

EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATION AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO IN SOUTH AFRICA: A REVIEW OF THE
PROGRESS DURING THE PERIOD 2000 – 2007

BY

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DECLARATION

I declare that this mini-dissertation on “Evaluation of the impact of transformation at the University of Limpopo: a review of the progress” for the Masters’ Degree of Public Administration has not been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained therein has been duly acknowledged.

Signed :.....

Date :.....

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study was to check on the impact of transformation in a higher education institution with particular reference to the University of Limpopo (Turffloop Campus), hence the work entitled “Evaluation of the impact of transformation at the University of Limpopo (Turffloop Campus): A review of the progress during the period 2000 – 2007”.

The 1990s marked the period during which all government departments went through a rough time in that they were required to transform or sink. The higher education realm was not immune to this tedious process with challenging factors, which were, among others, economic forces, the emergence of technology, competition in terms of educational products, new funding programmes with public accountability, mergers and globalisation trends.

In order for the universities to keep pace with the aforementioned challenges, a need for not merely administering, but managing the process of change as it presented itself to the universities, the need for visionary and transformational leadership became apparent. To ensure that the process of transformation in the higher education realm took place, the government enacted a number of items of legislation, and among others, the White Paper on Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education (Government Gazette, no. 4, 18207, 15 August 1997) was passed.

It was abundantly clear from the literature reviewed that the Transformation of Higher Education in South Africa was long overdue. This was marked by the 1975 uprisings and other related activities such as the demand for academic autonomy by institutions of higher learning.

It was evident from the results of the study that transformation at the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) was anathema to many. It is advisable for the University to take note of the results of this study, and that there is need for a turn-around strategy that would include Total Quality Management to be drawn up, implemented and monitored forthwith.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND GENERAL ORIENTATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The University of Limpopo, like any other public institution was established by an Act of Parliament, the Higher Education Act, (Act No. 101 of 1997 as amended). Its establishment was based on the premise of promoting teaching, research and community outreach. It is for this reason that government takes the responsibility of funding such institutions on the basis of student enrollment, pass rates and research output very seriously. Furthermore, the University of Limpopo came into being as a result of the merger between the former University of the North and the Medical University of South Africa (Medunsa).

Mehendiratta (1984:2) asserts that a university as an organisation consists of teachers, researchers, students and administrators, whose functions may broadly be described as related to academics and management. While the academic functions include teaching, learning and research, the management functions include planning, organising, staffing, directing, leading, coordinating and controlling.

Professor Ndebele made a statement in 1998 that was in line with the management functions referred to earlier. According to him there was a culture of “overstay” by the students in their academic endeavours and this to him, as the Chief Executive Officer,

had become a concern and is quoted as follows: “It was considered that the current situation where we allow students to stay for six years or seven years should be done away with.” He goes on to indicate that such students not only prevent other students from coming to the university, but they become a drain on the resources of the university because they do not even draw a subsidy for the university. Professor Ndebele indicated emphatically that in a situation where faculties become full-cost centres, as they should, faculties would have to live with the financial consequences of keeping non-performing students in the system forever (Ndebele, 1998:5).

Having said that, we cannot change the past. This cliché reminds us of “water under the bridge”. Yet, we know that we are active determiners of our future by what we do today (Mokgalong, 2006).

The then Minister of Education, Professor S.M. Bengu. indicated emphatically at the release of the Education White Paper that, “The transformation of the higher education system to reflect the changes that are taking place in our society and to strengthen the values and practices of our new democracy , as I have stated on many previous occasions, is not negotiable. The higher education system must be transformed to redress past inequalities, to serve the new order, to meet pressing national needs and to respond to new realities and opportunities” (Government Gazette, 1997).

In this study the impact of transformation experienced during the period 2000 – 2007 at the University of Limpopo with particular reference to Turfloop campus will be explored.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Although universities are said to be autonomous, they remain national assets or public institutions which are controlled or governed by the following legislative and policy framework which poses the most serious challenge for the higher education system in South Africa: Higher Education, 1997 (Act No.101 of 1997) as amended by Act no.23 of 2001, the National Plan for Higher Education (5 March 2001), the Transformation and Reconstruction of the Higher Education System (May 2002), a New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education in South Africa (30 May 2002), and also the constitutional mandate to address the whole issue of transformation in the institutions of higher learning. However, the big question that poses itself as a problem is, “Do such organs of state, including institutions of higher learning, comply with the aforementioned legislation?” If so, to what extent do they comply, and which mechanisms, resources and strategies do they have in place to ensure compliance? What prospects of transforming leadership and institutional and legislative compliance does the University of Limpopo have?

Van Niekerk(2004:7) states that the New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education in South Africa deals primarily with the reduction of institutions through mergers and incorporation in the South African context. Mergers and incorporation, as part of the solution to the problems in higher education, are not embarked upon for purely administrative purposes, as has been the case in some countries.

Kunstler acknowledges (Gagosian, 2003) that the university will henceforth be in the business of transforming the university. The actual act of reform will drive the organisational shifts in higher education. That is, they will not restructure themselves for the sake of efficiency or cost cutting. Instead they will engage in a deeply philosophical attempt to understand the underlying needs and themes of our world and the changes to scholarly exploration required to meet those needs without sacrificing intellectual integrity. At a time when knowledge is proliferating faster than anyone can keep up with, when “information anxiety” is afflicting practitioners in every field, and traditional disciplines are becoming unrecognisable due to computer-driven revolutions in methodology, discipline-based orthodoxies are rapidly becoming obsolete.

Professor Ndebele, in his annual address (1998:4), indicates that compared to other universities in the country, the ratio of academic to administrative and service staff has been extremely abnormal. The sum of administrative staff has dwarfed the number of the academic staff to unacceptable levels. He went further to indicate that the necessity for a small, highly productive administrative and service staff has hit us sooner than we anticipated. It was recognised that where a justification for staff reduction has been clearly established the normal labour-relations process would have to be followed to effect reductions.

Professor Fitzgerald, the then administrator of the university alluded to the fact that “Areas identified for outsourcing such as security, horticulture and cleaning will be serviced by interim service providers who will remain in place while proper tender

processes are undertaken. These tenders will result in the appointment of longer-term providers in the identified areas together with appropriate service-level agreements and contract management and monitoring arrangements”(Fitzgerald, 2002:7).

The period 1994-2001 marked the retrenchment and outsourcing of support-service personnel (those services which did not contribute directly to the core business of the university, which is knowledge production) in South African institutions of higher learning. The research conducted on the support-service outsourcing in the public sector, as captured in the work “Globalisation and the outsourced university in South Africa” (Van der Walt, *et al.*,2002:3) lists the following as challenges facing higher education, especially the University of Limpopo:

- Curriculum restructuring
- Marketisation
- Proposed mergers and,
- Political conflict.

Apart from the areas of change mentioned earlier, the University of Limpopo, like most universities in the country, is confronted with and exposed to large-scale transformation, risks and challenges, and these include:

- Equity and redress
- Democratisation of governance structures
- Public accountability
- Structure and growth
- Quality assurance and

- Financial capacity.

1.3 THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

It is on the basis of the issues problematised that the following questions are posed:

- What is the impact of the mission and vision statement on the transformation process at the University of Limpopo?
- What are the kinds of resource needed to implement change and fast track the transformation process at the University of Limpopo?
- Why do we have an inconsistent and unstable leadership environment at the University of Limpopo?

1.4 THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are to:

- evaluate the inherent institutional and organisational structures against the effective and profitable management of transformation in the university;
- assess the transformation process and financial capacity of the merger in the university;
- contribute to providing possible mechanisms for resolving transformation problems in the university.

1.5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher was faced with a situation in which some respondents from the targeted population in various departments were not free to offer information willingly and promptly as it was needed, due to the sensitivity of the topic and lack of knowledge of the subject under investigation.

