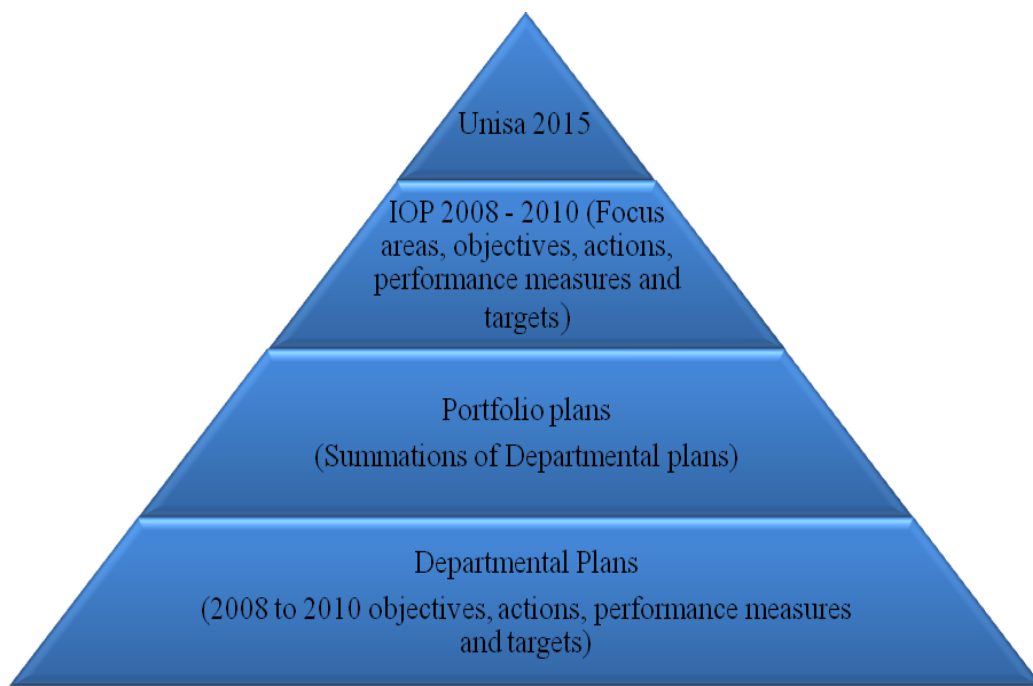
Source: Unisa. Institutional Operational Plan 2009 – 2010 (Unisa 2010)

However, while Unisa undoubtedly has the potential and the will to make a much more positive impact on higher education provision in South Africa and on the continent, and although Unisa enjoys a stable financial status and effects meticulous planning, it must do so in an environment that is currently not appropriately supportive of the ODL mode of delivery. Concerns remain around the long-term impact of the lack of a national distance education policy on the institution's sustainability. Some significant challenges faced by Unisa, and their implications as a result of a lack of a distance education policy, are discussed below

3.5   THE IMPACT OF NATIONAL POLICY ON ODL

As the merger process unfolded (cf. Par. 3.4.2), it became apparent that Unisa's mode of delivery was not adequately catered for in prevailing national policy on higher education.

Unisa operates in terms of the *South African Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act no. 101 of 1997).* The Institution is accredited by both the South African DoHE&T and the South African Council for Higher Education. Its qualifications are registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). As is the case with all South African higher education institutions, Unisa operates within the policy framework set by the state and receives state funding according to an agreed funding framework. Accreditation and quality oversight are entrusted to the Council for Higher Education.   However, the practice of distance education in South Africa is affected by the absence of a dedicated distance education/ODL policy.

Pityana (2009) states:

> In 2003, recognising that the absence of an ODL Policy Framework was affecting ODL operations in South Africa, then Minister of Education Prof Kader Asmal sought advice from the CHE the report of whose investigation was presented to him before he left office in 2004. His successor Minister Naledi Pandor, however, did not act on this matter until 2008 when she requested the CHE to prepare an ODL Policy. That exercise has not yet been completed. *This is unfortunate for ODL in South Africa. It means that regulations meant to apply to higher education in general are being applied to ODL programmes at Unisa. There is inadequate appreciation of the demands of 5th generation ODL practice: appropriate resources, learner support, admission criteria, assessment and flexible learning.* [My emphasis]

Thus, Unisa is of the view that it is unfairly discriminated against since it cannot or does not comply with certain DoHE&T definitions or requirements because of the nature of its operations as compared to contact institutions. Furthermore, the changes being wrought to both distance and contact education have resulted in new dynamics which are entrenching even further Unisa's disadvantage, especially in terms of access and funding.   The issue of sectoral perceptions and their impact on Unisa is also problematic, especially in the evolving higher education environment. Some of the more pertinent concerns and pitfalls around the lack of a distance education policy are discussed below.

3.5.1 The "active student" issue

In order to qualify for a subsidy, a student's activity has to be proven in the period before the census day of a module. Once activity has been proven, such a student is referred to as an "active student." The nature of the evidence of activity initially included inter alia, the submission of module assignments, the attendance of lectures, seminars, tutorials or practicals, written class tests, queries raised with an academic staff member and use of a learning centre. Institutions would not be allowed to use the writing of examinations as the sole evidence of activity. No administrative process, such as for example, financial transactions or change of address would be accepted as proof of activity. The activity had to be teaching or learning related (HEMIS 2002, 2003).

The Department later indicated that the directive should be made stronger, particularly in regard to distance education programmes and that its application should not be left to the discretion of the external auditors. However the Department subsequently gave notice that it would accept proof of activity after the census date provided that the student had been registered on the census date, that the proof of activity was before the final examination and that the activity comprised one of the listed transactions (HEMIS 2002, 2003).

Where providing proof of activity by the required census date is a straightforward matter for contact institutions, Unisa experienced serious difficulties in that the first submission of assignments after the registration period was the only 'legitimate' means of proving a student's activity. For the years immediately following on the merger, this proof could only be provided to the Department after the census date because of Unisa's registrations and assignment submission cycle.

Unisa was therefore obliged to estimate the number of active students based on headcount enrolments and not on activity as defined by the Department, which inevitably resulted in a discrepancy between the estimated and the final enrolment figures. There was a concomitant impact on the funding allocation with frustration being experienced by both parties. After initial accommodation of the discrepancies by the Department, Unisa was obliged to arrive at other acceptable means of proving student activity and thanks to its more sophisticated planning, and adjusted census dates the problem has largely been resolved. Unisa currently makes use of an 'activity assignment' to demonstrate student activity by a determined date, but given the very short period of time from the date of registration to submission, the format,

assessment, quality and value of the assignment as part of the students learning process may be questioned.

Although the issue of the definition of an "active student" has been resolved to the extent that Unisa is now able to fulfil DoHE&T requirements in that regard, this has not only caused lengthy and tenacious problems for Unisa in regard to compliance with DoHE&T requirements and the issue of unfunded students, but it has also highlighted just how seriously policy 'anomalies' in regard to distance education can impact on the institution and its operations. In addition, while the issue has been resolved, the measures which Unisa has had to adopt in order to comply with DoHET requirements have created their own set of challenges around the timing and quality of assessments to prove activity.

In an open letter to the President of the Republic of South Africa, HE Mr Thabo Mbeki, Pityana (2005) expressed this frustration with the situation as follows:

> We find that the notion of `active' applicable to contact institutions, is being applied willy-nilly to distance education…..to [then] be expected to subscribe to a notion of `active' that is indeterminate for distance education students is to place an unbearable burden on both the students and the university, well beyond what is reasonable and in a manner calculated to turn distance education into something that it is not.

The issue of the "active student" provided possibly the first instance of policy anomaly and conflict for the newly merged Unisa.

3.5.2 Access and success

The demand for access into higher education institutions in South Africa is increasing and is being accelerated by admission prescriptions linked to the new National Senior Certificate (NSC). Unisa has an open access admission policy in terms of which all students must meet the basic statutory admission requirements as prescribed by the Department of Education and the institution entrance requirements as set by the Senate. Prospective students who are older than 23 years of age and who hold a senior certificate without matriculation exemption may be admitted to an undergraduate degree programme in accordance with the rules prescribed by Higher Education South Africa (HESA). There are further provisions to cater for students over the age of 23 to be admitted to a diploma programme and for students over 45 without any schooling qualifications, to qualify for open admission (Unisa 2009: 4 – 5).

Given the current higher education access dynamics, this exposes the institution to the danger of continually exceeding DoE enrolment targets, as has consistently been the case since the

inception of the merger. While healthy growth in access is in line with the DoHE&T's goal of increasing participation rates, there is the danger that uncontrolled access could impact negatively on the equally important requirements of quality, relevance, success and throughput, funding and ultimately, the long-term sustainability of the institution.

From 2000 to 2008 enrolments at Unisa grew rapidly, exhibiting growth of more than 26.9% over the five years post-merger. By 2008 Unisa enrolments had exceeded both the 2010 Ministerial headcount and FTE enrolment targets. In 2008 Unisa recorded 261 927 headcount enrolments, which exceeded the 2010 target of 258 000 by 3 927, or 1.5%. Similarly, there were 133 022 FTE enrolments, which exceeded the 2010 target of 128 800 FTEs by 4 222. This trend has continued in the ensuing years (cf. Par. 3.4.2). The reasons for the growth in enrolments have been discussed above, but they include affordability, accessibility, flexibility, inflexible capping practices at other institutions, restrictive admission requirements at other institutions, economic conditions, and occasional students (Unisa 2009: 14).

Huge administrative and systemic changes occasioned by the merger have taken a number of years to implement and continue to be refined. Furthermore, given the large increase in student numbers brought about by the merger and the increased numbers of matriculants qualifying for university entrance, Unisa's registration infrastructure and systems have had to be upgraded at considerable cost to the institution. By far the majority of the funding for this infrastructural upgrading has been borne by Unisa, in part I would argue, because of the notion that Unisa is a distance education institution and therefore does not require, and should not receive funding for infrastructure development. One could argue that this is discriminatory, especially given the explosive growth in student numbers, who simply could not be accommodated physically, in the old registration facility or registered by the old 'by hand' registration system.

Despite the increasing numbers of registrations, there are as yet no effective systems in place that enable Unisa to cap students in line with negotiated enrolments targets (per College) during the registration process, and it is left to the institution to accept those who qualify and align them to enrolment ratios once the registrations have been processed. Under current policy, any students in excess of DoHE&T enrolment targets are not funded by the DoHE&T and as such they become 'unfunded students' and for the financial account of Unisa. Unless the University puts in place initiatives to manage access and to ameliorate the phenomenon of

unfunded students, the long-term sustainability of the institution could be jeopardised. Significant financial losses are already being incurred in respect of forfeited subsidy for unfunded students, and while these students still pay student fees, this only comprises approximately 29% of the total student cost (MacGregor 2008:1). However, a tension exists in regard to funding versus our national and social obligation at domestic and regional level. Unisa cannot apply the merit criteria or the first-come-first-serve measurements, as applied by other (provincially localised) contact Universities.

What emerges from the above assessment is that Unisa is faced with a variety of simultaneous, competing policy demands and while it could be argued that all higher education institutions are faced with the same problems, Unisa finds itself in the invidious position of being the 'catch-all' for students who are not accepted at contact institutions or who cannot be accommodated in contact institutions. In addition, as discussed in 3.3.2.1, many contact institutions, alarmed at a perceived lack of 'university-ready' students are raising university entrance requirements and thus excluding more students who then turn to Unisa as their only hope. Furthermore there is a growing cohort of students (school leavers) who choose Unisa as their university because of its affordability and flexibility.

I am of the view that there is another, perhaps unintended consequence of the large increase of student numbers at Unisa. Some academic and administration staff at Unisa seem to feel overwhelmed at the administrative workload that has accompanied the increased student numbers, especially in terms of registrations, assessments, examinations and tutorial and learner support. Furthermore, staff morale has also been negatively affected by the significant changes occasioned by the merger over the past five years, including changed conditions of service, differing cultures and a more rigorous, planned, 'managerial' approach to institutional management and operations. I would suggest that this has caused apathy and even resentment in some instances, which in turn may have prompted resistance to the institution's transformation initiatives (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1; 5.6.3.2)

Thus, even as the University attempts to manage access in a well planned manner it is being assailed from all sides by strident demands for access. If the statement in the recent *State of the Nation* address, to the effect that there will be 175 000 extra students per year accessing higher education by 2014 should realise (Zuma 2010), then Unisa and the DoHE&T would need to seriously review the role and position of Unisa in South African higher education. If the University continues to take sole responsibility for its unfunded students where there are

currently no mechanisms in place to manage enrolments effectively and where there is sustained pressure from all quarters on the institution to keep on accepting students in excess of the agreed student cap, then Unisa will continue to suffer increasingly larger financial losses in subsidy, which in turn, could impact on its future sustainability, the quality of its service provision to students and ultimately, the growth in throughput rates.

3.5.3 Funding

Another anomalous development emerging in line with the evolution of higher education programmes is funding. At the moment, Unisa is funded at a lower level (50% less) than contact institutions because distance education is held to be less costly than contact institutions, a belief that is based, among others, on the notion of economies of scale. However, as the modes of distance education provision have evolved in line with the development of new technologies, an increasing number of sophisticated technologies (including Web 2 technologies) are being employed not only in the delivery systems but also in student administration, learner support and importantly, courseware development. Contact universities have the same technologies at their disposal and they are making increasing use of them to supplement their face-to-face teaching. As stated by the CHE (2009:14)

> As understanding of teaching and learning develops it has been recognised that good distance education requires significant investment in programme design and materials development and providing support for students is costly. If the distinction between distance education and contact programmes is indeed blurring, the different levels of funding may be questioned.

The implication of this is that distance education is quite possibly equally, or in some instances, more expensive than contact education. ODL is a technology-driven mode of education and in order for its delivery to remain current, efficient and effective, the technology and related systems have to be upgraded on a regular basis. Although this is true for all universities, in terms of size and scale, Unisa's infrastructure and systems are far greater. Replacing or upgrading redundant technology on a significant scale is an extremely costly exercise. Currently funding continues to be allocated according to policy that does not provide appropriately for these realities. This is to the detriment of Unisa, which has been acknowledged by the CHE (2009: 16).

> Distance education has the potential to absorb higher numbers of students and more young people are opting to study in this way. New understandings of distance education are being explored, but the provision of more comprehensive services necessary for success in distance education is not

supported by the current funding policy. Attention to distance education at the level of policy is now overdue.

3.6 CONCLUSION

ODL as represented by Unisa plays a significant role in the provision of higher education, not only in South Africa, but also on the continent. However, while there was a veritable explosion of policy development in South Africa from 1990 to 2004, subsequent policy development has not only slowed down but it has also become increasingly non-consultative. This is a matter for concern in a higher education environment that is also becoming increasingly politicised. Ongoing calls for increased access need to be accommodated within a policy framework that will ensure that higher education institutions cope with the changing dynamics and continue to provide quality education.

As the only dedicated distance education provider in South Africa, Unisa is currently obliged to operate in a policy environment that is not entirely conducive to the particular needs of distance education. This has posed serious challenges for the institution, which could have potentially deleterious effects on its long-term sustainability, the quality of its education delivery, staff morale and productivity and student throughput rates. Although Unisa has its own distance education policy, a national dedicated distance education policy that takes into consideration the specific needs and requirements of ODL, will go a long way to ameliorating the problems experienced.

To determine the impact of the current policy prescriptions on Unisa and its operations, the views and perceptions of staff in middle, executive and top management were solicited and explored by means of an empirical study. The research design for this inquiry is presented in Chapter four.

CHAPTER 4

4.   RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1   INTRODUCTION

One of the first aims of a research study should be to establish what has already been done in the field of study (Mouton 2001: 86). In this study, the literature review has fulfilled that purpose. Chapters two and three provided a literature review of, amongst others, education theory, global trends in higher education, higher education policy formulation and implementation globally and nationally, issues of governance, the role of ODL globally and nationally, and the impact on higher education policy on ODL provision in South Africa. This formed a theoretical framework for the empirical investigation.

This chapter sets out the research design of the empirical investigation, detailing the type of design, the sampling method and procedure, data collection, data analysis, issues of reliability and validity and ethical considerations. The rationale for using a combined or mixed method research design has been provided, and the two phases of the combined research design explained.

4.2   MIXED METHOD RESEARCH DESIGN

The traditional approach to social science research was primarily quantitative until approximately four decades ago when there began to be a gradual introduction and adoption of more qualitative and mixed method research designs. Prior to that, research had generally been positivistic in nature, employing objective quantitative measurement to arrive at an objective, scientifically verifiable 'truth'. Alvesson and Skölberg (2000:1) assert that from what appears or is presented as data, facts, or the *unequivocal prints of reality* [my emphasis] it is possible to acquire a reasonably adequate basis for empirically grounded conclusions and as a next step, for generalisations and theory- building. However, quantitative research has been criticised for its seeming inability to address a variety of aspects of human lives, and questions have been raised as to whether the unequivocal prints of reality are in fact satisfactorily unequivocal or real. Furthermore, as discussed in 2.2.2.1 the positivist theory of knowledge is a social construct, and it is therefore ephemeral in nature, a transient reality and hardly a foolproof means of deriving an immutable reality or truth. This criticism finds

resonance in Wittgenstein's (1974:149) famous comment that "when all possible scientific questions have been addressed they have left untouched the main problems of life."

Given this view, another paradigmatic understanding is required that acknowledges the possibility of deep and often hidden meaning structures that may offer additional, more nuanced layers of meaning, which when appropriately explored, suggest a more comprehensive 'truth.' Husserl (1970: 1936) refers to this as our "life-world," which has both subjective and objective characteristics. The subjective characteristics reflect our perceptions or views on the meaning of our world, while the objective characteristics reflect the meaning that we negotiate with others and which then becomes a shared reality. This view speaks to a qualitative, interpretivist research methodology. While positivists believe that human experience of the world reflects an independent reality which provides the foundation for human knowledge, interpretivists intentionally constitute knowledge through their experiences of their life-worlds. It could be asserted then, that the qualitative researcher aims to isolate and define phenomena and/or categories during the process of research in order to comprehend and learn, whereas the quantitative researcher aims to determine the relationship between the phenomena and/or categories already identified and isolated prior to the research (Kvale 1996). The key difference between quantitative research and qualitative research methods is their flexibility, with quantitative research being less flexible than qualitative research.

Given the nature and the aims of the study, I believed that the most appropriate research design would be a combined , or mixed method, research design. The research design was selected on the basis of the research question and sub questions, and employed both a quantitative and qualitative phase.

The quantitative component of the research, Phase 1, aimed to interrogate the research statement by using an instrument, namely, a Likert Scale that would allow the researcher to ask identical questions to a wide range of respondents, in the same order and in a close-ended and fixed manner. The survey aimed to quantify through the collection of numerical data, the variation, causal relationships, characteristics and perceptions of a specific population. The survey therefore provided a quantitative or numerical description of a sample of the population through a data collection process of asking people questions (Fowler 1998). The main advantage of the quantitative design was that it allowed for meaningful comparison of responses across the participants and study site.

Creswell (1994: 1) defines the qualitative paradigm as an enquiry process of understanding a social or human problem, based in building a complex, holistic picture, formed with words, reporting detailed views of informants, and conducted in a natural setting. Thus, the qualitative component of this design, Phase 2, allowed for a deep and rich exploration of higher education policy developments post 1994, more specifically policy relating to planning, funding and quality in higher education, and took the form of in-depth, face-to-face interviews with identified elite informants.

The greater flexibility of qualitative research methods allows for greater spontaneity and adaptation between the interviewer and the participant. Interview questions are mainly open-ended leaving participants free to respond in their own words and to provide far more detail than is the case with quantitative research. Kvale (1996:5) asserts that the qualitative research interview aims to obtain a description of the life world of the interviewee with respect to interpreting the meaning of the described phenomena. The immediacy of the interview session also allows the researcher to probe more deeply and tailor subsequent questions to elicit a more comprehensive response. This implies that the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewees is closer and less formal than the relationship with the survey participant in quantitative research.

4.2.1 Rationale for a combined design approach

This study comprised a survey (Phase 1) and in-depth interviews (Phase 2). Use was made of concurrent data gathering in terms of which the survey was conducted and the findings analysed. Interviews were then conducted using the findings from the surveys to inform the interview questions. The interviews were subsequently analysed and the findings contextualised within the current status of higher education. The aim in adopting this methodology was threefold: to emphasise the convergence of results, or themes; to highlight contradictions and unearth fresh perspectives on the issues at hand; and to apply the findings to the research problem.

Figure 4. 1 provides a graphic model of the combined design for this study.

Figure 4.1   The Concurrent-Triangulation mixed method design used in this study
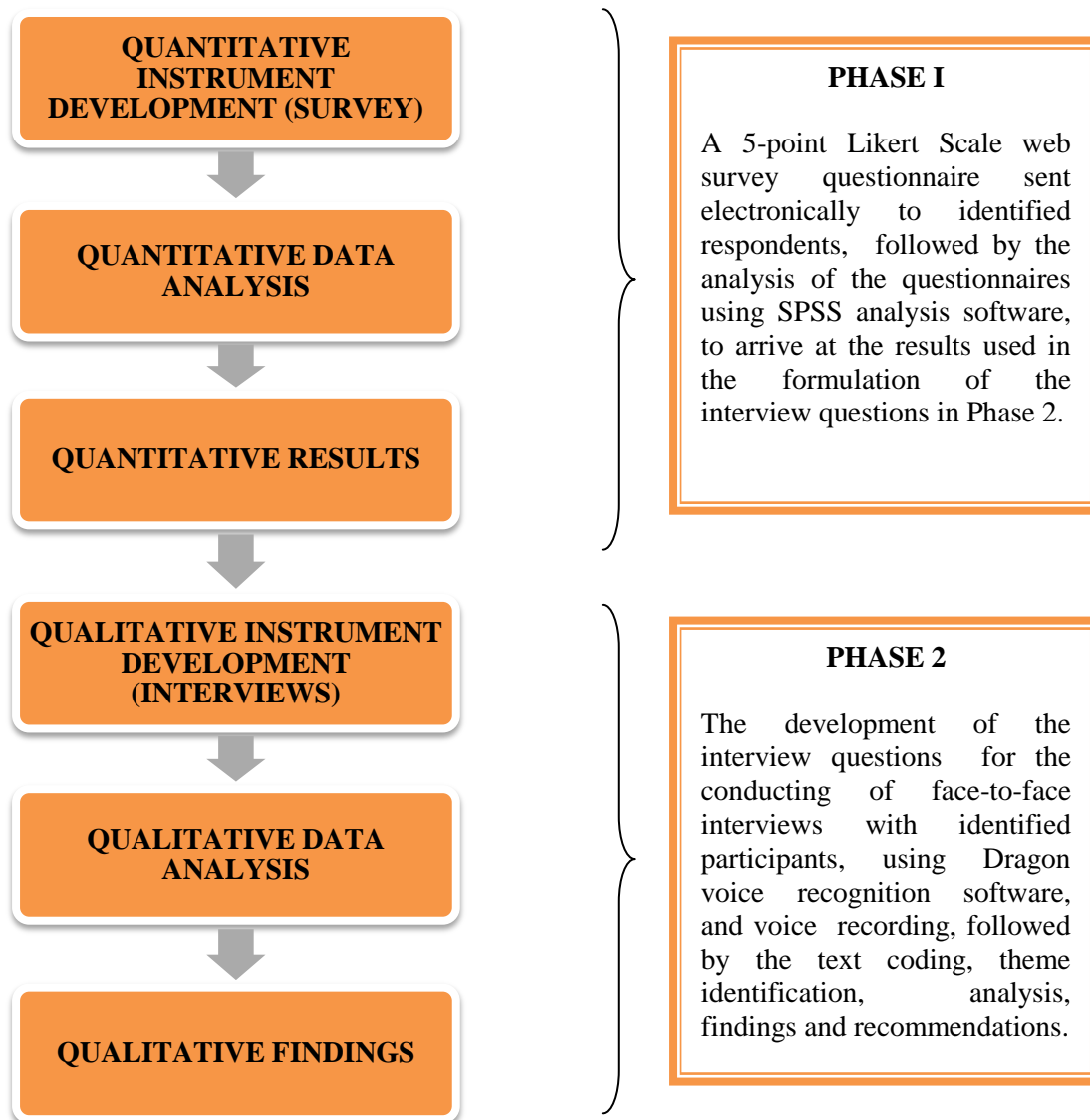
This design approach finds legitimacy in motivations that have been advanced by a number of authors, for a combined research design. Creswell (1994:175) lists these as:

- triangulation in the classic sense of seeking convergence of results;
- complementary, in that overlapping and different facets of a phenomenon may emerge (e.g., peeling the layers of an onion);
- developmentally, wherein the first method is used sequentially to help inform the second method;
- initiation, wherein contradictions and fresh perspectives emerge; and
- expansion, wherein the mixed methods add scope and breadth to a study.

Figure 4. 2 provides a graphic representation of the concurrent-triangulation mixed method research design for this study.

Figure 4.2 A graphic representation of the Concurrent-Triangulation mixed method research design used in this study
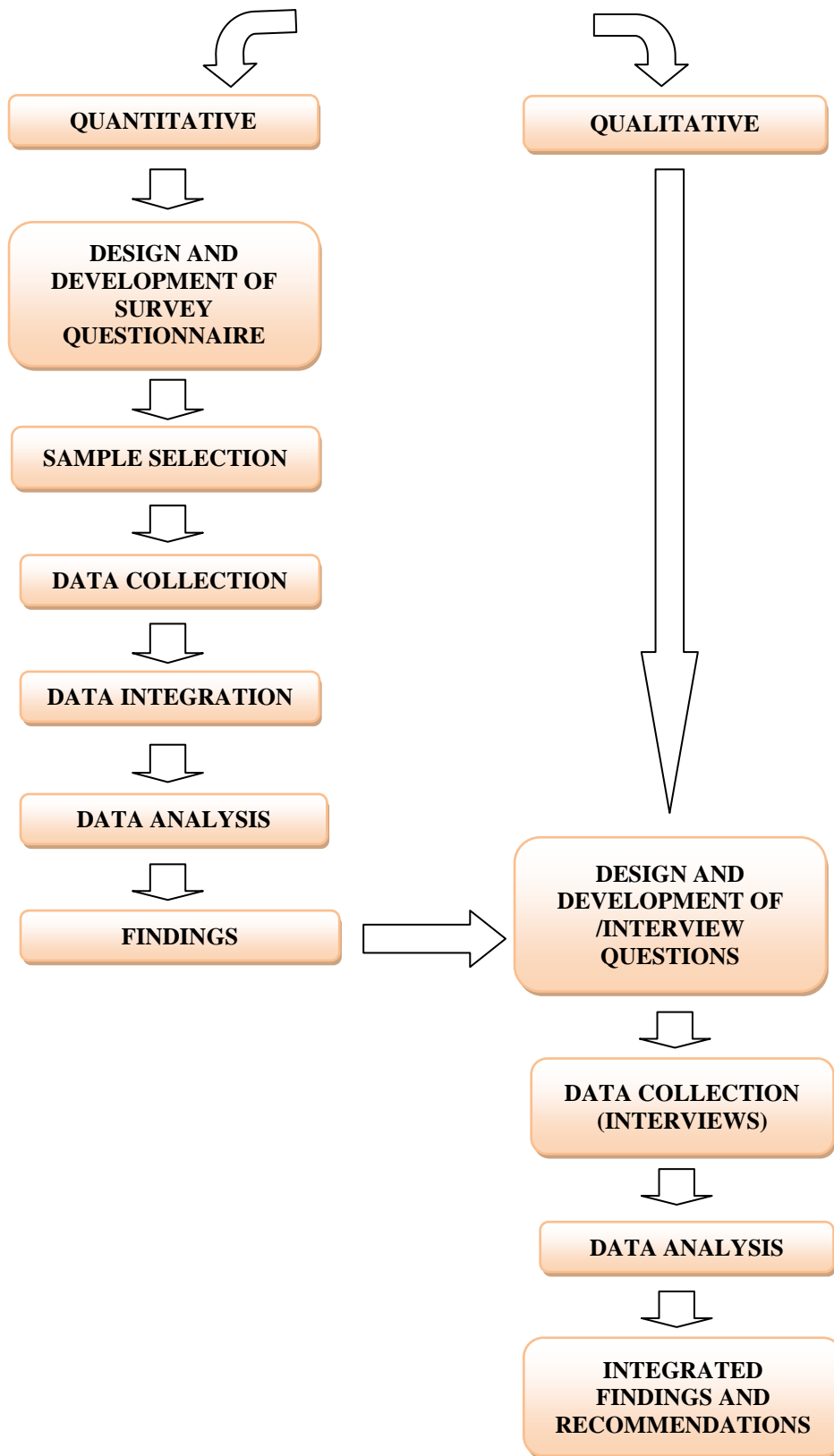
4.2.2 Background to the research site

Unisa is South Africa's only dedicated open and distance learning comprehensive university. Unisa is also the largest higher education institution in South Africa and on the African Continent, and one of the 20 mega institutions in the world (cf. Par.1.1.3). In 2008 Unisa had a headcount enrolment of 261, 927 (DoE 2010), which represented approximately one-third of all higher education enrolments in South Africa. Although this number is subject to minor fluctuations occasioned by the ongoing changes in enrolment trends (which to a large extent can be ascribed to policy changes around the NSC that have impacted fundamentally on admissions to higher education institutions) it has hovered at one-third since the merger (cf. Par. 3.4.2). This highlights Unisa's core role and responsibility in higher education in South Africa and equally, in the socio-economic growth and development of South Africa through the production of properly skilled and qualified graduates. It also implies that the success or failure of Unisa in executing its mandate will have concomitant educational and socio-economic repercussions.

Unisa has five Colleges with 13 Schools, 60 Academic Departments, 36 Units, Bureaux, Institutes and Centres and 26 Service Departments. In addition to the main campus in Pretoria, there are regional centres in the provinces of the Eastern Cape, Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Limpopo, Midlands, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. Unisa also has a regional presence in Akaki, Ethiopia (Unisa Online 2010).

The Principal and Vice Chancellor of the University is accountable to the University Council and is assisted in the management of the University by the executive, extended and middle management comprising the Pro Vice Chancellor, the vice-principals, the Assistant Principal, deputy and executive Deans, deputy and executive directors, directors of schools and administrative departments, and CoDs.

In designing the research study, Unisa's Pretoria campus or the 'Muckleneuk Campus' as it is known, was selected as the location for both the survey and the interviews. My own location at the Muckleneuk Campus facilitated both the survey and the interview processes. The web based format of the survey allowed for the inclusion of the directors in the regions, thus facilitating broad institutional participation and representation.

The choice of Unisa as the focus of this research can be ascribed to its core role in higher education delivery in South Africa, its status as the only dedicated open and distance learning

institution in South Africa, and to the impact that current higher education policy (including the lack of an Open and Distance Learning Policy) is having on the institution and concomitantly effective, quality open and distance learning in South Africa.

4.2.3 The role of the researcher

The qualitative nature of the interview process establishes the researcher as the primary data collector and in so doing brings under scrutiny the subjectivities, biases and assumptions that could influence in a positive or negative manner, the interviewing process and concomitantly, the integrity of the process and the validity of the findings. Such subjectivities, biases and assumptions should therefore be identified prior to the design and the conducting of the interviews with a view to removing any barriers that might impact negatively on the integrity of the research.

Locke, Spirduso and Silverinan (1987) are of the opinion that the interviewer's perceptions could make a positive, rather than a detrimental contribution to the research. In this view it can be stated that my personal experiences and understanding of the research topic have been informed, deepened and moulded by my employment at Unisa. Furthermore, as a Director in the Office of the Principal, my research responsibilities have, over the years, provided me with broad and in-depth exposure to a variety of higher education policy, trends and dynamics at global, continental and national levels.

At an institutional level I was deeply involved in the merger process. I am currently involved in a number of institutional strategy and planning activities, as well as other executive management activities, which expose me to a level of institutional knowledge and understanding that would be difficult to acquire elsewhere in the institution. In addition I have worked with executive management for more than a decade, and in so doing gained a sound understanding of the role and functions of the various institutional portfolios and the responsibilities of their incumbents. As a member of the institutional planning team, I am *au fait* with institutional strategy and planning and the operationalisation thereof, as well as the various initiatives at Unisa that are aimed at improving institutional effectiveness and efficiency. This intimate understanding assisted in the formulation of the survey and interview questions, the management of the interviews and the interaction with participants.

Thirdly, I am a Unisa graduate at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, and as such I have first-hand experience and knowledge of ODL from the student's perspective. This

means that I have brought to the study knowledge, sensitivity and an awareness of the many challenges faced by higher education, higher education institutions and students, especially ODL students in the current policy environment, both globally and nationally, particularly in regard to the impact of government steering on open and distance learning, and the implications of the lack of an ODL policy in South Africa.

I am aware that while my location in the institution may have elicited a greater response to the survey questionnaires, as well as the favourable consideration of my requests for interviews, it may also have constrained respondents and participants from voicing their views and opinions openly and honestly. Participants and respondents were therefore provided with the necessary ethical assurances and undertakings to mitigate such a possibility. These are discussed under 4.2.4 below.

I am also aware that my acquired knowledge and experience brought to the study certain assumptions and biases. Although every effort was made to ensure objectivity, these biases may have shaped the way in which I viewed, understood and interpreted the data. However, I feel that my knowledge may also have provided a depth to the analyses which may otherwise have been absent. This study was therefore approached from the perspective that the current higher education policy environment and dynamics, as well as the lack of a distance education policy, are having a deleterious effect on the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of open and distance learning delivery as typified by Unisa.

4.2.4 Ethical requirements

Ethical considerations are core to sound, professional research. There is amongst researchers, strong and general agreement on proper and/or improper ethical considerations in conducting research. The *Belmont Report* (1979) identifies three core ethical principles, namely, *Respect for the persons*, *Beneficence* and *Justice*. *Respect for the persons* requires that autonomy and dignity of study participants should be respected at all times and that their vulnerability should not be exploited. By adhering to this principle study participants would not be used merely as an end to achieving the research objectives. *Beneficence* in turn implies that any risk to the participants associated with the research will be minimised and that benefits that may accrue to the study participants will be maximised. Finally, *Justice* implies a commitment to ensuring that the risks and benefits from the research are fairly distributed and that the benefits of the knowledge gained are shared with the participants. These core principles are echoed in Unisa's Policy on Research Ethics (2007: 9) as follows:

- Unisa promotes the following four internationally established and accepted moral principles of ethics as bases for research:
- autonomy (research should respect the autonomy, rights and dignity of research participants)
- beneficence (research should make a positive contribution towards the welfare of people)
- nonmaleficence (research should not cause harm to the research participant(s) in particular or to people in general)
- justice (the benefits and risks of research should be fairly distributed among people)

In ensuring the dignity and respect of the study participants, researchers use informed consent which arises from the subjects' "right to freedom and self-determination" (Cohen et al 2002: 51). Any possible limitation upon such freedom must therefore be justified and consented to. Furthermore, if a subject has the right of consent then clearly he or she must also have the right of refusal to participate or even to withdraw once the research has begun. It is therefore the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that study participants are sufficiently informed of the facts pertaining to the study, which may or may not influence their decision to participate.

Cohen et al (2002: 51) refer to the United States Department of Health, Education and Welfare's *Institutional Guide to the DHEW Policy on Protection of Human Subjects* (1971) in suggesting that reasonably informed consent would include a fair explanation of the procedures to be followed, and their purposes; a description of the attendant discomforts and risks that may reasonably be expected; a description of the benefits reasonably to be expected; a disclosure of appropriate alternative procedures that might be advantageous to the participants; an offer to answer any enquiries concerning the procedures; and an instruction that the person is free to withdraw consent and to discontinue participation in the project at any time without prejudice to the participant.

