

IMPACT OF MERGERS ON LOWER LEVEL EMPLOYEES: A CASE STUDY OF THE DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

by

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DECLARATION

This serves to ascertain that this work is my original work. Care and due diligence has been taken to comply with the declaration.

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ABSTRACT

The study arose as a result of a merger between the former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon, culminating in the formation of a new institution in 2002, called the Durban Institute of Technology (now known as the Durban University of Technology). The focus of the study was on the impact of mergers on lower level employee motivation and staff morale at the Durban University of Technology. Furthermore, the study focused on examining the perceptions of lower level employees towards the merger process which included the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases. A mixed methods research design was used in this study. The quantitative sample was n=50. In addition, six in-depth interviews were conducted for the qualitative part of the study.

This study concluded that the merger had a negative impact on the perceptions of lower level employees regarding the merger process in the post-merger phase. The results indicated that staff morale of lower level employees was low post-merger. Some lower level employees proved to be less satisfied than others who adopted the new changes as a result of the merger. Interestingly, the results indicated a high level of motivation amongst lower level employees post-merger. Minimal communication originated from top management to lower level employees. It was recommended, amongst other suggestions that communication and training should be strengthened amongst lower level employees, supervisors and management in higher education institutions. Whilst lower level employees may have low skills and education, an attempt should be made to involve lower level employees early on and throughout higher education mergers.

KEY WORDS: mergers, higher education, lower level employees, motivation, staff morale

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CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTINGS

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Mergers represent a world-wide phenomenon that attempts to create value and development for organisations in many ways. Organisations may use mergers to improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. The expected benefits for an organisation may be seen to be an increase in production, market share and shareholder value. While these expected benefits have largely been associated with the private sector, mergers have taken place in the public sector, including the higher education sector.

An international perspective points to mergers of higher education institutions having varied results. In Germany, mergers of higher education institutions were generally unsuccessful (Skodvin, 1999:73). However, in the Netherlands mergers appear to have been more successful (Harman and Harman, 2003:36; Skodvin, 1999:70). In Australia, mergers were fraught with problems seen, as attempts to “cobble together” disparate institutions, with little concern for the impact of different organisational cultures on merged institutions (Robbins and Judge, 2007:586). This study attempts to investigate the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan higher education institutions that took place in 2002 in South Africa with a view to examining its impact on lower level employees often referred to as service level type workers.

Robbins and Judge (2007:579) stated that a significant early casualty during a merger is the culture of an organisation. An organisation’s culture is entrenched over many years and is rooted in deeply held value systems that employees

adhere to. Each employee's experience during a merger will be different. Such experiences are shaped by personal and organisational factors (Ivancevich, Konopaske and Matteson, 2008; Robbins and Judge, 2007). Personal factors include job security, individual comfort zone and habit. Organisational factors include a change in management, working environment, new policies and procedures (Greenberg and Baron, 2008:643). These personal and organisational factors may ultimately impact on an employee's sense of belonging to an organisation. During a merger such factors are unplanned for or overlooked, resulting in merger challenges for the organisation and the employees (Mullins, 2005:913; Harman and Harman, 2003:37; Jansen, 2002:13).

South African higher education institutions have been part of a changing educational milieu. This has taken place against a backdrop of an educational revolution at a secondary and higher education level in the country. Since 1994, several higher education institutions have merged in South Africa. According to Jansen (2002:128), the concept of merging higher education institutions has been driven in the South African context by the post democracy period of 1994.

One of the core objectives of merging higher education institutions has been the need to allow for racial integration. Integration at school level preceded the emphasis of integration at the higher education level (Reddy, 2007:488; Balintulo, 2003:457). Such integration was expected to continue at the higher education level. The education system would allow for equal access to quality education, particularly at a higher education level. Jansen (2002:9) is of the view that the challenge of equal access has had a profound impact on higher education institutions in South Africa, which often experience change as being radical due to their long standing history.

Despite the warning signals identified by Jansen (2002:3), the education sector was earmarked for radical change. The former Ministers of Education, Mrs Pandor and Professor Asmal, expressed their concern that higher education institutions were inefficient and operationally unfeasible (Jansen, 2002). This concern resulted in a large number of mergers in the South African higher education environment (Jansen, 2002:8). During the late 1990's, the Department of Education initiated a drive to merge a number of higher education institutions in order to address the concerns raised by Mrs Pandor and Professor Asmal. These initiatives by the Department of Education aimed to promote financial stability, access to learners and to improve institutional operations. Such initiatives were applied particularly in higher education institutions that were in close proximity for many years in terms of geographical location (Jansen, 2002).

The first merger of higher education institutions in South Africa, which took place in 2002, was between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, which became the Durban Institute of Technology (now known as the Durban University of Technology). This was followed by a further 13 mergers in South Africa. Therefore, it appears that there was no clear agreement from the different stakeholders about how the merger process was to unfold at the Durban University of Technology. We will return to this later in the case study.

The very nature of mergers is often a daunting experience, both for an organisation and particularly for employees. In addition, mergers bring about a perceived instability and unpredictability in the environment (Ivancevich, et al, 2008:586; Kinicki and Kreitner, 2008:410). Studies show that the potential for significant changes in beliefs and attitudes is difficult to control and manage during a merger. Management of the "people side" of a merger is often the most challenging component (Cartwright and Cooper, 1996:5). Given that there

appeared to be challenges in the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, this research study focuses on the impact of mergers on lower level employee morale and motivation in order to better understand such employees during a typical merger.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research study seeks to investigate the impact that mergers have on lower level employees in a higher education institution, with the Durban University of Technology serving as the case study of a merged higher education institution in South Africa. Literature searched does not seem to point to any specific attention having been given to lower level or service type employees during higher education mergers. The answer may well be obvious that it is an academic institution and hence the focus shifts to teaching and learning, improved research, student and general teaching staff. However, South Africa's historical past has created a class of lower level employees even at Universities sometimes referred to as general staff.

Lower level employees are typically found in administrative and service type positions. Nonetheless, these employees are critical in ensuring that the University's overall mission and vision is well supported. These employees tend to ensure that the university campus is well maintained and cleaned for effective teaching and learning to take place. Furthermore, a clean and maintained environment is conducive to quality teaching and learning for students and university employees. Therefore, this study attempts to examine whether higher education mergers have an impact on lower level employees and ways of managing these employees in future mergers.

1.3 KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This study covers two key research questions:

1.3.1 First research question

The first research question is to establish the impact of mergers on lower level employees especially from a motivation and staff morale position in a higher education institution.

1.3.2 Second research question

The second research question is to examine the perceptions and experiences of lower level employees during a merger process which includes pre-merger, merger and post-merger periods.

1.4 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

For the purpose of this research the following terms have been defined.

1.4.1 Merger

The literature provides a number of definitions of mergers. The Oxford dictionary defines a merger as an act of joining two or more organisations or businesses into one. Since mergers are usually defined in a business context, the following conceptual clarification is provided to augment the Oxford dictionary definition. Wheelen and Hunger (2004:139) define a merger, in a business context, as a transaction involving two or more corporations in which stock is exchanged, but from which only one corporation survives. David (2001:182) states that a merger

occurs when two organisations of about equal size unite to form one enterprise. Mergers are usually between firms of somewhat similar size and are usually “friendly” (David, 2001:182).

Anthony, Perrewe and Kacmar (1996: 423) define mergers and acquisitions as a union of two or more corporate interests or organisations. Acquisitions and mergers are two commonly used ways to pursue strategies in organisations. An acquisition occurs when a large organisation purchases a smaller firm, or vice versa. When an acquisition or merger is not desired by both parties, it is known as a takeover or hostile takeover.

Goedegebuure (1992:16) defines a merger in higher education as a combination of two or more separate institutions into a single new organisational entity, in which control rests with a single governing body and a single chief executive body, and whereby all assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single new institution. The South African Higher Education Act defines a merger as two or more public higher education institutions that lose their status as juristic persons on the date that they are merged into a new juristic person (Higher Education Act 99, Section 1). In the context of this study, mergers will be understood within the aforementioned higher education merger definition.

1.4.2 Staff morale

There is a gap in the literature with regards to the definition of staff morale. For the purposes of this study, staff morale is defined as the mental attitudes which people have towards an organisation (Mullins, 2010:573). Staff morale affects employee perceptions, motivation and job satisfaction in an organisation. Therefore, staff morale impacts on organisational growth and prosperity

(Bendix, 2001). Furthermore, staff morale of lower level employees is important for meeting the strategic imperatives of a public or private organisation.

1.4.3 Motivation

There are various definitions of motivation provided in the literature. The Oxford dictionary defines motivation as an act of making someone want to do something, especially something that involves hard work and effort (Hornby, 2005: 956). Heery and Noon (2009:296) define motivation as the propensity of the individual to expend effort in work. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:187), motivation is a process that accounts for an individual's intensity, direction and persistence of effort towards achieving a goal. Bergh and Theron (2007:156) point out that motivation is a process that involves the purposiveness of behaviour.

1.5 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study will focus on permanent, full time and contract lower level employees. Lower level employees refer to employees in grades 14 to 18 on the Peromnes grading system. The location of these employees is at the Steve Biko campus of the Durban University of Technology.