The study was limited to the University of Limpopo, Turfloop Campus during the period 2000 – 2007 since Turfloop campus was once put under an administrator due to maladministration and mismanagement which were reported by the Mojapelo and Sithole Commission and the assessor, Professor Nhlapo.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Oruka (1998:15) states that in ethics, there is much talk about right and wrong, good and bad, as well as duty and obligation. This is supported by Pauw *et al.* (2002:327) when quoting (Moodali, 2001:16) who defines ethics as a systematic thinking or reflection on morality being good and bad, and also as an agreed-upon view of what is permissible for the practitioners of a profession. Oruka (1998:89) asserts that free will is some inner force in the human mind which switches him/her into action and enables him/her to decide which of the alternative actions he should strive to choose. The respondents were requested to offer information as freely as possible and under no circumstances were they urged or bribed as this is ethically wrong. The respondents were assured of privacy and

anonymity, and those who would not have their names mentioned in the study were also assured of this.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE RESEARCH

Chapter 1: Introduction and general orientation

The research work is outlined in the form of chapters and each chapter bears its sub-topic for the reader to best understand and follow the whole work. Chapter one introduces the reader to the topic of the research and the rationale behind the endeavour. Further, this chapter outlines the following aspects which form the basis of the proposed study: statement of the problem, the objectives, definitions, research questions, research methods, literature review, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review.

Chapter two of this study presents the consulted literature related to the phenomenon, Transformation of Institutions of Higher Learning and the Higher Education Act no.101 of 1997 as amended by Act no. 23 of 2003. Furthermore, the study presents literature on various types of leadership.

Chapter 3: Research design and methodology

This chapter outlines the methods and designs which were employed in the research process. In this chapter the researcher further identifies the target groups, sampling methods, indicates the size of the population and lastly the research techniques.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

This chapter explains to the reader how data was collected and analysed. Furthermore, the researcher did an in-depth analysis of the collected data with a view to coming up with data which was required for the purpose of the proposed study.

Chapter 5: Findings, recommendations and conclusions.

This chapter concludes the research work, in that the researcher presents the findings of the proposed study, recommendations that solicits compliance with the Higher Education Act no. 101 of 1997 as amended by Act no. 23 of 1997. This chapter also makes provision for further research.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Higher education institutions in South Africa are faced with a number of transformational challenges nowadays. Universities are trying their best to live in accordance with the demands of transformation and that calls for the leadership concerned to become objective, ethical and accountable in their endeavour to manage institutions of higher learning.

The researcher adopted both qualitative and quantitative methods with a view to investigating and evaluating the impact of transformation at the University of Limpopo.

In the next chapter the study focuses on a literature review of the phenomenon of transformation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter first purports to provide a historical overview of the University of Limpopo which was previously called the University of the North. The historic events outline the initial stages of “transformation” at the University of the North through the efforts of the Broad Transformation Committee (BTC) and the three-year rolling plan of the University of the North (2000-2002:1).

Secondly, a presentation of the objectives and intents of the BTC of transforming the University of the North is outlined for the purpose of this research. Thirdly, the intentions of the three major policy documents, *viz.*, The National Plan for Higher Education of the Ministry of Education (5 March 2001), the Transformation and Reconstruction of the Higher Education System (May 2002) and a New Institutional Landscape for Higher Education in South Africa (30 May 2002) are also discussed.

Fourthly, the literature relevant to the phenomenon “Transformation/Change” is perused with a view to gathering adequate information to support the research work, “Evaluation of the transformation process at the University of Limpopo: A review of the progress during the period 2000-2007”.

Furthermore, the transformational leadership relevant to driving the transformation process in higher education is discussed, as well as the forces that influence change.

2.2 HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

The University of Limpopo (previously known as the University of the North) was established under the academic trusteeship of the University of South Africa through the provision of the extensions of the University Education Act as the University College of the North. It gained autonomy in 1970 through the promulgation of the University of the North Act. Between 1980 and 1983 three satellite campuses were established, one each in Venda (1980), Qwa Qwa (1981), and Giyani (1983). Venda has since become independent of the University of the North (University of the North, 2000-2002:1).

Further transformational indicators were seen at the University of Limpopo as the early 1990s witnessed many fundamental changes on campus. It was a period which marked the consolidation of the struggle against apartheid and transformation of the governing structures of the institution, and indeed of governance itself. This was also witnessed by the renaming of the student residences, reflecting the heroes and heroines of the liberation struggle. However, it was a period during which learning and teaching became one of the most difficult, yet most fundamental priorities of university life.

The year 1990 was the year during which the progressive structures created the idea of the Broad Transformation Committee (BTC) in which all sectors and structures of the

university were represented. At the time of the inception of the BTC, Professor Nkondo deputised Professor Manganyi as the rector of the University of the North and was the convenor.

It was after much deliberation, and many debates and discussions that consensus was reached, that the achievements of the Committee should set a precedent for the transformation process at all other South African Universities. This was made possible in 1991, against the background and the better standing of the BTC at that time, the appointment of a new, democratically-elected Council and the installation of the then President of the Republic of South Africa, President Nelson Mandela, as Chancellor (White,1997:154).

According to a student's newsletter (Student Vanguard Turfloop Newsletter, 1992) in White (1997:154), this gave impetus to the transformation process. "The appointment of Dr Mandela coincides with the university's commitment to transforming itself from an extension and sounding board of the merciless, selfish regime into the participatory democracy in higher education learning institutions."

Again, the BTC, according to White (1997:155), facilitated the election of the then Vice-Chancellor, Professor Ndebele, and was fundamental to the strategic planning process on campus. In the main, what became crucial is that there was never leadership stability in their tenure of office till today, and this is a serious question.

2.3 THE AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE BROAD TRANSFORMATION COMMITTEE

The aims and objectives of the BTC were as follows:

- Commitment to the transformation of the University of the North into a people's university.
- The democratisation of the structures of university governance, practices and processes of decision making.
- The creation of a climate conducive to effective teaching and learning.
- To work towards a university free from racism, ethnicity, tribalism, sexism and other forms of discrimination.
- To address the historical inequalities created by apartheid. This would be done professionally by designing and systematically implementing progressive affirmative-action programmes.
- To create a culture of respect for the protection and enhancement of the universally accepted rights and freedom of academic communities.
- To work towards developing the university to meet its local, national and international responsibilities, for example, by striving to improve the quality of life of our disadvantaged communities through relevant research and community projects geared towards empowering these communities (White, 1997 :154, quoting BTC, 1993:10).

2.4 THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Van Niekerk (2004:25), using Owen's work (1987:5), defines transformation as "the organisational search for a better way to be". She continues, on the same page, to indicate that in fact, Owen argues that transformation is when the environment alters in such a way that the old way of doing business is no longer appropriate or possible that a new way becomes essential in order to survive. Strydom in Van Niekerk (2004:25) points out that the term "transformation" is a process of transmutation from one form into another. According to the Reader's Digest Word Power Dictionary (2002:1040) "transformation" is a marked change, nature or form. A synonym for transformation being change, as other authors suggest, is defined as a move from one system or situation to another.

In support of the objective of this research (subsection 1.4) Carnal (1999:28) states that organisational structures allow to organise and deploy resources, make provision for job descriptions or activities to be well defined, provide for clearly-outlined responsibilities and accountabilities. Furthermore, organisations must ensure that decisions are communicated on time and effectively with a view to allowing for a proper flow of information. People should be influenced by organisational structures to really fulfil that sense of belonging, and identify themselves with the corporate image of the organisation. Lastly Carnal argues that organisational structures must make provision for the establishment of people's attitudes and behaviour which constitute the total corporate culture.

Deal and Kennedy (1982) in Carnal (1999:112) define corporate culture as encompassing how people in a company are likely to act in given situations both inside and outside the organisation. Carnal goes further to indicate that corporate culture includes a set of beliefs, a code of behaviour and minimum standards of performance and ethics. Finally he argues that corporate culture influences service quality and the way in which people are treated, whether customers or clients.