Informed consent is also required for access to the institution or entity at which the research is to be conducted and for the acceptance of the research by the 'gatekeepers', that is, those people whose permission/facilitation is required before embarking on the study. This provides the researcher with an opportunity to establish his or her credentials as a researcher, as well as his or her ethical position in regard to the research. Any possible benefits to the institution as a result of the research should be noted, but care should be taken not to raise expectations unduly.

Unisa has in place a very comprehensive Policy on Research Ethics (2007: 9), which incorporates internationally benchmarked ethical considerations for research. In addition Unisa also has its own Code of Ethics and Conduct (2007), which places upon all staff an obligation to act in an ethical manner and with integrity in the conduct and discharge of their duties and in their interaction with colleagues, staff, students and stakeholders. Furthermore the values which Unisa espouse include "Social Justice and Fairness, and "Excellence with Integrity," where ethical conduct is viewed as a critical element of integrity (Unisa 2015 Revisited 2010: 3).

I apprised myself of the ethical considerations and requirements of my research proposal. Furthermore, as an employee of Unisa, and given that I would be surveying and interviewing university staff, I made sure that I complied with and fulfilled all of the ethical requirements of the institutional Policy on Research Ethics (2007). To this end I sought and was granted permission from Unisa's Education Department's Research Ethics Committee to conduct the research (cf. Annexure A). A second letter was submitted to the Principal and Vice Chancellor of the institution requesting permission to interview specified member of Unisa's executive management and Council. Permission was granted (cf. Annexure B). Both applications in themselves fulfilled an ethical consideration while giving assurances of compliance with research and institutional ethics practices. In administering the survey the permission of all respondents was sought and they were apprised of their rights of refusal or withdrawal. All survey respondents were also contacted telephonically and e-mailed and apprised of the survey, their participation and their rights. Once the survey had closed all respondents were thanked for their participation. The same process was followed for the interviewees, and once all of the interviews had been conducted, the interviewees were thanked for their participation. In this way the ethical considerations of the research were fulfilled.

4.3 PHASE 1: THE SURVEY

A survey design provides a quantitative or numeric description of some fraction of the population – the sample – through the data collection process of asking questions of people (Fowler 1998; Creswell 1994: 117). This data in turn enables a researcher to generalise the findings from a sample of responses to a population.

The purpose of Phase 1 was to determine by means of a survey, the views and perceptions of Unisa's middle to executive management (both administrative and academic) (cf. Figure 4.3), of the impact of higher education policy on distance education provision at the institution, with particular regard to the three core steering mechanisms of planning, funding and quality (cf. Par. 3.3.2; 4.3.2).

4.3.1 Sampling

A non-probability purposive sampling strategy (Cohen et al 2000:103) was used to select respondents for the survey. In other words, the entire target population (employees at middle to executive management) were targeted to participate in the survey. A comprehensive sample aimed to ensure the best possible representation of views. Thus, 136 staff members were invited to participate in the study (cf. Par. 4.3.2.3). **Figure 4.3** provides a simple organogram of the location in the institution of the survey respondents.

Figure 4.3 **The location in the institution of the survey respondents**
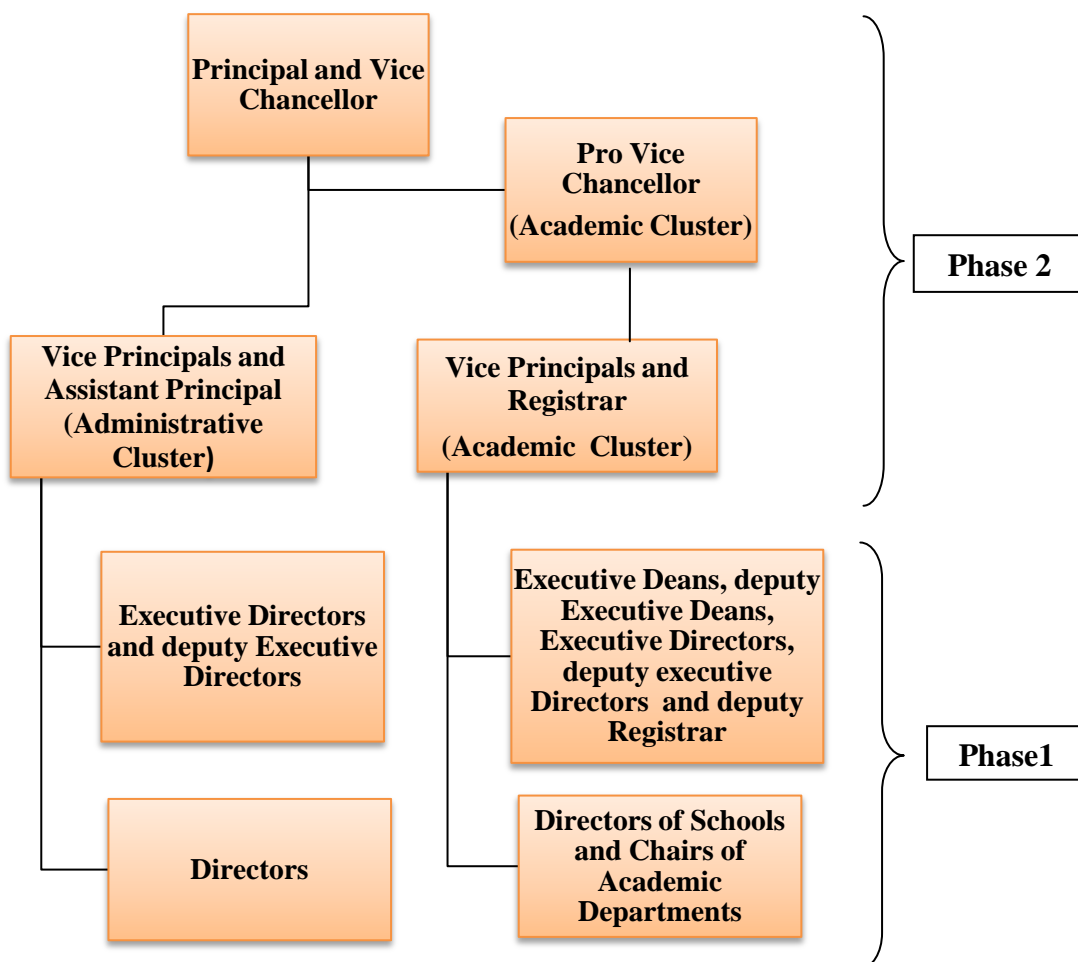
Figure 4.3 indicates that the sample included: Executive directors and deputy executive directors and directors (Administrative Cluster) and executive Deans, deputy executive Deans, executive directors, deputy executive directors and deputy registrar, as well as directors of schools and chairs of academic departments (Academic Cluster).

The sample as outlined above includes the incumbents in the identified positions (cf. Figure 4.3), irrespective of their age, race or gender. In the analysis of the data the names of the respondents were kept confidential and their positions (designations) were only indicated generically so as to provide evidence of the representivity the sample and in the aggregation of the data where the views of specific groups were consolidated.

4.3.2 Data gathering

4.3.2.1 Format of the questionnaire

In this study data were collected by means of a self-designed questionnaire comprising five sections: Section 1 (Planning); Section 2 (Funding); Section 3(Quality), Section 4 (Biographical data) as well as a Section 5 (Open comment). The introduction to the questionnaire comprised an advisory to the effect that it was not necessary to indicate a name (ensuring anonymity of the respondent); an explanation of the purpose of the research; a request for participation; an advisory of the right of refusal or withdrawal; an assurance of confidentiality; and an explanation of the survey instrument and how to complete it. The respondents could not proceed from one section of the questionnaire to the next unless they had acknowledged (by selecting an option) that they had read and understood the information and requests and were willing and able to move on to the next section. The questionnaire concluded with a note of thanks.

Sections 1, 2 and 3 comprised 101 variables, Section 4 comprised three variables, and there was a section (Section 5) for open comment. See Annexure C for an example of the questionnaire. Section 4 contained the biographical data of respondents that is factual information in respect of the age, gender and designation. Respondents were not compelled to respond to questions around age and gender, although an explanation and rationale were provided for their inclusion in the questionnaire. The rationale was linked to the aggregation of data into meaningful categories so as to conduct deeper-level analyses.

Sections 1,2 and 3 were based on a 5-point rating scale, namely the Likert Scale. The Likert scale builds in a degree of differentiation of response whilst still generating numbers (Cohen et al 2002: 253), and it provides a range of responses to a given question or statement.

Accordingly, the responses in the questionnaire ranged from '"strongly disagree", which had a value of 1 on a scale of 1-5, through to "strongly agree" which had a value of 5. An additional rating "not applicable" was also included. While a rating scale may not make allowance for degrees of subtlety in the responses and while it is acknowledged that "crude data can only yield crude interpretation" (Cohen et al 2002: 235), rating scales provide more opportunity than dichotomous questions for rendering data more sensitive and responsive to respondents (Cohen et al 2002: 255). This makes rating scales particularly useful for tapping the attitudes, perceptions and opinions of respondents. Section 5 provided space for the respondent to make a comment if so desired.

The need for a pilot survey to devise and refine categories making them exhaustive and discrete, has been suggested as a necessary part of this type of data collection (McMillan and Schumacher 2006:202) and with this in mind, a pilot survey was also conducted as part of the survey data collection methodology .

4.3.2.2 Development of the questionnaire and pilot survey

I developed the questionnaire according to the issues around the responsibilities and involvement of middle to executive management in the operationalisation of planning, funding and quality (cf. Annexure C for a copy of the questionnaire). Each section (1,2 and 3) comprised variables aimed at determining views and perceptions of the impact of policy on the operational duties and responsibilities of the respondents. Since planning (Section 1) and quality (Section 3) involved a more significant part of the respondents' responsibilities and duties, it was decided to pose considerably more questions around institutional planning (32 variables) and quality (45 variables) in comparison to funding (24 variables). It should, however, be noted that planning, funding and quality issues are intertwined and interdependent and that these links and interdependencies were considered in the formulation of the questions, as well as to allow for cross tabulations in the data analysis (cf. Par. 5.2.1; 5.5; 5.6.1).

The questionnaire was tested by means of a pilot survey. The pilot survey was conducted to ensure the best possible question formulation in relation to the survey sample, and concomitantly the reliability and validity of the survey sample. The pilot survey was sent to 20 respondents, all of whom completed the survey. Respondents were requested, and given the opportunity, to highlight any perceived lack of clarity, problematic questions or shortcomings in the questionnaire. The critique was analysed with expert peer assistance and changes were made to the final survey questionnaire where it was deemed necessary.

4.3.2.3 Distribution of the questionnaire

The questionnaire was administered electronically, using LimeSurvey. LimeSurvey (formerly PHPSurveyor) is an Open Source PHP web application to develop, publish and collect responses to online and offline surveys (LimeSurvey 2010).

All of the respondents were contacted telephonically and by e-mail to advise them of the survey as part of a doctoral study, its aim, and to solicit their participation. To achieve the best possible participation, the survey was sent out three times, at weekly intervals. An undertaking was made to keep the respondents apprised of progress on the study and to make it available to them upon completion.

4.3.2.4 Rate of return

As mentioned, 136 respondents were invited to participate in the study. A time period was given for respondents in which to complete the Web survey, followed by reminders to those staff members who had not yet returned their questionnaires at that time. Subsequently 103 responses were received of which 90 questionnaires were completed in full. There was a sample loss of 13 potential questionnaires as these were only partially completed. Thus, the actual response rate for the survey was 66%, which compares very favourably to other web-surveys showing response rates well below20 % (Tse-Hua and Xitao 2008).

4.3.2.5 Data analysis and statistical tools

The approach used to analyse the outcome of the survey was descriptive in nature. The descriptive analyses were concluded once the data had been electronically captured in the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software programme. The SPSS dataset was prepared by constructing a coding manual prior to downloading the data from the LimeSurvey tool. The e-coding manual was designed to include all research topics and response options included in the study. Once the data had been downloaded into a SPSS file, the data was cleaned, verified and stored for analyses purposes. Using SPSS, various descriptive analysis techniques were applied in analysing and interpreting the survey data.

These techniques were ultimately guided by the response formats used in the questionnaire as designed for the study. More specifically, the demographic variables (age, gender, designation and location) and open-ended question (cf. Par. 4.3.2.1) were most conducive for the construction of frequency distributions. Demographic variables were also cross-tabulated with each of the research constructs (planning, funding and quality) and variables (101

research variables) to measure agreement levels with planning, funding and quality aspects. The scaled-response design used in the questionnaire largely supported descriptive analyses showing the average or mean agreement scores for each research variable and construct. All analyses were conducted in SPSS and finally presented in table and figure format alongside the interpretation for each corresponding research construct.

The survey responses were also analysed independently by a statistician, using the SAS software package. The 101 variables under each of the three constructs of planning, funding and quality were ranked in order of the mean score levels of disagreement or agreement that they displayed. Further data analyses included pertinent one-way frequency distributions on the response data and biographical attributes, scale reliability testing on rating values of subsets of questionnaire items to verify internal consistency reliability, and the analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicating significant levels of biographical attributes identified as influential. Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of Means tests on perception construct category-mean scores for constructs where the effect of biographical attribute/s were indicated as having a statistically significant effect on the particular construct (in the analysis of variance) were also conducted.

All analyses were finally presented in table and figure format alongside the narrative interpretation for each corresponding research construct (cf. Par. 5.3)

To test whether the research results are consistent, a Cronbach Alpha (α) measure of scale reliability test was used. The outcome of the reliability analysis for each construct and the total study is displayed in **Table 4.1**

Table 4. 1   Cronbach Alpha (α) Reliability Tests

CONSTRUCT	NUMBER OF VARIABLES	CRONBACH ALPHA (A)
PLANNING	32	0.893
FUNDING	24	0.668
QUALITY	45	0.820
TOTAL	101	0.899

It should be noted that the Cronbach alpha (α) values displayed above are all above the desired level of between 0.7 and 0.8, except for funding. The three funding items that were identified as affecting reliability include:

- *Because it is systems driven, distance education/ODL is expensive to fund and maintain*

- *Unisa should halt all registrations once a given target for the Institution has been reached, irrespective of enrolment ratios per College*

- *The current large student numbers are jeopardising Unisa's future sustainability*

By deleting these items from the funding construct, the Cronbach alpha (α) reliability increases to above 0.7 (α = 0.704).   Nevertheless, this increase is not dramatic and all values reflect a reasonable degree of reliability.   Removing the three items further increases the overall reliability of the research model to α = 0.905.   In general, all the constructs proved to be most reliable.   This implies that the measurement scales used consistently reflect the constructs measured in the study.   The α-values in general indicates good reliability.

4.3.2.6 Validity and reliability of the questionnaire

Briefly put, validity ensures that the research instrument in fact measures what it sets out to measure. In quantitative data validity might be improved through careful sampling and appropriate statistical treatment of the data. Every attempt should therefore be made to minimise invalidity and biases in the survey design and administration.   In designing the questionnaire the following aspects were taken into consideration in order to ensure validity:

      a) an appropriate time scale (cf. Par. 4.3.2.3)

      b) sufficient resources: the university's email system which is effective and reliable

      c) appropriate methodology and sampling (cf. Par. 4.3.1)

      d) measures to ensure reliability (see discussion below)

      e) foci for the research questions (planning, funding and quality)

      f) a properly designed questionnaire and pilot study (cf. Par. 4.3.2.1; 4.3.2.2)

Reliability in quantitative research refers to its consistency and applicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents. For research to be reliable it must be able to demonstrate that if it were carried out on a similar group of respondents in a similar context, then similar results would be found (Cohen et al, 2002: 117). Thus, when administering a survey consideration needs to be given to the honesty and accuracy in answering, of those who complete the questionnaires, and to whether the answers of those who elect not to complete the questionnaires would have been the same as those who did.

In this study when administering the survey, the problem of non response , or "volunteer bias" (Belson 1986: 35 – 38) was controlled by contacting all respondents telephonically

(personally) prior to them receiving the survey and requesting that they participate in the survey, and by sending out the survey three times. Respondents were also sent follow-up e-mails reminding them to complete the survey. Other strategies that I used to maximise the response rate (and thus, the reliability) included:

a) ensuring the accuracy of the contact data (in this case, the designations and e-mal addresses of the respondents)

b) constructing a user-friendly survey questionnaire format (especially in terms of ethical assurances, and the purpose and length of the survey)

c) having a sound understanding of the survey population (cf. Par. 4.2.3)

The anonymity of the questionnaire (cf. Par. 4.2.3.1) allowed for a greater level of honesty than is the case with interviews, although this can obviously not be guaranteed, nor ascertained where there is an intention to be dishonest. However, while survey questionnaires are also more economical and efficient in terms of time and money, their anonymity precludes any interaction with the researcher who may otherwise have been able to clarify and explain various interpretations of the questions posed.

4.4   PHASE 2: INTERVIEWS

A research interview is a two-person conversation initiated by the interviewer for the specific purpose of obtaining research-relevant information, and focused by him (or her) on content specified by research objectives of systematic description, prediction, or explanation. Interviews may be used as the principle means of gathering information that has a direct bearing on the research objectives; to test hypotheses or suggest new ones; or in conjunction with other methods in a research undertaking (Cohen and Manion 1995:271-2).

In this mixed research design the interviews were used in conjunction with the survey (Phase 1). According to Henning (2004:53), the standard for such an interview is "Guidance without interference or conversation from the interviewer." This should enable the interviewee to give a "true" or "real" subjective version of the facts, opinions and feelings as she or he experiences them. Gubrium and Holstein (2002:9) refer to this notion as "the mediation of contemporary life." In such interviews the context is believed to be the real thing as presented by the subjective participant.

I envisaged that data gathered from the interviews would reveal commonalities and discrepancies in attitudes and practices towards policy formulation, implementation and

management, and that this evidence, together with evidence generated from the historical data, literature review and the survey, would form a broad frame of reference that would not only elucidate the research problem, but would also provide sufficient reliable data which could be drawn on in the formulation of possible recommendations in regard to identified problems.

4.4.1   Selection of participants

The aim with the interview was to elicit from interviewees subjective views and experiences on the topic of this research. In selecting participants for the interviews, judgement sampling was used in terms of which interview subjects who were most advantageously placed or in the best position to provide the information required, were selected. In this case, interview participants were selected from the topmost echelon of the institution (cf. Figure 4.3) and as such they could be regarded as "elite interviewees."   Welch, Marschan-Piekkari, Penttinen, and Tahvanainen (2010: 5) assert that an elite interviewee is a respondent (usually male) who occupies a senior or middle management position; has functional responsibility in an area which enjoys high status in accordance with corporate values; has considerable industry experience and frequently also long tenure with the company; possesses a broad network of relationships; and has considerable international exposure.

In the context of Unisa, top and executive management constitute "elite interviewees", although the race and gender spread of the interviewees in this instance reflect both black and white, and male and female.

The survey (Phase 1), which used middle and executive management as respondents, formed the basis for the questions used in the interviews with top management and in so doing the research design followed a natural progression through the ranks of institutional management in terms of the respondents and interview participants. I am of the view that this provided for an equitable representation of management views.

With this in mind, thirteen participants (N=13) were selected. Eleven members of top and executive Management at Unisa were identified, who have played a pivotal role in steering the institution through the merger process and in drafting and implementing the strategy, planning and quality processes at the institution in alignment with national policy imperatives. Interviewees were selected who could comment on the different facets of policy, from the planning and formulation level to the implementation level and across the

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range of institutional operations. In addition, given their knowledge and practical experience of ODL and higher education policy and management, a member of the Unisa Council who was a former Vice Chancellor of a Comprehensive University, and a second member of the Unisa Council who amongst others, is also the Executive Director: South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE) were included as participants.

The high-level of the positions meant that the incumbent had to be interviewed, irrespective of race or gender. What this ensured however, was an excellent and accurate representation of the status quo with regard to the gender and racial composition of the executive management of Unisa, and on another level it offered evidence of how Unisa has in fact responded to the transformational policy challenge of equity and redress.

The participants selected for the interviews occupied the following positions at Unisa:
- The Principal and Vice Chancellor
- The Pro Vice Chancellor
- The Vice- Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships
- The Vice- Principal: Academic and Research
- The Vice-Principal: Human Resources
- The Vice-Principal: Learner Support and Student Affairs
- The Vice Principal: Finance and Estates
- The Registrar
- The Deputy Registrar
- The Executive Director: Department of Strategy, Planning and Quality Assurance
- The Executive Director: Department of Information and Strategic Analysis
- Member of Unisa Council and former Principal and Vice Chancellor of the Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (one of the six designated Comprehensive Universities), and interim CEO of the Council on Higher Education.
- Member of Unisa Council and Executive Director: South African Institute for Distance Education (SAIDE), founding President of The National Association of Distance education and Open Learning in South Africa (NADEOSA), member of the Council on Higher Education and the Steering Committee of the International Research Foundation for Open Learning and deputy Chair of the Commonwealth of Learning.

The names of the incumbents in these positions were omitted to ensure some measure of anonymity and confidentiality. While they may currently be identified by virtue of their

incumbency, the passage of time and the retirement of many of the incumbents within the next two years, will increase the likelihood of anonymity significantly.   In the letter requesting permission to interview (cf. Annexure B) the above mentioned top management and Council members, the possibility of identification was clearly spelt out and interviewees participated in the interviews having been fully apprised of their ethical rights. Permission had also been sought and granted by the Unisa Ethics Committee (cf. Annexure A).

4.4.2   Data Gathering

Open-ended, face-to-face interviews were conducted and recorded directly by means of a Dragon voice recognition software as well as a voice recorder. In line with suggestions by Creswell (1994:153), a protocol for the interviews (cf. Annexure D) was prepared beforehand and included and an opening statement and key research questions derived mainly from the findings of the survey (which was already available at the time of the interviews) and the literature reviews in chapters 2 and 3.

Although the same twelve key questions (cf. Annexure D) were posed to all participants in individual interviews, interviewees were provided the opportunity to raise issues of their own volition and in relation to their specific functions. As the interviewer, I also encouraged interviewees to relax and speak freely on any additional related matters or issues that they might want to. During the interviews I asked numerous probing or follow up questions and I also made handwritten notes. At the conclusion of the interviews, interviewees were invited to give their own impressions of the overall success at Unisa in regard to the implementation of the three state steering pillars, and on the research itself.

4.4.3   Data Analysis

Mouton (2001:108-109) asserts that interview data analyses involve breaking up the data into manageable themes, patterns, trends and relationships (reduction), with the aim of understanding the various constitutive elements of the data collected by means of an analysis of the relationship between concepts, constructs or variables, and in so doing, determine whether there are any patterns or trends that can be identified or isolated, or establish themes in the data (interpretation). This is supported and expanded on by Kvale (1983:180) who observes that an interpretation of the results involves the "synthesis of the data into a coherent whole and the explanation of observable patterns or findings through the formulation of hypotheses or theories. The findings will then be evaluated against existing

theories or models to show whether these were supported or falsified by the new interpretation.

I transcribed all of the interviews, and the transcriptions were used in the data analysis. In analysing the data from the interviews I used a coding methodology that entailed firstly transcribing the interviews, then conducting a textual analysis to identify numerous codes, clustering these into code "families", identifying several emergent themes from the code families, linking the identified themes to the literature study while locating them within the theoretical framework of the study, making findings and finally, offering recommendations.

4.4.3.1 Trustworthiness of Data

Validity and reliability in qualitative research is problematic in that both the interviewer and the interviewees operate within a framework of subjectivity. The most significant danger in terms of validity and reliability is the bias of the interviewer and the participant, and the content of the questions. These biases relate to personal attitudes, opinions and expectations of the interviewer and interviewee; the interviewer seeking answers to support his/her preconceived ideas; misinterpretation and misconceptions about what the interview participant is saying; and misunderstanding of the questions by the interviewee. Aspects such as race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, status and social class and age could contribute to bias (Cohen *et al*, 2002: 121). Many commentators including Fielding and Fielding (1986) and Denscombe (1995) believe that interviewer neutrality is a "chimera."

Trustworthiness thus comes to the fore as a crucial means of ensuring reliability in qualitative research. Seale (1999: 226) states that "trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as reliability and validity."

Lincoln and Guba (1985: 316) argue that 'Since there can be no validity without reliability, a demonstration of the former [validity] is sufficient to establish the latter [reliability]. They propose four criteria that are considered appropriate for qualitative studies, and that should establish the trustworthiness of the research, namely: c*redibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability* (Lincoln and Guba 1985: 20).

Credibility refers to the fact that the study was conducted in such a manner as to ensure that the subject was accurately identified and described. This study was located within the policy framework of the higher education environment and it aimed to identify problems and challenges and make recommendations in relation to the difficulties being experienced by

Unisa in a policy environment that is designed for face-to-face institutions and that is becoming more tightly steered. In establishing credibility the parameters were defined in the research questions of this study and in the selection of the respondents and participants.

Transferability refers to the applicability of one set of findings in another context. This study is focused on the challenges being faced by distance education in a policy environment that is not necessarily conducive to its efficient and effective practice. However, I am of the view that the findings of the study could be useful in a variety of other research contexts and in so doing, contribute to the improved efficiency not only of open and distance learning, but also contact higher education institutions and higher education delivery in general.

Dependability refers to the attempt by the researcher to account for changing conditions in the design, created by an increasingly refined understanding of the setting and topic. This has been my experience. A refined understanding was gained from findings of the survey, and this contributed to ongoing and improved formulation of the interview questions, as well as probing questions, which ultimately added new insights into, and a more sophisticated understanding of, the problem statement.

Confirmability corresponds to the traditional notion of objectivity. I am of the view that the mixed method research design allowed for the confirmability (or objectivity) of the interview findings to be ensured by preparing the interview questions and conducting the interviews in such a manner as to reduce the possibility of subjective biases, and by triangulating and integrating the results with survey results and the literature review.

Kvale (1996: 148 – 9) suggests that an effective interviewer should be knowledgeable of the subject matter; structured in terms of clarity of purpose, conduct and completion of the interviews; clear; gentle; sensitive in terms of empathy and active listening; open; steering as in keeping to the point; critical in regard to questioning to check the reliability, consistency and validity of what is being said; remembering in terms of being able to recall previous statements and relate to them during the interviews; and interpreting so as to clarify, confirm or disconfirm the interviewee's statement with the interviewee.

To this end, in approaching the interviews, I endeavoured to ensure that interviews were properly structured. A protocol was prepared for the interviews (cf. Par. 4.4.3 and contained in Annexure D), and a pilot interview was conducted to ensure my familiarity with the interview process, protocols and pitfalls highlighted above. During the interviews, where

necessary, confirmation questions were asked to ensure that I had understood the meaning of a response and I repeated questions to ensure that every facet had been answered. I also asked probing questions to seek additional insights and clarity.

Finally, all recordings and transcriptions are in my possession and will be held in confidence for a period of three years.

4.5   PRESENTATION OF THE FINDINGS

The data from the survey (Phase 1) (cf. Par. 5.2; 5.3) and interviews (Phase 2) (cf. Par 5.6) are presented separately in Chapter 5 Findings of Phase 1 are presented statistically supported by tabular and graphical representations. Findings of Phase 2 are presented thematically in narrative form supported where necessary, by verbatim quotations from the interviews. Relevant aspects of the literature review were drawn into the findings to support, compare or highlight pertinent points or relevant issues and to ground, or locate the study in a theoretical framework.

4.6   CONCLUSION

This chapter outlined the research design for the mixed methods research component of this study. A rationale was given for the choice of a mixed methods design and the position of the researcher was clearly stated. Moreover, the chapter was structured according to the sampling, data collection and data analysis of Phase 1 and Phase 2 respectively. The findings are presented in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER 5

5. PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter 4 presented the mixed method research design of the empirical enquiry in two phases: Phase 1, the quantitative phase; and Phase 2, the qualitative phase. In this chapter, the findings are presented and discussed under three main headings, namely: the findings of Phase 1; the findings of Phase 2; and a conclusion. In the process of analysis in Phase 2, the findings of Phase 1 will be integrated where appropriate. The analyses in Phase 2 will also make liberal use of cross referencing where this will highlight the interdependency and integrated nature of the emergent themes.

5.2 PHASE 1: THE SURVEY

A non-probability purposive sampling strategy (Cohen et al 2000:103) was used in this study to select respondents for the survey, meaning that the entire target population (Unisa employees at middle to executive management) were targeted to participate in the survey to ensure the best possible representation of their views (cf. Par. 4.3.1). However, while the findings represent the views of the target population, they cannot claim to be representative of the views of all employees at Unisa, nor can they claim to represent the views of employees at similar levels in other contact and ODL institutions.

The findings of Phase 1 are presented in three parts: analysis strategy; discussion of analysis results; and summary comments and deductions.

5.2.1 Analysis strategy

An analysis strategy, as used in this study, aims to show how more information can conceivably be extracted from the questionnaire response data. To this end, the strategy sets out the additional statistical analysis techniques, motivates why they are required and how they can assist in extracting more information from the data. The analysis strategy also demonstrates the progression of the analyses from the more general exploratory phase in which general information is collected, to a more specialised phase in which more direct research questions are addressed and answered.

5.2.1.1 Descriptive statistics on responses to each questionnaire item

The descriptive statistics used on responses to each questionnaire item comprise the mean, standard deviation, minimum , maximum and spread (Cody & Smith 1997: 22-57) and were analysed independently by the statistician who administered the electronic survey questionnaire. These statistics give a good general impression of how respondents perceived each statement probed on the three policy steering mechanisms (PSMs) of planning, funding and quality at Unisa. They explore the extent to which the respondents, in general, perceived specific questionnaire questions: positively (agree and strongly agree, as indicated by a mean response value in the region of 4 or greater than 4); negatively (disagree or strongly disagree, as indicated by a mean response score in the region of 2 or less than 2); or ambivalent about the matter (indicated by a mean response rating in the region of 3). The descriptive statistics on responses to each questionnaire item are shown in bar graph format in **Tables 5.1 – 5.3** and have been provided in table format in Annexure E.

5.2.1.2 One-way frequency distributions on the response data

One-way frequency distributions on the response data for each individual questionnaire item were categorised according to the five response rating levels (where 1 represented 'strong disagreement' and 5 represented 'strong agreement'), from which respondents had to choose. The one-way frequencies describe how respondents evaluated each statement probed in the questionnaire. The frequency distributions complement the descriptive statistics of the previous step in that they provide more background regarding the response pattern associated with each item (Hatcher 1998: 523 -525). One-way frequency distributions on the response data of identified pertinent, individual questionnaire items (response data) and biographical attributes are shown in **Tables 5.4 - 5.34**. These frequency distributions highlight particular respondent sentiments of agreement or disagreement or interesting frequencies that could conceivably influence the clustering of the data and ultimately the formation of the interview questions in response to the research question and sub-questions. All of the frequency tables are included in Annexure F.

5.2.1.3 Clustering questionnaire items and scale reliability testing

To arrive at a more ordered analysis of the data, questionnaire items were clustered into subsets of questionnaire items that probe the same issue, and scale reliability testing was conducted. This was done once the general evaluation of the data had been established, and in view of the wealth and volume of the information presented by the analysis of 32 + 24 + 45 =

101 survey questionnaire items. Reducing the dimensionality of the information through the categorising of the information was done in order to answer specific questions such as for example: 'How do respondents perceive their workloads in relation to admission the admission policy and processes at Unisa?' or, 'Does designation have an effect on respondents' perceptions on issues related to Unisa's admission policy?' To be able to address these kinds of questions, questionnaire items which address the same issue can be grouped into subsets. A statistical technique, referred to as scale reliability testing (or item analysis) can be performed on the rating values of any such subset of questionnaire items to test statistically whether the grouping of items by the researcher truly represents an underlying issue (which is referred to as a construct) (Hatcher 1994:129-140). Put simply, scale reliability testing will determine whether all items included in a specific identified subset of questionnaire items (construct) all contribute towards explaining the underlying construct (e.g. the issue of admission, mentioned above).

In the questionnaire under investigation 16 subsets were identified that address specific aspects within the three policy dimensions: planning (6), funding (3) and quality (7). Each subset was given a name that alluded to the generic nature of its clustered items, as set out below:

The **planning** dimensions of the Policy Steering Mechanism: Planning
- **Numbers:** Unisa as an institution catering for a very large volume of students
- **InstStru:** Perceptions on institutional strategy and planning
- **InstEffi:** Views on institutional efficiency
- **StaffPlMo:** Perceptions on staffs' contributions to the implementation of the Institutional Operational Plan
- **PInstPln:** Personal perceptions on institutional planning
- **ValuePln:** Views on the value of an Institutional Operational Plan

The **funding** dimensions of the Policy Steering Mechanism: Funding
- **FundCos**t: Funding and cost incurred in implementing planning
- **Access:** Perspectives on student access
- **Policy:** Perspectives on policy issues

The **quality** dimensions of the Policy Steering Mechanism: Quality
- **Admissin**: Perceptions on student admission
- **ValuQual**: The value of quality to the institution
- **OnLine:** Quality on-line services
- **PQM:** The effect of the PQM and its management on quality
- **Support**: Quality student support
- **Staff**: Quality assessment by staff and large numbers
- **ICT_s:** quality enhancement through implementation of ICTs.

The different subsets are described in detail in columns 1 and 2 of **Table 5.35.**

One of the most important steps in the analysis strategy entails the development of a rule (or summative perception measurement of scale) that measures how each respondent perceived each aspect of the PSM that was probed. Accordingly the calculation of a rule based on the subset of questionnaire items associated with a particular issue, such as those listed under the three PSM dimensions mentioned above, and the applicability of these proposed rules (or perception measures) as indicators of respondents' perceptions on the various aspects, have to be evaluated. A form of reliability testing, referred to as internal consistency reliability, is therefore conducted on the response ratings of questionnaire items that describe a construct. If internal consistency reliability is established for each PSM perception construct, it implies that all questionnaire items within that particular construct contribute towards explaining the particular aspect, and therefore, that the rule calculated from these agreement responses, measures what it purports to measure. Internal consistency reliability therefore contributes towards the integrity of the research and ensures that valid and reliable analysis results and deductions are reached (Hatcher 1994:132).

The clusterings were done according to issues identified by the researcher as being pertinent to the study, with due cognisance of the research problem and related sub-questions (cf. Par.1.3; 1.4). Once the items had been clustered satisfactorily and dimensionality had been reduced scale reliability testing was performed on the rating values for each subset of items, thus verifying the internal consistency reliability of the subsets and confirming that the items included in the subsets all truly contributed towards explaining the defined construct.

In the analyses, scale reliability testing was carried out on each of the constructs separately as listed in **Table 5.35.**

Internal consistency reliability is indicated in the output of the scale reliability analyses by a value referred to as the Cronbach alpha coefficient, which acts as an indicator of internal consistency reliability. If the value of the alpha coefficient is in the region of 0.7 (thus including 0.6) or greater than 0.7, it can be assumed that internal consistency reliability has been statistically (and significantly) established for that particular subset of questionnaire items (Hatcher 1994: 137). Summary results of scale reliability testing conducted on the three PSMs are presented in **Table 5.35**. The interpretation of the Cronbach alpha coefficients is provided in the discussion of the analysis results under 5.3.3.3.

Reliability tests were conducted independently (cf. Par. 4.3.2.5) on the three policy constructs of planning, quality and funding as reflected in the survey questionnaire, and an overall (total) Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient of 0.899 was achieved for the 101 variables. Since a Cronbach alpha (α) coefficient in the region of 0.7 and greater is indicative of internal consistency, it can therefore be asserted that the three constructs and concomitantly the survey questionnaire could be deemed reliable.

This finding of reliability is corroborated in the analyses below, although the larger number of constructs derived from the three main policy constructs of planning, funding and quality (16 as opposed to 3) resulted in slightly lower Cronbach alpha (α) coefficients. However, the analyses will also show that all such constructs were still able to demonstrate internal consistency within the accepted region of 0.7. The clustering of the questionnaire items and conducting of scale reliability testing was carried out on each of the constructs (separately) as presented in **Table 5.35**.