1.6 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Mergers have been taking place between organisations for many years. These mergers have led to advantages and disadvantages for organisations. According to Jansen (2002:9), advantages of mergers could result in organisational benefits such as shared resources, avoidance of duplication and cost efficiency. However, Cartwright and Cooper (1996:57) stated that the

disadvantages of mergers are associated with softer issues such as organisational culture clash, job dissatisfaction and staff morale. These softer issues are largely challenging to manage for organisations. Mergers are usually associated with organisations in the private sector. The culture of these organisations and the expectations of management are different to the organisation settings of higher education institutions (Harman and Meek, 2002:6).

Organisation mergers take different forms, resulting in successes and failures. Tredeaux (2001:14) argues that “success is not always guaranteed... up to 60 percent of all mergers fail to achieve promised shareholder value for the acquirer”. Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche (2002:9) agree with Tredeaux’s assertion that many mergers are doomed to failure because of problems pertaining to integration between organisations. According to Walton (1999:49), mergers emphasise financial feasibility and sustainability, often disregarding the importance of the people component in a merger process. There appears to be a gap in the literature with regards to the contribution that lower level employees make towards the successful implementation of a merger. Limited literature and research that is focused on lower level employees during a merger in higher education has given rise to an interest in conducting this study.

According to the Department of Education (1997), financial feasibility and sustainability were necessary in the higher education sector. This focus appears to be oblivious to the “people issues” side of a merger (Cartwright and Cooper, 1996). Studies show that “people issues” are often ignored during mergers (Coffey, et al, 2002:8; Anthony, et al, 1996:423; Cartwright and Cooper, 1996:2). Coffey et al (2002:8) agree with Anthony et al (1996:423) that most mergers tend to concentrate on financial and operational issues, and the “people” issues tend to be ignored. Coffey et al (2002:36) point out that top management tends

to concentrate on financial and operational aspects of mergers, whilst paying minimal attention to “people issues”.

In the same breath, reflections on the Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon higher education merger point to financial and operational aspects as being the key focus areas. The existence of two expensive Technikons, one white and one black, sharing a common fence in Durban and offering similar engineering and technology programmes, could not be justified in terms of costs and efficiency. The finances of Technikon Natal had a deficit, whilst M.L. Sultan Technikon had a surplus (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 1999).

Despite the financial disparities between the two institutions, there were several advantages to support a merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, such as smaller qualification offerings and decades of educational experience. The two institutions were located within close proximity for decades, and therefore a merger was a logical outflow of the Department of Education's drive to restructure and improve higher education in South Africa (Jansen, 2002: 9).

According to Jansen (2002:10), it appears to be that, legally, the merger had taken place between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon. However, sharing a fence does not mean that there would be a marriage between the two disparate organisational cultures of the institutions. Jansen (2002:168) argues that each institution wanted to hold on to the uniqueness of its organisational culture which had been developed over decades. It can therefore be argued that organisation culture plays a role during a merger. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:581), organisational culture differences are often underestimated, yet organisational culture incompatibility is more likely to cause merger failure than any other factor. Robbins, Odendaal and Roodt (2003:396) state that each

side may want to hold onto its own organisational culture, even after the merger has occurred. This may lead to resistance towards the development of a new organisational culture.

Studies show that the resistance phenomenon, which appears to be a common problem, was also experienced when Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon merged (Jansen, 2002). Little communication originated from top management regarding the progress of the merger. Minimal information was provided to or encouraged from employees (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 1999). The seemingly limited communication between top management and employees did not, however, curtail the merger from taking place. The merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon institutions took place to increase cost effectiveness and reduce duplication in the higher education sector (Jansen, 2002:10).

The literature suggests that a merger should be “friendly” and forewarns against a lack of communication between stakeholders (Robbins, et al, 2003; Kinicki and Kreitner, 2001:48; Anthony, et al, 1996: 424). Despite a vast array of reported experiences on mergers, it is important to mention that the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon was a voluntary one. However, the merger was resisted and considerable conflict between parties occurred (Jansen, 2002: 137).

Conflict may result in negative perceptions amongst employees. According to Jansen (2002:10), addressing employee perceptions may be beneficial to the successful implementation of a merger. Mergers are a period of intense uncertainty and stress which results in major shifts in expense and employee reductions, particularly for lower level employees in an organisation. During a merger, employee perceptions appear to reveal that some concern is

demonstrated for academics and administration employees in the higher levels, whilst less concern is given to lower level employees (Chalufu, 2002).

According to Mullins (2005), lower level employees tend to be most loyal to an organisation because of the limited options for alternative employment. These employees with low level skills may find it difficult to access alternative employment (Walton, 1999:490; Cartwright and Cooper, 1996:29). It can be argued that lower level employees form an integral part of an organisation's ability to function efficiently and effectively. However, the literature generalises the impact of a merger on employees in an organisation. This study attempts to determine the effects of the merger on employee work ethic, morale and motivation. The results of this study may contribute towards knowledge and discourse on mergers in the higher education sector especially from the perspective of lower level employees.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW: A REFLECTION ON HIGHER EDUCATION MERGERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON EMPLOYEES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Mergers are not a recent phenomenon and have been taking place for many years. The selling point for most of these mergers is the financial benefits. However, mergers do have other benefits such as synergy due to the integration of human, financial and operational resources between merging organisations. Such integrated resources may lead to financial stability and sustainability in new organisations. These potential financial benefits are sometimes overshadowed by socio-economic and technological challenges.

Rapid technological developments and digital networks have led to transcontinental, global and frontier-less corporate competition, production and integrated communications systems. In the private sector, investment banking and corporate finance transactions have reached new records over the years in some parts of the world (David, 2001:24). These transactions have resulted in international, national and cross border mergers. David (2001:80) states that countries are making advances into the 21st century despite the social and economic challenges. Hunsaker (2005:112) agrees with David (2001:78) that mergers are perceived as a response to socio-economic challenges faced by corporations and organisations globally.

While we tend to associate mergers with the corporate sector, we also see a large number of them taking place in the public sector, which includes the higher education sector. Higher education mergers have been implemented due to the

perceived benefits thereof. Governments have introduced mergers to initiate a systematic restructuring of higher education institutions. Higher education restructuring is perceived to improve synergy and cost efficiency. The focus of this study is on lower level employees and the impact and implications for them in higher education mergers. The literature reviews the conceptual clarification of mergers as well as, international and South African perspectives on organisational and higher education institution mergers. Human capital, organisational culture, perceptions, motivation and staff morale are also examined in the context of mergers.

2.2 CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATION OF MERGERS

Most definitions of the “merger” found in the literature tend to resonate far more with private sector mergers. David (2001:182) states that a merger occurs when two organisations of about equal size unite to form one entity. Such mergers are undertaken to meet organisational strategic objectives by forming a single entity. Walton (1999:488) asserts that mergers refer to the joining or gradual blending of two previously discrete entities. Some merging organisations may appear not to share common or collaborative characteristics based on respective distinctive features.

Goedegebuure (1992:16) defines a merger in higher education as a combination of two or more separate institutions into a single new organisational entity, in which control rests with a single governing body and a single chief executive body, and whereby all assets, liabilities and responsibilities of the former institutions are transferred to the single new institution. The South African Higher Education Act defines a merger as two or more public higher education institutions that lose their status as juristic persons on the date that they are merged into a new juristic person (Higher Education Act 99, Section 1). In the

context of this study, mergers will be understood within the aforementioned higher education merger definition.

The creation of one entity through a merger process between higher education institutions is largely done to pursue strategic imperatives and interests between institutions. Some strategic imperatives include the sharing of resources such as infrastructure between merging institutions. This is corroborated by the higher education merger definition provided by Goedegebuure (1992:16). These merger processes are implemented gradually between higher education institutions. Therefore, higher education institutions explore various types of mergers to determine the most appropriate option for achieving strategic objectives.

2.2.1 Types of higher education mergers

There are many types of mergers that may be considered by higher education institutions. These merger types provide different forms that mergers may take in order to achieve a particular strategic objective. The merger type that is implemented by merging institutions is influenced by the unique merger features and characteristics of both institutions (Gaughan, 2011:13).

First, voluntary and involuntary mergers are types of mergers that can be implemented by higher education institutions. Voluntary mergers are initiated by respective institutions who are contemplating merging their institutions. According to Harman and Harman (2008:33), voluntary mergers are largely successful due to considerable support from employees in the respective institutions. In contrast, involuntary mergers are forced mergers initiated by external parties such as government, on higher education institutions. In South Africa, the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon was voluntary whilst subsequent higher education mergers were involuntary.

Second, merging higher education institutions may implement either a consolidation or a take-over merger. Consolidation refers to two institutions of relative equal size that merge. Harman and Harman (2008) argue that these types of mergers are challenging due to decision making on institutional structures, programme offerings and branding. Take-overs occur when a small organisation is incorporated into a large organisation. This type of merger may refer to the incorporation of a department or unit to create a larger institution. In South Africa, the University of Fort Hare took over the East London campus of Rhodes University during a merger process.

Third, we find single sector and cross sectoral mergers. Single sector mergers are mergers that take place within the same sector. Sectors refer to the different types of higher education institutions such as Universities, Universities of Technology or Colleges. The merger between the University of Natal and the University of Durban-Westville, both being Universities, is an example of a single sector merger. Cross-sector mergers involve mergers in different sub sectors within higher education. The merger between Rand Afrikaanse University and Wits Technikon would be deemed to be an example of a cross merger. Cross-mergers are challenging due to the different qualification offerings provided by Universities and Technikons (Harman and Harman, 2003).