According to Robbins (1994:185), there are three building blocks of an organisational structure which are described as follows:

- The first block has to do with the amount of vertical, horizontal and special differentiation and this is called complexity.
- The second one relates to the degree to which rules and procedures are adhered to or properly executed and it is referred to as formalisation.
- In every organisation, there has to be a body which takes decisions on behalf of the total workforce, and that is known as centralization being the degree to which decision making is concentrated at a single point in the organisation.

2.5 HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS AS SOCIAL SYSTEMS

According to Ford, *et al.* (1996:90) social systems are divided into four and describe how people are organised within an organisation, how they coordinate activities within the same structure, as well as how they are supported by the structure itself. The whole web

includes or illustrates external groups with which the higher education institutions interface in an attempt to meet the intended objectives.

The social system within higher education is formed by the following four topical aspects presented by Ford *et al.* (1996:90):

- People: These are associated with the higher education institutions and are influencers, users or clients, service providers or human capital and related agencies.
- Organisational structure: is a reflection of how both the internal and external communicate with each other, and also the manner in which the organisation of the higher education institutions impact on staff responsibilities and their overall efficiency.
- Roles: are all activities prescribed for individuals to discharge within the operational structure and such are associated with high levels of skill and knowledge.
- Workgroups do not necessarily form part of the organisational structure, but are groups with differing roles, and perhaps from different departments, working together, either in an informal or formal setup to achieve the intended goals.

2.6 TRANSFORMATION AND CHANGE IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

Higher education institutions, like any other organisations, are social systems in which people are employed to perform certain duties. Every social system has its own culture which should be a contribution of all participants towards the success of the whole organisation. Over and above a culture, there are a number of factors that influence organisational transformation or change.

2.6.1 Factors influencing organisational transformation or change

In the work “Organisational change and development”, Robbins (1994:262-264) mentions the following six factors which he names forces for change: The changing nature of the workforce, technology, social trends, economic shocks, world politics which encompass globalisation, and competition, which are discussed below.

According to Robbins the 1990s marked the decade during which organisations were hit by new legislation in that they were forced to, among others, learn and implement diversity management for survival. Organisations were obliged to ensure that the complexion of their workforce became representative of women and minorities. This move not only forced organisations to change the workforce, but also the total work environment had to change to such an extent that even people with disabilities and women were represented in top management positions.

The second factor that Robbins identified was technology which meant the adoption of new technology such as computers and telecommunication systems. This adoption of technology forced organisations to comply so as to meet the local and global demands. The introduction of new means of communication such as e-mail, internet and also the introduction of e-learning are good examples.

It should be noted with serious concern that the introduction of technology and its changes in universities did not only have an impact on the work environment, but also on the workforce itself. Robbins (1994:262) points out that computers and sophisticated information systems are having a huge impact on organisations in that they are changing the employees' skills levels required by the new setup, the daily activities of the managers, and the organisation's ability to respond to the changing needs of customers.

In the case of universities, especially the University of Limpopo as the test case, as it has now developed, it can make use of technology to distribute its products through intranet and other related sources. Robbins, (1994:263) argues that the 1970s and 1980s marked the social trends in organisations in that employment opportunities began to favour minorities and women. In South Africa talks began around affirmative action and equal employment opportunities for all, regardless of gender, colour, creed, political affiliation, race, etc.

According to Lebepe (2004:65), the restructuring of the University of Limpopo, then called the University of the North, did not adequately address the problems of

employment equity in terms of gender. Lebepe goes on to argue that despite the pieces of legislation regarding employment equity, women at the University of Limpopo are still under-represented in top management positions though they have the same qualifications as their male counterparts.

Teferra and Altbach, (2004:18-19) support Robbins when they point out that gender imbalance is a common phenomenon in the continent's educational institutions in that "gender imbalance" in higher education is acute in virtually all African countries and in most disciplines. This includes even the female student enrolments.

Teferra and Altbach (2004:19) quoting Chimombo (2003) point out that an affirmative action selection policy for women in Malawi was implemented on the premise that only 25 percent of the total student population was female. They gave other examples of most Tanzanian institutions which took precautionary measures to improve the participation of female students, which then made up between 25 and 30 percent of the enrolled students.

Robbins (1994:263) indicates that the world is living in an "age of discontinuity" where the 1950s and 1970s, the past, was a pretty good preliminary speech or poem to the future, while tomorrow was said to be essentially an extended trend line from yesterday. But today the ball game is different. The 1970s marked the ever-changing world economic shocks as the oil price continued to rocket, thereby imposing changes in organisations.

In the context of the higher education realm, the economic shocks were realised during the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR), and the other broader challenges imposed by neo-liberal globalisation which included transformation shaped by the new global ideology of university “marketisation” by the fiscal constraints of government’s macro-economic policy (Van der Walt *et al.* 2002:3).

Robbins (1994:13) points out that the global-village theme is more demonstrable by looking at the growing impact of multinational corporations and the rise of regional cooperative arrangements between countries. Tsai and Barveton (2007:6) argue that globalisation has recently been characterised by various changes that are dramatic in scale and in speed.

Tsai and Barveton. (2007:6) point out that this trend has been noticed in aspects such as the country’s politics, economics, culture and technology. But, most importantly, education, as one of the major policy areas of most countries in the world, is not immune to these global effects. The twenty-first century has marked the period during which universities all over the world face unprecedented challenges in response to one global development, “marketisation”, and in response most of them are seeking to make some major changes or reforms.

At the same time during the process of change, global development of decentralisation and reduced managerialism have had an impact on management styles and systems in higher education. Tsai and Barverton (2007), using the work of Cerny (1996), Flynn (1997),

Slaughter and Lesly (1997), and Clark (1998), maintain that globalisation has been considered as a political phenomenon, hence, globalisation may be seen from two perspectives, *viz.*, as producing a change in both the philosophy of governance and the way the public sector is managed, and as a set of political and economic changes or reforms that has led to a considerable increase in the number of universities and calls for strengthened entrepreneurial changes among all universities across the world.

According to Robbins (1994:264), the global economy means that competitors are coming from Japan, Mexico or Germany, but heightened competition also means that organisations need to defend themselves against both the traditional competitors who develop products and services and small entrepreneurial firms with innovative offerings.

Organisations that are able to tune to the waves of change in response to competition will be the ones to keep afloat. They will always be on the alert and capable of developing new products rapidly, and getting them on the market quickly (Robbins, 1994:264).

In adding to Robbins' assertions about competition as one of the forces of change, Tsai and Barverton (2007:7), using the work of Morrison (1998), Foskett (1998), Reich (1998) and Ball (1995), says that the 1980s and 1990s marked the trend in higher education whereby the "supply" side of the education market met with its "demand" side. Whereas the ideology of educational marketisation has led to more competitive environment for universities, enhancement of students' professional skills and capacities were the only true competitive "edge" for a university. Ball (1995) in Tsai and Barverton (2007:7) emphasises

the fact that the quality and the training of the workforce have since become the most essential determining factors in the economic competitiveness of universities.

Apart from Robbins' "six factors", there are other factors contributing towards organisational change within the context of higher education in South Africa. Van Niekerk (2004:56) quoting Green and Fischer (1991:xiii) emphasises the following factors or forces: The effects of the structure and growth or the expansion of higher education and the need for a proper enrollment plan that should promote access in terms of gender, the problems of declining resources due to the new legislation for funding institutions of higher learning, the need for higher education to become a role player in contributing towards the economic and social development of the country, and also the need for institutional autonomy as against the government being the major funder with its demand for public accountability.

2.7 TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM

In terms of Brown's (1998:176) assertion, leadership is vital to the success of all large-scale change programmes. Brown argues further that research has on numerous occasions demonstrated that the absence of top-leadership support for a project is often a key factor in that project's ultimate failure. Smit and Cronje (2002:294) point out in support that, in order for organisations to operate well in a rapidly-changing environment, a need for good leadership is essential, and even more so when the rate of change is enormous and

without any indications of its being under control. Hence, there is a need for organisations to have in their employ a leadership whose main task is to bring about the necessary change that will enable them to compete and perform successfully. On the other hand, Lomas (2004:162) asserts that if quality as one aspect of transformation is to be successfully achieved in a department or a university, it is imperative that a high level of management and leadership abilities are demonstrated without compromise.