5.2.1.4 Calculation of construct scores

Once the constructs have been defined and verified for internal consistency reliability, the respondent perceptions of the defined constructs must be evaluated. A single measure, or, score of scale value for each respondent for each construct can be obtained as the mean rating score of all items in the specific subset of questionnaire items that explain the particular construct. For example, in this study, the mean value of the individual respondent scores for the construct which evaluates respondent perceptions of Unisa's approach to large numbers of students (under planning) was calculated to be 2.71 (cf. **Table 5.35**), which reflects rather ambivalent perceptions about enrolling increasingly large numbers of students at Unisa, as opposed to the mean construct score for perceptions in regard to the value of institutional strategy and planning (4.55), which reflects a positive attitude towards the concept of strategy and planning.

By introducing constructs into the analysis strategy the large volume of questionnaire items (101) was organised and reduced to 16 constructs (or subsets), the aim being to facilitate the interpretation of results. Accordingly, scores for each respondent for each construct were calculated, and from these individual construct scores for each respondent, an overall mean score was calculated for each construct. The mean construct scores are presented in column 6 of **Table 5.35** and the standard deviation of each construct mean score is presented in brackets in the same column (6).

5.2.1.5 The interpretation of the construct mean scores and their contribution to the body of knowledge

Since the individual construct scores and the construct mean scores were calculated from the agreement rating values which respondents assigned to the questionnaire items, the construct score values (of each respondent) and construct mean score values can also be interpreted as agreement rating values ranging from '1' for strong disagreement to '5' for strong agreement. The interpretation of the construct mean scores is discussed under 5.3.3.4.

5.2.1.6 Analysis of variance and multiple comparisons of means: the effect of biographical variables on respondent perceptions

As a final step in the analysis strategy the biographical characteristics of respondents (which in this study comprised age, gender and designation) in regard to perceptions around the constructs that were designed and evaluated, were analysed. The statistical technique of analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used in this regard.

Analysis of variance is a basic statistical technique for analysing experimental data. It subdivides the total variation of a data set into meaningful component parts associated with specific sources of variation (biographical attributes) in order to test a hypothesis on the parameters of the model or to estimate variance components (ASQ : 2011). The hypothesis applicable to the current research would be that for any PSM construct, the mean construct scores for the construct, calculated according to the categories of a biographical attribute with more than two categories (e.g. age) do not differ from one another, as opposed to the alternative hypothesis that states that some category mean construct scores of a specific construct differ in a statistically significant manner from one another. If the alternative hypothesis is accepted in an ANOVA analysis, it implies that the specific biographical attribute significantly affects respondent perceptions for the construct investigated.

Analysis of variance requires that the dependent variable be a continuous variable and that the independent, or explanatory variables be categorical (Cody & Smith 1997 : 150 – 180). The 16 sets of construct score values in this study were regarded as the dependent variables (each set was separately analysed in a separate analysis of variance) and the categorical biographical characteristics of age, gender and designation were regarded as the explanatory variables in each analysis.

Put simply, analysis of variance investigates whether a statistically significant component of the variation present in the data of a given dependent variable (a specific construct's set of score values) can be attributed to any of the categorical (or explanatory) variables entered into the analysis of variance (ANOVA) model (Cody & Smith 1997 :150 – 180). An F-statistic is calculated for each biographical attribute to determine this. If any of the biographical attributes (e.g. gender) is indicated as being a statistically significant explanatory variable (thus having a statistically significant effect on perceptions of a specific perception construct, say for instance the construct of *the value of quality*) (cf. Par. 5.3.3.4), construct mean scores for the particular construct are calculated according to the levels of the explanatory variable, for example, for 'male' and 'female' of the gender explanatory variable. The category score means are then compared in a multiple comparison of means test (Cody & Smith 1997 :155 – 158) to determine which category means differ from one another. In this way the nature of the effect of a biographical attribute on a perception construct can be determined more precisely.

Sixteen analyses of variance were conducted on each set of construct mean scores in which the biographical attributes of age, gender and designation were entered as explanatory variables. A summary of the analyses results are presented in **Table 5.36** in the discussion of the results under 5.3.3.4.

5.3   DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS

5.3.1   Preparation of the data

In preparing the data for analyses, each of the 101 variables in the survey questionnaire under the three main policy steering mechanisms (or constructs), of planning, funding and quality, was allocated a numerical and alphabetical 'label' in the order in which they appeared in the survey questionnaire. So for example, question 1 under construct one (planning), was given the label q1a, where q = question, 1 = construct 1(planning), and a = the first letter of the alphabet. Once the letters of the alphabet had been exhausted under a given construct, the last letter, "z" was given an additional number for each following question. So for example, the 27th question under planning was labelled q1z1, while the 30th question was labelled q1z4, and so on.   Similarly, the variables for the second construct (funding), were labelled commencing with the first variable as q2a, while the first question in the third construct (quality), was labelled q3a. In this way it was easy to determine which of the questions had

been included or excluded in each of the 16 subsets analysed. (The survey questionnaire is attached as Annexure C.)

5.3.2 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics on the responses to each questionnaire are reflected in the bar graphs for the constructs planning, funding and quality in **Tables 5.1 – 5.3** below. The variables have been ranked ordinally in increasing mean value, according to the overall general mean response of disagreement or agreement expressed by all respondents in respect of each question posed. This shows which of the 101 survey questions elicited the most negative or positive responses generally, from the entire target population.

These initial general mean responses on the target population respondent perceptions offered some summary insights into questions aimed at probing the research question and sub-questions. Supported by the one-way frequency distributions on the response data for each statement probed in the questionnaire, they provided an additional dimension for consideration in the clustering of the 16 constructs that were subsequently analysed and used in the formulation of the interview questions in Phase 2 of the research design. The frequency tables for the descriptive statistics on responses to each questionnaire question are provided in Annexure F.

Table 5.1 Descriptive statistics on responses to questionnaire items under the construct Planning showing mean scores in ascending rank order from strongly disagree to strongly agree

Item	Mean
Unisa has sufficient lecturing staff to deal with increased numbers of students	2.38
Unisa has efficient administrative staff to deal with increased numbers of students	2.51
Unisa has the infrastructure to accommodate student numbers in excess of 300 000	2.56
Unisa has adequate processes to deal with increased numbers of students	2.64
Unisa should accommodate ever-growing student numbers	3.11
I have enough time to fulfil my planning and implementation responsibilities	3.12
Traditional notions of academic excellence and freedom and institutional autonomy are being sacrificed in pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness	3.13
I have enough time to fulfil my performance management and assessment responsibilities	3.36
Unisa's planning regime is effective	3.50
All staff should be responsible for the administration required for institutional planning and implementation	3.58
All staff should be responsible for providing institutional data on request	3.66
Performance management and assessment improve job performance	3.80
Regular performance assessments of all staff members promotes institutional efficiency	3.94
All staff should regularly provide information for the purpose of institutional monitoring and evaluation	3.96
The massification of higher education requires a business approach to education management and administration	4.02
All staff should be responsible for operational planning and its implementation	4.03

Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

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Planning (continued)

Statement	Value
Reviewing the institutional strategy, vision and mission on a regular basis promotes institutional efficiency	4.22
Monitoring, evaluation and regular reporting on IOP implementation promotes institutional efficiency	4.22
Sound planning empowers academics to perform more effectively	4.24
I am properly informed about my planning and implementation responsibilities	4.26
The ongoing acquisition of institutional information for planning and analysis purposes promotes institutional efficiency	4.26
All staff should share responsibility for their own performance management and assessment	4.28
Distance education/ODL is the best means of accommodating increasing demands for access to higher education in South Africa	4.30
I have the requisite skills and competencies to fulfil my planning, implementation, and performance management responsibilities	4.31
Sound planning promotes effective teaching, learning and research	4.37
It is necessary to have an institutional Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS)	4.38
It is necessary to have an institutional strategy, vision and mission	4.63
It is necessary to acquire and analyse on an ongoing basis, broad-based institutional data	4.69
It is necessary to have an institutional planning framework	4.70

Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

Table 5.2   Descriptive statistics on responses to questionnaire items under the construct Funding showing mean scores in ascending rank order from strongly disagree to strongly agree

Item	Mean
It is cheaper to design a course for distance education/ODL than for a contact institution	2.33
Distance education/ODL in South Africa receives sufficient funding	2.46
Unisa receives sufficient funding	2.60
The funding allocation for distance education/ODL is commensurate with its mandate and responsibility	2.64
Unisa is able to balance the DoHE&T student "cap" with demands for access from students	2.69
The DoHE&T should take back non-utilised block grants	2.84
Unisa should halt all registrations once a given target for the Institution has been reached, irrespective of enrolment ratios per College	2.90
The current large student numbers are jeopardising Unisa's future sustainability	2.98
Unisa should increase its student enrolment in the rest of the world	3.18
Because it is systems driven, distance education/ODL is expensive to fund and maintain	3.19
Proving student activity remains problematic for Unisa	3.33
There should be a dedicated ODL Policy that provides for the unique nature of ODL in South Africa	3.43

 Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

Funding (continued)

Statement	Value
The DoHE&T has stringent funding monitoring and reporting requirements in place	3.46
Unisa should increase its student enrolment in Africa	3.50
Economies of scale make distance education/ODL a much cheaper mode of tuition than contact tuition	3.74
Unisa is a "catch-all" institution for university entrance seekers	3.76
Unisa has many students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams	3.81
Funding for research should be aligned to the needs of a developmental state	3.82
The DoHE&T should compensate Unisa for unfunded students	3.86
Unisa's social mandate is in line with the educational needs of South Africa	3.90
Funding should be provided for community engagement initiatives	3.96
Students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams have a negative impact on Unisa's funding	4.17
Academics salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession	4.28
Students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams have an impact on Unisa's throughput rates	4.29

Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

Table 5.3 **Descriptive statistics on responses to questionnaire items under the construct Quality showing mean scores in rank order from strongly disagree to strongly agree.**

Item	Mean
Unisa should have completely open admission	2.24
It is easy for Unisa students to access their study…	2.30
Unisa's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM)…	2.31
Lecturers provide a quality service to students	2.36
Increasing numbers of Unisa students choose to use…	2.39
Current assessment practices promote improved…	2.84
South Africa's higher education quality regime is…	2.94
Unisa study materials are delivered on time	2.94
Tutor support is fundamental to quality ODL…	3.13
The Integrated Performance Management System at…	3.13
Registering students receive appropriate, quality…	3.16
Unisa's courses receive accreditation without…	3.21
Unisa's registration process is easy to understand	3.23
Lecturers cannot cope administratively, with the…	3.23
Unisa's courses are used by other institutions locally…	3.24
There is too much emphasis on ICTs in Unisa	3.24
Unisa's large number of modules impacts…	3.27
Unisa's large number of modules impacts…	3.27
Unisa staff are committed to quality assessment…	3.27
Unisa students prefer communicating with their…	3.31
Unisa has student-friendly registration facilities and…	3.31
Unisa's study materials are well written and easily…	3.32
Unisa students prefer communicating with their…	3.32

Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

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Quality (continued)

Statement	Value
Unisa students receive appropriate and timely assessment feedback	3.37
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of teaching	3.38
All prospective students at Unisa should undergo a university entrance examination	3.38
Unisa should reduce the number of modules it offers	3.39
Unisa's current admissions policy is impacting negatively on quality higher education delivery	3.41
Unisa's systems facilitate and support quality assessment	3.41
ICTs have improved service delivery at Unisa	3.41
Unisa's courseware design is innovative and creative	3.43
Unisa should cap its student intake	3.43
Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on quality learner support	3.46
Unisa's admission requirements should be more stringent	3.62
Unisa's courses are internationally recognized	3.63
Unisa employs sound quality assessment practices	3.67
Unisa students prefer communicating with their lecturers online	3.67
All Unisa students receive the same levels of support	3.74
Unisa lecturers support the use of ICTs in the execution of their duties	3.98
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of courseware	4.02
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of learning	4.02
It is easy to source appropriately qualified and skilled tutors	4.09
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to administrative excellence	4.23
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to excellence in teaching, learning and research	4.24
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to service excellence	4.31

Note: 1 = disagree; 5 = agree.

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5.3.3 Pertinent one-way frequency distributions on the response data and biographical attributes

5.3.3.1 Biographical attributes

The rationale for the analysis of the frequency distribution for the response data and biographical attributes is provided in 5.2.1.2. In this section, the one-way frequency distributions on the response data and biographical attributes of age, gender and designation are discussed in relation to the research question and sub-questions.

Table 5.4   One-way frequency distributions on the biographical attribute Age

Age				
q4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
20-50	44	49.44	44	49.44
51-60	33	37.08	77	86.52
61-70	12	13.48	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

In the frequency distribution of the biographical attribute *Age*, it can be noted that the majority of respondents (44) fell into the age group 20 – 50 (49.44%). There were 33 respondents in the 51 – 60 age cohort (37.08%) and 12 (13.48%) in the 61 – 70 age cohort. The target population reflects the generally more mature age of the management corps in higher education institutions and in Unisa in particular. It is possible that the more mature age of the respondents, together with their management status in the institution, might result in a more sober and possibly loyal response to the questions, which may in turn impact on the reliability of the survey. However, the anonymity of the questionnaires ameliorated this possibility to the extent that reliability has been confirmed in the analyses of the data. Consequently, any statistically significant analyses in relation to *age,* should represent views and perceptions that merit further interrogation.

It is also possible that the age difference between the younger cohort of 44 (20 – 50) respondents and the combined older cohort of 45 (51 – 70) respondents might result in

some statistical differences in perceptions because of the historical evolution and restructuring of higher education in South Africa (cf. Par. 3.3.1), particularly in regard to attitudes towards the changes in management and academic practices aligned to the policy steering mechanisms. The majority of the older respondents have transitioned through the change from *apartheid* education to a new democratic dispensation and it is possible that a lingering reluctance to adapt to new and different academic practices might be statistically evident. These possibilities are discernible in the analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary results in **Table 5.36** (cf. Par. 5.3.3.5), indicating significance levels of biographical attributes identified as influential**.**

Table 5.5   One-way frequency distributions on the biographical attribute Gender

Gender				
q5	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
male	50	59.52	50	59.52
female	34	40.48	84	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

The frequency distribution of 50 males : 34 females in the target population indicates firstly, that males still occupy more managerial positions at Unisa than females, although this is more prevalent at the Director/CoD levels. Once again this could in part be ascribed to South Africa's higher education historical *apartheid* legacy which saw males dominating the management ranks of higher education. However, the frequencies also reflect the continued global dominance of older males in the more senior echelons of higher education (UNESCO 2010: 67 – 78). Nevertheless it is evident that these male: female ratios are changing rapidly as an ageing cohort of predominantly male academics retires from academia, paving the way for female ascendancy (UNESCO 2010: 67-78). In this study, aspects that are statistically significant due to gender differences in perceptions, are reflected in **Table 5.36** and will be discussed under 5.3.3.5.

Table 5.6   One-way frequency distributions on the biographical attribute Designation

Designation				
q6_design	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Associate professor	2	2.41	2	2.41
Chair of dept.	17	20.48	19	22.89
Exec/deputy Dean/Director	16	19.28	35	42.17
Director/deputy director	48	57.83	83	100.00

Frequency missing =7

The respondents for the survey comprised the entire population of middle and executive management in view of their core 'hands-on' involvement in planning, funding and quality in the institution (cf. Par. 4.3.1). However, deputy executive Deans and Deans, and deputy executive directors and executive directors play a greater oversight role, while the directors and CoDs are more directly involved in the implementation of, for example, the planning and quality initiatives. The ratio of overseers': 'implementers' is 16:65 and it stands to reason that there might be significant differences in views and perceptions on the questions from these different tiers of management and levels of responsibility. These will be discussed in the interpretation of the Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of means tests, in **Table 5.37** (cf. Par. 5.3.3.6).

5.3.3.2 One-way frequency distributions on the response data

All of the one-way frequency distribution tables for the response data are included in Annexure F. Some of the questions under the three PSM constructs of planning, quality and funding that exhibited statistically interesting distribution patterns and mean levels of agreement/disagreement are indicated below. The one-way frequency distributions for each statement probed in the questionnaire offered a greater level and more nuanced understanding of the levels of agreement/disagreement amongst the respondents in regard to the questions. As such they informed and shaped the clustering of the 16 constructs that were subsequently analysed and used in the formulation of the interview questions in Phase 2 of the research design.

Planning

Table 5.7   The massification of higher education requires a business approach to education management and administration (Mean: 4.02)

q1a. *The Massification of higher education requires a business approach to education management and administration. (Mean: 4.02)*				
q1a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	5	5.56	5	5.56
2	8	8.89	13	14.44
3	5	5.56	18	20.00
4	34	37.78	52	57.78
5	38	42.22	90	100.00

There was strong agreement on this question with 72 of the 90 respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only 18 of the respondents were unsure or in disagreement. This strong agreement is reflected in the mean score of 4.02.

Table 5.8   Distance education/ODL is the best means of accommodating increasing demands for access to higher education in South Africa (Mean: 4.30)

q1b. *Distance education/ODL is the best means of accommodating increasing demands for access to higher education in South Africa. (Mean: 4.30)*				
q1b	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	7	7.78	8	8.89
3	4	4.44	12	13.33
4	30	33.33	42	46.67
5	48	53.33	90	100.00

There was strong agreement on this question with 78 of the 90 respondents either agreeing or strongly agreeing. Only 12 of the respondents were unsure or in disagreement.

Table 5.9   Unisa should accommodate ever growing student numbers (Mean: 3.11)

q1c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q1c. Unisa should accommodate ever growing student numbers (Mean: 3.11)				
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	33	36.67	39	43.33
3	10	11.11	49	54.44
4	27	30.00	76	84.44
5	14	15.56	90	100.00

A total of 39 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 41 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 10 were unsure. This clearly indicates the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.11. The influence of the biographical attributes such as *designation* on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.10   Unisa has the infrastructure to accommodate student numbers in excess of 300 000 (Mean: 2.56)

q1d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q1d. Unisa has the infrastructure to accommodate student numbers in excess of 300 000 (Mean: 2.56)				
1	14	15.56	14	15.56
2	43	47.78	57	63.33
3	11	12.22	68	75.56
4	13	14.44	81	90.00
5	9	10.00	90	100.00

The general level of disagreement and uncertainty around this issue is reflected in the 57 respondents who strongly disagree or disagree, the 11 who are uncertain and 22 who agree or strongly agree. The weight of disagreement and uncertainty is reflected in the mean score of 2.56.

Table 5.11   Unisa has sufficient lecturing staff to deal with increased numbers of students (Mean 2.38)

q1e. *Unisa has sufficient lecturing staff to deal with increased numbers of students. (Mean 2.38)*				
q1e	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	22	24.44	22	24.44
2	33	36.67	55	61.11
3	15	16.67	70	77.78
4	19	21.11	89	98.89
5	1	1.11	90	100.00

Fifty-five (55) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 15 were unsure. Only 19 agreed and 1 agreed strongly. This points to general disagreement with the statement, and this is reflected in the mean score of 2.38.

Table 5.12   Unisa has efficient administrative staff to deal with increased numbers of students (Mean 2.51)

q1f. *Unisa has efficient administrative staff to deal with increased numbers of students.(Mean 2.51)*				
q1f	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	15	16.67	15	16.67
2	37	41.11	52	57.78
3	18	20.00	70	77.78
4	17	18.89	87	96.67
5	3	3.33	90	100.00

Fifty-five (55) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 18 were unsure. Only 17 agreed and 3 agreed strongly. This points to general disagreement with the statement, and this is reflected in the mean score of 2.51.

Table 5.13   Unisa has adequate processes to deal with increased numbers of students (Mean: 2.64)

q1g.				
q1g	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	11	12.22	11	12.22
2	36	40.00	47	52.22
3	19	21.11	66	73.33
4	22	24.44	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

Forty-seven (47) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 19 were unsure. Only 22 agreed and 2 agreed strongly. This points to general disagreement with the statement, and this is reflected in the mean score of 2.64.

Table 5.14   I have enough time to fulfil my planning and implementation responsibilities (Mean: 3.09)

q1y				
q1y	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	8	8.99	8	8.99
2	26	29.21	34	38.20
3	11	12.36	45	50.56
4	38	42.70	83	93.26
5	6	6.74	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A total of 34 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 44 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 11 were unsure. This indicates the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.09, which falls into the unsure category. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.15   Unisa's planning regime is effective (Mean 3.50)

q1z2. *Unisa's planning regime is effective. (Mean 3.50)*				
q1z2	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	12	13.33	13	14.44
3	26	28.89	39	43.33
4	43	47.78	82	91.11
5	8	8.89	90	100.00

A total of 13 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 51 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 26 were unsure. This significant proportion of unsure respondents emphasises the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.50. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Funding

Table 5.16   Distance education/ODL in South Africa receives sufficient funding (Mean 2.46)

q2a. *Distance education/ODL in South Africa receives sufficient funding.(Mean 2.46)*				
q2a	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	18	20.00	18	20.00
2	30	33.33	48	53.33
3	27	30.00	75	83.33
4	13	14.44	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

Forty-eight (48) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 27 were unsure. Only 13 agreed and 2 agreed strongly. This points to general disagreement with the statement, and this is reflected in the mean score of 2.46.

Table 5.17   The funding allocation for distance education /ODL is commensurate with its mandate and responsibility (Mean: 2.64)

q2c. *The funding allocation for distance education /ODL is commensurate with its mandate and responsibility. (Mean: 2.64)*				
q2c	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	11	12.22	11	12.22
2	30	33.33	41	45.56
3	31	34.44	72	80.00
4	16	17.78	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

Forty-one (41) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 31 were unsure. Only 16 agreed and 2 agreed strongly. The 31 respondents who were unsure indicates a high level of ambivalence in regard to this question and points to general disagreement with the statement, which is reflected in the mean score of 2.64.

Table 5.18   It is cheaper to design a course for distance education /ODL than for a contact institution (Mean. 2.33)

q2d. *It is cheaper to design a course for distance education /ODL than for a contact institution. (Mean. 2.33)*				
q2d	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	18	20.00	18	20.00
2	37	41.11	55	61.11
3	24	26.67	79	87.78
4	9	10.00	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

This question achieved the highest mean score of general disagreement under the Funding construct. Fifty-five (55) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 24 were unsure. Only 9 agreed and 2 agreed strongly. The 24 respondents who were unsure also indicates a high level of ambivalence and points to general disagreement with the statement, which is reflected in the mean score of 2.33.

Table 5.19   Unisa receives sufficient funding (Mean 2.60)

q2f. *Unisa receives sufficient funding. (Mean 2.60)*				
q2f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	12	13.33	12	13.33
2	27	30.00	39	43.33
3	39	43.33	78	86.67
4	9	10.00	87	96.67
5	3	3.33	90	100.00

Thirty-nine (39) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 39 were unsure. Only 9 agreed and 3 agreed strongly. The 39 respondents who were unsure indicates a high level of ambivalence in regard to this question and points to general disagreement with the statement, which is reflected in the mean score of 2.60.

Table 5.20   Unisa is able to balance the DoHE&T student "cap" with demands for access from students (Mean: 2.69)

q2k	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q2k. Unisa is able to balance the DoHE&T student "cap" with demands for access from students (Mean: 2.69)				
1	10	11.11	10	11.11
2	30	33.33	40	44.44
3	29	32.22	69	76.67
4	20	22.22	89	98.89
5	1	1.11	90	100.00

Forty (40) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 29 were unsure. Only 20 agreed and 1 agreed strongly. The 29 respondents who were unsure indicates a high level of ambivalence in regard to this question and points to a preponderance of disagreement/uncertainty with the statement, which is reflected in the mean score of 2.69. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.21   Unisa should halt registrations once a given target for the institution has been reached, irrespective of the enrolment ratio per college (Mean 2.9)

q2m	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q2m. Unisa should halt registrations once a given target for the institution has been reached, irrespective of the enrolment ratio per college (Mean 2.9)				
1	10	11.11	10	11.11
2	31	34.44	41	45.56
3	17	18.89	58	64.44
4	22	24.44	80	88.89
5	10	11.11	90	100.00

Forty-one (41) respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly while 17 were unsure. A total of 32 agreed or agreed strongly. These frequencies point to a preponderance of disagreement as well as and some uncertainty with the statement, which is reflected in the mean score of 2.90.

Table 5.22   Unisa should increase its student enrolment in Africa (Mean 3.5)

q2q	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q2q. Unisa should increase its student enrolment in Africa (Mean 3.5)				
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	17	18.89	19	21.11
3	17	18.89	36	40.00
4	42	46.67	78	86.67
5	12	13.33	90	100.00

A total of 19 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 54 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 17 were unsure.   The significant proportion of respondents in the agree/strongly agree frequencies together appears to be offset by the 17 in the unsure frequency and this has contributed to the mean score of 3.50, which although ambivalent, tends toward agreement. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.23   Academic salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession (Mean 4.28)

q2t	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q2t. Academic salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession (Mean 4.28)				
2	25	28.09	25	28.09
3	22	24.72	47	52.81
4	23	25.84	70	78.65
5	19	21.35	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

This question achieved the second highest mean score (4.28) of general agreement under the Funding construct. Forty-two (42) respondents agreed or agreed strongly while 22 were unsure. Twenty-five (25) of the 89 disagreed.   The lack of respondents who disagreed strongly may have influenced the mean score but a preponderance of respondents clearly agreed with the statement or were ambivalent about it.

Quality

Table 5.24   Unisa should have completely open admission (Mean 2.24)

q3f. *Unisa should have completely open admission (Mean 2.24)*				
q3f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	19	21.11	19	21.11
2	48	53.33	67	74.44
3	7	7.78	74	82.22
4	14	15.56	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

A total of 67 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 16 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 7 were unsure. This indicates strong general disagreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 2.24.

Table 5. 25   Unisa's admission requirements should be more stringent (Mean 3.62)

q3g. *Unisa's admission requirements should be more stringent (Mean 3.62)*				
q3g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	17	18.89	19	21.11
3	11	12.22	30	33.33
4	43	47.78	73	81.11
5	17	18.89	90	100.00

A total of 19 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 60 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 11 were unsure. The significant proportion of respondents in the agree/strongly agree frequencies has contributed to the mean score of 3.62 which although ambivalent, tends toward agreement. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.26   Unisa should cap its student intake (Mean 3.43)

q3i. *Unisa should cap its student intake (mean 3.43)*				
q3i	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	5	5.56	5	5.56
2	21	23.33	26	28.89
3	12	13.33	38	42.22
4	34	37.78	72	80.00
5	18	20.00	90	100.00

A total of 26 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 52 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 12 were unsure.   The significant proportion of respondents in the agree/strongly agree frequencies has contributed to the mean score of 3.43 which falls into the ambivalent category. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.27   It is easy for students to access their study materials online (Mean 2.26)

q3o. *It is easy for students to access their study materials online (Mean 2.26)*				
q3o	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	22	24.72	22	24.72
2	39	43.82	61	68.54
3	14	15.73	75	84.27
4	11	12.36	86	96.63
5	3	3.37	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A total of 61 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 14 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 7 were unsure.   This indicates strong general disagreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 2.26.

Table 5.28   Lecturers provide a quality service to students (Mean 2.31)

q3z2. *Lecturers provide a quality service to students (Mean 2.31)*				
q3z2	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	17	19.10	17	19.10
2	44	49.44	61	68.54
3	13	14.61	74	83.15
4	13	14.61	87	97.75
5	2	2.25	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A total of 61 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 15 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 13 were unsure. This indicates strong general disagreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 2.31.

Table 5.29   Lecturers cannot cope administratively with the current large numbers of students (Mean. 3.20)

q3z3. *Lecturers cannot cope administratively with the current large numbers of students (Mean: 3.20)*				
q3z3	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	5	5.62	5	5.62
2	18	20.22	23	25.84
3	27	30.34	50	56.18
4	32	35.96	82	92.13
5	7	7.87	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A total of 23 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 39 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and a significant number of 27 were unsure. This indicates the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.09, which falls into the unsure category. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.30   Unisa's Programme and Qualifications Mix promotes quality learning (Mean 2.27)

q3z5. *Unisa's Programme and Qualifications Mix promotes quality learning (Mean 2.27)*				
q3z5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	14	15.73	14	15.73
2	47	52.81	61	68.54
3	19	21.35	80	89.89
4	8	8.99	88	98.88
5	1	1.12	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

A total of 61 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 9 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 19 were unsure. This indicates strong general disagreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 2.26.

Table 5.31   Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on effective administration (Mean: 3.27)

q3z7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q3z7. Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on effective administration (Mean: 3.27)				
1	7	7.78	7	7.78
2	18	20.00	25	27.78
3	20	22.22	45	50.00
4	34	37.78	79	87.78
5	11	12.22	90	100.00

A total of 25 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 45 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and a significant number of 20 were unsure. This indicates the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.27, which falls into the unsure category. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.32   Unisa should reduce the number of modules it offers (Mean 3.39)

q3z9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
q3z9. Unisa should reduce the number of modules it offers (Mean 3.39)				
1	7	7.78	7	7.78
2	15	16.67	22	24.44
3	16	17.78	38	42.22
4	40	44.44	78	86.67
5	12	13.33	90	100.00

A total of 22 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 52 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 16 were unsure. Although this indicates the ambivalence in the group, as reflected in the mean score of 3.39, there is a significant proportion of respondents in agreement or unsure. The influence of the biographical attributes, especially designation, on these distributions was taken into consideration in the further analyses.

Table 5.33 The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of courseware (Mean 4.02)

q3z12. *The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of courseware (Mean 4.02)*				
q3z12	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	4.44	4	4.44
3	18	20.00	22	24.44
4	40	44.44	62	68.89
5	28	31.11	90	100.00

A total of 4 respondents disagreed, while a total of 68 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 18 were unsure. This indicates strong general agreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 4.02.

Table 5.34 Increasing numbers of Unisa students choose to use online services offered by Unisa (Mean: 2.39)

q3z15. *Increasing numbers of Unisa students choose to use online services offered by Unisa (Mean: 2.39)*				
q3z15	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	12	13.33	12	13.33
2	45	50.00	57	63.33
3	21	23.33	78	86.67
4	10	11.11	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

A total of 57 respondents disagreed or disagreed strongly, while a total of 12 respondents agreed or agreed strongly, and 21 were unsure. This indicates strong general disagreement amongst the respondents, as reflected in the mean score of 2.36.

5.3.3.3 Clustering questionnaire items and conducting scale reliability testing

The rationale for the clustering of the questionnaire items and the conducting of the scale reliability testing is provided in 5.2.1.3. In this section, the clustering of the questionnaire items and the conducting of the scale reliability testing are summarised in **Table 5.35.** Each row in the table presents the summary analysis results which were conducted on a subset of questionnaire items. Control, sociability and well-being emotional intelligence constructs were defined to test internal consistency reliability. Cronbach alpha coefficients, questionnaire items included, removed and

reversed are indicated in the table. The respective construct mean scores and standard deviations are reported in the last column followed by a discussion of the analyses.

Table 5.35 Scale reliability testing on rating values of subsets of questionnaire items to verify internal consistency reliability

Table 5.35 Scale reliability testing on rating values of subsets of questionnaire items to verify internal consistency reliability					
Construct	**Items**	**Items reversed**	**Items omitted**	**Standardised Cronbach alpha***	**Mean construct score (Standard deviation)**
Planning Dimension					
Numbers Unisa education, large numbers	q1: c d e f g y		q1z6	0.79	2.71 (0.81)
InstStru Institutional strategy & planning	q1: s v z z2			0.67	3.51 (0.77)
InstEffi Institutional efficiency	q1: a n p r z5		q1t	0.79	3.96 (0.76)
StafPlMo Staff contribution, institutional strategy & planning implementation	q: w m o z4		q1h	0.78	4.22 (0.68)
PInstPlan Personal Institutional Planning & strategy implementation perception	q1: b h t u x z1		q1q	0.67	4.11 (0.49)
ValuePln The value of planning/IOP	q1: I j k l z3		q1z6	0.78	4.55 (0.52)
Planning mean perception score					**3.84**
Funding					
Funding and Cost	q2: a c f g b d		q2: h t w e v	0.71	2.76 (0.65)
Access	q2: k q r s	q2s	q2: l m n	0.71	3.14 (0.59)
Policy	q2: u p i h o		q2: j x	0.61*	
Funding mean perception score					**2.95**

*Note: The policy construct which falls in the funding dimension has been omitted from further analyses, since the Cronbach alpha value is 0.61, which does not sufficiently indicate internal consistency reliability.

Quality					
Constructs	**Items**	**Items reversed**	**Items omitted**	**Standardised Cronbach alpha***	**Mean construct score (Standard deviation)**
Admissin Issue of student admission	q3: f g h i j	q3f		0.80	3.52 (0.83)
Value of quality	q3: b c d e z10			0.76	3.86 (0.62)
On-line services	q3: k l n o v			0.71	3.02 (0.65)
PQM	q3: p q r s t z5-z9			0.69	3.24 (0.48)

Support	q3: x z w z14		q3: m z1 z2 z4	0.71	3.24 (0.66)
Staffing, quality assessment	q3: w y z3			0.69	3.09 (0.75)
ICT's	q3: z11-13 z15-19	q3z15 q3z19	q3z18	0.74	3.61 (0.52)
Quality mean perception score					**3.37**
* A Cronbach alpha coefficient in the region of 0.7 and greater (thus including 0.6) is indicative of internal consistency reliability					

The Cronbach alpha values for each of the 16 scale reliability tests conducted are presented in column 5 of **Table 5.35**. All coefficients exceed the value of 0.7 (or fall in the region of 0.7) and it can therefore be assumed that the internal consistency reliability of all defined constructs was validated. The policy construct of the funding dimensions was an exception to the rule with a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.61, and was consequently omitted from further analysis.

This implies that construct scores and mean construct scores calculated for the various constructs would represent reliable measures of respondents' perceptions/views on the various issues defined for the planning, funding and quality aspects of the DoHE&T policy steering mechanisms. The calculation of construct scores would thus be a viable way of further investigating these perceptions.

5.3.3.4 Calculation of construct scores

The various construct scores for each respondent were calculated as the mean value of all responses on a subset of questionnaire items that describe a particular construct. From these construct scores overall mean construct scores, and mean construct scores calculated according to biographical attribute categories, were calculated. These mean scores are listed below and give a first informal impression (or indication) of whether respondent perceptions are affected by biographical attributes

a) Interpretation of calculated overall mean construct scores of Table 5.35

An analysis of the 16 mean construct scores reported in column 6 of **Table 5.35** indicates that:

Planning

➢ On the planning issues, respondents were generally in agreement (mean score of 4) on issues represented by the constructs of:

- Institutional Strategy & Planning (mean construct score of 3.51). (Relating mainly to the time and capacity available for the implementation of strategy and planning.)

- Institutional efficiency *(*mean construct score of 3.96). (Relating mainly to institutional initiatives that affect institutional efficiency.)

- Staff's personal contribution to institutional strategy and planning implementation (mean construct score of 4.22).

- Staff's personal view of Unisa's Institutional Strategy and Planning and its implementation (mean construct score of 4.11).

This provides a clear indication that overall, respondents support, and have a very positive perception about the need for planning and strategy in higher education management. The implication for Unisa is that staff have accepted the need for planning, as well as the role that they must play in ensuring its implementation. A note of ambivalence begins to creep in when perceptions around time and capacity are introduced (**InstStru:** construct score of 3.51) which points to a possible concern amongst respondents in regard to the time and capacity (both personal and systems) that they have at their disposal to fulfil their duties around planning implementation. This will be enlarged on in further analyses particularly in regard to the designation of the respondents.