Fourth, two-partner and multi-partner merger types also occur in the higher education sector. Two-partner mergers refer to two institutions merging largely in a form of consolidation (Harman and Harman, 2003). The merger between the University of Port Elizabeth and Port Elizabeth Technikon in South Africa is an example of a two-partner merger. Multi-partner mergers take place when there are more than two partners involved in a merger process. Harman and Harman (2003) reveal that multi partner mergers are largely complex to implement in the higher education sector. The merger between the University of

Transkei, Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon is an example of a multi-partner merger in South Africa.

Lastly, horizontal and vertical merger types may be found in mergers in higher education institutions. Horizontal mergers refer to mergers between institutions that provide similar programme offerings (Harman and Harman, 2003). The merger between the University of North West and Potchefstroom University is an example of a horizontal merger. Vertical mergers are generally tougher (Harman and Harman, 2008:33). Vertical mergers are mergers between institutions that provide different programme offerings, such as the merger between the University of the North and the Medical University of South Africa. These types of mergers provide various forms and options that can be considered when merging higher education institutions nationally or internationally.

2.3 MERGERS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR- AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Internationally, mergers in the higher education sector have been taking place across the globe including the United States of America (USA), Australia and Europe (Stephenson, 2011:118). Voluntary mergers were largely initiated by institutions based on perceived synergies between such institutions. This appeared to have influenced the merger process followed by institutions before, during and after a voluntary merger. Involuntary mergers were initiated by respective governments in order to achieve particular strategic goals. Skodvin (1999:66) argued that mergers in higher education were decided by governments or the respective higher education institutions. The focus here is largely on mergers in higher education in the United States of America, United Kingdom, Australia, Finland and Norway.

In the United States of America, some voluntary mergers took place between privately operated small community Colleges and larger established institutions. In Alabama, the merger between three junior Colleges took place voluntarily between the institutions (Stephenson, 2011). This voluntary merger occurred due to the perceived benefits expected after the merger process. Perceived benefits included cost saving by the state resulting from reduced institutional operating costs (Stephenson, 2011:119).

Studies show that higher education mergers were proposed primarily as a cost saving measure in the United States of America. New York University and Brooklyn Polytechnic Institute merged to incorporate the Polytechnics engineering faculty during a take-over merger. New York University did not have an engineering faculty for many years. Polytechnic shared engineering resources and New York University shared prestige through the merger restructuring process.

A merger between Tennessee State University, a predominantly black University, and a predominantly white institution known as the University of Tennessee, Nashville occurred. This merger was implemented to deracialise and restructure the South of America (Stephenson, 2011:118). Similarly, the state proposal for a merger between three historically black institutions and a community College was opposed by institutional staff and students. The institutions involved were the Mississippi University for Women, Mississippi State University and Mississippi Valley State University including the Mississippi community College. Staff perceptions showed that the merger was proposed for political reasons without adequate consultation with the respective institutions by the state (Stephenson, 2011: 124). These perceptions resulted in the merger not taking place between the three institutions.

In the United Kingdom, higher education mergers occurred between small, highly specialised non-University institutions to form larger comprehensive institutions. Colleges were merged with Polytechnics or established Universities (Harman and Harman, 2008: 99). A merger between the University of Wales College of Medicine (UWCM) and Cardiff University took place. UWCM was a small specialised institution whilst Cardiff University was a large comprehensive institution. Some mergers took place based on specialist institutions maintaining their identity after the merger. A merger between the University of London and East European Studies University was undertaken on the basis of maintaining the identity of the respective institutions for strategic purposes, post-merger (Stephenson, 2011:125).

A voluntary merger occurred between Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology in London. This merger was a strategic response to changing times in the higher education sector. Harman and Harman (2008:115) report that before the merger, management handled the process in various ways. First, management did not publicise the proposed merger. Second, the lobbying and canvassing of University employees and structures to support the merger took place. Employee concerns were raised about the merger (Harman and Harman, 2008:115). These concerns included job security for directors in administration and service departments. Employees were promised that there would be no employee redundancies after the merger.

In Australia, studies show that mergers may lead to an improper utilisation of financial and human resources with anxiety, demoralisation and pain experienced by employees (Hawkins, Bond and Scott, 2005). A response to employee experiences resulted in strong leadership and direction provided at the University of Wollongong in order to build staff morale. This resulted in a

well implemented merger between the two institutions of Universities of South Wales and Wollongong (Harman and Meek, 2002; Skodvin, 1999). Harman and Meek (2002:107) suggests that, during a post-merger period, a culture that elicits employee loyalty and a sense of community is encouraged, in order to meet institutional goals.

In the case of higher education mergers in Finland and Norway, traditional Universities merged with Universities of Technology in certain instances. In Finland, a cross merger occurred between the Helsinki University of Technology, Helsinki School of Economics and the University of Art and Design. In Norway, a multi-partner merger took place amongst Colleges. The Telemark College merger involved five Colleges which were the College of Engineering, Health Education, Teacher Training and regional Colleges (Skodvin, 1999).

There appears to be limited literature that focuses on lower level employee perceptions toward merger processes in higher education internationally. It can be argued that lower level employees are not the core function of higher education institutions. Therefore, these lower level employees' concerns may be overlooked during higher education change processes, such as a merger. Emerging concerns and opportunities reported in studies on employees in the higher education sector during merger processes internationally are illustrated in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Emerging concerns and opportunities in higher education mergers at international level

MERGER CONCERNS	MERGER OPPORTUNITIES
Weakened general access to resources	Better management
Uncertainty and risk regarding expectations	Shared administration resources
Anxiety for the unknown	Shared physical facilities
Rising tensions and suspicions	Economies of scale
Potential conflict	Professional and efficient administration
Stress	Financial savings
Lost identity and autonomy	Eliminate duplication
Lost academic culture and tradition	Academic integration
Pursuit of political interests against academic interests	Diversified academic profile
Feelings of anger and bitterness	Informal face-to-face communication
Less job satisfaction and staff redundancies	Strong leadership
Incurred costs and financial viability	Strategic planning
Lack of planning and efficiency	Establishment of committees
More administration of larger organisation	Government support and advice
Quality of course programmes and competency profiles	Improved funding
Takes long for institutions to really merge	Staffing and salary levels improve
Rumour mongering	Merger goals articulated

Source (Harman and Meek, 2002; Skodvin, 1999:69)

These employee merger concerns and opportunities provide insights into higher education mergers that have taken place internationally. Such concerns and opportunities may provide further understanding of mergers in higher education in other parts of the world including South Africa.

2.4 MERGERS IN THE HIGHER EDUCATION SECTOR- A SOUTH AFRICAN PERSPECTIVE

Higher education mergers have taken place in the past decade in post democratic South Africa. When a democratically elected government came into power in 1994, changes began to take place in many sectors of society, including the higher education sector. The society was emerging from a challenging and divisive history. South Africa's history was characterised by racial divisions based on a system of apartheid.

The South African higher education profile prior to mergers consisted of 36 higher education institutions, comprising Universities and Technikons. These higher education institutions were divided along racial lines. Racial divisions created 11 white Universities, ten black Universities, eight white Technikons and seven black Technikons. Such higher education institutions could be further subdivided into Afrikaans Universities and English speaking Universities, Indian institutions and Black homeland institutions (Jansen, 2002:157). Studies show that these institutions had varied capacities for providing higher education based on government support (Jansen, 2002:157).

White higher education institutions had a developed infrastructure and facilities funded and supported by the then apartheid government. Institutional learning resources were available to meet higher education demands as white institutions were located in well developed areas. Resources included libraries,

laboratories, lecture halls and computer centres in these institutions. Therefore, teaching, research and development were well supported by the then government (Balintulo, 2003; Jansen, 2002). In contrast, black institutions were underdeveloped, under resourced and under funded by the then government. Most black institutions were located in homelands that were less supported and funded by the government. This resulted in challenges regarding teaching, research and development in black institutions. Challenges included a shortage of learning resources and funding from the then government (Jansen, 2002:157). Table 2 provides an illustration of higher education institutions in South Africa before mergers took place.

TABLE 2: List of South African Universities and Technikons before the mergers, divided according to race

Historically Black Universities	Historically White Universities	Historically Black Technikons	Historically White Technikons
University of the Western Cape	University of Cape Town	Peninsula Technikon	Cape Technikon
University of Venda	University of Stellenbosch	Border Technikon	Port Elizabeth Technikon
University of Transkei	Rhodes University	Technikon North West	Technikon Natal
University of Fort Hare	University of the Free State	Eastern Cape Technikon	Technikon Witwatersrand
University of North West	Potchefstroom University	M.L. Sultan Technikon	Technikon Pretoria
Vista University	University of South Africa	Mangosuthu Technikon	Technikon South Africa

University of Durban Westville	University of Pretoria	Technikon Northern Gauteng	Vaal Triangle Technikon
University of Zululand	Rand Afrikaanse University		Technikon Free State
University of the North	University of Natal		
Medical University of South Africa	University of the Witwatersrand		
	University of Port Elizabeth		

Source: (Chetty, 2010; Jansen, 2002)

Post-apartheid, the government attempted to restructure the higher education sector in order to deal with sector challenges that included race. The South African democratic government proposed the creation of fewer, larger, more effective and efficient higher education institutions. These higher education institutions were to undergo a restructuring process to meet national higher education strategic goals. Therefore, government initiated a process of developing a legislative framework which facilitated the merging of historically white and historically black institutions. Discussions took place about proposed mergers based on the Education White paper 3 (Hay and Fourie, 2002:101).