2.7.1. Transformational leadership and management

According to Smit and Cronje (2002:293), transformational leaders are the same as charismatic leaders, but are differentiated by their special ability to bring about innovation and change. Smit and Cronje assert that transformational leaders have the ability to make the necessary successful changes in an organisation's vision and mission, as well as in its goals, strategies, structures, culture and the reward system. According to Smit and Cronje, leadership and management are not one and the same aspect, but they are two distinct and complementary sets of management activities.

Leadership is defined by Smit and Cronje (2002:279) as the process of directing the behaviour of others towards the accomplishment of the organisation's goals, while on the other hand "management" is described by Ivancevich, *et al.* (1994:10) in Du Toit, *et al.* (1998:172) as the process performed by one or more persons to coordinate the activities of other employers to ensure high quality outcomes that would otherwise not be achieved by any single individual.

It has been indicated earlier that, in terms of the constitutional mandate, women and the minorities should be given an opportunity to prove themselves even in managerial positions; hence the concept “female leadership”. Smit and Cronje (2002:294) argue that women are capable of bringing a different leadership style (a style that is very effective in today’s turbulent corporate environment) into organisations as they move into higher positions. They go further to indicate that although women also possess assertiveness, initiative and aggressiveness, they tend to engage in leadership behaviour that can be interactive.

In describing interactive leadership, Smit and Cronje (2002:294) point out that interactive leadership is concerned with consensus building, is open and inclusive, encourages participation by others, and is more caring than the leadership style of many males. These desirable qualities can be developed by any person since they are consistent with the recent trend towards participation and empowerment.

The following table as presented by Smit and Cronje (2004:284) gives a clear distinction between management and leadership in terms of planning, organising, leading and controlling as follows:

Activity	Management	Leadership
<p>PLANNING:</p> <p>Creating an agenda</p>	<p>PLANNING:</p> <p>Establishing goals and formulating strategies and plans to reach the goals</p>	<p>ESTABLISHING DIRECTION:</p> <p>Developing a vision, mission, and strategies for change</p>
<p>ORGANISING:</p> <p>Developing a human network to achieve the agenda</p>	<p>ORGANISING AND STAFFING:</p> <p>Developing a structure for the assignment of tasks and resources</p>	<p>ALIGNING PEOPLE</p> <p>Motivating people and teams to follow a vision</p>
<p>LEADING:</p> <p>Executing the agenda</p>	<p>MANAGING:</p> <p>The complexities of policies, processes and procedures</p>	<p>DEALING WITH CHANGE</p>
<p>CONTROLLING:</p> <p>Checking if the agenda is achieved</p>	<p>CONTROL MEDIA:</p> <p>Comparing the plan and behaviour of the system with the mission and detecting deviations</p>	<p>STEERING PEOPLE</p> <p>in the right direction through motivation and checking control mechanisms; checking that subordinates follow new direction</p>

2.8 INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The University of Limpopo, like most of the South African Universities, and other social institutions, faces yet another set of constraints. Such constraints consist of substantial accountability demands put on them by both internal and external constituents and stakeholders.

In the case of universities this ranges from government being the main funder, demanding more stringent accounting for resources used and a greater say in the agenda of universities, from access standards and numbers to curricular relevance and income generation, to politicians, civil society and business groups, donors and external partners, each pushing sectional interests on the universities. Added to all this is the sheer weight of the expanded student population (Sawyer:1999).

2.8.1 Accountability

According to Schwella, *et al.* (1996:164), a person is responsible to his principal for the efficient, effective and responsive execution of assignments, to the extent that such a person is, for the purpose of an assignment, under the control and command of another person or institution. As such, those public institutions and persons responsible for management and administration of public funds are accountable to the taxpayers and the public at large for the efficient, effective and responsive execution of their assigned tasks. They further indicate that the effective, efficient and responsive public financial management includes the collection, safekeeping and spending of public funds.

The University of Limpopo is one organ of state under the auspices of the Department of Education and has personnel to render services with the aid of public funds. Such personnel are under obligation to render services as expected by the authorities and the recipient of such services, being the students and staff in some instances.

The student finance revenue division collects revenue in the form of students' fees and other related forms. The financial-aid office administers a number of bursaries and is accountable to the bursars. The asset management division is responsible for both capital and movable assets. The Research and Development Office is responsible for the allocation of research funds, research outputs and publications, while the institutional planning office is responsible for throughputs. All these functionaries have to be held responsible and accountable for the effective, efficient and responsive execution of their assigned tasks (Schwella, *et al.*, 1996:165).

With regard to accountability by universities, Bunting (1994:37) points out that for ages universities have been assuming that due to the high level of autonomy granted to them, they are not in any serious way accountable to government for their expenditure of public funds. This misunderstanding or assumption becomes worse when it appears that they are not even accountable to interest groups such as their students, the parents, future employees, or the communities in which they have been established.

2.8.2 Total quality management

The University of Limpopo, like any other institution, has organisational needs and objectives. Since the University of Limpopo does not operate in isolation, it has competitors. Based on the nature of the business run, it therefore becomes imperative for the University of Limpopo to manage its resources effectively and efficiently.

The current situation within which universities operate is competition driven, and it requires the university's management to change, and the University of Limpopo is no exception. Robbins and De Cenzo (1995:36) state that total quality management is a philosophy that is driven by customer needs and expectations. In the case of a university, customers could mostly be students and stakeholders (parastatals) for the purpose of research funding.

Schwella, *et al.* (1996:16-17) share the same view as Robbins and De Cenzo when they assert that public resources managers should strive towards qualitative and quantitative objectives derived from policies and incorporated into programmes. Furthermore, they indicate that effectiveness reflects the extent to which stated objectives are met, while efficiency refers to the optimal use of scarce resources in attaining policy and programme objectives.

Today most organisations are more concerned about producing good products, (goods and services) which in the case of universities are graduates of high quality to join the market, quality research, quality programmes (curricula) and quality personnel to drive

the total quality strategy which should be incorporated into the overall organisational change strategy.

2.9. CONCLUSION

The consulted literature clearly indicates that the problem with the phenomenon “transformation/change” has been a cause for concern throughout the global village. Its challenges have not yet been adequately addressed, while the leadership needed to drive the transformation processes, especially in the higher education realm, has not yet been developed.

The demands of the economic trends in South Africa create problems for the higher education institutions in that they are unable to sustain themselves due to the exodus of staff and the brain drain, new formulas for funding, mergers, and financial accountability.

For universities to survive the financial crisis, they have to employ various skills of financial management like budgeting, management of cash flow, debt and asset management.

The next chapter focuses on the research design and methodology.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on how the research work was designed and how data was collected for the study. However, the researcher was tempted to explore a number of research methods with a view to gathering as much relevant information as possible. The research methods chosen to gather data were interviews, observation and documentation. The researcher designed a questionnaire through which data was collected during the one-on-one conversations with the chosen population.

In this study, the researcher utilised the qualitative approach due to the nature of the topic under investigation. In pursuance of this study an exploratory design was opted for with a view to exploring whether the demands of transformation had an impact on the running of the University of Limpopo.

Purposive sampling was utilised to ensure that the size of the population ensured sufficient representation in the sample and also satisfied the purpose intended.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

The research design is the plan of how the research will be carried out, and its intent is not to deal with the specific aspects, but rather to address the broad strategy of how the research will seek to answer the question (Armstrong & Grace, 1994:16). In support of this view, Leedy (1997:93) points out that a research design is a demonstration of the data and the problems that go with the employment of those data in the entire research project. Furthermore, it is the clear thinking necessary for the management of the entire research endeavour to complete the strategy of attack on the central research problem.