➢ Respondents were generally in stronger agreement (score approximating '5') on planning issues around the value of Unisa's planning regime (construct mean score of 4.55). The construct mean score of 4.55 speaks to a broad and strong agreement on the necessity for, and value of, institutional strategy and planning. It also highlights the success of Unisa's management in inculcating in the institution an understanding and acceptance of strategy and planning, at a time when the institution was also implementing a very complex merger.

➢ Respondents were generally ambivalent, or even tended towards disagreement (score approximating '3') in regard to planning issues relating to providing

access to/educating large numbers of students (mean construct score value of 2.71). Concerns in this regard revolve around the impact and implications of accommodating ever increasing numbers of students, and whether or not Unisa has the requisite infrastructure, appropriately capacitated academic and support staff, and systems in place to accommodate the growing demands. In this part of the analyses one begins to discern a tension between understanding and accepting the necessity for effective strategy and planning in institutional management, and the perceived burden that this will place upon those responsible for its implementation, in terms of time, capacity, infrastructure and effective systems and processes. This tension is analysed in greater depth in Phase 2.

Funding

➢ Respondents were generally undecided or slightly negative (score approximating '3') on issues relating to the construct of funding and cost (mean construct score value of 2.76) and access at Unisa (mean construct score of 3.14).

Questions on issues pertaining to the funding of ODL, and the cost of ODL delivery elicited some decided views, with the general perception being that ODL is in fact not cheaper than face-to-face delivery. A significant degree of ambivalence/uncertainty also tempered the responses and this may point to a lack of 'hands-on' involvement and knowledge of ODL funding on the part of some of the respondents in the study.

The issue of access (mean construct score of 3.14) demonstrates an ambivalence/uncertainty and apparent tension between increasing enrolment continentally and internationally, the perceived need for student capping, and the possibility of unchecked student numbers jeopardising the future sustainability of Unisa. One discerns a paradoxical need to both increase and restrict access. Again this could demonstrate an understanding of Unisa's strategic intent and social mandate to be *the* African university in the service of humanity, as opposed to the operational reality of trying to implement the strategy under what are generally perceived to be non conducive conditions.

These ambivalences and seeming disconnects will be addressed in further analyses in Phase 2

Quality

- Respondents were generally in agreement (score approximating '4') on quality as represented by constructs of admission (mean construct score value of 3.54), the value of quality to Unisa (mean construct score value of 3.86) and the effect of ICT's on quality (mean construct score of 3.61).

  The admission construct pertained to issues around admission, both open and restricted, and the mean construct score of 3.54 reflects the ambivalence/ uncertainty around acknowledging Unisa's mandate, the desperate need in South Africa to provide access to as many qualifying students as possible, and simultaneously, the complexity in terms of implementing the mandate under existing administrative conditions.

  The value of quality tends towards general agreement, especially in regard to the need for an institutional quality regime and the role of quality in administrative and service excellence. The role that the Integrated Performance Management System and ICTs can play in improving quality in the institution was viewed more ambivalently, but in general it could be asserted that amongst the respondents, quality is well received and accepted.

- Respondents were generally undecided (score '3') on quality as represented by constructs such as OnLine services (mean construct score of 3.02), effect of PQM's (construct mean score of 3.24), quality support provided to students (construct mean score of 3.24) and quality assessment (construct mean score of 3.37).

  The OnLine services construct (mean construct score of 3.02) relates mainly to perceptions around student-friendly registrations, systems and facilities, and ease of access to study materials. While the score suggests some uncertainty, the perceptions tend towards the negative and these will be analysed in greater depth in Phase 2.

Although the means construct score for effect of the PQMs was 3.24 some strong views were expressed, particularly in regard to the size of the PQM and its impact on institutional efficiency. The seemingly negative perceptions in regard to the reduction of the PQM suggests a tension between acknowledging that the PQM is too large, accepting its negative impact on institutional efficiency but not agreeing that the number of courses needs to be reduced. Dynamics such as job security may be a factor in the seemingly dichotomous views, and this will be analysed in greater depth in Phase 2.

Staffing, quality assessment received a mean construct score of 3.37. The ambivalence of the score is echoed in the general uncertainty towards staff commitment to quality assessment practices, closer disagreement on whether or not current assessment practice improve throughput, and ambivalence around the ability of staff to cope administratively with large student numbers. These attitudes and perceptions will be analysed further in the light of the rest of the analyses and the interviews in Phase 2.

The construct mean scores, according to age, gender and designation categories are included in Annexure G, for a comprehensive and general overview of perceptions.

5.3.3.5 Analysis of variance and multiple comparisons of means

The rationale for, and explanation of the analysis of variance and the multiple comparison of means was provided in 5.2.1.6. In this section, **Table 5.36** provides the analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary results indicating significant levels of biographical attributes identified as influential. Each row of the table represents a separate analysis of variance performed on the policy steering mechanism construct scores. The constructs are listed in the 1st column of the table. The general ANOVA F-test statistic and associated probability is listed in the second column of the table. F-probabilities associated with the individual biographical attributes and F- statistics are reported in columns 4-6 of the table.

Table 5.36 Analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary results table indicating significance levels of biographical attributes identified as influential.

Table 5.36 **Analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary results table indicating significance levels of biographical attributes identified as influential.**					
Construct	**General F statistic (F- prob.)**	**error df (R-sq)**	**F-probability and significance attached to biographical effects identified as significant**		
			Age, q4	**Gender, q5**	**Designation, q6**
Planning Dimension					
Numbers: Unisa education, large numbers	1.92 (0.10 $^?$)	74 (0.11)	0.76	0.38	0.03*
InstStru: Institutional structure & planning	4.19 (0.01**)	74 (0.22)	0.08 $^?$	0.14	0.01**
InstEffi: Institutional efficiency	4.14 (0.01**)	74 (0.22)	0.54	0.24	0.001***
StafPlMo: Staff contribution, institutional strategy implementation	2.72 (0.03 *)	74 (0.16)	0.45	0.99	0.01**
PInstPlan: Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	3.84 (0.01**)	74 (0.21)	0.25	0.53	<0.001***
ValuePln	1.96 (0.10 $^?$)	74 (0.12)	0.71	0.87	0.01**
Funding Dimension					
FundCost: funding economics	0.94 (0.460)	74 (0.06)	0.11	0.88	0.93
Access: student access issue	0.22 (0.96)	74 (0.01)	0.88	0.83	0.73
Policy	-	-	-	-	-
Table 5.36 Continued **Analysis of variance (ANOVA) summary results table indicating significance levels of biographical attributes identified as influential.**					
Quality dimension					
Admissin, student admission	1.31 (0.27)	74 (0.08)	0.85	0.33	0.11
ValuQual, Value of quality to the university	3.02 (0.02*)	74 (0.17)	0.99	0.29	0.001***
OnLine, on-line services, quality	0.82 (0.54)	74 (0.05)	0.79	0.21	0.30
PQM, Effect of PQM's on quality	1.18 (0.33)	74 (0.07)	0.76	0.02	1.00
Support, Quality support provided to students	2.19 (0.06 $^?$)	74 (0.13)	0.88	0.04*	0.05*
Staff, Assess, quality assessment of student work	2.56 (0.03)*	74 (0.15)	0.76	0.11	0.01**
ICT's, value of ICT applications	1.01	74	0.91	0.51	0.18

in ODL	(0.42)	(0.06)			

Significance legend:
 [?] : 10% level of significance
 * : 5% level of significance
 ** : 1% level of significance
*** : 0.1% level of significance

b) Interpretation of results in **Table 5.36**

The summary results of the 15 analyses of variance performed on the 15 sets of perception construct scores (the funding policy construct not investigated further, cf. Par. 5.3.3.3) indicated that respondents' perceptions regarding certain of the issues were affected by:

➢ The designation of the respondents. Within the planning dimension, these constructs included:

- the constructs of education to large student numbers (Numbers);
- the Institutional Strategic Planning approach (InstStru);
- the construct of Institutional Efficiency (InstEffi);
- staffs' contribution to the implementation of the strategic plan (StadPlMO);
- personal view of respondents regarding Unisa's institutional strategy and planning (PInstPln);
- the perceived Value of Institutional Strategy and Planning (ValuePln).

➢ Constructs within the quality dimension included:

- the perception of the value of quality (ValuQual);
- quality support to students (Support);
- (Staff) quality assessment.

➢ The gender of the respondents. These constructs included:

- the issue of staffs' perception of their contribution towards institutional strategy (StafPlMo) on the planning dimension;
- the support to students on the quality dimension (Support).

➢ The age of the respondents. The constructs in which perceptions were statistically significant in terms of age were:

- Respondents' perceptions regarding staff's contribution towards institutional strategy (StafPlMo) on the planning dimension;
- Support to students (Support) on the quality dimension.

5.3.3.6 Multiple comparison of means testing

How perceptions are affected by these influential attributes, that is, the nature of the effect of the influential attributes, was determined by comparing the construct score means for a particular construct. These were calculated according to the categories of the influential biographical attribute (such as 'male' and 'female' for gender). This was done by comparing whether the category means differ in a statistically significant manner from one another. A Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of Means test was calculated for each case.

Multiple comparison procedures are commonly used in an analysis of variance after obtaining a significant test result, like the analysis of variance F- test, which is a post-hoc test. The significant ANOVA result suggests rejecting the global null hypothesis H_0 so that the means are the same across the groups being compared. Multiple comparison procedures are then used to determine which means differ. A number of methods have been proposed for this problem, one of which is the Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of Means test. The aim of the test, apart from determining which means differ significantly from the others, is to control the type 1 error which occurs when more than one set of means are compared pair-wise. Apart from controlling the Type 1 error, the Bonferroni test has the advantage that it can be used in situations where the group sizes of the groups being compared differ. The test calculates a value, the LSD (or Least Significant Difference). If the difference between pairs of means is greater than the LSD value, the means are assumed to differ (statistically) significantly from one another (Multiple comparisons: 2011).

The results of these analyses are presented in **Table 5.37**. Category mean-scores for specific perception constructs are also presented in **Table 5.37**. Within a particular construct, category means that differ statistically significantly from one another are indicated with different small letter suffixes.

Table 5.37 **Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of means tests on perception construct category-mean scores for constructs where the effect of biographical attribute/s were indicated as having a statistically significant effect on the particular construct (in the analysis of variance)**

Table 5.37					
Results of Bonferroni Multiple Comparison of means tests on perception construct category-mean scores for constructs where the effect of biographical attribute/s were indicated as having a statistically significant effect on the particular construct (in the analysis of variance)					
Bonferroni's least significant difference (LSD) is indicated in bracket below the structure labels					
Note that category means that differ statistically significantly from one another are suffixed with different small letters					
Biographical attribute categories		**Perception constructs that are influenced in a statistically significant manner by the biographical attribute of Designation**			
DESIGNATION	**n**	**Numbers** (LSD=0.58)	**InstStru** (LSD=0.42)	**InstEffi** (LSD=0.50)	**StafPlMo** (LSD=0.49)
ED/ Exec Dean/ Deputy Exec Dean	16	2.86 a	3.64 a	4.41 a	4.56 a
Director/ Deputy Director	48	2.82 a	3.67 a	4.01 a	4.22ab
Chair of Dept	16	2.22 b	2.92 b	3.43 b	3.78 b
	n	**PInstPlan** (LSD=0.34)	**ValuePlan** (LSD=0.37)	**ValuQual** (LSD=0.44)	**Support** (LSD=0.46)
ED/ Exec Dean/ Deputy Exec Dean	16	4.36 a	4.76 a	4.19 a	3.17 a
Director/ Deputy Director	48	4.14 a	4.57ab	3.83 ab	3.15 a
Chair of Dept	16	3.74 b	4.25 b	3.42 b	3.56 b (10%)
	n	**Staff assess** (LSD=0.53)			
ED/ Exec Dean/ Deputy Exec Dean	16	3.08 ab			
Director/ Deputy Director	48	2.91 a			
Chair of dept	16	3.54 b			
	Please note: The two associate professor-responses have been omitted				
GENDER		**Support** (LSD=0.27)			
Male	47	3.36 a			
Female	33	3.06 b			
AGE		**InstStru** (LSD=0.56)			
61-70	9	3.64 a			
51-60	31	3.28 b (10%)			
20-50	40	3.65 a			

c) Interpretation of **Table 5.37**

In the interpretation of the results the following aspects came to the fore:

➢ With regard to the Planning dimension of the PSMs, the biographical attribute of *designation* had a statistically significant effect on respondent perceptions. These

perceptions were neatly highlighted in the category means, showing that the more senior the designation of the respondent (Exec Director, Exec Dean, deputy Exec Dean) the more positive the perception of the respondent. On the other hand, CoDs, who are more practically involved in the implementation of the policy issues, were more sober in their views on five of the planning dimensions namely:

- Institutional Strategic Planning approach (InstStru – mean of 3.64 as compared to 2.92);

- Institutional Efficiency (InstEffi – mean of 4.41 as compared to 3.43);

- Staff's contribution to institutional strategic planning (StafPlMo – means of 4.56 as compared to 3.78);

- The personal view of respondents regarding Unisa's Institutional Strategic Planning (PInstPln – construct mean scores of 4.36 as opposed to 3.74);

- The perceived Value of the Institutional Strategic Planning, (ValuePln – construct mean score of 4.76 as opposed to 4.25 for the ED-category and Dept Chair respectively);

- When it came to perceptions around large numbers of students, namely the construct of education for large student numbers (Numbers: mean of 2.86 as compared to 2.22), perceptions still differed to a statistically significant degree, but they largely reflected a more generally ambivalent to negative stance.

➢ With regard to the Quality dimension of the PSMs, the following was ascertained:

- The same statistically significant designation trends were also established for the Value of Quality perception-construct under the Quality dimension, which had mean construct values of 4.19 for EDs in comparison to 3.42 for CoDs. It is likely that these differences could also be ascribed to the level of involvement in quality support and implementation in the institution.

- However, the statistically significant designation trends for the constructs of Quality Support and Assessment of the Quality dimension, reveal an inverse perception trend: ED-designation category construct means are statistically significantly higher for CoDs (3.56 and 3.54) than for ED categories (3.17 and 3.08 respectively). These are issues that relate to student support, including tutor support, assessment practice and assessment feedback, throughput and the ability to cope administratively with large student numbers. Since they are

linked to a host of institutional objectives that go to the very centre of Unisa's core business, namely teaching, learning and research, they are 'topical' institutional issues that require ongoing attention and action for resolution, but which seem to make limited progress because of the large number of dependencies in terms of systems, processes and capacities amongst others. It is therefore possible that the lower designations have a more positive view of these constructs because they are doing the 'hands-on' work, that is, realising the progress that is made. However, the executive Deans and directors are accountable for progress in these areas, and it is at this level that the limitations and delays across the institution become more apparent. This may account for the less positive perceptions of the EDs.

➢ In the Quality dimensions of the PSMs, the nature of the significant effect of *Gender* as illustrated in **Table 5.37** indicates that male respondents perceived the aspect quality support to students (Support), more positively than females. This is reflected in the male: female score mean ratios for support constructs of 3.40 : 3.06. One can only but speculate that a significantly higher proportion of females would occupy 'service positions' in the institution and as such they would be more exposed on a daily basis, through their interaction with students, to the shortcomings in quality service support to students.

➢ In the Planning dimension of the PSMs, the nature of the significant effect of *Age* as illustrated in **Table 5.37**, indicates that older and younger respondents tend to be significantly more positive than the middle age group in regard to staffs' contribution to institutional strategy and planning (InstStru, category mean construct score of 3.64 for the 61-70 age group and 3.65 for the 20-50 age group, as opposed to the mean score of 3.25 for the 51-60 age group). Once again this could be ascribed to the fact that the older age group would be responsible for overseeing implementation, the middle age group would be responsible for managing and ensuring implementation while the younger group would have to execute delegated responsibilities. The pressure of ensuring implementation may account for the statistical difference.

5.4   CONCLUDING REMARKS

A question that often arises at this stage is how non-significance should be interpreted for those perception constructs where no significant effect of any biographical attribute was indicated. Such constructs should not be viewed as not contributing to the body of knowledge of the study. The only implication in this instance, is that respondents (irrespective of gender, or age, or designation), had a 'mutual,' or 'shared' perception of the specific constructs.

The construct mean scores reflected in **Table 5.36** (column 6) in these instances, reflect the general perception of the respondents as a group. This applies to all Funding constructs, and includes the mean score for the Funding & Cost construct (at 2.76 a neutral to somewhat negative perception), as well as the Students access construct mean perception score of 3.14, (which also reflects a neutral perception) and the Quality dimension's constructs of Admission (mean perception score of 3.52) and On-line services (with a mean construct score of 3.02). The overall construct mean score of the ICT's construct, at 3.61 is generally more optimistic.

The overall mean perception scores for Planning (3.84), Funding (2.95) and Quality (3.37) indicate that respondents were positive to neutral towards all aspects of the DoHE&T policy steering mechanisms, but that respondents held the strongest views with respect to Planning issues.

5.5   THE BRIDGE TO PHASE 2: PREPARATION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The quantitative data were carefully analysed through each of the stages outlined above, with due cognisance of the research question and sub-questions, and the literature study. These data were then used in the formulation of a set of interview questions that formed the basis of the interviews in Phase 2. I believe that the interview questions have encapsulated the essence and the substance of the analysed survey responses of Phase 1 and that they add a richness to the interviews and

analyses which could not have been achieved by any other research model, particularly given the target population of this research design.

Accordingly, the questions below were formulated and sent to all interviewees (members of top management) in preparation for Phase 2 of the research design. It should be noted that during the interviews a great deal of latitude was allowed and interviewees were encouraged to share additional insights and views. I also posed a number of clarifying, probing and leading questions to elicit a more comprehensive response. This contributed to a rich, comprehensive repository of interview data.

The interview question protocol for Phase 2 of the research design follows:

Planning

1. While respondents clearly appreciate the rationale and support the need for institutional strategy and planning, when it comes to dealing with increasing student numbers insufficient capacity in regard to staff, infrastructure and processes emerged as a concern amongst the respondents. What are your views on these perceptions?

2. A second and related issue is that of time. Respondents tended toward the view that they do not have enough time to fulfil their planning and implementation, and IPMS management and assessment responsibilities. They appear to be ambivalent as to whether the administration of these should be the responsibility of all staff. Would you agree with these views and could you substantiate your position on this?

3. While there is firm agreement among respondents on the necessity for institutional strategising, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, there is ambivalence as to whether Unisa's planning is in fact effective. In the invited comments, specific mention was made of a perceived "top-down" planning process. Do you think that this is an accurate view, and why?

Funding

1. It is generally believed that it is cheaper to design a course for ODL than for contact institutions. However this was the funding issue with which respondents disagreed most strongly. What are your views on this matter and what do you believe this means for ODL as a method of delivery?

2. While the respondents were concerned about accommodating growing student numbers and the institution's ability to balance the enrolment cap with demands for access, they nevertheless felt that registrations should not be halted at cap level and tended towards agreeing that the institution should increase enrolments continently and abroad. How could you account for this seeming disjuncture? Do you think that their views could be linked to their expressed concerns about capacity?

3. The respondents felt that Unisa /ODL does not receive sufficient funding especially in light of Unisa's mandate and responsibility. However, they tended towards disagreeing, or were ambivalent about ODL being expensive to fund and maintain. Do you share this sentiment, and why?

4. Respondents agreed most strongly that academic salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demand of the profession. Do you agree?

Quality

1. Respondents disagreed most strongly with the statement: *Unisa should have completely open admission.* They agreed that admission requirements should be more stringent. Would you like to share your views on this, taking into account the higher education environment in which we have to operate?

2. While respondents leaned towards the view that the Institution's systems provide adequate and easily understandable access in regard to registration, they disagreed that students could easily access their study materials or that increasing numbers were choosing to use Unisa's online services. Would you agree with this and in your view, how is this distinction clarified?

3. Respondents disagreed that Unisa's PQM promotes quality learning. They are ambivalent though, when it comes reducing the number of courses, and the statement that the large number of modules impacts negatively on quality learner support. What are your views on this?

4. Respondents agree that lecturers do not provide a quality service to students. They also tend to agree that current assessment practices do not promote improved throughput. However, while they support institutional quality initiatives, they continue to be uncertain as to whether they can cope administratively with large numbers of students. What is your response to this?

5. In conclusion, do you think that Unisa has achieved success in the implementation of the policy steering mechanisms?

6. Are there any other views that you would like to share on this research?

5.6   PHASE 2: INTERVIEWS

This section discusses key thematic areas that emerged during the interviews with the elite interviewees and the subsequent analyses of the transcripts. The material is organised as follows for greater clarity: an explanation of the interlinking themes that emerged from the data (supported by a diagram); an interpretation of the findings; and the conclusion to Phase 2.

5.6.1   Interlinking themes that emerged from the data

The themes that emerged during the interviews demonstrate very clearly the interrelated and interdependent nature of higher education provision in and between the external environment (national) and the internal environment (institutional) (cf. Figure 3.1; Par. 3.3.2.1).

In the analysis of the data several codes were identified. These were then clustered into code 'families.' Each code 'family' had one overarching theme. In this way four main themes were identified. These are:

a) Transformation

b) Funding

c) Institutional efficiency

d) The need for an ODL policy

Each theme is discussed below, and will incorporate the various codes (or sub themes) that contributed to its formulation as follows:

a) Transformation
   - The national transformation agenda
   - Institutional transformation and mindset change
b) Funding
   - Funding, enrolment planning and capping and the unfunded student issue
   - Academic and support staff salaries
c) Institutional efficiency
   - Strategy and planning
   - Capacity and Quality
d) The need for an ODL policy
   - Cost of ODL/Course cost
   - A dedicated ODL Policy

Where relevant and to amplify the analyses, reference will be made to the literature study (chapters two and three) and most importantly, to the research question and sub-questions.

Figure 5.1 illustrates how the four identified themes overlap and interlink with one another, demonstrating the holistic and integrated nature of higher education policy and its impact and influence on Open and Distance Learning as represented by the University of South Africa.

Figure 5.1   The holistic and integrated nature of higher education policy and its impact and influence on Open and Distance Learning

TRANSFORMATION

- The national transformation agenda
- Institutional transformation and mindset change

THE NEED FOR AN ODL POLICY

- The cost of ODL/Course cost
- A dedicated ODL policy

HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY

*PLANNING
*QUALITY
*FUNDING

FUNDING

- Funding, enrolment planning/capping and the unfunded student issue
- Academic and support staff salaries

INSTITUTIONAL EFFICIENCY

- Strategy and Planning
- Capacity and quality
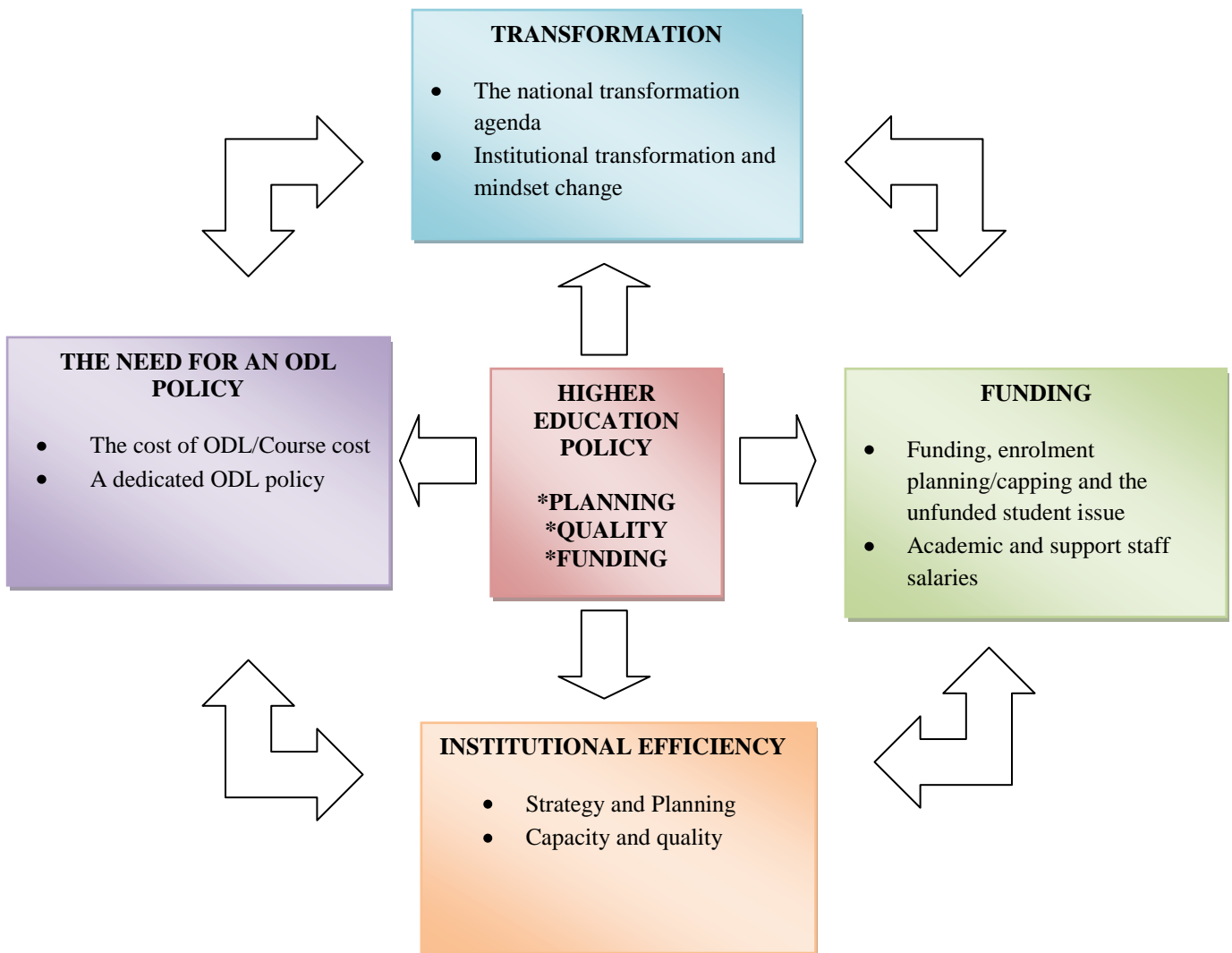
At the centre of the figure, higher education policy as it pertains to this research is aligned to the three policy steering mechanisms of planning, funding and quality. The impact of these overall, on higher education and ODL in particular (as represented by Unisa) is evidenced in the four themes of transformation, funding, institutional efficiency and the need for an ODL policy. Each theme incorporates a range of issues that came to the fore during the interviews and which contributed to its formulation.

It should be noted that some of the sub themes, or issues could conceivably resort under two or more (or even all) of the themes. This speaks to the interdependencies that exist between them and the integrated nature of ODL delivery. However in these

cases, during the coding each issue was placed in the context (theme) in which it was most often raised during the interviews. Each theme and related issues has been analysed below to demonstrate their relevance to the research questions and sub-questions.

5.6.2   Discussion of the findings

In the following paragraphs, each of the themes and subthemes has been discussed, highlighting their interdependencies and linkages as they emerged during the interviews.

5.6.3   Transformation

The theme of transformation permeated the conversations in the interviews and it was clear that notions and understandings of transformation ranged from the national to the institutional level and that in the minds of all, the imperative to transform formed the genesis of both the current higher education landscape and Unisa as a comprehensive ODL institution. Transformation was discussed under various guises and these are discussed in detail below.

5.6.3.1 The national transformation agenda

The process of policy transformation and governance in South Africa has been set out very systematically in chapter three of this study (cf. Par. 3; 3.1; 3.2; **Table 3.2**). However, the interviews brought to the fore the consequences, intended and unintended, of these policy changes for higher education, higher education institutions and more particularly, Unisa.

The second interview that I conducted turned out to be slightly different than anticipated.   Professor A provided a detailed contextual analysis of the policy process post 1994. He explained that the *Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997* (RSA 1997) had set out a very ambitious programme for higher education transformation and that there had been " too many policy initiatives and too many change initiatives imposed on the higher education system over too short a period." Successful transformation, he asserted, requires sufficient capacity and more pertinently, the right kind of capacity, which was (and remains) in short supply. The restructuring of a higher education system and higher

education institutions requires the kinds and compendiums of skills and expertise that at the best of times, are in short supply, more so in the higher education domain, which had never undergone such radical re-engineering before.

Given the particular socio-political circumstances at the time, he suggested that the national higher education restructuring initiative was embarked on without the appropriate skills and probably (since there was no former experience to draw from) an uninformed understanding of what it would actually take for such a massive exercise in re-engineering. In addition, to properly "analyse and then implement policy in a systematic way, translating policies into institutional objectives and outcomes, reconciling those with the institutional conditions and challenges and then producing a plan, also requires a particular capacity, and in this regard there was also a serious lack". At the time of the restructuring very few institutions had planning as a core focus, let alone the sophisticated kinds of planning required to give effect to the array of new policies. The consequences were unsurprising. Prof A explained:

> *So you had institutions very clearly without the necessary planning capacity having to undertake quite complex institutional reform and change initiatives. So the fact that many were thrown into disarray is not surprising.*

In considering his answer, I realised that the inevitable and critical consequence of this massive transformation effort was that it shifted the focus of the university governance and management to responding to policy imperatives, largely at the expense of attention to teaching and learning, as well as student support and service issues. This has been exacerbated by the accountable and subordinated role of Senate to Council in regard to academic and research matters, as set out in the Higher Education Act, 1997 (Act no. 101 of 1997) (RSA 1997) (cf. Par. 3.3.1), which asserted the pre-eminence of efficiency, effectiveness and accountability and opened the door to managerial practices, so providing higher education institutions with perhaps their first real taste of what is now firmly entrenched managerialism (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2).

This view was supported by Unisa Council member B who said that the "...core business of academic institutions is in fact, teaching and learning, research and to an increasing extent, community engagement, and *not* (my emphasis) strategy and

planning.*"* He went on to say that the actual business of the university is engaged in by the academic staff and by those who are in the immediate supporting environment to the academic endeavours, but that the perception is now being created that management and administrative staff represent the new "core business" of universities. "And yet", he said, " it is the academic staff who have to deal with the impediments, the hindrances and the frustrations around what the university is actually about."

Not surprisingly, in many universities a 'them and us' divide has arisen in terms of which management responds to national imperatives, to macro issues, to funding pressures, and to policy imperatives from the national department on the one hand, while the academic staff, who feel increasingly disempowered and undervalued are obliged to continue to deliver on the core business of the institution on the other. Council member B summed it up nicely when he said somewhat democratically:

> *Ironically both parties are exercising their mandates, but in so doing they are not succeeding in talking to each other and bringing one another to an understanding of the respective environments in which they must function. It is perhaps for this reason that one finds academics speaking disparagingly of management and sometimes management speaking disparagingly of the academics.*

The 'them and us' divide is perhaps an unintended consequence of the transformation imperative and growing managerial practices and there can be no doubt that it is quite firmly entrenched at Unisa and that it poses a significant barrier to the very transformation that it intended to achieve.

When one is faced with implementing new policies while merging into a mega institution simultaneously, it is difficult to find the time to prioritise which of the competing projects is most important and which should receive priority, and so Professor A explained that *"everything was done at the same time, which placed an extremely onerous burden on staff, both academic and support/administrative and particularly on the management of the universities."* Perhaps in support of management who are often seen as the 'them' he said:

> *People forget that it's not just management that is imposing these the demands on staff, but there is an externally driven and statutorily driven set of imperatives for change in the higher education sector that management would be remiss if they did not give attention to.*

Most of the leadership and management of higher education institutions also come from the academic sector or from the administration sector and while they might have experience in, and understand academic administration and scholarly work, changing an institution or changing a system and putting in place regulatory mechanisms, and the kinds of plans which are required to move institutions purposefully towards a new reality on the scale and with the ambition that was evidenced in the National Plan for Higher Education (MoE 2001) and the *Education White Paper 3 - A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education, 1997 (DoE 1997)* was, and is "a different matter entirely".

These remarks contextualised the discussion and highlighted one of the immediate flaws and unintended consequences of the new policy at the national and institutional level. Appropriate capacity might have foreseen and mitigated in a more proactive manner, the serious operational challenges faced by higher education institutions in implementing the policy and the mergers. As it was, higher education institutions simply had to 'make-do' with the leadership that they had inherited, irrespective of its calibre or competency. Furthermore, the majority of higher education institutions were merging, which meant that many of the leadership appointments were what could be termed 'compromise' appointments to democratically (and sometimes politically) accommodate the leadership of the respective merging institutions. Where this leadership was strong, as in the case of Unisa, the institutions flourished, but where it was weak, the institutions suffered accordingly and it is suggested that a number of higher education institutions are still coming to terms with that legacy. The same analysis can be applied to the staff of merging institutions. Staff had to be accommodated, and where there was more than one person for the same position, staff would have to apply for the positions and the 'extraneous' staff member would have to be accommodated elsewhere in the institution, often in a job which they didn't want and which they were not necessarily equipped to do. This has no doubt contributed to the unhappiness of staff and impacted on the capacity in certain areas, of the institution. It is likely that lack of capacity and experience (especially staff capacity), coupled with the sheer scale of the transformation contributed to the many challenges that universities face today.

Chief amongst these challenges must be the large volume of additional 'non-academic' work that has emanated from the policy reforms. As Prof A explained:

> *When you take all of the policy reforms for example, and the regulatory mechanisms, there's a hell of a lot more in terms of reporting, in terms of mobilising of information, analysing and aggregating information and then packaging it in the ways which are required through the reporting conventions and parameters set by the DoHE&T* (cf. Par.3.3.2.1).

This supports the assertions that the burden of that additional work has fallen on the shoulders of both academic and support staff. (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2). (This will be discussed in greater detail under 5.6.5.2 below.) However in acknowledging the burden, "*Unisa created additional capacities in planning, management information and strategic analysis so that they could provide support mostly for management, but for staff as well.*"

New departments, each with their respective cohorts of staff were established to fulfil the policy imperatives. At Unisa these include the Department of Strategy, Planning and Quality Assurance, and the Department of Information and Strategic Analysis and they exist solely to service the institution's strategy, planning, quality and monitoring and evaluation needs (cf. Par 3.4.2.1).

It is clear that in creating these additional capacities, higher education institutions and in this instance, Unisa, have incurred very significant ongoing expenditure that has to be drawn from available resources, which have consequently had to be spread more thinly across the institution. Because of its stable financial position (cf. Par. 1.1.3), Unisa has been able to absorb the additional cost and has been able to develop a sophisticated strategy and planning regime, but lesser financially endowed institutions may be at a disadvantage in that respect, and their strategy and planning initiatives (and institutional efficiency, effectiveness and accountability) may be affected accordingly. Once again, this might not achieve the intended results of the policy steering mechanisms (cf. Par. 3.3.2.1). Professor A pointed out:

> *I think when you throw the sector into disarray and if you destabilise an institution by merging it with others, I think that it was underestimated what it would do to institutions - what the costs would be and what implications were for the relative instability for several years following a merger, because the average merger of medium-*

sized and small-size institutions takes up to 10 years to realise the benefits. And we have created some really massive mergers, and Unisa is a case in point, and the fact that we have come out relatively stable after about four or five years, years I think suggests that this was an amazing feat and people seem to underestimate that.

While the rationale for the radical higher education re-engineering and transformation post 1994 is indisputable, there is equally no doubt that there have been unintended consequences for higher education institutions that are impacting on their current efficiencies, effectiveness and cultures. Much of this is evidenced in the slow pace of institutional transformation, more particularly at a cultural/mindset level.