The National Commission on Higher Education and the subsequent Education White paper 3 addressed the need for transformation to improve efficiency within the education sector. After considerable debates, the commission proposed the establishment of non-statutory structures to facilitate mergers in higher education institutions (National Commission on Higher Education report, 1996). The Education White paper 3 (1997) proposed the promotion of regional co-ordination and collaboration as part of the national plan to enhance the

articulation of educational programmes and learner mobility. This would lead to shared resources between higher education institutions.

Section 23 of the Higher Education Act (No 101 of 1997) empowered the Minister of Education with the authority to merge two or more public higher education institutions. The Minister had to consult the Council for Higher Education and give notice in the gazette before initiating institutional mergers. Restructuring and transformation of the higher education sector through mergers was perceived as necessary by government (Jansen, 2002:159). Transformation would facilitate change in institutional demographic profile. According to Jansen (2002:160), projected staff equity profiles suggested that the number of black and female academics would increase significantly after institutional mergers. Institutional mergers would facilitate equitable student access to higher education. Therefore, government argued that institutional mergers and transformation were necessary for the above and other reasons.

The proposed higher education mergers were advocated in order to meet the political interests of the post-apartheid government. Pressure to create fewer and larger institutions loomed large on government's political agenda. Political imperatives made mergers in higher education inevitable because of the historical background of South Africa. Therefore, mergers were advocated to address the apartheid legacy of racial divisions between institutions (Reddy, 2007:488). Balintulo (2003:457) agrees with Reddy (2007:487) that programme mergers were a suitable government mechanism for transformation and equity in the higher education sector. Proposed mergers were perceived by government as a way of achieving a political imperative of racial integration. Institutional racial integration had to be introduced through policy documents in order to achieve government political and financial goals.

Proposed higher education mergers were introduced to deal with financial instability in some institutions. Many higher education institutions were financially unsustainable. Financial mismanagement and falling student numbers appeared to have caused financial instability in these institutions. Jansen (2002:159) argues that falling student numbers in higher education institutions were as a result of low pass rates at high school level, and the exodus of black students from black Universities to white Universities. The then Education Minister, Professor Kader Asmal, disregarded the notion of the closing down of higher education institutions to deal with institutional challenges. The former Minister proposed the merger of higher education institutions to address financial challenges of institutions by improving financial stability and viability (Jansen, 2002:158).

Proposed mergers of higher education institutions were based on the perceived financial benefits of merger processes in South Africa. Cartwright and Cooper (1996:20) asserted that, during a merger process, the focus was on financial benefits. It can be argued that financial savings may be achieved through the economies of scale resulting from merger processes. Harman and Harman (2003:30) argued that the eradication of the duplication of academic programmes was a benefit between merging institutions, improving financial viability and stability. It can be argued that financial stability resulted from reduced institutional councils and management structures through mergers. Institutional mergers were implemented by government, resulting in institutions of higher education in South Africa as illustrated in Table 3.

TABLE 3: Merged South African higher education institutions and name changes as at June 2014

MERGED INSTITUTIONS	NAME CHANGES
University of Natal and University of Durban Westville	University of Kwazulu Natal
University of North West and Potchefsroom University	North West University
Technikon Pretoria, Technikon North West and Technikon Northern Gauteng	Tshwane University of Technology
University of Fort Hare and Rhodes University East London Campus only	Fort Hare University
University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth Technikon and Vista campus in Port Elizabeth	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
University of the North and Medical University of South Africa	University of Limpopo
University of Transkei, Border Technikon and Eastern Cape Technikon	Walter Sisulu University
Rand Afrikaans University and Wits Technikon	University of Johannesburg
Cape Technikon and Peninsula Technikon	Cape University of Technology
University of Pretoria and Vista University Mamelodi Branch Only	Pretoria University
M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal	Durban University of Technology
University of South Africa and Technikon South Africa	University of South Africa

Source (Jansen, 2002)

Table 3 points out that institutions were reduced from 36 to 23 as a result of mergers that have taken place. It is important to note that some higher education institutions did not undergo a merger process. These institutions were the University of Cape Town, Stellenbosch University, University of Pretoria, Rhodes University and Wits University in South Africa. In South Africa, most mergers were forced on institutions by government in order to achieve government goals. Higher education mergers were largely implemented to achieve financial and political goals. In light of this study, we now touch on variables reflecting human resource themes and review such themes.

2.5 HUMAN CAPITAL – A MERGER PERSPECTIVE

Much of the literature on human capital is focused on the private sector. Minimal information is available on the public sector. Historically, mergers have been hailed for financial and strategic benefits, as reported extensively in the literature (David, 2001:15; Walton, 1999:489; Cartwright and Cooper, 1996). In this subsection of the literature review, human capital and its implication pre-merger, during and post-merger will be further discussed.

2.5.1 Human capital management: Pre-merger process

Studies show that management of “intangible” human capital is necessary during a merger process (Coffey, Garrow and Holbeche, 2002:12; Brewster, Dowing, Grobler, Holland and Warnich, 1997:29). These intangibles provide an organised system of managing a merger, prior to a merger taking place. “Intangibles” include leadership quality, decision-making speed, idea generation, employee mindset, strategy and talent quality (Coffey, et al, 2002:12). According to Brewster et al (1997:29), “intangibles” refer to technical knowledge; employee talents; competence; motivation; behaviour conduct and transfer of

knowledge. Therefore, there are various human capital elements that should be considered prior to a merger taking place in order to meet organisational strategic objectives and purpose.

The organisation's strategic purpose should be in tandem with the employees' mindset. There should be a link between employee and organisation values, in order to achieve strategic imperatives. The strategic purpose of an organisation should be aligned with its human capital needs. Furthermore, an organisation's strategic purpose may include reducing production costs to improve operational effectiveness through a merger process. The impact of such a purpose on human capital may be considered a critical component in merger process planning (Brewster, et al, 1997). It can be argued that a balance between strategic purpose and human capital leads to organisational collaborations that reduce costly role duplication and rationalisation. Proposed organisation merger processes aim to maximise cost effectiveness by sharing resources, including the integration of human capital during a merger process.

2.5.2 Human capital management: During a merger process

During a merger process, there are requisite elements required to implement the merger process. Management provides a foundation for the merger process to be undertaken by an organisation. Management is involved in the process of communicating merger proposals to all stakeholders, including human capital. Human capital refers to the human resource value contribution towards the organisation after a merger. This involves articulating the merger rationale and implementation process, particularly to employees. Communication method and frequency is conducted by management in order to meet organisational goals and human capital needs in an organisation. Therefore, employees should feel part of the merger process (Harman and Harman, 2008:117).

Various studies have shown that the management of a merger process impacts on human capital (Giessner, Ulrich and Van Dick, 2011:235; Rouzies, 2011:21). Mergers influence an employee's working life in an organisation. Employees may have minimal control over a merger process. According to Greenberg (2011:523), a merger creates a level of concern and uncertainty amongst employees. Employees may leave the organisation, prior and during a merger process, due to concerns such as fitting into the new merged organisation (Walton, 2003: 499; David, 2001: 184; Cartwright and Cooper, 1996:45).

Many studies focus on experiences of employees in professional positions during a merger process (Giessner, et al, 2011:231; Rouzies, 2011:21). One study by Rouzies (2011:21) focused on a merger between two public companies. These two companies had complementary services and brand images. However, the study identified that employees may experience a lack of commitment, attachment and may want to leave the organisation due to a lack of an integration plan during the merger process. This appeared to be influenced by the dominant organisation's pre-merger, during and post-merger process. The dominant organisation in the pre-merger stage is likely to transfer its own systems, styles and procedures after the merger. According to Rouzies (2011:27), employees from the dominant organisation may experience a sense of continuity after the merger. Giessner et al (2011:335) argued that employees may tend to identify with their previous organisation after the merger.

2.5.3 Human capital management: Post-merger process

Harman and Meek (2002) and Skodvin (1999) suggest that it may take a long time for a merger to be fully implemented. This appears to depend on the merger process followed at the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases. The integration of resources and systems contributes towards time spent in

post-merger implementation. It can be argued that the post-merger period requires proper management and insight before, during and after the merger. The process that is followed when managing a post-merger period may lead to the success or failure of a merger.

The success of a merger is characterised by a number of factors. Shared resources, improved profit margins and rationalisation may contribute towards the success of a merger. Harman and Harman (2008:213) conducted a study of the merger between Victoria University of Manchester and the Manchester University of Science and Technology to form the University of Manchester, in the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Harman and Harman (2008:113) identified geographical proximity, previous co-operation, complementary programmes, academic excellence and government support as contributing towards higher education merger success. Studies show that voluntary mergers have a higher possibility of success than involuntary mergers (Harman and Harman, 2008:113).