According to Thyer (in De Vos & Fouche 1998:77) a research design is a roadmap or a blueprint following which the researcher attempts to achieve the research goal and objectives. According to Bless and Higson-Smith's assertion (1995:63) a research design is the planning of any scientific research from the first to the last step. Bless and Higson-Smith continue to argue that a research design is a programme to guide the researcher in collecting, analysing and interpreting observed facts.

There are a number of designs in research which are different in approach such as the explanatory, descriptive, experimental and exploratory approaches. According to Babbie (1998:279) an exploratory study explores a research question about which not much is known. The present researcher has noticed that the phenomenon of transformation is fairly new to institutions of higher learning and little research has been done, and in this study the University of Limpopo is a case study.

In this study, an exploratory design was employed with a view to finding out whether the transformation process in institutions of higher learning “with specific reference to the University of Limpopo: Turfloop campus” commissioned by the Department of Education, had an impact. The exploratory research design was chosen on the basis of its main purpose, being to gain insight into a situation, phenomenon, community or person (Bless & Higson-Smith, 1995:42).

For the purpose of this study, the researcher employed a qualitative approach based on the nature of the topic under investigation, which was aimed at evaluating the inherent institutional and organisational structures against the effective and profitable management of transformation in the university. Furthermore, it was aimed at assessing the transformation process of the merger in the university and contributing towards possible mechanisms of resolving transformation problems in the university.

According to Holloway (1997:1), qualitative research is a form of social inquiry that focuses on the way people interpret and make sense of their experiences and the world in which they live.

On the other hand, Brynard and Hanekom (1997:29) assert that qualitative research produces descriptive data, “generally people’s own written or spoken words”. Mouton, in Brynard and Hanekom (1997:30), indicates that there are a number of methods found in qualitative research which could be utilised, namely interview, questionnaire, observation, and scrutiny of relevant literature.

In this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to ensure that the segment of the population received adequate representation in the sample. The researcher designed and developed the interview questions with the sole intention of gathering the required data through both structured and unstructured interviews.

3.3 POPULATION AND SAMPLING

According to Arkava and Lane (in De Vos & Strydom, 1998:190) a population is defined as individuals in the universe who possess specific characteristics. Seaberg (in de Vos & Strydom,1998:190) argues that a population is the total set from which the individuals or units of the study are chosen. Babbie (2007:111) states that the population for a study is derived from a group (usually of people) about whom the researcher wants to draw conclusions on the undertaken study since it is never possible to study all members of the chosen population in question.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:87) maintain that a population is a set of elements that the research focuses upon and to which the results obtained by the sample should be generalised. The researcher's population was drawn from the employees of the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

According to Arkava and Lane (in De Vos & Strydom (1998:191) a sample is defined as elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study.

Bless and Higson-Smith (1995:88) argue that although a sample is a subset of the population, it must have properties which make it representative of the whole.

The university's workforce is divided into two components, being the academic and administrative staff. Within these two components there are various levels of management that are there to ensure that the day-to-day activities of the university are taken care of. Furthermore, there are stakeholders who also have a say in the running of the university and those are the unions, the students' representative council and the institutional forum. The researcher looked at the complexity of this population and decided to choose a sample from each without compromising the representativeness of the entire population.

The sample drawn consisted of members of the executive management, deans of faculties, executive directors of various divisions, school directors, directors and managers of divisions and administrators of various schools and divisions according to their levels of operations, the student leadership, the National Health and Allied Workers' Union Leadership and the Institutional Forum. The targeted sample was chosen in line with Bless and Higson-Smith's assertion (1995:85) that sampling theory is the technical accounting instrument to rationalise the collection of information, to choose in an appropriate way the restricted set of objects, persons, events, etc., from which the actual information will be drawn.

Singelton, *et al.* (in De Vos & Strydom, 1998:198) and Babbie (2007:184) both emphasise that it is sometimes appropriate to choose a sample on the basis of the knowledge of the population, its elements, and the purpose of the study. In this study, the researcher chose purposive sampling to determine the size of the sample which is referred to as judgmental in that it is non-probability sampling in which the units to be observed are selected on the basis of the researcher's judgment about which ones will be most useful.

3.4 RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

There are a number of research techniques that could be utilised to collect data. In pursuance of this study, the researcher chose to employ both structured and unstructured interviews, observation and documentary survey as relevant techniques.

3.4.1 Interviews

The researcher utilised both unstructured and structured interviews. Since the nature of the study was sensitive, the researcher also used the disguise as another method of data collection as it is mostly preferred to obtain valid information where issues are highly sensitive, potentially embarrassing or otherwise felt to be a threat to the respondent if disclosed (Coolican,1999:139).

The researcher first made appointments with the selected people and secondly verified the time of the scheduled interview with the interviewees in line with recommendations

made by Brynard and Hanekom (1997:33). The researcher further explained some of the questions which were not very clear to the interviewee as the design allows a face-to-face interaction rather than the respondents' reading and filling in the answers.

The interview took place during the mid-year examinations session and coincided with the visit of the Independent Assessor at the university. Despite these engagements, the researcher was able to meet with the respondents as scheduled. As indicated earlier, the researcher interacted with Executive Deans of the Faculties, Executive Directors of various divisions, School Directors and Directors of divisions, Managers of various divisions, Officers, Students' Representative leadership, the National Health and Allied Workers' Union Leadership and the Institutional Forum. It was not always easy to meet the Student Representatives as they were busy with examinations and making presentations to the Independent Assessor as well, but finally the interview schedule was completed.

3.4.2 Observation

As one of the data-collection techniques, the researcher used observation to gather information, particularly non-participatory or naturalistic observation. The researcher looked at how some of the university employees came and left their work stations daily and evaluated that against the principles of management as contained in the Personnel and Policy Procedure (PPP) of the University of Limpopo as inherited from the defunct University of the North. The advantage of this type of observation is that participants are

not brought into a controlled environment, but the researcher is able to watch their spontaneous behaviour in natural surroundings (Malim & Birch, 1997:32).

The researcher has been working for the university since 1983 and this made it easier for the researcher to observe how the leadership was changing as well as the high personnel turnover due to the brain drain which impacted negatively on the transformation process.

In the main, since the study under investigation related to transformation and leadership, the researcher observed the conduct of the current leadership in terms of how they interrogated issues of transformation.

3.4.3 Documentary survey

The researcher studied the advertisements for the posts of senior management with the intention of making a comparison of the contents in terms of the requirements, namely, the job specification and the men specification. The other document that was perused by the researcher was the culture-survey report of May 2004. This was done with the purpose of understanding the outcomes of the survey and the recommendations made and to try and evaluate them against the norms and demands of transformation.

One other aspect which the Education White Paper 3: A programme for the transformation of higher education (July 1999) is vocal about is equity in the workplace. In order for the researcher to best understand the University of Limpopo (Turfloop) Campus' stand on issues of equity, the researcher perused the Employment Equity Report

of 01 June 2005 – 31 May 2006. This was read in conjunction with Lebepe's masters' dissertation on the role of women in top management positions at the University of the North.

The other crucial document that was studied by the researcher was the executive summary of the King Report II (2002) that was read in conjunction with Professors Nhlapo and Khoapa's reports, as well as Mogotsi's master's dissertation on Public Administration and the role of performance management at the University of the North, and the 2002 -2003 audited financial report of the University of the North with a view to checking on compliance by the university management and the university employees in general.

3.5 CONCLUSION

The chapter described a number of research designs that are used in research; a detailed description of the exploratory design being the design followed in pursuance of this study is given. The chapter discussed the qualitative approach used in the study. The purposive sampling method was used to choose the correct sample size without compromising the representativeness of the entire population. The data was collected through a designed questionnaire that was used during the interviews. Observations were done and relevant documentation was perused.

The next chapter focuses on data analysis and exploratory data collected from the chosen population for the study under investigation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on how data was analysed and interpreted. Furthermore, the results are presented and analysed. A number of data-collection techniques were utilised to collect relevant data. The main thrust of the chapter is to validate facts and present them in context. The data is presented using the qualitative approach. A conclusion is drawn at the end based on the findings presented. The responses cover the interview questions found in Appendix 2.