5.6.3.2 Institutional transformation and mindset change

While sophisticated strategy and planning have moved Unisa deliberately into new ways of operating and while the need for strategy and planning is well understood and accepted (cf. Par. 5.3.2) the institutional culture, that is, that which deals with buy-in, enthusiasm for, and acceptance of change remains problematic. Aligned to this is the natural reticence that most people have when it comes to making adjustments in their lives for which they are not equipped or prepared, or which disrupt their comfort zones. There can be no clearer evidence of resistance to this kind of change than the now infamous "Reitz Four" incident at a sister institution, during which four white students subjected mostly female black staff to humiliating 'initiation' rituals in protest against the racial integration of 'their' residence (SAPA 2011). It took a long and systematic process of reconciliation to finally lay the matter to rest, but this incident provides a (perhaps extreme) example of the resistance to change and the interventions that are required to achieve buy-in and commitment to new ways of operating and a new institutional ethos.

(It must be noted that the researcher is aware of the *Ministerial Committee Report on Transformation and Social Cohesion and the Elimination of Discrimination in Public Higher Education Institutions* (DoE 2008) (the so-called *Soudien Report*) and its findings, as well as the subsequent call from Higher Education South Africa (HESA) for higher education institutions to submit integrated transformation plans (HESA 2011). However the *Soudien Report* focuses predominantly on racism and discrimination in South African higher education institutions, while the transformation (mindset change) referred to in this discussion, entails the kinds of

adjustments that need to be made to accept and accommodate the perceived consequences of managerial practices in higher education institutions, occasioned by higher education policy whose main objectives include institutional efficiency, effectiveness and accountability [such as the 'them-and-us' sentiment, the perceived demise of collegiality, excessive workloads and the marginalisation of academics amongst others]). While racism and discrimination will undoubtedly play a role in the views and perceptions, they are not the central focus.

Section 5.6.3.1 has already made mention of the 'them and us' divide that constrains genuine and lasting institutional transformation in many higher education institutions, including Unisa. The issue of managerialism encroaching into the more traditional ethos of collegiality has also been mentioned (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2). These influences, together with incessant demands for changes to the accustomed way of doing things (wrought by the mergers), the concomitant perceived disempowerment and relegation of the academe to the sidelines of higher education, the simultaneous emergence of the administrative staff into positions of high status and earning in higher education institutions (cf. Par. 5.6.4.2) and perceptions of unsustainable workloads have resulted in a genuine sense of disillusionment and perhaps understandably, some resentment and resistance to changes which are perceived to be of little benefit to those who must implement them (cf. Par.1.1.2). These are what could be called 'mindset change' issues that impact directly on institutional efficiency and effectiveness.

At Unisa there are strong views and sentiments around issues such as sufficient staff capacity (general mean scores of 2.38 and 2.51 respectively), appropriate institutional processes, open admissions, the PQM, conditions of service, including salaries (general mean score of 4.28) and the quality of service that lecturers offer to students (cf. Par 5.3.2). It is significant that those issues that achieved the highest levels of agreement or disagreement in the rating scales, namely staff capacity and salaries, are fundamentally linked to the level of satisfaction experienced in terms of career aspirations and expectations.

While staff may understand the rationale for transformation and while they may accept it on an intellectual level, there will always be a schism between that

intellectual understanding and the more psychologically-based openness to the need for a mindset change that will ensure not only buy-in, but peace of mind and acceptance. During our discussion Professor C said that until an integration of 'mind and heart" (the psychological and the intellectual) is achieved disaffected staff will continue to pay lip service to transformation initiatives, institutional goals will be complied with out of a sense of duty and not desire, and genuine mindset change and buy-in will remain elusive:

> *If you do have institutional goals, you want to change the hearts and the minds of colleagues to move into a new direction, but if buy-in hasn't been achieved as yet, you'll find that you've got two centres of focus.*

During the interviews it became evident that management, staff and students alike were grappling with mindset change issues.

a) Management

Since the merger, management at Unisa (and I would suggest most merging institutions) have found themselves in an invidious position. The responsibility of implementing a whole raft of new higher education policy initiatives while simultaneously driving the merging of three different higher education institutions'(which included the two biggest in the country) programme offerings, ICT systems, institutional systems, policies and processes, human resources capacities, conditions of service and unions (amongst others), to arrive at the largest higher education institution in Africa (and one of the 20 largest in the world) was a vast and complex undertaking (cf. Par. 3.4.2) that allowed little latitude. It was a process that needed to be driven relentlessly and with the available capacity irrespective of its merit or experience (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1). It is perhaps understandable that under these circumstances academic and staff matters may not have received the attention that they needed and required at that time, especially when it came to facilitating genuine 'mindset transformation' towards a common institutional ethos. It is also important to understand that many of the issues that caused insecurity and unhappiness amongst staff, and especially academics (particularly those pertaining to conditions of service) could only be concluded once the disparate systems had been integrated and the negotiations with unions (Bargaining Forum) finalised. These were in themselves time consuming and contested processes, which added to the uncertainty and tensions

amongst staff who may not always have appreciated that management was obliged to ensure that due process had been followed in all such matters. Professor D had another view. He said:

> *For a long time the unhappiness amongst staff had to do with the elitist nature of higher education –that we can't be open distance learning without being something else. And open distance learning was an extra we were doing, but really we were no different from other universities. Give me a break. I mean we ARE a different institution or an ODL.*

I think this statement articulates the frustration of management who have had to persuade staff to embrace a new mode of higher education delivery that is apparently at odds with what they know and are accustomed to. This has to a certain extent bedevilled relations between management and staff , many of whom, not entirely cognizant of the magnitude of the task at hand, felt that change was merely being imposed and that they had no say in the process. Furthermore, the changes that were affected were perceived to be taking away, rather than adding to the status and wellbeing of staff, especially the academics, and particularly in regard to the conditions of service (cf. Par. 5.6.5.2). This has had a knock-on effect in the institution to the extent that many management decisions, no matter how broadly consulted, and irrespective of the fact that due process was followed, are deemed to be 'management issues.' The voice of staff (including the academics), of the 'us,' is not seen to be heard in those decisions and as such they do not receive complete acceptance and buy-in.

Management now faces the task of facilitating genuine mindset change in the institution, of acknowledging that the space that they occupy in the institution is by its very nature exclusionary, and that they will need to bridge the gap between their space and the spaces of those who they lead and manage if genuine institutional transformation is to happen. This will require a new and different mindset that is focused more on people than on policy.

b) Staff

Probably the most affected cohort of higher education practitioners when it comes to the changes wrought by higher education policy, is staff. While many staff support the institutional initiatives and are working extremely hard, a significant number feel

overwhelmed and dispirited. One could suggest that they are suffering from 'change fatigue'.

In the interviews it was asserted that most new employees are more than willing to give it their all, but they need proper guidance and an appropriate introduction into the 'new ways of doing things' at Unisa. They need to be socialised in to the real challenges facing Unisa. Failing that they soon fall under the sway of the disillusioned 'old guard' who are negative about, and unresponsive to, issues of transformation. Implicit in this view is the notion that perhaps the 'old guard' is beyond redemption and that they in fact present not only an ongoing barrier to transformation, but also a subversive influence. Thus, unless staff understands their role in the whole continuum of institutional operations and the associated benefits and outcome for the institution, there will be no buy-in and there will always be a level of resistance. Failure to 'socialise ' staff into new ways of doing things merely perpetuates resistance to changes in practices that are in fact aimed at improving efficiency. This is particularly true with regard to assessment methods (cf. Par. 5.6.5.2), as mentioned by Professor E:

> With respect to assessment, it is one area, which I as a lapsed academic have always thought should be given greater attention. Our assessment methods are antediluvian – I mean they must change and er, I agree that we are hide-bound with tradition, but the world has changed so radically, technologies have changed so radically, to deal with new assessment methods and practices and I think it is long overdue that our academics take this into their priority lists.

Interviewer: "So in a sense, it's almost as if they haven't moved into the ODL paradigm yet? They understand that we are ODL but in terms of our whole delivery model....." Prof E:

> It has to be co-created. It must be a joint responsibility. I know the academics – and I respect that position that they take for the most part - that they're the custodians of imparting the knowledge that revolves around the disciplines, but the ODL environment is fundamentally different, there must be a way where the academics, administrators, people in examinations, or DSAA, student assessment administration, sit together and devise new methods. They are still hidebound into the cocoons, the silos – there needs to be a breaking of those barriers – maybe not barriers, what are they.... mindsets. I think there is a realisation by most people, but I think just stepping over those boundaries and acknowledging that they are completely

interdependent. They can only enhance the work of both sectors – you know – the administration and the academics coming together.

These statements tend to suggest that some staff, particularly academics, have not accepted the fact that Unisa's ODL mode of delivery entails co-dependency and joint responsibility between the academic and administrative staff. Administrative staff is no longer 'in the service of academics' as it were. They are partners in education delivery. ODL entails a team approach to education delivery.

There can be no doubt that Unisa staff feel besieged by the ongoing adaptations that they have to make in the way that they operate, by changed conditions of service, the way that they are perceived, and by what they perceive to be increased workloads (cf. Par. 5.6.5; 5.6.5.2). Adaptation to these changed and changing circumstances will require a different level of transformation that is not solely strategic or systemic. However, there will need to be openness and accommodation on the part of all stakeholders in the institution, to new ways of doing and knowing.

c) Students

In the words of Professor F: *we need to socialise our students to be able to say, listen, you can get your material via the toaster*. This simple statement sums up the serious and difficult task that needs to be undertaken by Unisa to assist students in moving from the known and comfortable to more efficient and effective ways of studying and interacting with a modern ODL university.

Given the student profile (cf. Par. 3.4.2; 5.6.6.1) this will be an ongoing challenge. There has been much debate about the calibre of students coming into South African universities and about the fact that Unisa is seen as a "catch all" institution for those students who cannot be accommodated at contact institutions (cf. Par. 5.3.2; **Table 5.2**). As Professor D explained:

> *I think open universities like the University of South Africa must always live with the reality that overwhelmingly they will be meeting the lesser-abled students. Invariably, it's likely to be students who, for whatever reason, couldn't find a place – especially the young ones. Or, it will be students who come from the workplace and they have no culture of learning built into them - so that's something that we have to learn. The expertise that we offer, is a level of ability to turn that student into a successful learner. That's the expertise we offer. And*

we are saying confidently, the ODL method will be able to offer an opportunity to a student who otherwise might not have had the opportunity – and that's the expertise we bring into the learning process.

Higher education institutions are obliged to cope with the calibre of student that they get from the schooling system and in Unisa's case, 'what they get' is very often students who are totally unprepared for their studies in terms of their capability and readiness, as well as their own understanding of what a university should be and what they believe it should do for them (cf.Par.3.4.2).

It is generally acknowledged and accepted that a younger generation of students is quicker to adapt to new technologies, but in the case of Unisa students this is taking some time. To a quite significant extent, and given their lack of preparedness and their expectations, Unisa students still require (and in fairness often need) more personal interaction with the university. The need for personal attention is exacerbated by the ODL mode of delivery which, even under optimum conditions is not only a rather lonely experience, but it also requires of the student an independence and proactiveness that many do not have. As a consequence many are ill-prepared for ODL methods of studying and this has an impact on the dropout rate (cf. Par. 5.6.6.1). Although the need for personal contact is certainly not unique (cf. Par. 2.4.2.1) and while it is understandable, it creates serious challenges for teaching staff in an ODL environment. This view was shared by Unisa council member B who said:

> *This is a difficult one for me, but there's a part cultural issue here too, in that many students are still in the culture that they actually want to stand in a line – they want to speak to a human being face-to-face. They don't want to go to a kiosk and log on and type in.* (Interviewer - when you say culture, do you mean a human culture?) *A human culture – it's not a race-based thing. There are just some people who actually want to talk to someone, they want to look at someone and actually see someone smile and welcome them, you know, they don't want to talk through a machine and I don't know whether we're going to break that down so quickly..... We often asked them – I would personally go down to registration and spend the day there and I would ask them: "Why are you standing in line, why don't you do it online?" and they would say: "No, I want to talk to somebody." I said: You're going to stand here for four hours" and they would say, "That's fine."*

This aspect of Unisa's student profile will be discussed in greater detail in 5.6.6.1 particularly in regard to the challenges it poses for a maturing ODL institution in South Africa.

The above discussion suggests that higher education policy has imposed an onerous burden on higher education management, staff and students in terms of mindset transformation, for which little formal support and provision has been made. It is possible that the impact of policy around this aspect of transformation has been seriously underestimated by all role players. As South Africa moves in a more focused manner into its model of a developmental state and new challenges for higher education in South Africa emerge (cf. Par. 2.3.3.3; 3.3.3.2), these challenges are likely to continue and exacerbate. Mindset transformation will require dedicated attention if higher education institutions are to achieve the kinds of efficiencies and effectiveness that policy envisages and requires. Professor D summed this up by saying:

> *My fundamental thesis is that in order to work effectively in the new idiom of Unisa, we need to change the way we believe and the way we do things.*

5.6.4 Funding

The theme of *funding* elicited strong and diverse views and perceptions from both the survey respondents and the interviewees, particularly in regard to issues such DoHE&T funding, enrolment planning and capping (and unfunded students) and academic and support staff salaries. These views and perceptions are discussed below.

5.6.4.1Funding, enrolment planning/capping and the unfunded student issue

a) Funding

Firstly, it must be acknowledged that compared to ODL in the rest of Africa (and possibly, in most countries in the world) (ICDE 2010:1) ODL in South Africa enjoys a relatively privileged position in regard to funding. Professor E and Professor A both mentioned that the reason for this centred around Unisa's status, reputation and integrity as a quality higher education provider, which it has built up nationally and internationally over the more than 130 years of its existence. In the words of Professor D:

> *One thing is that in South Africa we are very, very lucky. Because of the long experience with Unisa and distance education, there is a much*

higher appreciation of the value of the University of South Africa and the programmes that it offers than is the case in any other distance education university in Africa that I know of. That's one statement that we must make.

This means that while Unisa may argue that ODL is not sufficiently funded, in South Africa many of the barriers that exist in terms of ODL's general status as being of lesser quality and importance and therefore not deserving of the same consideration as contact institutions, have been obviated. There can be no clearer evidence of this than the fact that more than one-third of all South African students, and the largest portion of foreign students on the African continent, are ODL (Unisa) students (cf. Par. 3.4.2). ODL is the major higher education provider in South Africa and even though this is proportionately reflected in the funding allocation, logically, the sheer number of students would require that this should in fact be the case, and ODL funding remains a concern for Unisa.

The ambivalence and divergent views on DoHE&T funding were contextualised succinctly by two interviewees. On the one hand Professor H felt that there was a complete lack of understanding of what the ODL teaching and learning environment is all about as indicated in the fact that they have not even understood the necessity for establishing a policy for ODL. She asserted:

> *What we find happening is that Treasury says, here we've got a pot of money that we're going to give to higher education and then we have the Department saying, well how do we take this pot of money and start dividing it amongst all of our institutions for their various engagements, without first looking at the distinction - and the very definite distinction - between what an ODL environment needs as opposed to the contact and residential institutions. I think that that's a real, real, issue that we're going to face.*

On the other hand Ms G seemed to take a more strategic view of the funding issue asserting: *It is a steering mechanism towards the national needs of higher education in South Africa.*

These seemingly disparate views provide some insight into the dilemma facing Unisa as an ODL provider. Given the various views and the elements and nuances of funding that they represent, and the fundamental relation of the funding issue to the problem statement of this study, I have decided to include the majority of the

responses. The majority of interviewees felt that Unisa (as representative of ODL in South Africa) did not receive sufficient funding:

Prof D: The answer is that Yes, I share that sentiment. I share it because there is at certain levels, a misconception about Open Distance Learning provided on the cheap.

Prof E: Well I share that view. We certainly don't receive sufficient funding for what we do as an ODL institution. The mandate is quite clear. I mean the politicians just spell it out so clearly: we need more and more of South Africans, of Africans across the Continent, to have access to higher education. But we are not getting the funding that is required to meet that demand.

Prof F: The first one I agree. Unisa is not funded properly. There's no ODL policy in the first instance. How to you find and institution of this magnitude without a policy? So it's funded like any other institution. And there are other benefits which Unisa is not receiving which other institutions do.For example we have got infrastructural development which we have to pay for; there's no support for that. I want to agree that we are not properly funded and the only basis on which this can happen is that the Department of Education must be very serious in developing a policy for ODL.

Prof K: Well I definitely agree that the funding is wrong. They shouldn't fund ODL exactly the same as contact universities, they must understand there is a difference, that there are additional needs that are required especially given the profile of more and more of our students and as I indicated to you many students require a facility where they can sit and study because they just don't have it.

Prof I: Yes I do, because I believe that the Department does not understand ODL. They don't understand that we've grown from being a pure distance education university. They've just decided many years ago that it is cheaper to offer distance education and I do believe that it is not sufficiently funded – that they don't understand what we are doing and what we are trying to achieve.

Prof H felt that while funding was adequate in some respects, it was lacking in others. *Prof H: I looked at that and there are two issues that I thought about with this question. I looked at our teaching and learning grants and I looked at our research grants that we are getting by virtue of being this ODL institution and I know that our teaching and learning grants and the research grants that we get. I believe that we receive good funding for those specific activities. My problem is where we come to the specific issue of the unfunded students. And if the Ministry, and the Minister has said it repeatedly and we hear it at the enrolment management meeting on the one hand, that he is looking at Unisa as being the space that when they determine that they need more*

teachers, Unisa should be able to cater to that need, when they determine that they need nurses for example, Unisa should be able to that need, yet we still have the cap. And that constraint, that tension needs to be resolved quickly because until that tension is resolved our capacity constraints are going to continue forever and ever. Because if money is not going to be injected into the institution for taking on the added numbers, our staffing and our infrastructure - we're not going to be able to grow we're not going to get that infrastructure funding to meet that need so I think it is linked.

The main reasons advanced for the beliefs of these interviewees, included a perceived lack of understanding on the part of the DoHE&T in particular, around the nature and character of an ODL institution and the unique demands of ODL provision in South Africa today. There were decided views and concerns on the 'hidden' costs involved in ODL delivery, as well as South Africa's socio-political environment and its impact on ODL provision. In addition, Unisa has had to make quite drastic additions and changes to its operations and infrastructure to accommodate the massive rise in student numbers in the years since the merger and to give appropriate expression to its ODL character (cf. Par. 3.4.2). This for example, has entailed a complete relocation/transition from the old facilities and processes (which quite literally, could not accommodate the growing hordes of students coming to register on campus) to new and modern registration facilities and processes aimed at accommodating the demands and improving efficiencies.

Again, it is important to note that the funding of the new registration facilities was borne by Unisa (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1). This fact was mentioned by both Prof F and Prof K. Funding received from the DoHE&T for infrastructure development is used mainly for the improvement and development of infrastructure in the regions in support of Unisa's academic project. Unisa is deemed to be a distance education provider and as such the view of the DoHE&T seems to be that there should be no need for such vast cash injections into infrastructure development. However this view demonstrates a serious lack of understanding of Unisa's role as an ODL institution in the current higher education environment. It is argued that this lack of understanding, or appreciation, is impacting on the effective provision of ODL in South Africa. This will be discussed in greater detail under 5.6.4.1 below, but it again demonstrates a huge expense that has had to be (and continues to be) borne by the university as a direct consequence of new policy prescriptions.

It was also argued in regard to facilities, that Unisa has had to use significant sums of its own funds on structural improvements to accommodate the policy demands for efficiency, effectiveness and accountability (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1), as well as growing demands for access (cf. Par. 5.6.3.2). This constitutes a significant 'hidden cost' that is necessary for effective and efficient ODL provision in South Africa today. These demands and their concomitant costs have had, and continue to have a knock-on effect in the institution. Given the profile of Unisa students (cf. Par. 3.4.2; 5.6.6.1) and the nature of ODL provision at Unisa (cf. 3.4.2) there is an ever growing need for additional space for students to study and to have access to ICT facilities, including in the regions and far-flung rural areas. ODL funding does not make provision for such student 'space.' At Unisa it is felt that this space constitutes "accommodation". At the moment Unisa is obliged to shoulder the bulk of costs incurred in that regard. As stated by Prof K:

> *That to me is like student accommodation – it's just day accommodation, not overnight accommodation, and we should get funding for that.... Maybe the Minister should come and talk to students some time. Come to one of these study centres and see what we are doing there. If I had to say to the students: "We have to close this", what will we say to them? Where are they going to study then? They [the DoHE&T) have no understanding at all.*

Upon reflection one begins to discern in the responses the tensions emanating from the socio-political environment in which South African higher education institutions, and Unisa in particular are obliged to operate. Statements such as "I mean the politicians just spell it out so clearly" and "...the Minister has said it repeatedly and we hear it at the enrolment management meeting on the one hand, that he is looking at Unisa as being the space that when they determine that they need more teachers, Unisa should be able to cater to that need..." speak to the expectations of the state, which have a political bias, and the reality of the policy constraints and the funding available for higher education delivery in South Africa. Unisa, it seems, is caught up in those expectations.

On the other hand, perhaps more in line with the sentiment that funding is a steering mechanism aimed at meeting national needs, other interviewees felt that Unisa did in

fact receive sufficient funding. Again, given the nuance of their responses I have decided to include the responses in full.

> *Prof A: I don't share this sentiment, because if I look at the resourcing of Unisa it's not a poor institution. It's not under-endowed, it's not under funded. It's a question of what do we do with the resources that we have, and I look at the vast amount of unspent resources and I look at the profligate expenditure that adds very little value, I can't in all conscience see what I see, and see the use of the resources and available resources, the underutilisation of resources, and then declare that we are short of funds, because I don't believe we are.*

> *Council member B: Look. This is a difficult debate. I personally drove, many years back, the argument that at the masters and the doctoral level there's no distinction between an ODL institution and a contact institution and that's why the funding framework then, did away with that distinction, but the funding framework argued at the honours and undergraduate level, there still is a cost distinction between contact institutions and ODL education. If you simply look at the total amount of the higher education budget that goes to universities, I mean Unisa takes by far the largest proportion of it. Second I know of few universities that are able to embark on such a comprehensive infrastructure renewal programme such as Unisa is, and I know some of that money has come from the infrastructure renewal programme of government, but still quite a bit is coming from Unisa itself. I would argue that from my understanding Unisa is probably not the most cash-strapped university that I have come cross and it seems to me, part of that has to do with human fallibility and that is that students enrol for too many modules and then pay, and then don't cancel their enrolments so the university gets subsidy for students many of whom they don't service and in that respect, and it sounds terrible, but in that respect, Unisa makes money – it scores. And that's why it's finding itself in a relatively flush position. If one had a very strict definition of active students and I know there is a definition of active students, but it's only towards exam time. If you had to measure active students let's say in the course of the year, 3, 4 or 5 times and then your subsidy was adjusted towards the level of active students that you have, Unisa might find itself in a worse position, but at the moment my argument is Unisa does pretty well.* (Interviewer: We're actually capped at 256 000. Anything more than that Unisa is actually funding except for the student fee component of it. Would that not balance out the students who are not continuing?) *It's difficult – no I think you could be right that there's an offset there of the over-enrolled students Unisa carries and they do that through the subsidy they get for students who enrol in too many modules or they drop out in the first week of studies.*

> *Ms G: I don't agree with them. We need to understand how Unisa consumes its resources. When you post a surplus margin at the end of*

your academic year, any academic, and any manager and any top management and leader in this institution will find difficulty to indicate to any policy maker that we don't receive adequate funding. Unisa is receiving adequate funding in regard to teaching and research development, we consumed the largest component for that for the higher education system, we received research development grant because we don't make our norms, and for that reason I cannot agree with the respondents that we are not sufficiently funded.

While these interviewees agreed that if Unisa aimed to be a 5th or 6th generation ODL institution (cf. Par. 2.5.2; **Table 2.3**) then additional funding and third stream income (cf. Par.2.4.1) would be required, they nevertheless felt that Unisa's current consumption of funds could be executed more judiciously and effectively and that until such time as that could be done, it was unlikely that Unisa (and by implication, ODL) would receive additional funds.

Probably one of the most difficult aspects to defend in the funding debate is the issue of the surplus margin that Unisa has posted at the end of every year since the merger (cf. Par. 1.1.3). While this speaks to very sound financial management on the one hand it also speaks to the possible non-efficient utilisation of available resources and to the difficulty that any higher education institution would have under these circumstances, in convincing policy makers that ODL does not receive sufficient funding.

However, the fact that Unisa remains in transition towards an efficient and effective ODL institution in an extremely dynamic higher education environment, may well provide some understanding for the surplus phenomenon. Changing to new systems and processes may have taken longer than initially anticipated, and the element of mindset change discussed under 5.6.3.2 above, as well as the challenges around the integration of ICTs and their allied systems and processes (cf. Par. 5.6.5.2) is likely to have impacted on the institution's ability to move more quickly into new efficient and effective ways of operating. This may have manifested in lags in project completion and a concomitant under spending on allocated funds. Also, old and established budgeting habits have possibly contributed to a more conservative approach to the implementation of initiatives for which funding has been allocated. Put simply, the proper reconfiguration and redistribution of resources to give appropriate expression

to ODL needs, would likely give a better account of funds and surplus margins may not be posted.

What became apparent during the course of the interviews is the tension that exists between the need for Unisa to fulfil its social mandate, its role as an institution that can meet government needs (for example producing or skilling teachers), the urgent national imperative to admit as many students as possible to tertiary institutions, and the simultaneous requirement for higher education institutions to comply with enrolment caps and ratios that are negotiated with the DoHE&T. Until such time as these tensions are addressed and resolved, Unisa's capacity constraints will continue and worsen. This is discussed in greater detail below.

b) Enrolment Planning/Capping and the unfunded student issue

The issue of enrolment planning and capping and the related issue of unfunded students engendered strong sentiments and unanimous agreement that Unisa needs to make a definite decision about the numbers of students it can accommodate and still provide an efficient and effective quality service to its students. The general feeling was that the institution did not have the capacity to keep on accommodating thousands of extra students and that a tipping point would inevitably be reached. The responsible thing to do would be to mitigate that risk before it became a reality

At the same time it was very clear that there is a dichotomous tension between the need to heed Unisa's vision, its social mandate and South Africa's developmental priorities, and the realities of what that implies and entails for Unisa staff who are responsible for the implementation thereof.   In my view this speaks to an understanding of Unisa's role in higher education, that is located on two levels, that is, at the strategic and operational levels.

On one hand staff at Unisa understand very clearly, and they appreciate and support the need for Unisa to have a strategy, vision and mission that reflect its aspiration and intentions as an African university in the service of humanity (mean score 4.63) (cf. **Table 5.1**). It is suggested that at a strategic level, staff understands and buys into Unisa's role as an ODL provider both locally and continentally. Linked to this is a

simultaneous acknowledgement of the serious responsibility that Unisa has, to fulfil its responsibility in terms of redressing historical imbalances and contributing to a more equitable society (cf. Par. 3.4.2.1).

On the other hand there is an almost contradictory view (and perceptions) around the capacity, capability (and funding) of Unisa and Unisa staff to give effect to the strategy and vision. This is evident in the mean score responses to the questions around the capacities that are required to fulfil Unisa's vision and social mandate as follows:

- *Unisa has sufficient lecturing staff to deal with increased number of students* (mean score 2.38)
- *Unisa has efficient administration staff to deal with increased numbers of students* (mean score 2.51)
- *Unisa has the infrastructure to accommodate students in excess of 300 000* (mean score 2.56)
- *Unisa has adequate processes to deal with increasing number of students* (means score 2.64)
- *Unisa should accommodate ever-growing student numbers* (mean score 3.11) (cf. **Table 5.1**)

The general level of disagreement or ambivalence reflected in these scores across the survey respondent population speaks to the prevalence of the sentiment. This was generally acknowledged and understood by the interviewees, as expressed by Prof D:

> *On the one level they are thinking strategically, they are thinking about the idea of us growing continentally and internationally. Now that's a strategically focused response to both our national imperative and the social mandate – we know that's what we want to do in terms of national priorities. But then the concern with the growing student numbers comes to the operational activity and what it means, and I think that in the mindset, there's just that slight tension between what we know the strategic must do, but the reality of the operational issues that pertain to capacity to infrastructure and to funding......I think sometimes what we're doing, we're responding to the strategic mandate without having the operational issues in place and that's what gives us a bad reputation.*

Looked at another way, all public higher education institutions have to carry the burden of increasing access and promoting access and widening participation in

higher education, while recognising that the material reality is that in the main they cannot invest vast amounts in building new universities and new infrastructure. The burden therefore falls on higher education institutions to do more with the little that they have.

A direct contributor to this tension is the unabated growth in students numbers being experienced by Unisa (cf. Par.3.5.2). There is a concern with the apparently paradoxical situation in which Unisa negotiates enrolments caps which are already exceeded at the time of negotiation, but where the institution is nevertheless encouraged to continue taking on more and more students (cf. Par 3.5.2), and linked it to the phenomenon of unfunded students (cf. Par. 5.6.4.2).

Beside the onerous burden that this places on Unisa in terms of capacity (human, infrastructural and systems) an even more problematic result is the growth in unfunded students. Unfunded students are those students who exceed the "cap" agreed to with the DoHE&T. While a formula is used in the calculation of unfunded students (MoHE&T 2009:7), the cost for unfunded students is borne by the institution, with student fees being the only contribution that is available from external sources, to offset that cost. A related concern, over and above the impact that growth in numbers is having on the institution's capacity, is that it is directly linked to success and throughput, which in turn affect the funding the institution receives. Together these place the institution in a lose-lose situation when it comes to the issue of capping and funding, and interviewees emphasised that Unisa could not continue to grow without the necessary infrastructure and human resource capacity in place. Real concerns were expressed about the impact on quality and service provision should the trend continue. Council member B observed:

> *You should at least maintain your service levels, or better even, improve them. Then you can enrol more students. And so one side of that debate would be that Unisa must first jack up its service levels to its students, to an acceptable measure before it starts thinking of enrolling more students. This is exactly the tension that I've been speaking about, so it's unresolved by both Unisa and the DoE. I mean I think it can't probably ever be resolved. It's an ongoing tension but the DoE really has to understand that.*

Another consequence of increasing enrolment is its effect on staff. Interviewees acknowledged that as a consequence of growing numbers lecturers and in fact, "most

academics feel totally stretched, administrative staff feel totally stretched, and students are not receiving the full, quality learner support that they require and deserve." (cf. Par. 5.5.5.2).

Prof E recommended that after thorough research Unisa should determine an upper ceiling in regard to student numbers. "We, as an institution, should after careful and clinical research, you know, precise research, just say, state what the capacity is."

Unchecked growth in student numbers could ultimately impact on Unisa's long term sustainability. Alluding to this, Prof H articulated the real difficulty faced by Unisa as follows:

> *I think that's a very real concern for everybody because if we continue growing unchecked, if we haven't sorted out our capacity issue which talks directly to success and throughput, we're going to have a problem with funding there, but we're also going to have a bigger problem with the fact that as we grow we've also got the cohort of unfunded students so we get the hex on both sides of the funding timeline. And I think people are very worried about that, I think it's a realistic concern that we cannot, we cannot grow without the necessary infrastructure and capacity in place.*

Overarching the concern with growing student numbers was a genuine understanding and expression of the moral obligation that the university has, to accept students. In Prof K's words, "Morally I don't think you should turn students away either. It's somebody's life and future that you're playing with if you say you can't come." This speaks to the heart of the dilemma in which both Unisa and the DoHE&T find themselves. While every attempt is being made to improve FETs and increase access to them (cf. Par. 3.3.1) and in so doing not only alleviate the burden on the country's universities, but also focus attention on the generation of much needed skills, institutions in the meantime must find ways of dealing with current demands for education.

5.6.4.2 Academic and support staff salaries

The matter of academic and support staff salaries engendered lively discussion in the interviews, particularly when interviewees were apprised of the high mean score level of agreement (mean score 4.28) for the statement *academic salaries are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession*. With the exception of one

interviewee, and one who appeared to be ambivalent, all interviewees disagreed quite strongly and in a well substantiated manner with the perceptions of the survey respondents. Interviewees were well informed in regard to the salary model and scales used by Unisa and were able to confirm that salaries are market-related within the higher education sector and with the market as a whole. Ms G said, " Unisa's salaries are comparable and we need to publish that widely. I think we don't do that."

There was also a general agreement that being academic entailed far more than earning a salary. Being an academic is a choice that entails teaching, learning and research. As such academics cannot expect to earn the same salaries as equally qualified people in the market place. Secondly, being an academic means more than just a salary slip. In the words of Prof D, "So as an academic I don't think you should look just at what you get. You must also look at the environment that enables you to become good at your job.*"*

At Unisa that environment includes monetary support for research, the ploughing back of a part of what is produced in terms of research outputs for further work and personal gain, and also, support for participating and presenting papers at academic conferences. These support measures speak to an enabling environment for the academics, which seem somehow to have been missed or not acknowledged in the survey respondent response.

There was however a shared sentiment between both the survey respondents and the interviewees on the high salaries commanded by administrative staff in relation to their respective levels of qualification. While this in part entails transformation and mindset perceptions (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1; 5.6.3.2) as well as a manifestation of managerialism (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2; 5.6.3.1) it was generally agreed that academic staff had legitimate cause for concern, but that again management were faced with a very real dilemma that is linked to the availability of appropriate capacity (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1). Prof A shared his opinion as follows:

> *Well I believe that is an issue because I think that the qualification requirements and the experience requirements for non academic staff are much lower so the threshold is set much lower than for academic staff, and I've raised this at the management committee very frequently. But again its market related. If you set the requirements*

very high on the non academic side you very soon end up not being able to appoint anyone, so that's a particular dilemma we confront in the management.

Whether there needs to be differentiation between the academic corps of the institution and the administrative function is a moot point. Ms G expressed the urgent need to do so arguing that when administrative directorship positions were advertised in the institution some of the best academics were applying for the positions because of salary differentiation between the two sectors. Obviously the university cannot afford to lose that kind of academic capacity. "I don't believe that a manager in dispatch should be a profound academic that could do research, that could promote Ms and Ds and do teaching and learning and really contribute to the core business of the institution. Let's keep them there. Let's pay them a differentiated salary that will uphold their academic excellence. For me that is a critical issue."

The importance of this statement should not be glossed over because it provides direct evidence of one of the unintended consequences of higher education policy that has facilitated the managerial practices that characterise higher education institutions in South Africa today. Well qualified, trained and experienced academics are in very short supply, particularly in South Africa. To run the risk of losing that scarce capacity to university administration purely because of a salary benefit is simply indefensible.

The issue of academic salaries was contextualised within the higher education domain by Council member B, who asserted that academic salaries generally, in South Africa, are too low and that if one compared academic salaries (since 1990) in relation to for example, government service salaries, more pertinently a particular post in government such as a Chief Director, one would find that academic salaries have slipped. The opposite has happened with university senior management salaries, which have risen beyond all bounds and this may well have contributed to the 'them and us' sentiment (cf. Par. 5.6.3.1). He concluded: "I still am concerned that on the whole, non academic salaries seem to have risen faster [than academic salaries]."

However, it should simultaneously be acknowledged that the skills and capacities required of administrative/support staff in higher education today require

competencies that are extremely complex and demanding and that in line with similar position in the market place, their salaries may be justified. As Prof H stated firmly:

> *Administrative staff do not have the "luxury" of flexitime. They work a full day and are often required to work beyond 4 o' clock or earlier than 8 o' clock, for no additional remuneration. That's part of the job requirement for them. So I think the tension is a bit unfair and I think it's a bit unfounded but I think it's also a level of arrogance involved. Its academic arrogance and it goes with the qualification.*

The issue of academic salaries speaks to so much more than money. It is simultaneously an expression of the change in dynamics that higher education institutions are having to deal with in their attempt to implement policy initiatives whose core focus is not so much 'academics' as it is efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. While it is evident that comparatively speaking Unisa academics are well paid, their general feeling is that they are not, and this possibly alludes to a deeper sense of alienation that is far more difficult to articulate. It is suggested that academics will need to feel a greater sense of ownership of their own responsibilities and functions and that they will need to be given appropriate recognition as professionals, before this sentiment will dissipate.