When mergers are voluntary, there is considerable acceptance of the merger process by stakeholders. Cartwright and Cooper (1996:129) identified key factors such as employee participation, fairness in the merger process; management and employee support; open communication and ideal leadership as important for merger success. These merger success factors influence the human capital during a merger process in an organisation. Factors that affect human capital in a merger are illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4: Factors that affect human capital in a merger

Employee needs and expectations
Employee uncertainty
Redundancy concerns
Continuous communication
Managerial support
Employee value
Employer needs and expectations
Multiskilling
Continuous engagement

Source: (Coffey, et al, 2002; Cartwright and Cooper, 1996)

2.6 ORGANISATION CULTURE- A MERGER PERSPECTIVE

Robbins and Judge (2007:582) define organisational culture as a pattern of basic assumptions, invented, discovered or developed by a given group. Therefore, organisational culture involved employee perceptions of an organisation regarding patterns of beliefs, values and expectations from an organisation. According to Harman and Meek (2002:37), academic culture may be interpreted as historically transmitted patterns of meaning expressed in symbolic form through the shared commitments, values and standards of behaviour peculiar to members of a profession, as well as the traditions, myths, rituals, language and other forms of expressive symbolism that encompass academic life and work.

Academic culture refers to the institutional way of doing things. Such academic cultures depict institutional uniqueness in history and practices. Written statements regarding architectural design of physical spaces, institution buildings, leadership style and human resource practices relates to institutional history and practice. Infrastructure such as buildings depicts historical practices and design influences, including the naming of buildings. Academic culture develops from institutional inception (McCaffery, 2004:32). Institutional employees become part of such practices as influenced by the type of culture found in an organisation.

There are different types of organisational cultures found in the higher education sector. McNays model uses two dimensions of identifying the organisational cultures. The two dimensions are policy and control within an institution. The first type is the classic collegial academy. This type is characterised by freedom for employees to follow career goals without external interference. Policy and control are loose. Management style is democratic. Evaluation is by peer review. Senior professors run discipline based departments. Second, the corporate University culture is depicted by employee loyalty to senior management. Politics and senior management centred decision making is part of this culture. Evaluation is based on performance indicators. Policy is loose but control is tight (McCaffery, 2004:31).

Third, a bureaucratic University is symbolised by rules, regulations, processes and a loose policy. Committees are responsible for decision making and a formal management style is prevalent. Evaluation is externally conducted. Lastly, the enterprise University is characterised by loose policy but tight control. The focus is on competence, including internal and external engagements. Management is supportive with decision making centred in project teams. Repeat business is the evaluation yardstick (McCaffery, 2004).

2.6.1 Organisational culture development

There appears to be more formal literature on the private sector than in the public sector when assessing organisational culture. Therefore, correlations may be drawn between the public and the private sector in relation to organisational culture during mergers. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:583), organisational culture is created by the organisation's founders. This sets the foundation for organisational values that employees adhere to over time. Organisational values refer to matters that are important to an organisation. Organisations have different cultures and values that make them distinct entities. These organisational culture and value differences focus on five dimensions, which are academic role; professional loyalties; teaching versus research; reward structures and governance styles in higher education (Harman and Harman, 2008:35). Employees may conform to the status quo or take risks guided by an institution's culture (Ivancevich, Konopaske and Anthony, 2008: 681). Employees learn about an organisational culture through various processes.

First, organisational culture is entrenched through an employee socialisation process during a change process such as a merger. Socialisation is defined as a process that moulds employees towards organisational culture practices (Robbins and Judge, 2007:583). Socialisation involves the pre-arrival, encounter and the metamorphosis stages. The pre-arrival stage prepares an employee to meet the expectations required by an organisation. The encounter stage refers to the new employee's initial reaction and behaviour in an organisation. The metamorphosis stage includes guiding employee behaviour to fit into an organisational culture. It can be argued that the socialisation of employees post-merger may influence the success of the merger. Socialisation stages largely depend on management involvement in the organisational culture socialisation process.

Second, management influences organisational culture development by establishing core values that employees should follow in an organisation during a change process such as a merger. Management uses symbols, stories, acts and behaviours to entrench a culture of the founding organisation members. For example, management could tell stories about the founders of the organisation. Management provides the basis for expectations that employees should adhere to in an organisation (Ivancevich, et al, 2008:681; Robbins and Judge, 2007: 579). Therefore, management action influences employee behaviour in an organisation. Last, organisational culture is developed through a defined set of parameters for employee expectations. Parameters provide consistency, clarity and stability for employee behaviour in an organisation, including during a merger process.

Organisational culture stability provides clarity for employees regarding organisational expectations. Such culture stability may be elusive, intangible, implicit and taken for granted (Robbins and Judge, 2007:578). Ivancevich et al (2008:681) argue that organisational cultures are elusive and hidden where they cannot be adequately diagnosed, managed or changed within an organisation. Sanctions and rewards are used to correct or encourage employee behaviour as espoused in an organisation's culture. Organisational culture parameters and compatibility provide guidance for employees in a changing environment.

2.6.2 Organisational culture compatibility

Organisations undergo changes over time as a result of a dynamic environment. These organisation changes may include a merger process as a response to a changing environment. It can be argued that organisational culture compatibility should be considered as part of a merger change process. According to Cartwright and Cooper (1996:77), considerable concern should be given to

ensuring cultural compatibility between merging organisations. Harman and Harman (2003:37) agree with Cartwright and Cooper (1996:77) that a “cultural fit” between merging organisations is necessary to avoid culture clashes.

Organisational culture clashes between merging organisations are likely during a merger process (Carleton and Lineberry, 2004:13). These culture clashes are characterised by a ‘them versus us’ attitude; praising and holding on to the former organisation’s name and pedigree. Such clashes may involve undermining new employees and office political infighting, as a result of the merger process. These clashes and the size of merging organisations may support or hinder the merger integration process between employees. The size of merging organisations may impact on culture compatibility. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:580), when a smaller organisation merges with a larger organisation, the smaller organisation may be expected to adopt the culture of the larger organisation. These merger processes have an impact on employees based on their perceptions pre-merger, during and post-merger.

2.7 PERCEPTIONS - A MERGER PERSPECTIVE

Perceptions are used to view and respond to situations encountered by people. These perceptions assist in attempting to make sense of the world. It can be argued that people perceive a situation through diverse lenses. These ways of perceiving appear to be influenced by a perceiver’s sense of knowing about the world. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:146), factors in the perceiver, target and situation influence human perceptions. The perceiver is the person viewing a situation. The target refers to the object or situation that is perceived. The situation is the context underpinning the situation that is perceived. Therefore, people, including employees, perceive situations in order to make decisions.

Employees have perceptions about organisations that they work for. It may be argued that employee perceptions influence employee response to an organisation, particularly during changes. When an organisation undergoes changes such as a merger process, employees form perceptions about the merger. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:148), perceptions refer to a process of organising and interpreting sensory impressions in order to attach meaning to an environment. Perception is defined as a process where people select, organise, and interpret information. An active and complex process commences where people make sense of situations confronted, within a reasonable time (Greenberg, 2011:103). People encounter various situations and targets in various contexts that include organisations.

Various situations require people to decide the object to perceive at any given time. According to Robbins and Judge (2007:152), a long time would be required to analyse many targets and situations. Therefore, employees use rapid methods of perceiving situations like mergers which may result in perceptual shortcuts. Perceptual shortcuts are used to minimise the time it would take to perceive objects and situations (Mullins, 2010: 239). The notion of employee perceptions is important because employees are seldom passive observers of events that occur in the workplace. Employee perceptions have an impact on employee behaviour and response to an organisation, in spite of possible perceptual errors.

2.7.1 Perceptions and the merger process

Employee perceptions play a role during a change process, including mergers. Seijts and Roberts (2009:193) conducted a study on employees during a merger in the public sector. The study argued that when change occurred, employees may experience skepticism regarding fitting into the organisation after the

change. This skepticism may be based on employee competence levels. Studies show that employees who have competence confidence are more likely to perform better after a merger process in comparison to those who are less confident. The study emphasised the importance of organisation support and leadership during a change process. It can be argued that employee experiences recorded in the study may be used to understand further employee experiences during a merger process.

Mergers may be voluntary or involuntary prior to implementation within an organisation. According to Walton (1999:490), employee reactions to an involuntary merger follow various stages. The first stage involves disbelief and denial. Employees experience shock and wish that the merger would not take place. The second stage includes feelings such as anger, rage and resentment as a result of realising that the merger will take place. Such employee feelings may be targeted towards the initiators of the merger process.

The third stage is characterised by emotional bargaining, anger and depression regarding the merger process. Fear and uncertainty regarding job security develops resulting in entrenched anger. According to Walton (1999), employees become angry at not anticipating the merger process and nostalgia is experienced. Concerns about employee's existing skills and required skills in the merged organisation emerge. The last stage refers to the acceptance of the merger. These stages attempt to expand on employee perceptions and experiences pre-merger, during and post-merger (Walton, 1999:490). Given that the Durban University of Technology merger was voluntary, we would expect that these perceptions and attitudes would be absent. However, it seems to be the opposite as seen later in the case study.