4.2 ALIGNMENT OF THE ACADEMIC BUSINESS TO THE VISION AND MISSION

The majority of the respondents, including those in executive management positions, felt that the University's academic business was not aligned to its vision and mission statements during this period of transformation. Ngara (1995:40) asserts that a mission statement is a statement of physical strength encapsulating the institution's philosophy and what it sees as its place in society and its obligation to students. The researcher observed that the University of Limpopo, in line with Ngara's assertion, has a mission statement which says, "A world-class African university which responds to education, research and community-development needs through partnerships and knowledge

generation, continuing a long tradition of empowerment.” On the other hand the university has also a vision which says, “To be a leading African university, epitomizing excellence and global competitiveness, addressing the needs of rural communities through innovative ideas.”

The researcher observed that the university accounts for only one sector of its mission which is “responding to education” through teaching and conducting graduations at the end of every academic year. One senior member of the academic sector alleged that there were academics who went on retirement without having published a single article. Other respondents argued that the vision and mission statements of the university were not being clearly articulated to the university community hence, they were currently not of much value.

The research revealed that the “outreach” aspect of community development was not adequately addressed. During the interview session, the researcher could not find convincing information in relation to the aspect in question except two, one under the Optometry department “Phelophepa” and the other a joint venture between Professor Malaka under the Department of Social work (UL) and the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA, Southern University in the United States of America).

The other aspect of the mission which was not being adequately addressed as per the responses, was research in general. The majority of the interviewees acknowledged that little effort was being put into research. However, one argument which was subject to

debate was that, while not much was being done regarding research activities, credit should go to a group of women (women in research) in the university who are trying to resuscitate research activities at the university.

4.3 CAPACITY TO DEAL WITH THE CHALLENGES OF TRANSFORMATION

According to the respondents, the university was not well resourced or capacitated enough to deal with the challenges of transformation as required by the legislation. The majority of the respondents argued that there were imbalances in staffing in that some divisions were understaffed while others were overstaffed, and this anomaly created a situation whereby service delivery was negatively affected. The earlier scenario was supported by management's pronouncement that the university was experiencing a financial crisis (Liebenberg, 2007) and lack of proper laboratory equipment in most departments as presented to the researcher by the senior academics whose areas were being affected. The researcher observed that there was a high labour turnover and this was confirmed by the annual reports.

The researcher observed that there had been no strong capacity at the university for a long time. This was evidenced by the fact that within a period of six to seven years there were two investigations instituted at the University of the North and the University of Limpopo was presently looking at similar problems, generally governance and management (Nhlapo, 2002:4; Khoapa, 2007:3).

4.4 THE LEADERSHIP CULTURE

According to the respondents, the leadership culture at the university was “inheritance” in approach, hence it was not conducive to the transformational process. Furthermore, in their endeavour to respond to the question, the majority of the respondents indicated that the manner in which management positions were being filled impacted negatively on the quality of leadership that should demonstrate the democratic ethos. Again, the respondents indicated that the leadership at the university did not communicate or really articulate issues of transformation in the manner they should, hence, the culture itself was not receptive to transformation.

4.5 THE ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE ALLOWING PROPER GOVERNANCE

According to the present researcher’s observation proper governance structures were put in place which advocate for corporate governance at the university. These governance structures were established in terms of the King Report II (2002). This was evidenced by the Council’s Report on Corporative Governance - 31 December 2003, as contained in the university’s Financial Statement - 31 December 2003. This scenario was further supported by the statements by the respondents who said that much as the structure allowed for proper governance and participative management, the leadership in power deliberately failed the structure. The respondents acknowledged that there were democratic structures like the Institutional Forum, the National Education and Allied

Workers' Union and the Students' Representative Council which participated in most structures of governance, but, there seemed to be tactics employed by the leadership to render these democratic structures ineffective, for example, deliberate delivery of the invitation and voluminous minutes to be read sometimes a night before the date of the meeting.

The scenario portrait constitutes the abuse of authority according to the researcher. The study found the element of abuse of authority and processes in the advertisements. A comparison between the advertisements for a Director in one of the Schools and that of the Vice-Chancellor and Principal was done by the researcher. The researcher noticed that the advertisement for a Director of a School was four-year fixed-performance based, while that of Vice-Chancellor and Principal was not performance based. One would have expected a Vice-Chancellor and Principal to sign a performance contract which should be aligned to his/her strategic plan.

Furthermore, in respect of the abuse of authority and process, the researcher perused memos exchanged between the Chairperson of Council, the Chairperson of the Institutional forum as well as the Interim Registrar over a dispute on the process to be followed when appointing a Vice-Chancellor and Principal at the University of Limpopo. The study found that the university council observed and followed all the steps but deliberately left out one important step that said, "the short-listed candidates shall be required to address an open meeting, chaired by the Chairperson of Council, which any member of Council, Senate or the University community may attend. All members of the

selection committee shall be invited to attend. Candidates shall be invited to make a presentation of up to thirty (30) minutes and answer questions for a further twenty-five (25) minutes” (Schedule 1.4 of the University of the North Draft Statute, 2002).

In support of the scenario as presented in the preceding paragraph, Nhlapo argues that it is no wonder that successive managements have been unable to break out of the morass, and that the forces of mediocrity are too strong, and as far as he could tell there was not yet a critical mass of dedicated and committed academics and administrators at the University of the North (then) (Nhlapo, 2002:35).

4.6 THE MAJOR SETBACK OF THE MERGER PROCESS

During the interview session it became clear from the responses that the major setback of the merger process was resistance to change, fear of the unknown and lack of leadership to effectively manage the process. The other setback which became common as presented by the respondents was the politics between the two campuses, Turfloop and Medunsa, coupled with too much reliance on the Department of Education to provide guidance without management taking up the responsibility. The researcher observed that during the merger process, there had been a great deal of travelling by members of staff between Medunsa and Turfloop. This impacted negatively on the services when staff was away and most decisions were being delayed for too long.

4.7 THE IMPACT OF THE PREVIOUS RESTRUCTURING

The study found that most people, particularly in management positions, did not want change as the respondents alleged that they enjoyed and benefited from the chaos. Over a period of time the researcher had been observing and noticed the loss of highly-skilled personnel who could not stand the chaos. Evidence of this aspect was the annual reports of various faculties.

Among others, the researcher observed lack of improvement in planning, value for money and accountability on the part of the university leadership. There had been a general outcry against the performance of leadership on the part of university personnel and attempts to remedy the situation were made in that a number of consultants were appointed and none of the recommendations were ever implemented. According to Mogotsi (2002:67-76) in the work entitled “The role of performance management amongst administrative staff at the University of the North” the following consultants, commissions and delegations earned public money and their reports continued to gather dust and this constituted lack of value for money:

- *. I van W Raubenheimer (Consultant)
- *. Fisher Hoffman and Sithole (Consultants)
- *. Delloite & Touche (Consortium)
- *. Mojapelo & Sithole (Commission of Inquiry)
- *. Delegation from Unisa (Delegation)
- *. Independent Assessors’ Report (Mogotsi, 2002 : 67-78)

The respondents indicated that the restructuring did not yield positive results because there was still that notion of them (management) and us (the university community) and the ever-poor communication syndrome. This was evidenced by the November 2006 salary delay which was communicated to the university community on the day of payment. The top-heavy structure, as perceived by the respondents, worsened the cash-flow problem while it did not pay and was still not paying dividends to the university, and also that, for too long, the university had been operating on skeletal acting personnel which defeated the core business of the university and compromised quality.