5.6.5   Institutional efficiency and effectiveness

In line with its core emphasis in higher education policy (cf. Par.3.3.1) it is perhaps not surprising that the theme of institutional efficiency and effectiveness resonated strongly throughout the interviews. This was expressed in terms of strategy and planning, capacity, ICTs, time, quality, the PQM and service. Interviewees aired differing opinions on these issues in support of, or in refuting notions of institutional efficiency and effectiveness, and these are examined in the discussion below.

5.6.5.1 Strategy and Planning

The generally high overall mean score (4.70) of the survey respondents when it came to the need for institutional strategy and planning (cf. Par. 5.3.2), was echoed by the interviewees.   This high level of agreement speaks not only to the success that Unisa has achieved in inculcating a planning culture in the institution, but also to the success of planning as a DoHE&T steering mechanism (cf. Par. 3.3.1), especially when it comes to Unisa. In the words of Prof A:

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I think that the success we've achieved is really phenomenal at this institution and if you look at just firstly in terms of putting in place a regimen of planning that reaches the entire institution, that systematises the way in which we identify and order our priorities and the way in which we involve everyone from the very top management right down to people working in all sectors of the organisation. And we've created a coherent and repetitive cycle of planning that gives constant attention to what is happening in the institution, what are the emerging challenges and how do we respond to them. That we certainly have that we've looked at the entire policy landscape and imperatives for change in higher education and we've translated those into institutional imperatives - not slavishly – we've filtered it through our own experience and our own concerns, but if you look at our strategic planning and operational planning we are responding to of the policy imperatives that exist.

However, while it was acknowledged that strategy and planning are firmly entrenched and supported at Unisa, the effectiveness of planning came under scrutiny by survey respondents (mean score 3.50) (cf. **Table 5.1**) and during the interviews. Respondents seemed ambivalent about the efficacy of planning and a closer scrutiny of the summary statistics (cf. Par. 5.3.3.6; **Table 5.37**) revealed that the more senior the designation, the more favourable the perceptions in regard to the efficacy of planning. The suggests that the lower levels of management, that is CoDs and directors, who are mainly responsible for the implementation of planning are less certain of its efficacy. It is possible that the higher levels of management, namely, the deputy and executive deans and deputy and executive directors have a more comprehensive view of planning, and in addition are largely responsible for overseeing its implementation. They may consequently have a more favourable view of its effectiveness.

Several interviewees identified a gap between the planning exercise and its implementation. Prof I said: "That we could perhaps consult more, is true..." Prof K was a little more forthright:

Well I always sit there when we go to these planning breakaways and I wonder why we don't have at least ten people from right at the bottom through the ranks, and just get their perspectives sometimes as well. Because I think the general agreement has actually been said, that everything works wonderfully at the university up to the management level and there things start breaking down. What is that level? I mean let them be blunt. That is the level where you meet the unions.

There was also a general sense that the number of activities that needed to be attended to in order to achieve the institutional goals was a little optimistic and that planning at Unisa may be overly complicated. Prof C felt that " a simpler clearer, more focused planning framework will help us achieve more,*"* while Prof K expressed strong views on the efficacy of planning saying, "I wouldn't say that we haven't got a very sophisticated planning regime, to use all the jargon that I've heard, but does it actually work? Do we actually ever achieve what we are trying to achieve? Have we ever... what should we do? We're a university for goodness sake! We should get students graduated."

In this regard it was suggested that the institution should rather focus on a few core projects per planning phase and ensure their completion. This would facilitate the participation and support of all stakeholders in the projects thus ensuring that the interdependencies, that is, the inputs required from the various contributors to the project, could be accommodated within reasonable timeframes. Such a focus would also reduce the administrative burden of staff. This is particularly relevant in the light of the constraints and limitations highlighted by the survey respondents and listed for example, under 5.6.4.1(a) above.

Interestingly, there was a firm belief among interviewees that planning is not top down, (contrary to the comment received from one of the respondent surveys) and that staff are provided with the opportunity to contribute to institutional planning. Planning needs to start somewhere and that that 'somewhere" resided legitimately with the leadership of the institution. Prof D stated:

> *I'm a very firm believer in the fact that there comes a time when decisions have to be made and if you leave it to everybody to make their own decisions and move along, we're going to move along a different paces, not everybody is going to be engaged in the activity, not everybody's going to be planning. So there needs to be a kind of direction and I think that direction has to come from the top because it needs to talk to our strategy at some level.*

Linked to strategy and planning, differing views were also raised on the Integrated Performance Management System. While the notion of the IPMS is generally supported (cf. **Table 5.1**), some questioned its format. Prof K asserted that the IPMS "wants to test and measure everything in one document and people begin to think that

they've got to attain all of these goals, or achieve all of these goals and it can't be done." Prof H agreed saying, " I think we've tried to create a document that tries to be everything to everybody, and the generic IPMS does not work. It wants to test and measure everything in one document, and people begin to think that they've got to attain all of these goals and that can't be done." The ideal outcome would be to personalise the IPMS but equally it was acknowledged that in an institution the size of Unisa, it would be a "virtually impossible task".

While Unisa has a sophisticated strategy and planning and IPMS regime in place, there are genuine difficulties and concerns around implementation. This underscores the point that even where a higher education policy steering mechanism (planning) may achieve the desired results in terms of its integration into a higher education institution, it may nevertheless take far more time than anticipated to achieve the desired outcome of that steering mechanism (in this case, institutional efficiency and effectiveness). Probably the best explanation for this lag is that the systems (that is, policy, people and processes) need sufficient time to integrate and mature to the desired level, for successful implementation.

5.6.5.2 Capacity and quality

There was some disagreement around the issue of capacity and time as raised by the survey respondents (cf. Par. 5.6.4.1(b)). For example, Unisa Council member B felt quite strongly about the issue saying:

> Unisa's student: staff ratio is slipping and they're accepting far more students than they're increasing staff numbers, so a mismatch is occurring. And that mismatch is being reflected in the time pressure under which people feel they are, so instead of improving the staff: student ratio, Unisa's is actually deteriorating. And add together all these functions and the average staff member or academic staff member is just throwing their hands into the air.

This was supported by Prof H who mentioned the size of the institution, and the "realities and character of our student population." She also found the current planning framework and the higher education environment to be "incredibly diverse" and not fully cognizant of the array of the interdependencies that exist. Unisa Council member J on the other hand, had a sense that, "There's not a very clear understanding of people's workloads at Unisa."

Prof A felt that academic staff's primary purpose is teaching, learning and research and community outreach, and where more and more demands on their time take them away from those central objectives of the University, complaints about time should be taken seriously. The burden that falls on the administration and on the management of the institution is to ensure that demands on staff that take them away from their central purposes should be kept to a minimum and that where demands on time are made, they should be as simple as possible to comply with. That means having simple instruments and documents that require compliance, as well as informational needs that are simple and easy to respond to. "Time" he asserted, "is a scarce commodity." This point related back to the perceived sophistication of the IOP, and suggestions that it be more focussed and simple (cf. Par. 5.6.5.1).

However some interviewees felt that staff were not properly managing and balancing their time, responsibilities and the systems available to them, and that this problem was compounded by a resistance to change, as evidenced for example, in new methods of assessment (cf., Par. 5.6.3.2.(b)). Prof D explained that Unisa is having to confront a very "deep-seated approach to working in the academic environment, that is bracketed by time." Ultimately academic colleagues should recognise that the management of time is part of the expertise that they ought to have. So it becomes "very, very important for them to work smarter and more effectively," and to be able to be responsive to their environment, using all the available mechanisms including e-tutors, using technology better and more effectively.

There was also the view that supported staff complaints around capacity, asserting that the increase in human resource capacity (staffing) at Unisa had not kept pace with the increase in student numbers and that consequently, staff were continually having to 'pick up the slack' and their workloads were becoming more onerous. Prof A explained:

> *So capacity in that sense is not the ability to do, but it is more about having the personnel to do and therefore I think that legitimately staff can complain that that extra capacity to deal with all of these extra administrative demands was not made available at the same time. We kept loading the demands: more and more demands, more and more reporting requirements, more and more information needs and demands, more and more participation in workshops and in the planning workshops in particular, you know, the strategic planning*

workshops, more and more committees, more complex committee structures, more layers of management committees. All of these made more and more demands on the staff.

At Unisa capacity constraints are exacerbated by a continued lack of effective integration of ICT systems. Prof J explained that the capacity problem is exacerbated by the fact that Unisa's ICT platforms are not in place. "So whilst we don't want to be a contact university, because we don't always talk to our students through the ICT platforms, due to their constraints or our constraints, we go back to behaving like a contact university. So those constraints are very real. If we had our infrastructure in place we would need fewer staff members, both academic and administration. A lot of the work could be done on the ICT platforms if we had the ICT platforms done correctly." In support of this Prof C said that like it or not, Unisa's efficiency is not so much measured against academic standards (locally), but against "how efficiently a student can be taken through the system."

In this view it is important that all of the ICT platforms including business intelligence architecture, the enterprise architecture and ultimately the organisational architecture are in place and fully functional. Effective ICT systems and processes are fundamental to service excellence and quality ODL delivery, and as Unisa students mature into the use of ICTs the institution will be able to move into more efficient and effective ODL delivery.

Probably one of the most disconcerting admissions for the interviewees, was that of the survey respondents' acknowledgement that lecturers do not provide a quality service to students (mean score 2.36) (cf. **Table 5.3**). Despite that, they tended to agree with the assertion. One interviewee said:

> *Well I think I agree firstly that we do not provide a quality service to students. And there's a combination of issues here. We invest a vast amount in ICT and in learner support - several hundred millions – I don't think we are getting value for money. We're not using technology in the optimum way - to simplify processes, to simplify the work, and to turn around response times to students.*

This statement clearly indicates the interdependence of the identified themes in this research. It also highlights the critical need for an integrated approach to ODL

education delivery. Where one link in the chain is weak, the ramifications are experienced throughout the system. Where ICT integration, efficiency and capacity are below par, there is a knock on effect in the entire institution. Quality and service also become casualties.

Concerns around quality included the student : lecturer ratio and the impracticality of one lecturer trying to reach and assess thousands of students without efficient systems in place. However it was also asserted that even where systems are in place some staff did not use them optimally, and there are also staff who are simply not available to students. This latter point speaks the need for mindset change as discussed in 5.6.3.2. Prof L emphasised this point by saying:

> *You can't say: "well I've got 2000 students and I'm drowning" but then you have a print-based system and the only avenue of access to the lecturer is by telephone, or by e-mail - then of course you going to have hundreds of e-mails that the lecturer is not going to be able to respond to, and the call centre is going to get inundated. So you have to use e-learning platforms that make it possible for one lecturer or one tutor, by posting responses to frequently asked questions for example, through blogs, through all kinds of approaches to maximise the use of technology to reach vast numbers of students. And when you create that kind of environment students don't only depend on the lecturer or the tutor, they actually learn far more from each other. And that's a weakness I think.*

Further cause for concern is that large numbers of students tend to promote very simplistic assessment methods which call into question the quality of the learning process. Unisa Council member B explained that one of the critical ways of mediating learning is by getting students to do complex tasks which are properly assessed and feedback given. "This helps students to learn." Given the vast student numbers, Unisa is currently not able to assess to the degree that it would wish to and this impacts on both quality and throughput. Prof E, Prof D and Prof H suggested that as a matter of urgency Unisa would have to look at new and creative ways of assessment to accommodate challenges around large numbers, time, quality and service, and that this would require a mindset change.

The low mean score (2.31) for the statement: *Unisa's Programme and Qualifications Mix (PQM) promotes quality learning* (cf. **Table 5.3**) , suggests that the survey respondents agreed that this is another factor that not only impacts on institutional

efficiency, but also on the cost of ODL delivery. It is also likely that the very high number of modules at Unisa (particularly for an ODL environment) spreads academic resources very thinly and complicates the curriculum. Prof I acknowledged that complex curriculum creates "a lot of confusion and difficulties" for students when they register, while Prof H confirmed that "many students require assistance and advice on how to understand the curriculum, and online registrations are hampered because difficulties and mistakes have to be resolved manually." The high number of modules also creates difficulties and delays in the printing process and the large volumes required make it difficult to cope within the scheduled timelines. Furthermore large number of modules affects administrative activities around registrations, particularly given Unisa's very tight timelines. It is also suggested that the large number of modules sometimes results in an unfocused qualification for a student that may not be conducive to the world of work. Prof D summed it up by saying:

> *The problem with a complicated PQM, it makes registrations difficult, it makes assessment difficult, it makes complicated setting up of examinations and all of that stuff. The issue of the PQM therefore is only in a secondary manner about learning. It's really about flexibility, about ease of registration, simplicity of setting examinations, arranging assessments – that's the important thing, so the PQM that we have, surely must promote quality I think, but whether it does so in a convenient package is the concern that we have.*

Ms G concluded, "We don't reap the optimum benefits of economies of scale because of the numbers of modules that we offer. And that's a real problem."

The issues raised around strategy and planning, capacity and quality are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. They speak to different kinds of capacity constraints: personnel, systems and processes. Together they inform the very fabric of Unisa and its operations and as such they will need to be considered in a holistic manner in their resolution. This once again highlights the difficulties being experienced by higher education institutions as they get to grips with policy imperatives and their impact on higher education delivery.

5.6.6 The need for an ODL policy

5.6.6.1 The cost of ODL/Course cost

Traditional views hold that ODL provision is much cheaper than contact, or face-to-face provision (cf. Par. 5.5.4.1). However such views were generally formed in regard to paper-based distance education and are not applicable to the modern 5th or 6th generation technology- driven ODL institution. While some higher education practitioners still maintain that because of economies of scale ODL is less expensive, there is a strong view that ODL is in fact not as cheap as it is purported to be (CHE 2009:14). As Prof L explained:

> *The first thing to say is that the statement at its most simple, is correct, but it presupposes economies of scale. With economies of scale it will obviously be cheaper to produce and ODL course. The reason however, that colleagues are concerned about this is that the input costs at the beginning are much higher, because the input in terms of time, input in terms of creativity and pedagogy - even before you come anywhere near one student your input costs are very high and they are very, very considerable. Whereas in a contact institution as a lecturer you prepare your lecture, you appear before a class, you given them an assignment or an essay to do, you mark that - that's all it takes. Even that in a contact institution is no longer exactly true so the input costs are high – but where it matters for ODL is in the economies of scale. In other words, how many students actually buy into that course. Once it is done, that course can actually be spread over a large number – much larger than you would find in a contact institution. And then all the assessment processes follow from that.*

Fundamental to the cost of ODL is of course, the size of the PQM. As discussed under 5.6.5.2, fewer and more focused courses would not only reduce costs significantly but they would have a knock-on effect in the institution, simplifying and streamlining the institution's systems and processes, including for example, registration, print production and assessment .

An ODL institution does not only require efficient and effective ICTs to facilitate delivery and interaction with its students, it also requires appropriate and extensive learner support, which is best achieved via a functioning tutor support network. However such a network is extremely expensive. This poses a dilemma for institutions the size of Unisa. On the one hand, the sheer number and calibre of Unisa students (cf. Par. 3.4.2: 5.5.6.1) requires various kinds and large numbers of tutor support. On the other hand costs associated with such tutor support are enormous and very careful costing would need to be done to determine the financial feasibility of a comprehensive tutor system especially over the longer term.

Prof C felt that ODL was more expensive than contact institutions, not only in regard to the kinds of technologies and the number of hours that go into the design of its courses, but also in regard to the lecturer: student ratio. His view was stated as follows:

> *How many lecturers per student do you need? Early research, I don't know if it was in late 90's indicated a ratio of 1:35 or 1:40 (in contact it's 1:20). That is just not affordable for Unisa. We don't have that many lecturers to deal with the numbers. And then the question about assessment, and we focus on assessment, and I think it's a great idea, but online assessment, if you've got the numbers, you've will use multiple choice for a huge number, you will not change that assessment method as you work with the numbers. But the whole question of online delivery is not been tested. Deep learning doesn't happen online and I think not enough research has been done into that. You know, if we say that the funding thereof is an issue, the online part is going to be very expensive – we just can't afford it.*

There are clearly a number of factors that influence the cost of ODL, some of which are not immediately transparent. However what is clear is that traditional notions around the cost of distance education are not properly applicable to Unisa , particularly given its unique student profile and operating environment. The most sensible means to resolving and addressing these diverse factors would be through an ODL policy.

5.6.6.2 A dedicated ODL policy

In discussing ways in which all of the abovementioned challenges can be ameliorated, the one recurring thread through all of the interviews was the need for an ODL policy that will cater for the unique demands and nature of ODL delivery in South Africa. Interviewees all expressed a strong view that there needs to be deliberate discourse on higher education and differentiation, and that the issue of differentiation should form the basis of the debate (cf. Par 5.4.6.1). In the words of Prof A, "The absence of the policy I think, is at the heart of it." Prof I supported this saying," the fact that the Department of Higher Education and Training does not have a policy on distance education creates huge problems for us."

Unisa comprises one third of the higher education system and accordingly, there should be a greater consciousness on the part of the policy makers and on government, of the role of the institution in the higher education landscape and

equally, of the important role that Unisa plays in providing access to South African and African students. (cf. Par. 3.4.2; 5.4.6.1) Unisa's assertion of its unique character and needs was summed up as follows by Prof D:

> *I think where we start from, is in my very humble opinion, a complete lack of understanding of what the ODL teaching and learning environment is all about and that goes right back I think, to the fact that they haven't even taken or given the necessary priority to establishing a policy for ODL. So we don't have a policy, nobody has really sat down and thought about the ramifications and the implications of this ODL environment, what it needs, to produce and be a good ODL institution. So you can't ignore all of that and say:"OK, well you must improve your performance and your throughputs to the same level as other institutions" That's nonsensical. The whole idea of an open university is to give students more years, given their personal circumstances, given their legacy issues – poor schooling and so on - so they can learn here at their own pace. They may take longer but, the idea is that they will come out with an equivalent quality of qualification.*

There seems to be no doubt that in the view of the interviewees, the time for a dedicated ODL policy is long overdue and that the seeming procrastination of the DoHE&T in dealing with the issue is cause for concern. The irritation and concern of the interviewees in this regard was expressed quite succinctly and humorously by Prof K who said: "There must be a policy and I think Unisa should actually just draft the bloody thing. Maybe we should just draft it and send it to them."

5.7   CONCLUSION

In considering all of the foregoing views and discussions, it is suggested that overall, ODL is a far more complex and expensive mode of higher education delivery that generally believed, more so in South Africa, and Africa. This is especially true where policy steering mechanisms, that is planning, funding and quality, aimed at achieving efficiency, effectiveness and accountability, have given rise to a range of dynamics that were not intended and which are impacting negatively on that which they aimed to achieve.

The core concerns in regard to the steering mechanisms can be expressed thematically as transformation; funding, institutional efficiency and the need for an ODL policy.

Issues incorporated under these themes, such as the national transformation agenda; mindset change, funding; enrolment planning, capping and the unfunded student issue; academic and support staff salaries; institutional efficiency; strategy and planning; capacity and quality; the cost of ODL/course cost and the need for an ODL Policy all engendered animated discussion among the interviewees. Many suggestions and recommendations emerged from the discussions. Those that fall within the scope of this study have been considered in the recommendations that will be presented in Chapter 6. It is quite evident that Unisa's top management are deeply committed to the institution, its staff and the students whom they serve, and that they are desirous of arriving at the best possible solutions to the various concerns and challenges that emerged from the interview questions. Chapter 6 will provide some recommendations in regard to the core identified concerns.

CHAPTER 6

6. SYNTHESIS OF THE FINDINGS, FINAL CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

In this concluding chapter I focus on a summary of the literature study and the empirical investigation in the light of the problem statement, sub questions and aims, and I make recommendations which, based on the analyses, I believe will facilitate the enhanced delivery of ODL in South Africa. I propose areas for future research, note the limitations of the study, and outline final conclusions.

It should be noted that a number of recommendations emerged from the analyses in Chapter 5, but those of a more operational nature have not been included for consideration since they reside outside of the parameters of this research.

6.2 SUMMARY OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW AND RESEARCH DESIGN

In providing a rationale for this research, I located the study within the global (cf. Par. 1.1.1) and national (South African) higher education environment (cf. Par. 1.1.2) , and more specifically the environment of the 'new' Unisa (cf. Par. 1.1.3) as the only dedicated distance higher education institution in South Africa. I explained the need for the study in terms of its relevance , contribution and results, not only in regard to the higher education body of knowledge, but also in regard to the broader higher education policy debate (cf. Par. 1.2). I articulated the problem statement, namely: *What is the role of higher education policy in relation to the provision of distance education in South Africa?* (cf. Par. 1.3), as well as the questions and aims of the investigation relating to the statement (cf. Par. 1.4). I discussed the research design (cf. Par. 1.5) and motivated it by way of an explanation of the methodologies employed to achieve the aims of the study (cf. Par.1.5.2; 1.5.3).

In seeking to explore the background and complexities of recent policy development and trends in higher education globally and their relationship to, and impact on distance education (cf. Par. 2.1) I provided an analysis of policy developments and trends in regard to higher education policy worldwide, with specific reference to distance education. This was done by means of a comprehensive literature review which supported and developed the theoretical framework of the study. Higher education theoretical underpinnings (cf. Par. 2.2.1; 2.2.3) and policy formulation and its application in the higher education environment (cf. Par. 2.3.1; 2.3.2) were discussed, as was governance (cf. Par. 2.3.3) including governmental steering (cf. Par. 2.3.3.1), managerialism (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2) and notions of the developmental state (cf. Par. 2.3.3.3). Global trends such as globalisation and internationalisation (cf. Par. 2.4.1), massification (cf. Par. 2.4.2), the changing face of research (cf. Par. 2.4.3), the commodification of knowledge (cf. Par. 2.4.4) and the privatisation of higher education were examined in the light of their impact on higher educational delivery globally on the African Continent and in South Africa. I also investigated the role of distance education and open and distance learning (cf. Par. 2.5.1; 2.5.2), tracing its evolution and speculating on the role that this mode of education delivery could play globally, continentally and nationally in accommodating demands for increased access to higher education.

Unisa plays a significant role in the provision of higher education, not only in South Africa, but also on the continent. However, while there was a veritable explosion of policy development in South Africa, particularly from 1990 to 2004, subsequent policy development has not only slowed down but it has also become increasingly non-consultative. This is a matter for concern in a higher education environment that is also becoming increasingly politicised. Ongoing calls for increased access need to be accommodated within a policy framework that will ensure that higher education institutions cope with the changing dynamics and continue to provide quality education. As the only dedicated distance education provider in South Africa, Unisa is currently obliged to operate in a policy environment that is not entirely conducive to the particular needs of distance education. This has posed serious challenges for the institution, which could have potentially deleterious effects on its long-term sustainability, the quality of its education delivery, staff morale and productivity and student throughput rates.

With this in mind, in Chapter 3 of the study I focused on how higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa has impacted on distance education provision (cf. Par. 3.1). After discussing the evolution of ODL on the African continent (cf. Par. 3.2) and the role of e-learning as represented by the AVU (cf. Par. 3.2.1), I discussed the main challenges facing distance education in South Africa within the context of policy development and implementation since 1994 (cf. Par. 3.3.1), as well as various models of governance (cf. Par. 3.3.2). Issues such as the three core steering mechanisms (cf. Par. 3.3.2.1) and the notion of a developmental state in the South African context (cf. Par. 3.3.3.2), were also interrogated. I concluded this section of the study with a discussion of distance education (ODL) in South Africa arguing that distance education (ODL) in South Africa, as represented by Unisa (cf. Par. 3.4), is facing challenges that are peculiar and quite distinct within the context of the current policy framework and the broader national socio-economic transformation framework. These include the 'active student' issue (cf. Par. 3.5.1), access and success (cf. Par. 3.5.2) and funding (cf. Par. 3.5.3). I concluded that the impact of these aforementioned dynamics and challenges on ODL (as represented by Unisa) needed to be determined and that the best means of doing so would be through an empirical investigation (cf. Par.3.6).

6.3 SUMMARY OF THE EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION

To determine current perceptions, attitudes and experiences of higher education policy in relation to distance education provision in South Africa, the views and perceptions of staff in middle, executive and top management at the University of South Africa, as the only dedicated distance education institution in South Africa, were solicited and explored by means of an empirical investigation. I used a concurrent-triangulation mixed method research design (cf. Par. 4.2) comprising a survey (Phase 1) and interviews with selected expert informants from Unisa (Phase 2) to assess and analyse the impact of the current policy prescriptions on Unisa and its operations. Accordingly, Chapter 4 set out the research design of the empirical investigation, providing the rationale for the design (cf. Par. 4.2.1), the background to the research site (cf. Par. 4.2.2), the role of the researcher (cf. Par. 4.2.3) and the ethical requirements (cf. Par. 4.3.3). In Phase 1 of the design (the survey) (cf. Par. 4.3) I detailed the type of design, the sampling method and procedure (cf. Par. 4.3.1) and

data gathering (cf. Par. 4.3.2). Aspects such as the format, development and distribution of the questionnaire (cf. Par. 4.3.2.1; 4.3.2.2; 4.3.2.3,) the rate of return, data analysis and statistical tools and issues of validity, reliability (cf. Par. 4.3.2.4; 4.3.2.5; 4.3.2.6) were explained. Phase 2 of the research design comprised the interviews (cf. Par. 4.4). In this section I discussed the selection of the participants (cf. Par. 4.4.1), and the data gathering and analysis processes (cf. Par. 4.4.2; 4.4.3). I concluded the section with an explanation of the process to be undertaken in analysing the data and presenting the findings in Chapter 5 (cf. Par. 4.5; 4.6).

In presenting the findings of the empirical research, I set out the process and analyses of Phase 1 and Phase 2 of the mixed method research design respectively. Phase 1 provided the analysis strategy (cf. Par. 5.2.1), the rationale for the various analytical tests that were conducted, together with analyses of the results (cf. Par. 5.2.1.1; 5.2.1.2; 5.2.1.3; 5.2.1.4; 5.2.1.5; 5.2.1.6). In Phase 2, I discussed the key thematic areas and the respective sub themes that emerged from the analysis of the interview data (cf. Par. 5.5.1).

Four main themes were discussed, including: *Transformation* (cf. Par. 5.5.3) with its sub themes of t*he national transformation agenda* (cf. Par. 5.5.3.1) and *institutional transformation and mindset change* (cf. Par. 5.3.3.2); *Funding* (cf. Par. 5.5.4) with its sub themes f*unding, enrolment planning ,capping and the unfunded student issue* (cf. Par. 5.5.4.1) and *academic and support staff salaries* (cf. Par. 5.5.4.2); *Institutional efficiency and effectiveness* (cf. Par. 5.5.5) and its sub themes s*trategy and planning* (cf. Par. 5.5.5.1) and c*apacity and quality* (cf. Par. 5.5.5.2); and *The need for an ODL Policy* (cf. Par. 5.5.6) with its sub themes *the cost of ODL/course cost* (cf. Par. 5.5.6.1) and a *dedicated ODL Policy* (cf. Par. 5.5.6.2).

In the analyses, where appropriate, the results of the analyses in Phase 1 were incorporated to substantiate, emphasise or highlight specific arguments/propositions. The integrated and interdependent nature of the themes and their links to the literature survey were demonstrated by appropriate use of cross referencing. In conclusion, I provided a brief synopsis of the discussion, highlighting the main findings and setting out the way forward.

6.4   RECOMMENDATIONS

In the analyses of the interview data key thematic areas emerged, each of which demonstrate very clearly the interrelated and interdependent nature of higher education provision in and between the external environment (national) and the internal environment (institutional).   The data under each theme were thoroughly analysed.   In the course of the analyses several recommendations were identified which I believe could facilitate the enhanced delivery of ODL in South Africa. (Recommendations that were identified but which fall outside of the scope of this study have not been included.)

The following recommendations are offered for consideration. Each recommendation is supported by a brief rationale, cross-referenced to the outcomes of the interviews.

6.4.1   Transformation

Recommendation 1: A national transformation turnaround strategy

The strategy would be aligned to the challenges posed by the so-called corporatisation (managerialism) of higher education management and operations, such as the diminishing status of academics, the lack of appropriate skills and capacity, the professional management of time, the 'them-and-us' mindset, and lack of understanding around national policy imperatives and their implications for efficient and effective quality higher education (and ODL) delivery.   Such a strategy would be preceded by the formation of a task team to conduct a national investigation into the 'as-is' status of 'mindset transformation' (and not necessarily, or solely racism and discrimination) at South African public higher education institutions.   Following on the findings of the report, a turnaround strategy should be devised which provides public higher education institutions with practical, feasible, workable, implementable and measurable actions that they can roll out systematically.

This recommendation is made in view of the serious barriers to genuine and lasting transformation posed by a demoralised and disempowered workforce. (cf. Par. 3.4.2; 2.2.3.2; 5.6.3.1; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.4.2; 5.6.5.2; 5.6.6.1)

Recommendation 2: A study into the effect and impact of current higher education management practices on higher education delivery and the quality thereof (including ODL)

Such a study could be conducted at national level, perhaps through the Council for Higher Education, or as part of higher education institutions' individual research projects. The study would investigate the extent and degree to which managerial practices aligned to current policy and steering mechanisms are impacting (positively or negatively) on the core business of higher education institutions, that is, teaching and learning and research (and community engagement). Areas that could be investigated could for example include the status of planning in the institutions and the allied costs in terms of staffing, time and money, as well as the relative status of the academe in terms of additional responsibilities linked to planning initiatives that might detract them from their core functions.

This recommendation is made in view of the apparent decline in the status of academics and academia in South Africa (cf. Par. 2.3.3.2; 2.3.4; 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.4; 3.3.2; 3.5; 3.3.2.1; 5.6.3.1; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.4.2; 5.6.5.2)

Recommendation 3: An investigation into academic salaries in South Africa (and not academic management salaries)

The investigation would comprise an in-depth analysis of academic salaries in South Africa, benchmarked against salaries earned by similarly qualified and tasked academics internationally, in both developed and developing nations. A parallel study could be conducted into the qualifications and experience of administrative staff who earn commensurate salaries to determine what sort of skills, capacities and job requirements are being taken into consideration in pitching their salaries. Consideration could then be given to the creation of a higher education sector salary system that is benchmarked internationally and which could be used as a baseline for all higher education institutions in South Africa. If the system were to achieve credibility and legitimacy, it would prove a valuable resource in salary negotiations and budgeting forecasts amongst others.

This recommendation is made in view of the alleged disparities in academic and administrative salaries, the drift of academics into administration to achieve salary

progression, and the lack of comprehensive empirical research to substantiate or refute the concerns (cf. Par. 2.3.3; 2.3.3.1; 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.4.4; 3.3.2; 3.4.2; 5.6.4.2).

6.4.2 Funding

Recommendation 4: A re-evaluation of the current funding framework in line with realities of ODL delivery in the South African context

Although the funding framework is revised on a regular basis, it is recommended that it be re-evaluated in line with the realities and 'hidden' costs of ODL delivery in South Africa as discussed in this study. To this end it is suggested that a task team is convened comprising representatives from the core constituencies of the university (both academic and administration), as well as pertinent representatives from the DoHE&T. The Unisa team would be responsible for researching and providing empirical evidence of the actual total cost of ODL to the institution, and, if the assertions are proven correct, for drafting a feasible ODL funding model for DoHE&T consideration. This recommendation provides excellent research possibilities.

This recommendation is made in view of the majority view that ODL cannot be provided 'on the cheap' and through appropriate research, it aims to ensure equitable funding for ODL delivery in South Africa (cf. Par. 1.1.3; 2.3.3; 2.4.1; 2.5.2; 3.3.1; 3.3.2; 3.4.2.1; 3.5; 5.6.3.1; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.4.1; 5.6.4.2)

Recommendation 5: An investigation into Unisa's total ODL capacity in relation to the current and projected growth in student numbers over the short, medium and long-term

This investigation would determine projected growth in ODL student numbers over the short, medium and long-term, aligned to the available human resource, infrastructural and financial capacity of the institution, projected for the same period. This, in a sense, will comprise a long-term feasibility study for the institution, but in so doing it will simultaneously address the capacity and sustainability of ODL provision in South Africa (bearing in mind the limited ODL provision at contact institutions (cf. Par. 3.4)). The information will enable Unisa to make informed decisions about the numbers of students it can afford and accommodate, about the possible future need for generating

third-stream income, and about possibilities that exist in regard to working with government and sister institutions in assisting with the revitalisation of the FETs and the channelling of students, so as to accommodate new entrants into tertiary education at more appropriate levels of aptitude and competence.

This investigation is recommended in view of the state of flux in higher education provision in South Africa, the invidious position of Unisa as a 'catch-all' institution, the significant influx of students into higher education institutions, and state initiatives to revitalise the FET sector (cf. Par. 1.1.2; 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.5; 5.6.4.1; 5.6.5.2; 5.6.6).

6.4.3 Institutional efficiency

Recommendation 6: **The development of a national database of human resource capacity in higher education (academic and non academic)**

Given the rapidly diminishing cohort of appropriately qualified academics, many of whom will be retiring within the next $5 - 10$ years and the deleterious impact that this will have on higher education provision in South Africa, and given the meagre uptake of new academics into the profession and the dearth of information on the number and nature of qualifications of top administrative staff in higher education institutions, it makes good sense to create a national database of skilled and qualified human resource capacity in higher education. The database could be used to identify areas that are, or will be, in critical short supply of appropriate capacity, and for the targeted and aggressive recruitment of 'new blood' into the academe. As part of the database project universities could also identify promising post graduate students who would be well suited to the academe, with a view to channelling them straight into active university careers.

This project is recommended in view of the critical shortage of qualified academic staff, and a dearth of information on the available skills among top quality administrative staff (cf. Par. 2.4.1; 2.4.2; 2.3.3.2; 5.6.5.2; 5.6.4.2; 5.6.3.2).

Recommendation 7: A national debate on the feasibility of differentiation and additional capacity in higher education

There appears to be a groundswell of opinion that there needs to be some level of differentiation in the higher education system. However, Unisa comprises more than one-third of that system and as such there needs to be an understanding of the role that the institution (and ODL) plays in providing access to students and producing human capital for South Africa. Given its unique characteristics and student profile, Unisa should not be expected to perform at the same level as contact institutions. In addition, given the ongoing and growing demand for access to Unisa, it is recommended that the debate includes suggestions around some form of additional ODL capacity, possibly at a FET level or even at post grad level.

This recommendation is made in view of the excessive demands being made on Unisa to provide access to ever-growing numbers of ill-equipped and unprepared students. A debate on differentiation and additional ODL capacity could produce informed insights and perspectives aimed at facilitating a way forward in regard to the concerns and challenges (cf. Par. 5.6.4; 5.6.4.1; 5.6.5).

Recommendation 8: A comprehensive profile of ODL students in South Africa

This profile could be created at the institutional level, as part of Unisa's institutional research. The profile would not merely look at the student demographics, but it would also include issues such as levels of access to ICTs, computer and mobile technology proficiency, study preferences (e.g. online or paper-based) and career expectations amongst others. Although this profile would need to be updated with each new student uptake it will over the longer-term, begin to provide a comprehensive picture of the type and calibre of student that Unisa will need to cater for. The profile will also assist with decision making on a whole variety of operational issues, from courseware design to learner support, and it should become an indispensible analytical tool for Unisa and ODL in South Africa.