According to Schraeder (2001:191), employee perceptions about an organisational change that includes mergers influence employee commitment. Communication and job security concerns have an impact on employee response to a proposed merger. The study recommended early communication with employees about the proposed merger. Employee perceptions and attitudes should be assessed prior, during and after a merger process to facilitate support from employees. Therefore the merger process should involve employees prior and during the merger process in order to create support for implementation (Schraeder, 2001:191).

Studies show that organisational understanding shown during a merger process can improve employee loyalty post-merger. Chun (2009:473) argued that when an organisation showed conscientiousness towards employees, employees were more likely to feel a sense of satisfaction and attachment to the organisation. This study was conducted on a merger that took place as a result of organisational crises characterised by voluntary resignations and underperformance. Chun (2009:479) concluded that some employees had negative feelings towards the merger process. After the merger process, post-merger integration and motivation of employees is necessary to support the merger progress.

2.8 MOTIVATION- A MERGER PERSPECTIVE

2.8.1 Motivation concept

Greenberg (2011:244) defines motivation as a set of processes that arouse, direct and maintain human behaviour towards attaining a goal. Robbins and Judge (2007:186) agree with Greenberg (2011:245) that motivation is a willingness to exert high levels of effort towards organisational goals,

conditioned by the effort's ability to satisfy some individual need. According to Bergh and Theron (2007:156), motivation is a process that involves the purposiveness of behaviour. There appears to be various factors that contribute towards motivation of an individual. There are many theories that attempt to provide knowledge on motivation, including content and process theories (Mullins, 2010: 259).

2.8.2 Content motivation theories

Content motivation theories are about the nature of needs that motivate employees in the workplace (Mullins, 2010:480). Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, which is a content theory, states that human beings are always wanting more depending on their needs (Mullins, 2010: 480). Maslow's theory identified security, as one of the needs for motivation purposes. In an organisation, employee job security may be applied to Maslow's security level need (Mullins, 2010).

Job security was a consideration when organisations, including higher education institutions, underwent a merger process. When higher education institutions underwent a merger process, employees regarded job security as a cause for concern (Reddy, 2007:486). The social needs level is also identified in Maslow's theory of motivation. Employees have a social need to relate to other employees for motivation purposes. During a merger process, the integration of employees to promote social needs satisfaction is encouraged as explained elsewhere in the literature.

2.8.3 Process motivation theories

Process motivation theories identify the variables that influence motivation, through behaviors and actions of employees in an organisation (Mullins, 2010:489). Goal setting theory, as an example of a process motivation theory, involves the process of determining specific levels of performance to be attained by employees (Mullins, 2010:498). An assigned goal influences people's beliefs about their ability to perform a task within an organisation, including higher education institutions (Greenberg, 2011:248; Robbins and Judge, 2007:197).

Higher education institutions that undergo a merger may influence the propensity of employees to achieve goals pre-merger, during and post-merger. Mergers may influence employees to feel a sense of uncertainty about the future. Uncertainty emanates from unfulfilled personal goals such as clear career paths and growth opportunities. These employee experiences could influence goal setting and achievement (Mullins, 2010:276). It can be argued that goals are set based on the way jobs are designed.

The way that a job is designed influences the motivation levels of employees. Hackman and Oldham's job characteristic model refers to job redesign (Greenberg, 2011). This model identifies five characteristics which are skills variety; task identity; task significance; autonomy and feedback. These characteristics should be considered when designing a job. Job design may assist employees in achieving meaning, responsibility and results in a job. Therefore, motivation of employees can be achieved in an organisation (Greenberg, 2011:268). Process and content theories provide insights about factors that influence employee motivation in an organisation, particularly in the higher education sector. Studies show that, during a merger process, people and motivation levels are overlooked. These employee motivation levels are likely to be affected by staff morale in an organisation.

2.9 STAFF MORALE- A MERGER PERSPECTIVE

There appears to be a gap in the literature with regards to the concept of staff morale, particularly in relation to mergers in higher education institutions. Therefore, staff morale is discussed within the context of employee attitudes and job satisfaction. According to Mullins (2010: 573), staff morale can be viewed in terms of the mental attitudes of employees towards an organisation. Gulliver, Towell and Peck (2003:102) used job satisfaction and role ambiguity as a basis for discussing staff morale in a study on the public sector. This study attempted to determine changes in job satisfaction and morale during an integration process in an organisation. The study concluded that employees should be involved before, during and after organisational restructuring in order for integration to take place. This would improve staff morale in an organisation through appropriate leadership.

According to Ngambi (2011:764), mergers in higher education have led to decreased staff morale which has caused dissatisfaction. The study focused on the relationship between leadership and staff morale at a South African University. Recommendations emanating from the study included that, leadership should focus on communication in order to improve staff morale. During a change process, employees are likely to experience low or high staff morale in an organisation. A number of factors that may lead to low staff morale have been identified by Mullins (2010:573). These are:

- Inconsistent and arbitrary decisions;
- Insufficient delegation;
- Unclear job descriptions and performance assessment;
- Competing organisation pressures;
- Management overload;
- Inadequate support systems and
- Conflict and lack of coordination

It can be argued that these factors that lead to low staff morale require consideration in dealing with employees, particularly lower level employees in an organisation. Organisations that undergo changes should consider the implications of such changes on staff morale. Changes may include mergers that take place in public and private organisations. Therefore, mergers particularly in higher education institutions may influence staff morale, motivation and perceptions of lower level employees at pre-merger, during and post-merger phases.

2.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter covered the literature that relates to mergers in organisations as is applicable to higher education institutions. International and national perspectives were provided regarding mergers in higher education, with themes emerging from the literature discussion. These themes included the strategic and financial focus of mergers. Processes that were followed pre-merger, during and post-merger had an impact on merged higher education institutions. This chapter focused on perceptions, motivation and staff morale as perspectives that relate to mergers in higher education. These perspectives provided theoretical and practical insights into mergers and employees in the higher education sector.

CHAPTER 3

MINI CASE STUDY ON THE MERGER BETWEEN TECHNIKON NATAL AND M.L. SULTAN TECHNIKON

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this mini case study is on the merger between M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. Being a voluntary merger, it resulted in a new institution called the Durban Institute of Technology (DIT) formed in 2002 which subsequently became the Durban University of Technology (DUT) in 2006. The case study covers the merger process and related merger elements. An in-depth description of the Durban University of Technology merger process addressing pre-merger, during and post-merger is covered in this chapter.

Mergers took place in the context of a democratically elected government of South Africa attempting to introduce changes to the higher education sector. The higher education merger process appeared to have challenges because of different ideological positions. The proposed mergers were an endeavour to move away from the geo-political imagination of the apartheid planners of the past, through the creation of a single, coordinated system of higher education without racialised inequalities (Jansen, 2002). A mix of politics, legislation and persuasion informed the proposed mergers of higher education institutions (Asmal, 1999). There was an interplay between government public policy and higher education institution missions with regards to mergers.

The National Commission on Higher Education and the subsequent Education White paper 3 (1997) addressed the need for a rationalisation of the sector towards greater effectiveness. After considerable debate, the commission proposed the establishment of non-statutory structures to facilitate mergers in higher education institutions (National Commission on Higher Education report, 1996). The Education White paper 3 (1997) emphasised the promotion of regional co-ordination and collaboration as part of the national plan to enhance articulation of programmes, mobility of learners between institutions and the sharing of resources, including scarce academic staff. Issues of regional co-operation, as well as part or complete mergers of higher education institutions were also raised.

Consequently, section 23 of the Higher Education Act (No 101 of 1997) gave the Minister of Education the authority, after consulting the Council for Higher Education, to merge two or more public higher education institutions into a single public higher education institution. This section of the Act indicated the importance placed on the requirements for rationalisation of higher education institutions and increasing the value received for the subsidy funding provided by the state. The objectives of the Higher Education Act were clear and the proposed merger between the institutions would respond to government needs.

The National Commission for Higher Education, the subsequent Education White paper 3 (1997) and the new Higher Education Act made it clear that issues of rationalisation and the merger of higher education institutions in South Africa would be afforded high priority. This commission believed it would eliminate unnecessary duplication in academic and administrative service provisions. Therefore, in 1989 investigations were conducted in order to look into the potential for mergers in higher education institutions. In South Africa, the merger between M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal remains the only

voluntary merger, the rest being the outcome of state intervention (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). This merger was the first of its kind in South Africa. The merger process is outlined on a systematic timeline in Table 5.

TABLE 5: Pre-merger, during and post-merger process

PRE- MERGER EVENTS UP TO 2001	DURING MERGER EVENTS (2002-2003)	POST- MERGER EVENTS (2003-2005)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial meetings between rectors, councils and executives • Pricewaterhouse Coopers hired to conduct feasibility study • Disagreements between creating multi campuses or complete merger • Imbizo held with unions on way forward • Joint councils, senate and Committees of Twelve (COT) established. • Government gets involved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Merger implemented • Anderson Consulting hired • Professor Ncayiyana (Vice Chancellor) faces staff concerns regarding the merger • AIMS (Audit Institutional Management System) report makes recommendations • Task teams established to focus on specific merger areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act would affect 230 employees as a result of the merger • Some regarded the merger as a takeover by M.L. Sultan Technikon • Unions participated in the merger. There were disagreements between staff regarding the merger • Staff concerns regarding inadequate consultation

(Adapted from Chetty, 2010)

After the decision was made to merge Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, a merger process was undertaken to facilitate the voluntary merger. The merger process involved a number of stakeholders from both institutions. Stakeholders that were involved in the merger process included top management, trade unions, students and government. Various stakeholders were involved in the merger process to varying degrees, depending on the events that unfolded at the time.