The University had during its endeavour to save costs, among others, outsourced the cleaning services. In place of the cleaning service, a private company called Beta Projects was employed. In terms of the operational plans of the university (as contained in the advertisement) Beta projects was to report to the Facilities Manager who should in terms of his job description manage both staff and contract service providers on behalf of the university to ensure adherence to the service level agreements. The researcher observed that there was a flaw in the whole setup, in that line managers were not taken on board with a view to assisting with managing the environment. Needless to say, they were not even given the service-level agreement to ascertain compliance. In terms of item 2.1.2 of the Beta Projects' service-level agreement, carpets and rugs were to be vacuumed with an approved vacuum cleaner, and open offices and other open areas were to be vacuumed daily while single offices should be vacuumed weekly.

It was observed by the researcher that the vacuuming routine was not carried out in terms of the service-level agreement and no one was ever called to account. There were some single offices that students frequented due to the services offered by such offices. Such offices got dirty quickly because of their size but, according to the instructions to Beta Projects, were to be vacuumed once a week. Fortunately, the researcher had an opportunity to sit in a meeting where cleaning-related problems were discussed, and it became abundantly clear that Beta Projects was not being well managed while public money was being compromised. The manager indicated to the members of the meeting that they had come to the university to make money, hence, they were not prepared to add more staff.

The researcher found that to some extent, positive results were being noticed through the academic structure which allowed for interdisciplinary activities as alleged by most academics. The Administrator had turned the university around to the extent that the non-working culture had been reduced. However, the remaining leadership that had been put in power by the Administrator could not sustain the good things brought in to resuscitate the University. The ongoing concern that became apparent from the respondents was that people were made to act indefinitely in positions of management and due to the uncertainty of their positions, they tended not to give their all in terms of managing, but continued to protect one another while the core business of the institution was being compromised.

4.8 READINESS FOR CHANGE

The researcher has been in the employ of the university for more than two decades and was able to observe that there was too much laxity in terms of labour laws regarding absenteeism on the part of the employees. Often people would leave their work stations, have extended tea and lunch breaks, while some just reported late and knocked off early without being reprimanded and this impacted negatively on service delivery (<http://www.labourguide.co.za/absenteeism.htm>).

According to the policy of the University (Personnel Policy and Procedures, B13-1) “(a) Employees whose job dictates that they work normal hours, these normal hours shall be between 07:30 and 16:30 Monday to Friday. (b) Employees shall be permitted to take one afternoon off a week, However, this should be approved by the relevant line manager, who shall ensure that a continued service is provided.”

B.13.2.4 stipulates that academic staff is required to be available to students between the hours of 08:00 and 13:00 or any other period as approved, in writing, by the Dean of the Faculty. However, an observation by the researcher and other respondents was that there were some people who left the university premises at 12:00 every day and no corrective measures were being taken.

According to the collective agreement/s, employees were allowed to take afternoons off regardless of whether there was a holiday in a week or not. The worst scenario in respect

of this practice was that even if an employee was on leave for two days, such still qualified for an afternoon off. An observation by the researcher was that more often this anomaly created problems where people were working shifts in that those who were at work would want to take their off periods assuming that there would be a person remaining, only to realise that they were all leaving.

During the interview, the respondents often indicated that people on the ground were ready for change. However, they were being disappointed by the leadership. The majority of the respondents indicated that people in the leadership were still comfortable in their negativity and did not have the necessary skills and capacity to drive change; hence, they were anti-transformation.

The other response that reflected negativity from the respondents in this case, middle management, was that the culture of leadership at the University was non-existent in that managers were not being properly managed. They did not enjoy the support of top management in their endeavours to manage as a result of the “I don’t care” attitude that was prevalent.

4.9 LACK OF STABILITY IN LEADERSHIP

According to the respondents, the leadership of the university had been unstable and had deteriorated over a long time because of the politics of the time which was characterised by a power struggle. This in itself brought instability in the leadership as management of

the university was never solid. Instead, it was ever changing with acting personnel across all levels of management. Furthermore, the respondents alleged that the process of making appointments in leadership positions had fundamental flaws, and that led to people not trusting and respecting the leadership. The majority of the respondents alleged that the leadership at the university had not been appointed on the basis of merit but on the basis of being popular with the authorities and the followers did not easily buy in to their authority.

It is the researcher's observation that issues raised earlier are historic and systemic. The then Vice-Chancellor and Principal, Dr Minyuku, was accused of appointing his own people as the management team. In item 7.2.2 of the Nhlapo Report (2002) it was stated that from the documents and reports presented, dissatisfaction in this area revolved around Dr Minyuku's choice of new management team.

Item 7.7.13 of the Nhlapo Report (2002) strengthened the issue of instability in leadership at the university as it says, "The other concluding remark must go towards the issue of conspiracy theories and fractured relations on campus. To supporters of Dr Minyuku, the issues are simple: the enemies of Dr Minyuku at UNIN are anti-transformation forces whose world is threatened with audits, evaluations, instance on standards and vision of an institution of excellence where mediocrity would have no place."

The respondents further indicated that the leadership at Turfloop campus had never been transparent in dealing with the affairs of the university. Instead, it relied too much on Council and that often made people on the ground feel uncomfortable and begin to gang up against the leadership, or let the sleeping lions lie. More often than not, the respondents referred to the leadership as being unskilled and not having the necessary knowledge to manage a university. Instead they would rather resort to political manipulation and that compromised the quality of leadership. It was further indicated that the leadership at Turfloop campus did not uphold the academic vision and values and that often gave the opposition an opportunity to regroup and retaliate.

4.10 ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE SOCIETY AND STAKEHOLDERS

Universities are established by Acts of Parliament and for that reason, they are classified under public institutions and receive subsidies from government; hence such institutions are obliged to account to society and stakeholders. The researcher has observed that the university does not publish its financial statements to society nor its employees. The only audited financial statement that was made public was the one for the year ending December 2003 found on the university's website. According to the 2003 financial statement (a report to the University Council) the audited financial statement (AFS) for the year 2003 was completed within the timeframe as required by the Department of Education. This was a major improvement on previous years as the institution even three years ago, **failed** to produce a set of annual financial statements. However, the Annual

financial statements were qualified by the auditors due to the non-availability of a fixed asset register and some minor non-performance of account reconciliations.

The respondents indicated that there were no transparency and accountability at the university, and as a result of that, there was no way that the university could account to society and the stakeholders. Some respondents argued that to some extent the university accounted to the Minister of Education with a view to receiving a subsidy, and to parents only through graduations.

The universities deliberately did not account as they should, as they were confused by the level of autonomy which made them assume that they were not accountable to the government in any serious way for their expenditure of public funds. This anomaly went to the extent of assuming that the universities were not accountable in any serious way to important interest groups such as students, the parents of students, future employees and the communities in which they had been established (Bunting, 1994:37).

4.11 THE ENROLLMENT PLAN AND THE NEEDS OF THE MINORITIES

The majority of the respondents alleged that the enrollment plan of the university took into account the needs of the minorities especially women and disabled students. Their point of argument was the well-established division known as the Disabled Students' Unit, commonly known as Re a Kgoni. The researcher observed that, although there was

a special unit for disabled students, the general environment was not user friendly in that there were no special toilets for the disabled to accommodate their wheelchairs. In general there were no facilities to cater for disabled students. In support of this scenario, an example was cited of a pharmacology student with disabilities who spent the duration of her studies struggling to attend practicals as the laboratory was on the third floor where there was no lift to take her up.

The respondents further alleged that the fact that a great improvement in the number of women in classes was realised, was justification enough to say that the enrolment plan took into account the needs of the minorities and women. The researcher's observation was that although there was a great improvement in the intake of women in classes, it was limited to the junior degrees as there were fewer women, not to mention disabled students, in senior degrees especially in the sciences.

Below are the statistics of women students in Physics compared to male students for the period 1999 – 2007:

- In 1999 there were eight honours students and of the eight one was a woman.
- In 2000 there were eight honours students and of the eight one was a woman.
- In 2001 there were only four male students registered for honours in Physics.
- In 2002 there were five male students registered for honours.
- In 2003 there were four male students registered for honours.
- In 2004 there were four male students registered for honours.