This recommendation is made in view of the current lack of knowledge and understanding around Unisa student needs and expectations. This lack has been expressed as problematic in terms of operational decision making and forecasting. An

ODL student database will contribute to a more accurate understanding of the challenges confronting ODL provision in South Africa (cf. Par. 3.4.1; 3.4.2; 3.5; 5.3.2; 5.6.3.2; 5.6.6.1; 5.6.5.2; 5.6.6.2)

6.4.4   The need for an ODL policy

Recommendation 9: A dedicated ODL policy
The most unanimous agreement to emanate from the interviews was the need for a dedicated ODL policy that will take into account the unique characteristics and challenges of ODL delivery in South Africa. While there has been acknowledgement of the need for such a policy and while the DoHE&T has been engaged in a long and protracted process of trying to get the ODL policy project underway (cf. Par. 3.5) pressure needs to be brought to bear on the DoHE&T to revive the ODL policy project. It is suggested that in this regard a formal ODL/DoHE&T task team is constituted to project manage an ODL policy to its completion. Failing that, the DoHE&T could task Unisa to produce a draft ODL policy for their consideration. This might be the more viable of the options in terms of time and a more comprehensive understanding of the uniqueness of ODL provision in South Africa.

This recommendation is made in view of the negative impact that the lack of an ODL policy is having on ODL delivery in South Africa and with the aim of ensuring that Unisa receives more equitable treatment as the largest higher education provider in the country. (cf. Par. 3.4.2; 5.6.6; 5.6.4.1; 5.6.6.1; 5.6.6.2; 5.6.5; 5.6.5.2; 5.6.4.1; 5.6.3.2).

Recommendation 10: The need for a dedicated national policy research unit
Given the main concerns that have emerged from this study (cf. Par. 5.7) this recommendation is based on the fact that there appears to be a need in South Africa to monitor the impact of policy on higher education provision and to be in a position to take appropriate measure to mitigate problems, affect remedial amendments or draft entirely new policies in line with emerging state and higher education needs. Such a unit would also monitor international higher education trends and assess their relevance and impact in regard to higher education in South Africa. It would therefore serve multiple purposes. The unit could be located in a higher education institution

such as Unisa (which already has a department dedicated to higher education research) or it could be located at the DoHE&T.

This recommendation is made in order to promote policy consonance with higher education provision and ultimately to position policy as a dynamic catalyst for higher education growth, efficiency and impact.

6.5   AREAS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

In the course of the empirical investigation and contextualised within the literature survey a number of further research possibilities emerged. These include:

- The institutional survey could be extended to the lower levels of staff at the institution to assess their views and perceptions on the impact of the policy steering mechanisms on ODL (at Unisa). Many staff at these levels are responsible for the day-to-day operationalisation of institutional planning and quality initiatives in particular, but they have limited input into institutional strategy and planning at the formulation stage. In addition, their understanding of higher education policy and the institution's aligned responsibilities is sometimes incomplete or even absent. Where planning initiatives are not communicated correctly or in good time, staff at these levels may feel alienated and resentful and ill-equipped to perform their duties. This in turn, may impact on the quality and volume of work that they deliver. Such a survey would unearth these views and perceptions and pave the way for remedial action.

- Empirical research on the student profile at Unisa to determine their ODL-readiness. Such research would be ongoing and would incorporate a variety of quantitative institutional data gathered from various sources, including for example, registrations, student surveys, satisfaction surveys and HEMIS data. The data would for example, reflect age, gender, marital status, employment status, income levels, location, access to ICTs, and ICT proficiency amongst others. This could be supported and supplemented by qualitative data that investigates the socio-economic status of Unisa students, probes their assumptions and expectations in regard to ODL delivery and determines their

particular needs. The aim of the research would be to arrive at a profile that reflects the realities of South African and African students and to use the information in providing a more appropriate and effective learning experience.

- Empirical research on a "best-fit" ODL model for South Africa and Africa that accommodates the unique challenges of ODL in an African paradigm. The traditional ODL phases and models set out in this study have emanated from developed westerns nations. Unisa uses these models to define its own ODL character and delivery model both in terms of its current status and more pertinently, the status towards which it is striving. However, South Africa's and Africa's challenges in regard to effective and efficient ODL delivery differ markedly from those of the more affluent, technology enriched Westerns nations to which the current models apply. The difference becomes starker when it comes to the quality and calibre of students who enrol for distance education. Taking these factors into consideration it seems logical that a "best-fit" ODL model for South Africa and Africa could differ significantly from those that are currently in use. Empirical research conducted on the student profile (as mentioned above) could also be used to determine the ODL delivery model that would best meet the particular needs of South African and African students. The research would enable Unisa to plan all aspects of its ODL delivery far more effectively, such as, for example, the consumption of its resources, its courseware, the levels and nature of learner support and the nature and extent of ICT use in tuition. The ultimate goal of an efficient and effective South African and African ODL model would be to increase throughput through an appropriate delivery model.

- A clear delineation of where the responsibilities of universities (and especially ODL), in terms of where their social mandates end, and those of government begin. There is an increasing tendency amongst students, and to a lesser extent, staff and government, to expect higher education institutions to provide facilities or commodities that go beyond their mandated responsibilities. Examples of such demands at Unisa for example, include free education, the provision of computers to all students, free internet/broadband access, free textbooks, sporting facilities, more study space, and in certain circumstances, free transport. While these expectations are understandable, particularly in light of the prevailing socio-

economic environment, universities do not have the funds to meet these needs, which in the main are related to the alleviation of the student's personal financial burdens and which fall outside of the parameters of higher education institutions' responsibilities. Much of the uncertainty around this issue can be ascribed to the fact that most higher education institutions have social mandates that incorporate a commitment to social upliftment in a variety of manifestations. Where these social mandates, responsibilities and commitments are not clearly delineated or understood, a blurring of responsibilities between higher education institutions and the state can occur. Research into this issue could incorporate a study of the various institutional social mandates/policies, the demands that are being made on institutions by students, and an analysis of community engagement initiatives and their related costs. The aim of such research would be to provide clarity on the role and responsibilities of both higher education institutions and the state around these issues, to suggest guidelines that can be understood and adhered to by all stakeholders and possibly to motivate the possible funding of community engagement initiatives.

6.6   LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The sampling site for Phase 1 of the research design was Unisa (as the only dedicated ODL institution in South Africa) (cf. Par. 4.2.2) and the survey population comprised a target group of Unisa staff (cf. Par. 4.3.1). As such the findings of the study are representative of the survey and interview sample and cannot be generalised to the rest of the institution or to all ODL institutions.

Both the questionnaires and the interviews are self-report instruments. Limitations in relation to self-report instruments include issues around the validity of causal conclusions (for a variety of reasons), the context of the self-report measures in regard to the design of the study, the statistical treatment of the data in the analysis stage, the reliability and validity of questionnaire scales (Razavi 2001: 23). There is also no guarantee that the respondents/participants will necessarily report their respective views accurately. In the questionnaires I ameliorated these concerns by incorporating appropriate reliability and validity measures (cf. Par. 4.3.2.5; 4.3.2.6). In terms of the

interviews, I enjoy a professional relationship of trust with the participants, established over a number of years, and by ensuring confidentiality and allaying apprehensions around identity disclosure and professional status (cf. Par. 4.2.3; 4.2.3.1; 4.2.4; 4.4) I felt that this would enhance accurate self-disclosure.

6.7   CONCLUSION

By its very nature, policy is a complex and thorny issue irrespective of the field of its application. When it comes to higher education, policy making and implementation have an impact on, and ramifications for, society-at-large. Unisa is not only the only dedicated comprehensive distance education provider in South Africa, but it is also the biggest education provider, nationally and continentally. More than one-third of all South African students are Unisa students and accordingly, policy that hampers throughput in distance education provision will similarly hamper throughput in higher education provision in South Africa. It is therefore imperative that policy concerns, be they real or perceived, should be addressed with the aim of finding sensible and workable solutions that will ultimately contribute to quality, efficient and effective higher education provision in South Africa.

This study posed the research question: *What is the role of higher education policy in relation to the provision of distance education in South Africa?*

As the only designated distance education provider in South Africa, Unisa was used to demonstrate the role of higher education policy on the provision of distance education. In seeking to answer the research problem, the literature study in Chapter 2 investigated recent policy developments and trends in higher education globally, and their effect on distance education. The literature study in Chapter 3 investigated how higher education policy development and implementation in South Africa has impacted on distance education provision in South Africa. Chapters 4 and 5 aimed to determine how the academic and administrative cohort of top and extended management at Unisa perceive and experience the implementation of higher education policy in relation to distance education provision. The empirical research design was explained in Chapter 4. In Phase 1 of Chapter 5, the views and perception of middle and extended management at Unisa on the three policy steering mechanisms of

planning, steering and quality were tested. It can be asserted that the reliability and validity of the research was established. Phase 2 of the research ascertained, by means of in-depth unstructured interviews, the views and perceptions of top management and two council members of Unisa on the impact of policy on ODL provision. The data analyses resulted in the identification of four themes which ultimately informed the recommendations in this chapter.

I would thus contend that all the research questions and sub questions have been satisfactorily addressed and that this study has produced recommendations that could contribute to the improved practice and delivery of ODL.

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ANNEXURE A

ETHICS CLEARANCE PERMISSION

FEEDBACK ON ETHICAL CLEARANCE REQUEST

A. APPLICATION DETAILS:

1. NAME OF PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER:

JEANETTE CLAIR BOTHA

2. NAME OF PROJECT:

THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY IN DISTANCE EDUCATION PROVISION IN SOUTH AFRICA

B. OBSERVATIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE ETHICS SUBCOMMITTEE OF THE COLLEGE OF HUMAN SCIENCES

1. Is the proposal of an acceptable standard?

Yes ⊠

No, it should be referred back to the researcher ☐

2. Are all reasonable guarantees and safeguards for the ethics of this study covered?

Yes ☐

Partially covered Yes ⊠

No, it should be referred back to the researcher ☐

COMMENTS

The following Ethical concerns were raised by the reviewers:

- The student should clearly indicate how **anonymity** and **confidentiality** of the participants will be maintained. The interviews with senior members of staff such as the VC, PVC, VPs and Council members carry some potential risk for these participants (as the applicant acknowledges), as their responses might be easily identifiable because of their positions.
- It is thus important to indicate how the student will deal with this **crucial** ethical issue. For an example, will participants have a chance to read the interpretations/results before they are made public?
- The student must also give more details regarding the consent forms that will be used (both for the electronically administered questionnaire and the interviews).

Methodological Comments

The following methodological concerns were raised:

- The student indicated that a mixed method research (MMR) design is going to be used. It is not clear from the proposal why the MMR design is preferred. The description of the design that is given is more of triangulating of instruments rather than MMR. The candidate should clearly show why MMR design is important to this research rather than use the terms loosely.
- Reference to testing a hypothesis that is not clearly stated. This aspect needs to be addressed by the student.
- The inclusion of the survey protocols would have been welcome, though it does not seem that it is a requirement.

Conclusion:

- Approval of the proposed study was granted by all reviewers. However, the researcher is requested to address the concerns described above.
- Ethical clearance certificate will be forwarded to the student once signed by the chairperson.

I trust that all is in order and please let me know if you need further clarification.

Thank you and regards,

Prof LI Zungu

ANNEXURE B

PERMISSION TO INTERVIEW TOP MANAGEMENT

UNISA
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

25 August 2010

Prof N B Pityana
Principal and Vice Chancellor: University of South Africa
Room 13-17 ORT Building
Muckleneuk Campus
Tel: 012 429 2561
Fax: 012 429 2562
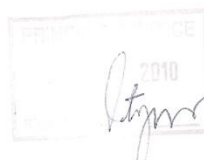
Dear Professor Pityana

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED TOP/EXTENDED MANAGEMENT AND COUNCIL MEMBERS AS PART OF MY RESEARCH FOR MY THESIS

I am currently engaged in the survey and interview component of my thesis entitled *Higher Education Policy Development and Implementation and Its Impact on Distance Education Provision.*

Unisa's Research Ethics Committee has approved my proposal and given the go ahead to administer the survey, which will be done electronically amongst a carefully selected Unisa population. The pilot survey is already underway. Once the survey results have been analysed questions will be formulated for the interviews which I would like to conduct with the following members of top/extended management and Council:

Prof N B Pityana: Principal and Vice Chancellor
Prof N Baijnath: Vice-Principal: Strategy, Planning and Partnerships
Prof RC Maré : Vice- Principal: Academic and Research
Prof BJ Erasmus: Vice-Principal: Human Resources
Prof DL Mosoma: Vice-Principal: Learner Support and Student Affairs
Prof L Molamu: Registrar
Ms Liana Griesel: Executive Director: Strategy, Planning and Quality Assurance
Prof D Singh: Deputy Registrar
Ms Jenny Glennie : CoL , SAIDE and Unisa Council member
Prof Rolf Stumpf: former VC of a comprehensive university and Unisa Council member

Each of the identified interviewees will be formally requested to participate in the interviews. They will be fully apprised of the aims of the research. The analyses of the survey will be made available to them should they so require, and they will be advised of their right not to participate, or to withdraw from the process at any stage. Confidentiality will be ensured by referring to designation only in the analyses, but

participants will be advised that logical deduction by colleagues could reveal their identities. However, by the time the research is completed, it is possible that some of the interviewees will have retired of changed portfolios, thus ensuring some anonymity amongst the broader educational community.

Your approval to approach the above mentioned colleagues and formally request their participation, is hereby sought.

Yours sincerely

Ms Jeanette Botha
Director: Office of the Principal
University of South Africa

ANNEXURE C

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

Botha, Jeanette

From:	Goetz, Madeleine
Sent:	Tuesday, October 12, 2010 2:36 PM
Cc:	Tustin, Deon; Botha, Jeanette
Subject:	FINAL REMINDER: MS JC BOTHA: SURVEY - THE IMPACT OF THE THREE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STEERING MECHANISMS

Dear Colleague

> This is a final reminder to please participate in this survey on higher education policy development and implementation by following the Web-link below.
> Thank you to those colleagues who have already participated, and request you to PLEASE IGNORE this reminder.

The Bureau of Market Research (BMR) at Unisa has been commissioned to administrate a survey for a doctoral study focusing on higher education policy development and implementation and its impact on distance education provision. Given the relevance of the study for Unisa, you are kindly requested to participate in this exciting survey. Please use the following Web-link to allow you access to the questionnaire to be completed by 30 September 2010.

http://surveys.unisa.ac.za/index.php?sid=88147&lang=en

Please note:

- The Web-questionnaire outlines the objectives of the study and guarantee confidentiality of inputs provided.
- Once opened, please complete the questionnaire immediately to avoid losing any responses due to possible system time-out.
- Once the questionnaire is retrieved, simply use your "mouse" to click on the appropriate response option(s) and use the prompt option "next" that appears at the bottom of each page to continue with the questions on the next page. You will not be allowed to proceed to a next page if you have not completed all mandatory questions. A clear message will appear on the screen if you have not completed all mandatory questions on a specific page. Once you click the "okay" button and complete the outstanding question(s) (the outstanding questions to be completed will appear on the screen in RED) you will be allowed to proceed. Continue with this procedure up to the "last" prompt instructing you to submit the questionnaire. You can use your scrollbar to move up and down on a specific page or you can use the "previous" prompt button at the bottom of each page to move backwards to previous questions/sections.

Kind regards

Prof DH Tustin
Executive Research Director
Bureau of Market Research
University of South Africa
B1-04 Theo van Wijk Building
Muckleneuk Campus
0003 Pretoria
Tel: 27 12 429-3156
Fax: 27 12 429-3170
Email:tustidh@unisa.ac.za

UNISA university of south africa

THE IMPACT OF THE THREE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STEERING MECHANISMS: PLANNING, FUNDING AND QUALITY ON ODL PROVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

Dear Respondent

This survey forms part of a doctoral thesis entitled *Higher Education Policy Development and Implementation and its impact on distance education provision.*

South Africa's Higher Education goal of higher education efficiency, effectiveness and accountability is intended to be achieved primarily through the steering mechanisms of planning, funding and quality. The aim of these study is to determine the impact of these policy steering mechanisms on Open and Distance Learning at the University of South Africa, the single, dedicated Open and Distance Education Institution in South Africa.

You are kindly requested to complete this survey questionnaire, comprising of five sections, as honestly and frankly as possible and according to your personal views and experience. You have the right not to complete the questionnaire should you so choose. To ensure confidentiality you are not required to indicate your name and are not compelled to respond to questions on age and gender, although their inclusion will allow for the aggregaion of data into more meaningful categories so as to conduct deeper level analyses. All information obtained from this questionnaire will be used for research purposes only. The findings of the research will be made available to respondents on request. Any enquiries may be addressed to Ms JC Botha at (012) 429-3571.

Thanking you in anticipation for your cooperation.

Ms JC Botha
Office of the Principal

A note on privacy
This survey is anonymous.
The record kept of your survey responses does not contain any identifying information about you unless a specific question in the survey has asked for this. If you have responded to a survey that used an identifying token to allow you to access the survey, you can rest assured that the identifying token is not kept with your responses. It is managed in a separate database, and will only be updated to indicate that you have (or haven't) completed this survey. There is no way of matching identification tokens with survey responses in this survey.

[Exit and clear survey]   Load unfinished survey | Next >> |

This survey is not currently active. You will not be able to save your responses.

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UNISA university of south africa

THE IMPACT OF THE THREE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STEERING MECHANISMS: PLANNING, FUNDING AND QUALITY ON ODL PROVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

0% [＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿＿] 100%

SECTION 1:

PLANNING

*For each of the statements related to 'PLANNING' please rate your level of agreement with each

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
The massification of higher education requires a business approach to education management and administration	○	○	○	○	○	○
Distance education/ODL is the best means of accommodating increasing demands for access to higher education in South Africa	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa should accommodate ever-growing student numbers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa has the infrastructure to accommodate student numbers in excess of 300 000	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa has sufficient lecturing staff to deal with increased numbers of students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa has efficient administrative staff to deal with increased numbers of students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa has adequate processes to deal with increased numbers of students	○	○	○	○	○	○
I understand the implementation of higher education policy at Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is necessary to have an institutional strategy, vision and mission	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is necessary to have an institutional planning framework	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is necessary to have an institutional Integrated Performance Management System (IPMS)	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is necessary to acquire and analyse on an ongoing basis, broad-based institutional data	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reviewing the institutional strategy, vision and mission on a regular basis promotes institutional efficiency	○	○	○	○	○	○
Reviewing the Institutional Operational Plan (IOP) on an annual basis promotes institutional efficiency	○	○	○	○	○	○
Monitoring, evaluation and regular reporting on IOP implementation promotes institutional efficiency	○	○	○	○	○	○
Regular performance assessments of all staff members promotes institutional efficiency	○	○	○	○	○	○

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
The ongoing acquisition of institutional information for planning and analysis purposes promotes institutional efficiency	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All staff should be responsible for operational planning and its implementation	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All staff should be responsible for the administration required for institutional planning and implementation	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All staff should regularly provide information for the purpose of institutional monitoring and evaluation	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All staff should share responsibility for their own performance management and assessment	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All staff should be responsible for providing institutional data on request	○	○	○	○	○	◉
I support Unisa's strategy and planning regime	○	○	○	○	○	◉
I am properly informed about my planning and implementation responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○	◉
I have enough time to fulfil my planning and implementation responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○	◉

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
I have enough time to fulfil my performance management and assessment responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○	◉
I have the requisite skills and competencies to fulfil my planning, implementation, and performance management responsibilities	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's planning regime is effective	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Sound planning promotes effective teaching, learning and research	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Sound planning empowers academics to perform more effectively	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Performance management and assessment improve job performance	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Traditional notions of academic excellence and freedom and institutional autonomy are being sacrificed in pursuit of efficiency and effectiveness	○	○	○	○	○	◉

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   << Previous   Next >>

This

300

THE IMPACT OF THE THREE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STEERING MECHANISMS: PLANNING, FUNDING AND QUALITY ON ODL PROVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

UNISA
university of south africa

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SECTION 2:

FUNDING

*For each of the statements related to 'FUNDING', please rate your level of agreement with each

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Distance education/ODL in South Africa receives sufficient funding	○	○	○	○	○	○
Economies of scale make distance education/ODL a much cheaper mode of tuition than contact tuition	○	○	○	○	○	○
The funding allocation for distance education/ODL is commensurate with its mandate and responsibility	○	○	○	○	○	○
It is cheaper to design a course for distance education/ODL than for a contact institution	○	○	○	○	○	○
Because it is systems driven, distance education/ODL is expensive to fund and maintain	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa receives sufficient funding	○	○	○	○	○	○
The DoHE&T should take back non-utilised block grants	○	○	○	○	○	○
Funding for research should be aligned to the needs of a developmental state	○	○	○	○	○	○
Funding should be provided for community engagement initiatives	○	○	○	○	○	○
The DoHE&T has stringent funding monitoring and reporting requirements in place	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa is able to balance the DoHE&T student "cap" with demands for access from students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa is a "catch-all" institution for university entrance seekers	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa should halt all registrations once a given target for the Institution has been reached, irrespective of enrolment ratios per College	○	○	○	○	○	○
Proving student activity remains problematic for Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	○
The DoHE&T should compensate Unisa for unfunded students	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa's social mandate is in line with the educational needs of South Africa	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa should increase its student enrolment in Africa	○	○	○	○	○	○

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Unisa should increase its student enrolment in the rest of the world	○	○	○	○	○	○
The current large student numbers are jeopardising Unisa's future sustainability	○	○	○	○	○	○
Academics salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession	○	○	○	○	○	○
There should be a dedicated ODL Policy that provides for the unique nature of ODL in South Africa	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa has many students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams have an impact on Unisa's throughput rates	○	○	○	○	○	○
Students who gain examination entrance but do not write exams have a negative impact on Unisa's funding	○	○	○	○	○	○

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   << Previous   Next >>

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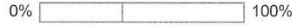
SECTION 3:

QUALITY

*For each of the statements related to 'QUALITY', please rate your level of agreement with each

This question is mandatory.
Please complete all parts.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
South Africa's higher education quality regime is efficient and effective	○	○	○	○	○	◉
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to excellence in teaching, learning and research	○	○	○	○	○	◉
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to administrative excellence	○	○	○	○	○	◉
An institutionalised quality regime is fundamental to service excellence	○	○	○	○	○	◉
The Integrated Performance Management System at Unisa promotes quality in all of its facets	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa should have completely open admission	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's admission requirements should be more stringent	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All prospective students at Unisa should undergo a university test for admission	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa should cap its student intake	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's current admissions policy is impacting negatively on quality higher education delivery	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's registration process is easy to understand	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa has student-friendly registration facilities	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa has student-friendly registration systems	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Registering students receive appropriate, quality career counselling and advice	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa study materials are delivered on time	○	○	○	○	○	◉
It is easy for Unisa students to access their study materials online	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's study materials are well written and easily understandable	○	○	○	○	○	◉

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	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Unisa's courseware design is innovative and creative	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's courses receive accreditation without difficulty	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's courses are used by other institutions locally and internationally	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's courses are internationally recognised	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa employs sound quality assessment practices	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's systems facilitate and support quality assessment	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa staff are committed to quality assessment practices	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa students receive appropriate and timely assessment feedback	○	○	○	○	○	◉

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Strongly agree	Not applicable
Current assessment practices promote improved throughput	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Tutor support is fundamental to quality ODL provision at Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	◉
It is easy to source appropriately qualified and skilled tutors	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Lecturers provide a quality service to students	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Lecturers cannot cope administratively, with the current large numbers of students	○	○	○	○	○	◉
All Unisa students receive the same levels of support	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's Programme and Qualification Mix (PQM) promotes quality learning	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on the production of quality course material	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on effective administration	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa's large number of modules impacts negatively on quality learner support	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa should reduce the number of modules it offers	○	○	○	○	○	◉
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of teaching	○	○	○	○	○	◉
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of learning	○	○	○	○	○	◉
The growing use of ICTs improves the quality of courseware	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Unisa lecturers support the use of ICTs in the execution of their duties	○	○	○	○	○	◉
There is too much emphasis on ICTs in Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	◉
Increasing numbers of Unisa students choose to use online services offered by Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	◉

Unisa students prefer communicating with their lecturers online	○	○	○	○	○	⊙
Unisa students prefer communicating with their lecturers telephonically	○	○	○	○	○	○
Unisa students prefer communicating with their lecturers face-to-face	○	○	○	○	○	⊙
ICTs have improved service delivery at Unisa	○	○	○	○	○	⊙

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   [<< Previous] [Next >>]

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SECTION 4:

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

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1. Please state your age category
Choose one of the following answers

○ 20 - 30 years

○ 30 - 40 years

○ 40 - 50 years

○ 50 - 60 years

○ 60 - 70 years

◉ No answer

---

2. Please state your gender
Choose one of the following answers

○ Male

○ Female

◉ No answer

---

3. **Please indicate your designation at Unisa (eg ED, Director, CoD, etc)**

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   [<< Previous] [Next >>]

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SECTION 5:

FURTHER COMMENTS

Please provide any additional comments (only those that you deem to be important and relevant to the aims of this survey), exceeding no more than 300 words.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   [<< Previous] [Submit]

This survey is not currently active. You will not be able to save your responses.

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of south africa

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SECTION 5:

FURTHER COMMENTS

Please provide any additional comments (only those that you deem to be important and
relevant to the aims of this survey), exceeding no more than 300 words.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN THIS SURVEY

[Exit and clear survey]   Resume later   [<< Previous] [Submit]

This survey is not currently active. You will not be able to save your responses.

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Thank you!
Your responses have been recorded.

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INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

THE IMPACT OF THE THREE HIGHER EDUCATION POLICY STEERING MECHANISMS: PLANNING, FUNDING AND QUALITY ON ODL PROVISION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA.

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview and for taking the time out of your busy schedule to accommodate the request. The questions set out below emanate from the results of Phase 1 of the mixed method research design of this thesis, namely the institutional survey, and are aimed at acquiring the views of top management on the responses of the survey respondents.

The survey tool used was a Likert Scale survey (LimeSurvey) and was administered over a period of four weeks. It was sent out to respondents three times during this period. The survey covering letter provided the title and rationale of the research and advised respondents of their rights in terms of the ethical considerations. The survey was followed up by emails and phone calls to all respondents, requesting their participation.

A total of 130 respondents were surveyed, comprising CoDs, Directors, Executive Directors, Executive Directors, Deputy Executive Deans and Executive Deans. Among this group, two gave their designation as associate professor and one respondent who was acting director provided his/her designation as deputy director. Thirteen responses were incomplete and could not be used (sampling error and loss). Ninety respondents completed the survey successfully, signifying a 69.23% response rate. The sum of the sample response (13 plus 90 = 103), indicates a response rate of 79.23% . Various literature (Gold and Dore 2001) indicates that an average response rate for this kind of survey is generally between 20 % to 45% and it can therefore be concluded that the response rate for this survey was well above average.

You are invited to relax and to respond freely to the questions. Please note that you have the right not to participate in the interview and the right to withdraw from the process at any time. Your identity will remain confidential. It is estimated that the interview will take approximately one hour. Please be advised in advance that there

may be the odd moment when the interviewer consults her notes. This is merely to ensure that all aspects of the question have been addressed, and does not signify a lack of attention.

The survey covered the steering mechanisms of planning funding and quality in higher education and based on the responses the following questions can be posed for the interviewees:

PLANNING

1. While respondents clearly appreciate the rationale and support the need for institutional strategy and planning, when it comes to dealing with increasing student numbers, insufficient capacity in regard to staff, infrastructure and processes emerged as a concern amongst the respondents. What are your views on these perceptions?

2. A second and related issue is that of time. Respondents tended toward the view that they do not have enough time to fulfil their planning and implementation, and IPMS management and assessment responsibilities. They appear to be ambivalent as to whether the administration of these should be the responsibility of all staff. Would you agree with these views and could you substantiate your position on this?

3. While there is firm agreement among respondents on the necessity for institutional strategising, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation, there is ambivalence as to whether Unisa's planning is in fact effective. In the invited comments, specific mention was made of a perceived "top-down" planning process. Do you think that this is an accurate view, and why?

FUNDING

1. It is generally believed that it is cheaper to design a course for ODL than for contact institutions. However this was the funding issue with which respondents disagreed most strongly. What are your views on this matter and what do you believe this means for ODL as a method of delivery?

2. While the respondents were concerned about accommodating growing student numbers and the institution's ability to balance the enrolment cap with demands for access, they nevertheless felt that registrations should not be halted at cap level and tended towards agreeing that the institution should increase enrolments continently and abroad. How could you account for this seeming disjuncture? Do you think that their views could be linked to their expressed concerns about capacity?

3. The respondents felt that Unisa /ODL does not receive sufficient funding especially in light of Unisa's mandate and responsibility. However, they tended towards disagreeing, or were ambivalent about ODL being expensive to fund and maintain. Do you share this sentiment, and why?

4. Respondents agreed most strongly that academic salaries at Unisa are out of touch with the current realities and demands of the profession. Do you agree?

SUMMARY /DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

- **Descriptive statistics on responses to each questionnaire item**

Variable	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Maximum	Minimum	Skewness	Kurtosis
q1a	q1a	4.02	1.16	5.00	1.00	-1.28	0.81
q1b	q1b	4.30	0.95	5.00	1.00	-1.51	1.81
q1c	q1c	3.11	1.25	5.00	1.00	0.07	-1.30
q1d	q1d	2.56	1.21	5.00	1.00	0.72	-0.50
q1e	q1e	2.38	1.11	5.00	1.00	0.37	-1.02
q1f	q1f	2.51	1.08	5.00	1.00	0.43	-0.66
q1g	q1g	2.64	1.05	5.00	1.00	0.23	-0.92
q1h	q1h	4.20	0.72	6.00	2.00	-0.14	0.36
q1i	q1i	4.63	0.73	5.00	2.00	-2.37	5.71
q1j	q1j	4.70	0.59	5.00	2.00	-2.51	8.05
q1k	q1k	4.36	0.94	5.00	1.00	-1.61	2.09
q1l	q1l	4.69	0.51	5.00	3.00	-1.34	0.81
q1m	q1m	4.22	0.96	5.00	1.00	-1.25	1.05
q1n	q1n	4.04	1.09	5.00	1.00	-1.10	0.52
q1o	q1o	4.22	0.90	5.00	1.00	-1.22	1.41
q1p	q1p	3.92	1.00	5.00	1.00	-1.02	0.92
q1q	q1q	4.26	0.65	5.00	3.00	-0.30	-0.67
q1r	q1r	4.01	0.95	5.00	1.00	-1.01	0.67
q1s	q1s	3.58	1.16	5.00	1.00	-0.57	-0.68
q1t	q1t	3.96	0.87	5.00	2.00	-0.95	0.57
q1u	q1u	4.28	0.78	5.00	1.00	-1.41	3.28
q1v	q1v	3.66	1.17	5.00	1.00	-0.66	-0.58
q1w	q1w	4.17	0.79	5.00	1.00	-1.03	1.99
q1x	q1x	4.24	0.72	5.00	2.00	-0.76	0.57
q1y	q1y	3.09	1.16	5.00	1.00	-0.27	-1.15
q1z	q1z	3.33	1.19	5.00	1.00	-0.50	-0.92

Variable	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Maximum	Minimum	Skewness	Kurtosis
q1z1	q1z1	4.27	0.71	5.00	2.00	-1.04	1.85
q1z2	q1z2	3.50	0.88	5.00	1.00	-0.46	-0.17
q1z3	q1z3	4.35	0.68	5.00	2.00	-1.01	1.66
q1z4	q1z4	4.24	0.83	6.00	1.00	-0.85	1.89
q1z5	q1z5	3.80	0.94	5.00	1.00	-1.09	1.36
q1z6	q1z6	3.13	1.26	6.00	1.00	-0.02	-0.86
q2a	q2a	2.46	1.04	5.00	1.00	0.27	-0.62
q2b	q2b	3.74	1.02	5.00	1.00	-0.88	0.35
q2c	q2c	2.64	0.99	5.00	1.00	0.12	-0.54
q2d	q2d	2.33	0.98	5.00	1.00	0.52	-0.11
q2e	q2e	3.19	1.02	5.00	1.00	-0.52	-0.49
q2f	q2f	2.60	0.96	5.00	1.00	0.18	0.00
q2g	q2g	2.81	1.09	5.00	1.00	0.01	-0.58
q2h	q2h	3.82	1.00	5.00	1.00	-1.21	1.35
q2i	q2i	3.96	0.90	5.00	1.00	-1.15	1.29
q2j	q2j	3.43	0.75	5.00	1.00	-0.24	0.52
q2k	q2k	2.69	0.98	5.00	1.00	0.00	-0.80
q2l	q2l	3.76	0.99	5.00	1.00	-0.78	-0.10
q2m	q2m	2.90	1.22	5.00	1.00	0.20	-1.05
q2n	q2n	3.33	0.99	5.00	1.00	-0.51	-0.60
q2o	q2o	3.86	0.92	5.00	1.00	-0.77	0.36
q2p	q2p	3.90	0.84	5.00	2.00	-0.52	-0.12
q2q	q2q	3.50	1.02	5.00	1.00	-0.49	-0.56
q2r	q2r	3.18	1.03	5.00	1.00	-0.05	-0.84
q2s	q2s	2.98	1.07	5.00	1.00	0.16	-0.84
q2t	q2t	3.40	1.12	5.00	2.00	0.09	-1.34
q2u	q2u	4.28	0.94	5.00	1.00	-1.76	3.59
q2v	q2v	3.79	0.78	5.00	2.00	-0.35	-0.07
q2w	q2w	4.29	0.60	5.00	2.00	-0.85	2.85
q2x	q2x	4.17	0.72	5.00	1.00	-1.36	4.25

Variable	Label	Mean	Std Dev	Maximum	Minimum	Skewness	Kurtosis
q3a	q3a	2.94	0.94	5.00	1.00	-0.05	-0.82
q3b	q3b	4.24	0.77	5.00	1.00	-1.51	3.96
q3c	q3c	4.23	0.74	5.00	1.00	-1.61	5.01
q3d	q3d	4.31	0.70	5.00	1.00	-1.53	5.34
q3e	q3e	3.13	1.13	5.00	1.00	-0.08	-0.91
q3f	q3f	2.24	1.03	5.00	1.00	0.87	0.05
q3g	q3g	3.62	1.07	5.00	1.00	-0.61	-0.54
q3h	q3h	3.38	1.20	5.00	1.00	-0.45	-0.92
q3i	q3i	3.43	1.21	5.00	1.00	-0.39	-0.99
q3j	q3j	3.41	1.08	5.00	1.00	-0.39	-0.57
q3k	q3k	3.23	0.97	5.00	1.00	-0.26	-0.88
q3l	q3l	3.31	0.98	5.00	1.00	-0.37	-0.78
q3m	q3m	3.16	1.03	5.00	1.00	-0.13	-0.96
q3n	q3n	2.88	0.87	5.00	1.00	0.03	0.31
q3o	q3o	2.26	1.07	5.00	1.00	0.77	-0.06
q3p	q3p	3.29	0.96	5.00	1.00	-0.30	-0.65
q3q	q3q	3.40	0.85	5.00	1.00	-0.66	0.21
q3r	q3r	3.21	0.91	5.00	1.00	-0.34	-0.25
q3s	q3s	3.21	0.67	5.00	1.00	-0.03	1.17
q3t	q3t	3.63	0.61	5.00	2.00	0.08	-0.36
q3u	q3u	3.67	0.76	5.00	1.00	-0.43	0.84
q3v	q3v	3.41	0.81	5.00	1.00	-0.76	0.56
q3w	q3w	3.27	0.84	5.00	1.00	-0.67	-0.30
q3x	q3x	3.37	0.91	5.00	1.00	-0.63	0.09
q3y	q3y	2.81	1.01	5.00	1.00	0.06	-0.94
q3z	q3z	3.10	0.91	5.00	1.00	-0.11	-0.72
q3z1	q3z1	4.07	1.03	5.00	1.00	-1.22	0.92
q3z2	q3z2	2.31	1.02	5.00	1.00	0.72	-0.13
q3z3	q3z3	3.20	1.04	5.00	1.00	-0.29	-0.55
q3z4	q3z4	3.72	1.10	5.00	1.00	-0.89	0.28
q3z5	q3z5	2.27	0.88	5.00	1.00	0.69	0.39
q3z6	q3z6	3.24	0.94	5.00	1.00	-0.49	0.14
q3z7	q3z7	3.27	1.15	5.00	1.00	-0.36	-0.76
q3z8	q3z8	3.46	1.14	5.00	1.00	-0.70	-0.35
q3z9	q3z9	3.39	1.15	5.00	1.00	-0.59	-0.54
q3z10	q3z10	3.38	1.19	5.00	1.00	-0.32	-0.82
q3z11	q3z11	4.02	0.82	5.00	2.00	-0.54	-0.19
q3z12	q3z12	4.02	0.83	5.00	2.00	-0.52	-0.32
q3z13	q3z13	3.96	0.80	5.00	2.00	-0.47	-0.09
q3z14	q3z14	3.24	0.94	5.00	1.00	-0.10	-0.48
q3z15	q3z15	2.39	0.93	5.00	1.00	0.67	0.22
q3z16	q3z16	3.67	0.91	5.00	1.00	-0.65	0.45
q3z17	q3z17	3.28	0.87	5.00	1.00	-0.05	0.19
q3z18	q3z18	3.26	0.80	5.00	1.00	-0.23	-0.14
q3z19	q3z19	3.32	0.86	5.00	1.00	-0.34	0.12