3.2 BACKGROUND TO THE MERGER OF TECHNIKON NATAL AND M.L. SULTAN TECHNIKON

3.2.1 Pre-merger developments

The merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon can be traced back to 1989 up until its conclusion in 2004. During this period of 15 years, the merger process stalled at different points for various reasons. However, before a discussion on the background of the merger is introduced, a brief overview of the historical developments of the two institutions is provided in this section of the chapter. The historical overview will assist with an understanding of the emerging values and organisational cultures that gave rise to the unique institutional climates associated with Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon respectively.

Technikon Natal has a rich history that spans over many decades. The institution was founded in the early 1900's by physicist Dr Samuel George Campbell, who was committed to building a higher education institution to advance and develop the white ruling class in the Natal province. Technikon Natal is one of the oldest tertiary institutions in the Kwazulu Natal province of South Africa. The institution has undergone many name changes as its study

programme offerings changed over the years. Technikon Natal has been known as a Technical Institute, a Technical College and Technikon Natal in later years (Chalufu, 2002).

Whilst Technikon Natal provided various study options for students, community engagement and research was emphasised in the institution. The institution grew in student numbers to a point where the Berea campus was established as a response to a growing student population. Technikon Natal would later establish two more campuses in the Midlands, these being Indumiso campus and Riverside campus. The three campuses provided a variety of study programme offerings in different faculties that included the Arts, Commerce and Engineering (Chetty, 2010:89; Jansen, 2002).

Hajee Malukmohammed Lappa (or M.L.) Sultan was the founder of M.L. Sultan Technikon College. M.L. Sultan, the founder, required additional funding to secure the establishment of the higher education institution. The funding was secured by advocate Albert Christopher in 1927 shortly after the drafting of the Cape Town Agreement, under which Indians faced reparations if they did not possess a formal education qualification in South Africa. M.L. Sultan Technikon College had undergone a number of name changes, such as the Indian Technical Institute, Advanced Technical College to a Technikon in the 1970's. The institution had branches in Tongaat and Umkomaas in an attempt to be close to its students (Sattar and Cooke, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

M.L. Sultan Technikon is regarded as a historically disadvantaged Technikon and had its origins in the colonial past of Kwazulu Natal province in South Africa. It remained, as a result of apartheid, an exclusively Indian institution because of enforced racial segregation during that period (Chetty, 2010:91; Jansen, 2002). Over many years, Technikon Natal continued as a predominantly White

institution and M.L. Sultan Technikon as an Indian institution. Yet, the two institutions were, for decades, literally separated by a physical fence, providing the same academic programmes in close proximity. In the words of the Vice Chancellor of M.L. Sultan Technikon “The removal of the crooked white fence that physically kept us apart for the better part of the last century may be likened to the triumphant Berlin Wall” (M.L. Sultan Technikon Annual Review, 2001).

Therefore from a purely practical point of view, the merger of these two Technikons in Kwazulu Natal made eminent sense. The two Technikons offered substantially the same study programmes and operational functions, divided across racial lines. Technikon Natal offered 67 different study programmes, whilst M.L. Sultan Technikon provided 46 study offerings, with 31 study programmes being similar (Chetty, 2010).

There are many considerations with regards to the merging of higher education institutions. Geographical proximity is considered to be one of the requirements for mergers of higher education institutions to take place (Chalufu, 2002; Skodvin, 1999). Hence, one of the considerations given by the former Minister of Education, Professor Kader Asmal, when a decision was taken to support the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, was the close proximity of the two institutions (Jansen, 2002). However, Professor Asmal did not consider such in the Walter Sisulu University merger, for example.

Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon shared many synergies, one being similar visions for higher education. The visions of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon overlapped, as they both strived for technological leadership in Africa. Historically, the sizes of the two institutions were about the same, minimising a potential for a takeover of one institution by the other (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). Hunt (2003) emphasised the importance of

considering the size of the institutions prior to a merger and stated that when one institution is substantially larger than the other, there was difficulty in achieving synergy between such merging institutions.

According to Hunt (2003) the advantages of a merger between institutions include increased cost effectiveness; a wider skills pool; resources used to provide a better education service and scope for increasing the depth of the education service provided by merged institutions. These advantages potentially existed in the M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal merger.

From a historical perspective, the merger roots can be traced to a meeting that occurred between the three Vice Chancellors of Technikon Natal, M.L. Sultan Technikon and Mangosuthu Technikon in 1989. The meeting aimed to discuss the feasibility of merging the three higher education institutions. However, a decision was made that, based on the proximity, size, closeness of the visions and programme offerings, it was more feasible to proceed with plans to merge Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon (Sattar and Cooke, 2010; Chalufu, 2002). The period 1990 to 1994 was characterised by no documented evidence on moving ahead with the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon. This period should be contextualised within the rapid political changes that were taking place in South Africa. The government's focus shifted to the central political arena, disregarding peripheral issues temporarily.

After the first democratic elections in 1994, not only was change anticipated in the political arena, but also in the sector of higher education. The demographics of the South African student population came under the spotlight. The government set out to address inequalities relating to student access and funding at higher education institutions (Balintulo, 2003; Jansen, 2002). The proposed changes would affect both institutions that were regarded previously as advantaged and disadvantaged respectively.

At Technikon Natal, this transition meant moving from a historically White institution to that of integrating all racial groups. At M.L. Sultan Technikon, which was regarded as a predominantly Indian institution, the transformation enforced by the government demanded that the student population should comprise a representative percentage of black students based on the South African population figures (Balintulo, 2003; Reddy, 1998).

Transformation was taking place in the South African higher education sector. This was in response to redressing the past inequalities in the higher education system. Given the budget of public and private spending on higher education, and their pivotal role in the nation's economic and social development, expectations were high for institutions to fulfill such expectations. The merger of higher education institutions responded to governments macro-politics against institutional micro politics (Balintulo, 2003; Jansen, 2002; Hay and Fourie 1999; Reddy, 1998). Tierney (1998) perceived higher education as seeking equilibrium between external demands and the values and needs of the institutions.

Government and the Vice Chancellors of M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal continued to explore the possibility of a merger between the two institutions. To initiate the merger project, a steering committee was established, which comprised of the executive committee from each institution. On a number of occasions, discussions took place between the committees. In 1990, the Natal Mercury newspaper reported that a committee of enquiry had been established as far back as the early 1980's to explore the potential for a merger between the two institutions, which resulted in subsequent discussions proceeding to the actual merger. Therefore there were exploratory meetings between the two institutions throughout the 1980's and early 1990's (Chetty, 2010).

Amidst the political and educational changes that occurred in the South African landscape, talks about the merger process between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon continued in 1996, with each Vice Chancellor of the respective institutions meeting their respective executive committees. In the same year, the councils of the two institutions met and a steering committee was established. The steering committee consisted of members from Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon.

Trade unions and student bodies were not represented in the steering committee up until a later stage (Chalufu, 2002). The steering committee's objective was to facilitate the various elements that needed attention during the merger process. Attention was required from the steering committee with regards to elements such as human resources, systems and technology. Each institution had its own distinct elements, which made the respective institutions unique (Chetty, 2010).

Due to the magnitude of the merger process, elements and stakeholders involved, the steering committee established informal management teams that would assist the committee during the merger process. A number of meetings subsequently took place between the steering committee and the informal management teams in order to deal with various elements and the merger process (Chetty, 2010). On the 08 March 1996, councils of both institutions met to discuss further merger possibilities.

On the 27th of March 1996, the Vice Chancellors of the two institutions, including their respective executive committees of council, met to further discuss the possibilities of a merger. There were many meetings between the two institutions at this stage in the merger process. The merger talks between the two institutions seemed to be gathering momentum. The steering committee

made up of members of the executive committee council met on the 10 June 1996 to discuss merger matters.

In 1997, M.L. Sultan Technikon and Natal Technikon councils agreed in principle for the two institutions to merge by forming one council and one executive management structure (Reddy, 2007; Chalufu, 2002). During the latter part of 1996 and during 1997, not much progress was made in terms of merger discussions. This period was fraught with student protests and a Technikon Natal staff strike. According to Chetty (2010) the protests and the strikes were unrelated to the merger discussions.

Merger discussions stalled as a result of disagreements and challenges to a point where a third party had to be brought in to deal with the delayed discussions. In 1999, the Department of Education provided funds for an external facilitator and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) was brought in to facilitate the merger process between the two institutions. PricewaterhouseCoopers assisted with the development of a merger project charter which was approved by the steering committee and eventually a critical path to direct the decision making process between the two institutions was drawn (Chetty, 2010; Sattar and Cooke, 2010; Chalufu, 2002). The merger charter was developed in order to identify the feasibility of the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon, and the options to be considered in facilitating the merger process (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 1999).

The merger project charter document raised a number of concerns that included:

- Lowered academic standards;
- Possible job losses;
- Merger process funds;
- Remuneration and conditions of service differences (Chalufu, 2002:136).