- In 2005 there were three male students registered for honours.
- In 2006 there were five honours students and only one was a woman.
- In 2007 there were four honours students and one was a woman. One man has since deregistered.

4.12 THE CASH-FLOW PROBLEM

According to the respondents the university suffered a cash-flow problem during this era of transformation because of lack of financial planning and proper financial control systems which was characterised by poor budgeting. In terms of the assessors' report, the 2006 approved budget, which was already in significant deficit of R39,3 million, was forecast in November 2006 to be exceeded by R8,3 million. In fact the 2006 draft income statement indicated a deficit (excluding debt provision) of approximately R73 million. Furthermore, the management report to the Finance Committee in 2007 indicated that 80% of individual cost centres, including the cost centres for senior executives, were overspent. There was no correlation between the approved budget and the cash flow. The cash flow seemed to have been "**doctored**" to satisfy the Finance Committee or placate the Finance Committee. This clearly represented a total lack of cost and budget control (Khoapa:2007:5). In support of this statement, the respondents cited an example of Xerox Company which appeared to be ripping off the university for a lot of money for photocopiers. Emphasis was put on the type of contract signed which, according to the respondents, forced the university to pay a fixed amount depending on the model of the photocopier, regardless of the number of copies made.

Again, it was indicated that the university had been subjected to a culture of non-payment by students who were said to be coming from disadvantaged communities for a long time. While the university received a subsidy from the government, the top-heavy structure drew too much cash from the university. One Executive manager indicated that risk areas were not sufficiently addressed; gaps were left open for the perpetrators to take advantage of the situation. The petrol scam at the transport section was cited as a relevant example.

4.13 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY BEYOND 2010

The comments by the respondents regarding the current management taking the university beyond 2010 were very clear, in that they indicated that unless a serious intervention was made, the university was not going to recover in any way. The majority of the respondents emphasised the fact that the current leadership lacked administrative, management and leadership background. This was the reason why the university was in its current position despite the previous interventions.

Furthermore, the respondents indicated that the future was frightening, seeing that for many years people had been in acting positions and the core business was continuously being compromised. There was a dire need for committed and transparent management with experience in the running of the institutions of higher learning. Until such time that

the university did away with the inbreeding, transformation would always be a myth at the university, the respondents alleged.

The respondents indicated that if it were possible, a motion of no confidence in the current leadership should be passed, and also that if there was anything good that had to come out of this institution, a drastic overhaul of the executive management was required in view of the fact that the present crop was seen to be more adept in politics than in leadership.

4.14 CONCLUSION

Data was analysed based on the research findings through interviews with the selected population, documentary survey and the researcher's observational experience. The researcher realised that there was lack of adherence to the policies, relevant legislation on transformation and change. Women were under-represented right from council level cascading down to lower levels of management, and this included the under-representation of women students in science, in post-graduate physics to be precise, at the University of Limpopo: Turfloop Campus.

On further analysing the collected data, the researcher realised that there was a serious problem of leadership, starting with council, that impacted negatively on the overall management of the university and the transformation process in particular.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this chapter is to draw conclusions and make recommendations on the basis of the research findings.

In this study the researcher's main point of focus was to evaluate the impact of transformation on the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus) with a view to reviewing the progress during the period 2000 – 2007. The researcher first evaluated the inherent institutional and organisational structures against the effective and profitable management of transformation in the university. Secondly the transformation process of the merger in the university was assessed and thirdly, meaningful contributions towards providing possible mechanisms of resolving transformation problems in the university were made.

In Chapter one, the researcher presented an introduction and the background of the phenomenon, "Transformation in a higher education institution" with a view to orientating the reader and indicating its impact. Furthermore, a presentation of the objectives and the research questions was made that prompted the researcher to undertake this study.

Chapter two of this study presented the literature relevant to the study under investigation and the historical overview of the University of Limpopo (Turfloop Campus).

In Chapter three the researcher showed how the research was designed. It was in this chapter that the researcher elaborated on how data was collected, the size of the sample was determined, the research methods and techniques that were used to collect the data and the procedure followed in gathering data were discussed.

Chapter four demonstrated how the collected data was analysed and presented. In this chapter the results of the respondents were presented through qualitative analysis.

Based on the critical issues raised in the present study, the following recommendations are made:

- a)** Since leadership is a process whereby the leader influences others to reach common goals and objectives of the institutions, it becomes imperative for individual leaders to carry the moral and ethical burden. The results of this research work found that the leadership at the University of Limpopo (Turffloop Campus) is not conforming to the legislation enacted to promote transformation as it is required. It is therefore recommended that an Administrator be appointed with a new council to really re-invent this institution.
- b)** Once everything has been put in motion, a new visionary and transformational leadership should be appointed on a five-year performance-based contract, non-renewable. For this university to survive, inbreeding should not be the only source of recruitment. If one checks at all levels of management, the majority of the personnel has been in the employ of the university for years and has not made any

- effort to ensure that change that goes with responsibility and obligation becomes the order of the day.
- c) The university is a societal system made up of people (employees, students, and stakeholders) within the prescribed operational structures. It is apparent that any prescribed operational structure is governed by a set of rules which defines different roles or activities which should be professionally coordinated. Therefore, corporative governance rule should be enforced by council.
 - d) Based on the findings of the reports on the financial management of the university, it is recommended that well-qualified and experienced personnel should be appointed as a matter of urgency and the potential Vice-chancellor and Principal be given a crash course on financial management. This good practice should also be cascaded down to the lower levels of management.
 - e) Since the study has found that there is a problem of gender balance in science students, it is imperative for the university management to improve on recruitment, retention conditions and thereby raise awareness of the contributions that women could make to science and engineering.

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APPENDIX 1

Box 597
SOVENGA
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Dear Sir/Madam/Prof/Dr

I am a postgraduate student at the Graduate School of Leadership in the Masters of Public Administration, currently busy with research “Evaluating the impact of Transformation at the University of Limpopo: A review of the progress during the period 2000-2007” under the supervision of Professor M H Kanyane.

In order for me to finalise this study, I have to gather information or data through a number of research methods of which interviews is one.

It will be greatly appreciated if you could allow me some time, probably ten (10) to fifteen(15) minutes to go through the questions together.

Please be assured that the responses will be handled in the strictest confidentiality. The findings of the study will be made available upon request.

Thanking you in anticipation.

S J Mothapo
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082 200 5440 (C))

APPENDIX 2

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Is the current academic business of the University of Limpopo aligned to its vision and mission statements during this period of transformation?
2. Is the University of Limpopo well resourced or capacitated enough to deal with the challenges of transformation as required by the legislation?
3. How does the leadership culture at the University of Limpopo make suitable provision for transformation to take place?
4. Does the organisational structure of the University of Limpopo allow for proper governance or participative management?
5. What would you say is the major setback of the merger process?
6. Has the previous restructuring yielded positive results for the university?
7. Are the employees at the University of Limpopo ready for change?
8. Why has the leadership of the University been unstable from way back till today?
9. Does the university account to the society and or stakeholders, if so in what way?
10. Does the enrollment plan of the University of Limpopo sufficiently take into account the needs of the minorities, especially women and disabled students?
11. Why is the university suffering from a cash-flow problem during this era of transformation/merger process?
12. Generally comment on the ability of leadership as management of the university's academic business from the present for the remaining three years of 2010.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I, DR LARAINÉ C O'CONNELL, hereby declare that I am an editor/translator and a registered member of SATI (South African Translators' Institute), Registration number 1001497.

I further declare that I have edited the following dissertation:

**EVALUATION OF THE IMPACT OF TRANSFORMATION AT THE
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO IN SOUTH AFRICA: A REVIEW OF THE
PROGRESS DURING THE PERIOD 2000 - 2007**

by Mr SJ Mothapo

**for a Master's degree in Public Administration
in the Faculty of Management and Law, Turfloop Graduate School of
Leadership,
UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO**

**DR LC O'CONNELL
27 December 2007**