ANNEXURE F

FREQUENCY TABLES

q1a				
q1a	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	5	5.56	5	5.56
2	8	8.89	13	14.44
3	5	5.56	18	20.00
4	34	37.78	52	57.78
5	38	42.22	90	100.00

q1b				
q1b	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	7	7.78	8	8.89
3	4	4.44	12	13.33
4	30	33.33	42	46.67
5	48	53.33	90	100.00

q1c				
q1c	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	33	36.67	39	43.33
3	10	11.11	49	54.44
4	27	30.00	76	84.44
5	14	15.56	90	100.00

q1d				
q1d	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	14	15.56	14	15.56
2	43	47.78	57	63.33
3	11	12.22	68	75.56
4	13	14.44	81	90.00
5	9	10.00	90	100.00

q1e				
q1e	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	22	24.44	22	24.44
2	33	36.67	55	61.11
3	15	16.67	70	77.78
4	19	21.11	89	98.89
5	1	1.11	90	100.00

q1f				
q1f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	15	16.67	15	16.67
2	37	41.11	52	57.78
3	18	20.00	70	77.78
4	17	18.89	87	96.67
5	3	3.33	90	100.00

q1g				
q1g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	11	12.22	11	12.22
2	36	40.00	47	52.22
3	19	21.11	66	73.33
4	22	24.44	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q1h				
q1h	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	1	1.11	1	1.11
3	11	12.22	12	13.33
4	49	54.44	61	67.78
5	27	30.00	88	97.78
6	2	2.22	90	100.00

q1i				
q1i	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	4.44	4	4.44
3	1	1.11	5	5.56
4	19	21.11	24	26.67
5	66	73.33	90	100.00

q1j				
q1j	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	2	2.22	2	2.22
4	21	23.33	23	25.56
5	67	74.44	90	100.00

q1k				
q1k	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.12	1	1.12
2	6	6.74	7	7.87
3	5	5.62	12	13.48
4	25	28.09	37	41.57
5	52	58.43	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

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q1l				
q1l	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	2	2.22	2	2.22
4	24	26.67	26	28.89
5	64	71.11	90	100.00

q1m				
q1m	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	6	6.67	7	7.78
3	9	10.00	16	17.78
4	30	33.33	46	51.11
5	44	48.89	90	100.00

q1n				
q1n	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	7	7.78	10	11.11
3	12	13.33	22	24.44
4	29	32.22	51	56.67
5	39	43.33	90	100.00

q1o				
q1o	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	4	4.44	5	5.56
3	10	11.11	15	16.67
4	34	37.78	49	54.44
5	41	45.56	90	100.00

q1p				
q1p	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	3	3.37	3	3.37
2	5	5.62	8	8.99
3	15	16.85	23	25.84
4	39	43.82	62	69.66
5	27	30.34	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1q				
q1q	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
3	10	11.11	10	11.11
4	47	52.22	57	63.33
5	33	36.67	90	100.00

q1r				
q1r	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.12	1	1.12
2	8	8.99	9	10.11
3	9	10.11	18	20.22
4	42	47.19	60	67.42
5	29	32.58	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1s				
q1s	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	4.44	4	4.44
2	17	18.89	21	23.33
3	12	13.33	33	36.67
4	37	41.11	70	77.78
5	20	22.22	90	100.00

q1t				
q1t	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	10	11.11	10	11.11
3	6	6.67	16	17.78
4	52	57.78	68	75.56
5	22	24.44	90	100.00

q1u				
q1u	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	2	2.22	3	3.33
3	6	6.67	9	10.00
4	43	47.78	52	57.78
5	38	42.22	90	100.00

q1v				
q1v	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	4.44	4	4.44
2	16	17.78	20	22.22
3	10	11.11	30	33.33
4	37	41.11	67	74.44
5	23	25.56	90	100.00

q1w				
q1w	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.12	1	1.12
2	1	1.12	2	2.25
3	12	13.48	14	15.73
4	43	48.31	57	64.04
5	32	35.96	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1x				
q1x	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	2	2.25	2	2.25
3	9	10.11	11	12.36
4	44	49.44	55	61.80
5	34	38.20	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1y				
q1y	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	8	8.99	8	8.99
2	26	29.21	34	38.20
3	11	12.36	45	50.56
4	38	42.70	83	93.26
5	6	6.74	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1z				
q1z	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.87	7	7.87
2	21	23.60	28	31.46
3	8	8.99	36	40.45
4	42	47.19	78	87.64
5	11	12.36	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1z1				
q1z1	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	3	3.41	3	3.41
3	4	4.55	7	7.95
4	47	53.41	54	61.36
5	34	38.64	88	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

q1z2				
			Cumulative	**Cumulative**
q1z2	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	12	13.33	13	14.44
3	26	28.89	39	43.33
4	43	47.78	82	91.11
5	8	8.89	90	100.00

q1z3				
			Cumulative	**Cumulative**
q1z3	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
2	2	2.25	2	2.25
3	4	4.49	6	6.74
4	44	49.44	50	56.18
5	39	43.82	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q1z4				
			Cumulative	**Cumulative**
q1z4	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	1	1.11	2	2.22
3	11	12.22	13	14.44
4	41	45.56	54	60.00
5	34	37.78	88	97.78
6	2	2.22	90	100.00

q1z5				
			Cumulative	**Cumulative**
q1z5	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	6	6.67	9	10.00
3	14	15.56	23	25.56
4	50	55.56	73	81.11
5	17	18.89	90	100.00

q1z6				
			Cumulative	**Cumulative**
q1z6	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
1	10	11.11	10	11.11
2	20	22.22	30	33.33
3	23	25.56	53	58.89
4	23	25.56	76	84.44
5	13	14.44	89	98.89
6	1	1.11	90	100.00

q2a				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2a	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	18	20.00	18	20.00
2	30	33.33	48	53.33
3	27	30.00	75	83.33
4	13	14.44	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q2b				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2b	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	10	11.11	13	14.44
3	13	14.44	26	28.89
4	45	50.00	71	78.89
5	19	21.11	90	100.00

q2c				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2c	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	11	12.22	11	12.22
2	30	33.33	41	45.56
3	31	34.44	72	80.00
4	16	17.78	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q2d				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2d	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	18	20.00	18	20.00
2	37	41.11	55	61.11
3	24	26.67	79	87.78
4	9	10.00	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q2e				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2e	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	17	18.89	23	25.56
3	25	27.78	48	53.33
4	38	42.22	86	95.56
5	4	4.44	90	100.00

q2f				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2f	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	12	13.33	12	13.33
2	27	30.00	39	43.33
3	39	43.33	78	86.67
4	9	10.00	87	96.67
5	3	3.33	90	100.00

q2g				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2g	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	12	13.48	12	13.48
2	21	23.60	33	37.08
3	33	37.08	66	74.16
4	18	20.22	84	94.38
5	5	5.62	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q2h				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2h	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	4	4.44	4	4.44
2	7	7.78	11	12.22
3	9	10.00	20	22.22
4	51	56.67	71	78.89
5	19	21.11	90	100.00

q2i				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2i	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	9	10.00	10	11.11
3	5	5.56	15	16.67
4	53	58.89	68	75.56
5	22	24.44	90	100.00

q2j				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2j	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	1	1.12	1	1.12
2	6	6.74	7	7.87
3	41	46.07	48	53.93
4	36	40.45	84	94.38
5	5	5.62	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q2k				
			Cumulative	Cumulative
q2k	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	10	11.11	10	11.11
2	30	33.33	40	44.44
3	29	32.22	69	76.67
4	20	22.22	89	98.89
5	1	1.11	90	100.00

q2l				
q2l	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	14	15.56	15	16.67
3	9	10.00	24	26.67
4	48	53.33	72	80.00
5	18	20.00	90	100.00

q2m				
q2m	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	10	11.11	10	11.11
2	31	34.44	41	45.56
3	17	18.89	58	64.44
4	22	24.44	80	88.89
5	10	11.11	90	100.00

q2n				
q2n	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	19	21.11	22	24.44
3	19	21.11	41	45.56
4	43	47.78	84	93.33
5	6	6.67	90	100.00

q2o				
q2o	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	8	8.89	9	10.00
3	15	16.67	24	26.67
4	45	50.00	69	76.67
5	21	23.33	90	100.00

q2p				
q2p	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
2	6	6.67	6	6.67
3	18	20.00	24	26.67
4	45	50.00	69	76.67
5	21	23.33	90	100.00

q2q				
q2q	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	17	18.89	19	21.11
3	17	18.89	36	40.00
4	42	46.67	78	86.67
5	12	13.33	90	100.00

q2r				
q2r	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	24	26.67	27	30.00
3	25	27.78	52	57.78
4	30	33.33	82	91.11
5	8	8.89	90	100.00

q2s				
q2s	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	5	5.56	5	5.56
2	30	33.33	35	38.89
3	24	26.67	59	65.56
4	24	26.67	83	92.22
5	7	7.78	90	100.00

q2t				
q2t	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
2	25	28.09	25	28.09
3	22	24.72	47	52.81
4	23	25.84	70	78.65
5	19	21.35	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q2u				
q2u	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	2	2.22	5	5.56
3	6	6.67	11	12.22
4	35	38.89	46	51.11
5	44	48.89	90	100.00

q2v				
q2v	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
2	5	5.62	5	5.62
3	23	25.84	28	31.46
4	47	52.81	75	84.27
5	14	15.73	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q2w				
q2w	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
2	2	2.22	2	2.22
3	1	1.11	3	3.33
4	56	62.22	59	65.56
5	31	34.44	90	100.00

q2x				
q2x	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	2	2.22	3	3.33
3	5	5.56	8	8.89
4	55	61.11	63	70.00
5	27	30.00	90	100.00

q3a				
q3a	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	4	4.44	4	4.44
2	28	31.11	32	35.56
3	29	32.22	61	67.78
4	27	30.00	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q3b				
q3b	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	3	3.33	4	4.44
3	3	3.33	7	7.78
4	49	54.44	56	62.22
5	34	37.78	90	100.00

q3c				
q3c	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	3	3.33	4	4.44
3	1	1.11	5	5.56
4	54	60.00	59	65.56
5	31	34.44	90	100.00

q3d				
q3d	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	1	1.11	2	2.22
3	3	3.33	5	5.56
4	49	54.44	54	60.00
5	36	40.00	90	100.00

q3e				
q3e	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	24	26.67	30	33.33
3	22	24.44	52	57.78
4	28	31.11	80	88.89
5	10	11.11	90	100.00

q3f				
q3f	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	19	21.11	19	21.11
2	48	53.33	67	74.44
3	7	7.78	74	82.22
4	14	15.56	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q3g				
q3g	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	17	18.89	19	21.11
3	11	12.22	30	33.33
4	43	47.78	73	81.11
5	17	18.89	90	100.00

q3h				
q3h	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	21	23.33	27	30.00
3	10	11.11	37	41.11
4	39	43.33	76	84.44
5	14	15.56	90	100.00

q3i				
q3i	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	5	5.56	5	5.56
2	21	23.33	26	28.89
3	12	13.33	38	42.22
4	34	37.78	72	80.00
5	18	20.00	90	100.00

q3j				
q3j	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	4	4.44	4	4.44
2	16	17.78	20	22.22
3	22	24.44	42	46.67
4	35	38.89	77	85.56
5	13	14.44	90	100.00

q3k				
q3k	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	23	25.56	25	27.78
3	22	24.44	47	52.22
4	38	42.22	85	94.44
5	5	5.56	90	100.00

q3l				
q3l	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	21	23.33	23	25.56
3	20	22.22	43	47.78
4	41	45.56	84	93.33
5	6	6.67	90	100.00

q3m				
q3m	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	26	28.89	29	32.22
3	21	23.33	50	55.56
4	34	37.78	84	93.33
5	6	6.67	90	100.00

q3n				
q3n	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	5	5.68	5	5.68
2	21	23.86	26	29.55
3	45	51.14	71	80.68
4	14	15.91	85	96.59
5	3	3.41	88	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

q3o				
q3o	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	22	24.72	22	24.72
2	39	43.82	61	68.54
3	14	15.73	75	84.27
4	11	12.36	86	96.63
5	3	3.37	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3p				
q3p	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	19	21.35	21	23.60
3	25	28.09	46	51.69
4	37	41.57	83	93.26
5	6	6.74	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3q				
q3q	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	11	12.36	13	14.61
3	29	32.58	42	47.19
4	43	48.31	85	95.51
5	4	4.49	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3r				
q3r	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	3	3.33	3	3.33
2	16	17.78	19	21.11
3	34	37.78	53	58.89
4	33	36.67	86	95.56
5	4	4.44	90	100.00

q3s				
q3s	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.12	1	1.12
2	7	7.87	8	8.99
3	55	61.80	63	70.79
4	24	26.97	87	97.75
5	2	2.25	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3t				
q3t	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	1	1.11	1	1.11
3	36	40.00	37	41.11
4	48	53.33	85	94.44
5	5	5.56	90	100.00

q3u				
q3u	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.11	1	1.11
2	3	3.33	4	4.44
3	31	34.44	35	38.89
4	45	50.00	80	88.89
5	10	11.11	90	100.00

q3v				
q3v	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	9	10.00	11	12.22
3	32	35.56	43	47.78
4	44	48.89	87	96.67
5	3	3.33	90	100.00

q3w				
q3w	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	15	16.85	17	19.10
3	30	33.71	47	52.81
4	41	46.07	88	98.88
5	1	1.12	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3x				
q3x	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	3	3.37	3	3.37
2	12	13.48	15	16.85
3	28	31.46	43	48.31
4	41	46.07	84	94.38
5	5	5.62	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3y				
q3y	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.87	7	7.87
2	32	35.96	39	43.82
3	23	25.84	62	69.66
4	25	28.09	87	97.75
5	2	2.25	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z				
q3z	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	23	25.84	25	28.09
3	31	34.83	56	62.92
4	30	33.71	86	96.63
5	3	3.37	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z1				
q3z1	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	9	10.11	11	12.36
3	5	5.62	16	17.98
4	38	42.70	54	60.67
5	35	39.33	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z2				
q3z2	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	17	19.10	17	19.10
2	44	49.44	61	68.54
3	13	14.61	74	83.15
4	13	14.61	87	97.75
5	2	2.25	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z3				
q3z3	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Cumulative Frequency**	**Cumulative Percent**
1	5	5.62	5	5.62
2	18	20.22	23	25.84
3	27	30.34	50	56.18
4	32	35.96	82	92.13
5	7	7.87	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

331

q3z4				
q3z4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	5	5.62	5	5.62
2	8	8.99	13	14.61
3	15	16.85	28	31.46
4	40	44.94	68	76.40
5	21	23.60	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z5				
q3z5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	14	15.73	14	15.73
2	47	52.81	61	68.54
3	19	21.35	80	89.89
4	8	8.99	88	98.88
5	1	1.12	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z6				
q3z6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	5	5.62	5	5.62
2	11	12.36	16	17.98
3	36	40.45	52	58.43
4	32	35.96	84	94.38
5	5	5.62	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z7				
q3z7	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.78	7	7.78
2	18	20.00	25	27.78
3	20	22.22	45	50.00
4	34	37.78	79	87.78
5	11	12.22	90	100.00

q3z8				
q3z8	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.78	7	7.78
2	13	14.44	20	22.22
3	15	16.67	35	38.89
4	42	46.67	77	85.56
5	13	14.44	90	100.00

q3z9				
q3z9	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	7	7.78	7	7.78
2	15	16.67	22	24.44
3	16	17.78	38	42.22
4	40	44.44	78	86.67
5	12	13.33	90	100.00

q3z10				
q3z10	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	6	6.67	6	6.67
2	17	18.89	23	25.56
3	21	23.33	44	48.89
4	29	32.22	73	81.11
5	17	18.89	90	100.00

q3z11				
q3z11	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	4.44	4	4.44
3	17	18.89	21	23.33
4	42	46.67	63	70.00
5	27	30.00	90	100.00

q3z12				
q3z12	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	4.44	4	4.44
3	18	20.00	22	24.44
4	40	44.44	62	68.89
5	28	31.11	90	100.00

q3z13				
q3z13	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
2	4	4.49	4	4.49
3	18	20.22	22	24.72
4	45	50.56	67	75.28
5	22	24.72	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z14				
q3z14	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	18	20.00	20	22.22
3	33	36.67	53	58.89
4	30	33.33	83	92.22
5	7	7.78	90	100.00

q3z15				
q3z15	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	12	13.33	12	13.33
2	45	50.00	57	63.33
3	21	23.33	78	86.67
4	10	11.11	88	97.78
5	2	2.22	90	100.00

q3z16				
q3z16	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.22	2	2.22
2	7	7.78	9	10.00
3	24	26.67	33	36.67
4	43	47.78	76	84.44
5	14	15.56	90	100.00

q3z17				
q3z17	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.25	2	2.25
2	11	12.36	13	14.61
3	43	48.31	56	62.92
4	26	29.21	82	92.13
5	7	7.87	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q3z18				
q3z18	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	1	1.14	1	1.14
2	13	14.77	14	15.91
3	39	44.32	53	60.23
4	32	36.36	85	96.59
5	3	3.41	88	100.00

Frequency Missing = 2

q3z19				
q3z19	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
1	2	2.30	2	2.30
2	11	12.64	13	14.94
3	36	41.38	49	56.32
4	33	37.93	82	94.25
5	5	5.75	87	100.00

Frequency Missing = 3

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FREQUENCY TABLES FOR BIOGRAPHICAL DATA

q4				
q4	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
20-50	44	49.44	44	49.44
51-60	33	37.08	77	86.52
61-70	12	13.48	89	100.00

Frequency Missing = 1

q5				
q5	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
male	50	59.52	50	59.52
female	34	40.48	84	100.00

Frequency Missing = 6

q6				
q6	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Associate Professor	1	1.20	1	1.20
Assosciate Professor	1	1.20	2	2.41
COD	5	6.02	7	8.43
CoD	11	13.25	18	21.69
DED	1	1.20	19	22.89
DIRECTOR	3	3.61	22	26.51
Depity Director	1	1.20	23	27.71
Deputy Director	3	3.61	26	31.33
Deputy ED	1	1.20	27	32.53
Deputy Executive Dean	1	1.20	28	33.73
Director	35	42.17	63	75.90
ED	6	7.23	69	83.13
ED: Dean of Students	1	1.20	70	84.34
Executive Dean	1	1.20	71	85.54
Executive Director	1	1.20	72	86.75
Regional Director: KZN	1	1.20	73	87.95
cod	1	1.20	74	89.16
deputy executive dean	1	1.20	75	90.36
director	6	7.23	81	97.59
ed	2	2.41	83	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

q6_design				
q6_design	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Associate professor	2	2.41	2	2.41
Chair of dept.	17	20.48	19	22.89
Exec/deputy Dean/Director	16	19.28	35	42.17
Director/deputy director	48	57.83	83	100.00

Frequency Missing = 7

6 Variables:	q1e	q1f	q1d	q1g	q1c	q1y

Simple Statistics							
Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Sum**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Label**
q1e	89	2.39326	1.10390	213.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1e
q1f	89	2.52809	1.07756	225.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1f
q1d	89	2.57303	1.20499	229.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1d
q1g	89	2.66292	1.04385	237.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1g
q1c	89	3.10112	1.25268	276.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1c
q1y	89	3.08989	1.16424	275.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1y

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.793495
Standardized	0.797405

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		**Standardized Variables**		
Deleted Variable	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Label**
q1e	0.560478	0.758689	0.564924	0.763089	q1e
q1f	0.578743	0.754865	0.588630	0.757493	q1f
q1d	0.675400	0.728815	0.672039	0.737328	q1d
q1g	0.696240	0.729255	0.697210	0.731095	q1g
q1c	0.497073	0.775321	0.492333	0.779856	q1c
q1y	0.311570	0.815468	0.315839	0.818377	q1y

4 Variables:	q1z	q1z2	q1s	q1v

Simple Statistics							
Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Sum**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Label**
q1z	89	3.32584	1.19445	296.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1z
q1z2	89	3.48315	0.86750	310.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1z2
q1s	89	3.59551	1.15522	320.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1s
q1v	89	3.67416	1.16556	327.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1v

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.659533
Standardized	0.663308

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		**Standardized Variables**		
Deleted Variable	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Label**
q1z	0.409834	0.616102	0.416201	0.614726	q1z
q1z2	0.407460	0.619250	0.407057	0.620768	q1z2
q1s	0.599204	0.471899	0.588834	0.493293	q1s
q1v	0.373029	0.640179	0.373512	0.642611	q1v

q1z5   q1p   q1a   q1r   q1n

Simple Statistics							
Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Label
q1z5	88	3.81818	0.89115	336.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1z5
q1p	88	3.92045	1.00826	345.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1p
q1a	88	4.03409	1.14920	355.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1a
q1r	88	4.00000	0.94686	352.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1r
q1n	88	4.04545	1.09239	356.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1n

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	Alpha
Raw	0.775673
Standardized	0.780649

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		Standardized Variables		
Deleted Variable	Correlation with Total	Alpha	Correlation with Total	Alpha	Label
q1z5	0.662029	0.702442	0.659498	0.704117	q1z5
q1p	0.696075	0.683079	0.691448	0.692766	q1p
q1a	0.506921	0.752423	0.516054	0.752853	q1a
q1r	0.398504	0.780283	0.394159	0.791494	q1r
q1n	0.518175	0.745943	0.530000	0.748272	q1n

q1w   q1m   q1o   q1z4

Simple Statistics							
Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Label
q1w	89	4.16854	0.78676	371.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1w
q1m	89	4.21348	0.95907	375.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1m
q1o	89	4.21348	0.89788	375.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1o
q1z4	89	4.23596	0.82603	377.00000	1.00000	6.00000	q1z4

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	Alpha
Raw	0.787259
Standardized	0.784216

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		Standardized Variables		
Deleted Variable	Correlation with Total	Alpha	Correlation with Total	Alpha	Label
q1w	0.542760	0.760507	0.537653	0.757975	q1w
q1m	0.663849	0.698323	0.658905	0.695760	q1m
q1o	0.758090	0.645244	0.752530	0.644578	q1o
q1z4	0.436181	0.808196	0.432835	0.808194	q1z4

q1x   q1u   q1b   q1z1   q1t   q1h   q1s

Simple Statistics							
Variable	N	Mean	Std Dev	Sum	Minimum	Maximum	Label
q1x	88	4.22727	0.72282	372.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1x
q1u	88	4.30682	0.74830	379.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1u
q1b	88	4.32955	0.89342	381.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1b
q1z1	88	4.27273	0.70674	376.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1z1

Simple Statistics						
Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Sum**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Label**
q1t	88	3.97727	0.85739	350.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1t
q1h	88	4.17045	0.69846	367.00000	2.00000	6.00000	q1h
q1s	88	3.62500	1.12763	319.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1s

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.661422
Standardized	0.667451

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		**Standardized Variables**		
Deleted Variable	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Label**
q1x	0.405273	0.618296	0.423535	0.618357	q1x
q1u	0.338681	0.634874	0.319022	0.648435	q1u
q1b	0.371042	0.626015	0.362119	0.636216	q1b
q1z1	0.464289	0.603986	0.480843	0.601211	q1z1
q1t	0.323504	0.639906	0.302100	0.653162	q1t
q1h	0.276131	0.650200	0.306399	0.651965	q1h
q1s	0.452222	0.602825	0.442056	0.612867	q1s

5 Variables: q1z3   q1k   q1i   q1l   q1j

Simple Statistics						
Variable	**N**	**Mean**	**Std Dev**	**Sum**	**Minimum**	**Maximum**	**Label**
q1z3	88	4.34091	0.67613	382.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1z3
q1k	88	4.35227	0.94735	383.00000	1.00000	5.00000	q1k
q1i	88	4.62500	0.73207	407.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1i
q1l	88	4.68182	0.51518	412.00000	3.00000	5.00000	q1l
q1j	88	4.69318	0.59419	413.00000	2.00000	5.00000	q1j

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha	
Variables	**Alpha**
Raw	0.780140
Standardized	0.784699

Cronbach Coefficient Alpha with Deleted Variable					
	Raw Variables		**Standardized Variables**		
Deleted Variable	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Correlation with Total**	**Alpha**	**Label**
q1z3	0.331355	0.806844	0.307257	0.822773	q1z3
q1k	0.654279	0.713863	0.648137	0.714990	q1k
q1i	0.742490	0.671051	0.756558	0.676548	q1i
q1l	0.394529	0.785410	0.399228	0.795572	q1l
q1j	0.753075	0.685429	0.741767	0.681916	q1j

ANNEXURE G

CONSTRUCT MEAN SCORES ACCORDING TO AGE, GENDER AND DISPOSITION CATEGORIES

Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Numbers		90	2.71	0.81	1.00	4.67
InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	90	3.51	0.77	1.25	5.00
InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	90	3.96	0.76	1.00	5.00
StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	90	4.22	0.68	1.75	5.00
PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	90	4.11	0.49	2.83	5.00
ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	90	4.55	0.52	3.00	5.00
FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	90	2.76	0.65	1.00	4.33
Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	90	3.14	0.59	1.60	4.40
Admissin	Quality: value of quality	90	3.52	0.83	1.40	5.00
valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	90	3.86	0.62	1.40	5.00
OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	90	3.02	0.65	1.40	4.60
PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	90	3.24	0.48	1.40	4.30
Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	90	3.24	0.66	1.00	5.00
Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	90	3.09	0.75	1.00	4.67
ICT_s		90	3.61	0.52	2.00	4.86

q5	N Obs	Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
male	50	Numbers		50	2.79	0.73	1.00	4.33
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	50	3.59	0.81	1.25	5.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	50	4.03	0.73	1.00	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	50	4.20	0.74	1.75	5.00
		PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	50	4.11	0.53	2.83	5.00
		ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	50	4.56	0.51	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	50	2.79	0.51	1.83	4.33
		Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	50	3.14	0.59	1.60	4.40
		Admissin	Quality: value of quality	50	3.61	0.83	1.80	5.00
		valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	50	3.90	0.53	2.60	4.80
		OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	50	3.08	0.64	1.60	4.60
		PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	50	3.34	0.40	1.90	4.30
		Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	50	3.38	0.61	2.00	5.00
		Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	50	3.19	0.73	1.67	4.67
		ICT_s		50	3.53	0.55	2.00	4.86
female	34	Numbers		34	2.57	0.86	1.17	4.67
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	34	3.37	0.71	1.75	4.50
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	34	3.88	0.68	2.50	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	34	4.21	0.56	3.00	5.00
		PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	34	4.06	0.43	3.14	4.86
		ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	34	4.52	0.52	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	34	2.76	0.78	1.00	4.33
		Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	34	3.09	0.60	2.00	4.20
		Admissin	Quality: value of quality	34	3.37	0.81	1.40	5.00
		valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	34	3.74	0.72	1.40	5.00
		OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	34	2.90	0.64	1.40	4.25
		PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	34	3.06	0.58	1.40	4.30
		Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	34	3.07	0.68	1.00	4.25
		Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	34	2.94	0.75	1.00	4.67
		ICT_s		34	3.66	0.44	3.00	4.86

q4	N Obs	Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
20-50	44	Numbers		44	2.64	0.68	1.17	4.17
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	44	3.67	0.64	2.25	5.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	44	4.03	0.63	2.50	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	44	4.31	0.54	3.00	5.00
		PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	44	4.19	0.44	3.14	4.86
		ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	44	4.61	0.47	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	44	2.73	0.69	1.00	4.33
		Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	44	3.14	0.46	2.00	4.00
		Admissin	Quality: value of quality	44	3.52	0.75	1.60	5.00
		valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	44	3.86	0.71	1.40	5.00
		OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	44	3.04	0.69	1.60	4.60
		PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	44	3.25	0.50	1.40	4.00
		Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	44	3.20	0.77	1.00	5.00
		Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	44	3.11	0.87	1.00	4.67
		ICT_s		44	3.60	0.54	2.00	4.86
51-60	33	Numbers		33	2.81	0.93	1.00	4.67
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	33	3.30	0.87	1.25	5.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	33	3.93	0.89	1.00	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	33	4.13	0.82	1.75	5.00
		PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	33	4.03	0.51	2.83	4.86
		ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	33	4.52	0.55	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	33	2.73	0.60	1.67	4.33
		Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	33	3.12	0.75	1.60	4.40
		Admissin	Quality: value of quality	33	3.47	1.00	1.40	5.00
		valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	33	3.86	0.58	2.60	5.00
		OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	33	3.02	0.66	1.40	4.40
		PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	33	3.20	0.53	1.90	4.30
		Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	33	3.26	0.58	2.00	4.50
		Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	33	3.04	0.62	2.00	4.00
		ICT_s		33	3.65	0.56	2.29	4.86
61-70	12	Numbers		12	2.85	0.79	1.50	4.00
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	12	3.58	0.85	2.00	4.75
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	12	3.98	0.59	3.20	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic implementation	12	4.21	0.70	3.25	5.00
		PInstPlan	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implementation	12	4.11	0.63	3.14	5.00
		ValuePln	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	12	4.50	0.49	3.60	5.00
		FundCost	Funding: Unisa student access issue	12	3.00	0.60	1.67	4.33
		Access	Quality: Issue of student admission	12	3.28	0.57	2.40	4.20
		Admissin	Quality: value of quality	12	3.62	0.65	2.40	5.00
		valuQual	Quality, OnLine services	12	3.88	0.40	3.40	4.60
		OnLine	Quality: PQM assures quality	12	3.05	0.47	2.20	3.80
		PQM	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	12	3.30	0.32	2.70	3.89
		Support	Quality, assessment & numbers	12	3.33	0.46	2.25	4.00
		Staff	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	12	3.11	0.69	2.00	4.00
		ICT_s		12	3.52	0.34	3.00	4.00

q6_design	N Obs	Variable	Label	N	Mean	Std Dev	Minimum	Maximum
Associate professor	2	Numbers		2	2.17	0.47	1.83	2.50
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	2	3.50	1.77	2.25	4.75
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	2	3.60	0.57	3.20	4.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic	2	3.88	0.88	3.25	4.50
		PInstPlan	implementation	2	3.93	1.11	3.14	4.71
		ValuePln	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan, implem	2	4.30	0.99	3.60	5.00
		FundCost	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	2	2.75	0.12	2.67	2.83
		Access	Funding: Unisa student access issue	2	3.50	0.71	3.00	4.00
		Admissin	Quality: Issue of student admission	2	4.40	0.57	4.00	4.80
		valuQual	Quality: value of quality	2	4.00	0.85	3.40	4.60
		OnLine	Quality, OnLine services	2	3.10	0.42	2.80	3.40
		PQM	Quality: PQM assures quality	2	3.35	0.92	2.70	4.00
		Support	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	2	4.13	1.24	3.25	5.00
		Staff	Quality, assessment & numbers	2	3.83	1.18	3.00	4.67
		ICT_s	Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	2	3.64	0.30	3.43	3.86
Chair of dept.	17	Numbers		17	2.16	0.84	1.00	4.17
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	17	2.91	0.72	1.25	4.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	17	3.33	1.02	1.00	4.80
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic	17	3.74	0.93	1.75	5.00
		PInstPlan	implementation	17	3.75	0.41	2.83	4.57
		ValuePln	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy	17	4.20	0.66	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	Plan,implement	17	2.73	0.54	1.67	3.83
		Access	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	17	2.99	0.58	1.60	3.80
		Admissin	Funding: Unisa student access issue	17	3.78	0.84	1.80	5.00
		valuQual	Quality: Issue of student admission	17	3.44	0.61	1.80	4.20
		OnLine	Quality: value of quality	17	2.80	0.65	1.60	4.40
		PQM	Quality, OnLine services	17	3.22	0.47	1.90	4.00
		Support	Quality: PQM assures quality	17	3.54	0.55	2.75	4.50
		Staff	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	17	3.55	0.54	2.67	4.67
		ICT_s	Quality, assessment & numbers Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	17	3.61	0.66	2.00	4.57
Exec/deputy Dean/Director	16	Numbers		16	2.86	0.91	1.17	4.33
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	16	3.64	0.75	2.25	5.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	16	4.41	0.52	3.20	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic	16	4.56	0.43	3.75	5.00
		PInstPlan	implementation	16	4.36	0.34	3.71	4.86
		ValuePln	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan,	16	4.76	0.30	4.00	5.00
		FundCost	implementation	16	2.78	0.78	1.67	4.33
		Access	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	16	3.10	0.67	2.00	4.40
		Admissin	Funding: Unisa student access issue	16	3.13	0.79	1.80	4.60
		valuQual	Quality: Issue of student admission	16	4.19	0.43	3.40	5.00
		OnLine	Quality: value of quality	16	3.18	0.75	1.40	4.25
		PQM	Quality, OnLine services	16	3.19	0.55	2.10	4.30
		Support	Quality: PQM assures quality	16	3.17	0.82	1.25	4.25
		Staff	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	16	3.08	0.88	1.67	4.67
		ICT_s	Quality, assessment & numbers Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	16	3.82	0.49	3.14	4.86
Director/deputy director	48	Numbers		48	2.82	0.70	1.33	4.67
		InstStru	Plan:Institutional structure & planning	48	3.67	0.68	1.75	5.00
		InstEffi	Plan:Institutional efficiency	48	4.01	0.55	2.50	5.00
		StafPlMo	Plan:Staff contribution, institutional strategic	48	4.22	0.57	3.00	5.00
		PInstPlan	implementation	48	4.14	0.48	3.00	5.00
		ValuePln	Plan:Personal view Unisa Instr. Strategy Plan,	48	4.57	0.46	3.00	5.00
		FundCost	implemtation	48	2.78	0.64	1.00	4.33
		Access	Plan:value of Inst. Startegy	48	3.15	0.58	1.60	4.20
		Admissin	Funding: Unisa student access issue	48	3.52	0.81	1.40	5.00
		valuQual	Quality: Issue of student admission	48	3.83	0.59	1.40	4.80
		OnLine	Quality: value of quality	48	3.00	0.62	1.60	4.60
		PQM	Quality, OnLine services	48	3.24	0.49	1.40	4.30
		Support	Quality: PQM assures quality	48	3.15	0.55	1.00	4.00
		Staff	Quallity:Quality support provided to students	48	2.91	0.69	1.00	4.00
		ICT_s	Quality, assessment & numbers Quallity: ICT conribution,quality educ.	48	3.51	0.45	2.71	4.86