According to Chalufu (2002) these merger concerns were stated by various students and staff members during the merger process. The prolonged period building up to an eventual merger project charter had an impact on the staff members at both Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon. Staff members from both institutions had concerns about the feasibility of the merger, the merger process and the impact of the merger on staff members (Chetty, 2010; Jansen, 2002).

Staff members feared the perceived incompetence of its top management structures due to failing to provide adequate direction or sufficient feedback to all stakeholders and a disregard for the international reputation and high excellence of both institutions (Chalufu, 2002:136). These employee concerns impacted on the institutional climate, which took a complete new trajectory moving from an academic focus to that of uncertainty (Jansen, 2002). This resulted in staff morale at M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal declining over a period of time (Chetty, 2010).

Technikon Natal was experiencing financial difficulties when the merger process was taking place. This was one of the contentious issues regarding M.L. Sultan Technikon refusing to go ahead with the merger process, to a point of using the law to drive the agenda (Chalufu, 2002:143; Jansen, 2002). M.L. Sultan Technikon felt that Technikon Natal was dealing in bad faith by not dealing with its financial challenges prior to the merger taking place. According to Chalufu (2002) and Jansen (2002), M.L. Sultan Technikon was in a much stronger financial position prior to the merger.

The financial standing of Technikon Natal appeared to slow the merger progress. In spite of the financial concerns between the two institutions which led to much contestation, the Department of Education was forging ahead with

the merger (Chalufu, 2002:139; Jansen, 2002; Melck, 2002). According to the Department of Education, the benefits of the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon far outweighed the challenges the merger was facing at the time. The government had a specific interest in the merger going ahead as the merger was the first of its kind in South Africa. The expectation was that the merger would set a foundation for future higher education institution mergers. The government began the process of merging higher education institutions in South Africa, in part, to improve the financial standing of the merging institutions and structures (Jansen, 2002; Melck, 2002).

Trade unions and other employee structures were crucial stakeholders in the merger process as the merger had implications for staff members, especially lower level employees. The mooted cost saving measures through rationalisation of staff members and operations could have implications for trade unions and their members (Jansen, 2002). Therefore trade unions had an interest in the merger process for its members, including lower level employees. The joint trade unions held a labour merger workshop, where chairs of councils, management and the steering committee were invited. However, all the invited parties did not attend but wished the trade unions well in their deliberations (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

Following the trade union workshop, the joint trade unions prepared a document addressed to the chairperson of the merger steering committee. In the document, the trade unions requested that a memorandum be placed on the agenda of the merger process. A meeting with the steering committee was also requested. The memorandum of the trade unions was placed on the agenda of the steering committee meeting. The steering committee then took the decision to meet with the trade unions of both M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. The purpose of the meeting was to engage the trade unions and to provide information regarding merger developments (Chetty, 2010).

At this point in the merger process, an imbizo presented by ACCORD (African Centre for Conflict Resolution and Dialogue) was held at the Durban City hall. All staff members, students and external stakeholders were invited to the imbizo. The idea of the imbizo was to report back on the progress of the merger, provide a vision and allow for responses to the merger process (Sattar and Cooke, 2010; Chalufu, 2002). This would prove to be the forum through which trade unions NUTESA (National Union of Tertiary Employees of South Africa) and NEHAWU (National Education and Health and Allied Workers Union) would strongly raise their employee concerns. Trade union concerns included potential job losses and cost cutting measures that seemed to concentrate on staff members (Chalufu, 2002).

Although the merger was a voluntary merger, employee groups of both Technikons were against the merger and showed their feelings at an imbizo where both staff and students demeaned the merger (Jansen, 2002). Bishop Phillips, Chairperson of Technikon Natal Council and Judge Jali, Chairperson of M.L. Sultan Technikon Council chaired the imbizo, with assistance from the ACCORD agency. Chris Elfick represented PwC as chief project manager. The perception emanating from the imbizo was that there was great dissatisfaction and unhappiness amongst the trade unions, NUTESA and NEHAWU, concerning the merger developments, especially for lower level employees.

Although there was consultation with trade unions, it is unclear in the case study whether lower level employees were a focus during the merger process. Lower level employees in a higher education sector are typically found in administrative and support units and departments. It can be argued that these employees are not perceived as core employees in higher education institutions in comparison to academic staff members. Lower level employees typically hold job positions such as plumber, gardener, artisans, handyman and driver in a higher education

institution. Such employees tend to be characterised by low levels of education and skill, and be located in jobs that are perceived as non-core in higher education.

According to Chalufu (2002:146), non-professional staff members that include lower level employees were predominantly from previously disadvantaged backgrounds at Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon. Lower level employees may be particularly impacted by the merger process with regards to motivation and staff morale. There is limited information regarding the way lower level employees were dealt with or considered during the various debates, meetings and consultations held in respect of the merger process between M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal.

Poorly constructed and deteriorating buildings are not conducive to effective teaching and learning in a university. Lower level employees such as plumbers conduct critical work through the maintenance of university buildings and grounds in order to support effective teaching and learning, for staff members and students. Effective teaching and learning would not take place if the classrooms were not maintained and cleaned by lower level employees. Higher education institutions may not necessarily focus on lower level employees as essential to the strategic function of teaching and learning at a university. Therefore, lower level employees may be vulnerable during strategic change processes such as mergers. Low levels of education and skills of lower level employees mean that these employees could be retrenched as a result of a merger, although this was not the case at the Durban University of Technology.

Although united against the merger, employees were divided along institutional lines, with especially M.L. Sultan Technikon staff members sniping at Technikon Natal (M.L. Sultan Nutesa Newsletter, 2000). There appeared to be

considerably resistance from staff members regarding the merger process, although it was a voluntary merger (Jansen, 2002). With the exception of top management structures in Technikon Natal, other staff members and students at both institutions and, top management at M.L. Sultan Technikon, appeared to be against the merger. The planning and implementation of the merger was largely a top-down process and subject to political intervention (Jansen, 2002).

On the 16 of February 2001, joint councils of the two institutions met to chart a way forward in terms of establishing a single council, senate and chancellor. A Committee of Thirteen (COT) was established in order to implement the merger project charter (Chalufu, 2002). Decisions would need to be made on appointments to a single institutional structure (Jansen, 2002). Stakeholders from both institutions were represented in the Committee of Thirteen structure. The clinching factor appeared to be that mergers were going to be effected nationally between Universities by the South African government therefore mergers were inevitable (Chetty, 2010).

In 2001, the Department of Education started intervening in higher education in the process of creating a number of institutions through mergers. Senior government officials were involved as they had a vested interest in the inaugural merger between M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal. Government's involvement was important in order to provide the financial support for the merger process. Government needed to facilitate the legal requirements to be effected in conjunction with the Higher Education Act. As the merger would be the first of its kind, government was keen to observe the merger process (Jansen, 2002). During 2001, Technikon Natal incorporated Indumiso campus and Gamalakhe as part of government's initiative to reduce the number of Teacher training Colleges (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

Various scenarios were considered by the management of the two institutions regarding the form the merger would take. The Vice Chancellors of both institutions proposed a multiple campus scenario. This meant that institutions would remain where they were located, with satellite campuses based on demand. However, PwC had based their assessment of the form the merger would take on fully integrated institutions. The PwC assessment was supported by the Department of Education. The merger developments went ahead in order to effect the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon as fully integrated institutions (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

3.2.2 During the merger developments

On the 04 of January 2002, the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon was gazetted by the South African government, with the name Durban Institute of Technology. The Higher Education Act afforded the Minister of Education the power to gazette an institution of higher education. One of the objectives of the Higher Education Act was to streamline higher education institutions to improve the institutions' academic and financial standing. The merger of the two institutions was the first of its kind by the Department of Education (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). Prior to the actual date of the merger (01 April 2002), integration of systems and staff had to take place between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon.

An interim council was established to govern the merged institution until the appointment of a new council. Professor Ncayiyana, who was from M.L. Sultan Technikon was appointed as an interim Vice Chancellor. Tensions arose regarding the appointment of senior managers for this transitional period. Most senior managers came from M.L. Sultan Technikon resulting in some Technikon Natal staff members characterising the merger as a takeover by M.L. Sultan

Technikon (Jansen, 2002). However, Technikon Natal appeared to support the merger due to the anticipated higher remuneration. M.L. Sultan Technikon was perceived as paying employees higher salaries than Technikon Natal (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

The merger process appeared to have an impact on employees from both institutions. Staff morale and uncertainty resulted in general anxiety with regards to the process that was being followed in merging the two institutions. Relations between staff members of the two institutions were beginning to strain (Chalufu, 2002:147). In 2002, M.L. Sultan Technikon employees raised objections about the merger process, using a court interdict to stop the merger from taking place (Chalufu, 2002). The objections arose out of concerns about the financial standing of Technikon Natal prior to the merger.

Technikon Natal was incurring a financial deficit. M.L. Sultan Technikon was concerned about the debt that Technikon Natal would bring to the merged institution. Technikon Natal management felt that the credible name of Technikon Natal was being tainted by M.L. Sultan Technikon management concerning the financial standing issue (Chetty, 2010). Management of the integration of the two institutions became eminent in part due to the disagreements that were taking place at the time.

New project managers were brought in to manage the merger integration process. Project managers had to integrate academic rules, examinations and fees from the respective institutions. Conditions of service that impacted on employees were not part of the integration process at this point in the merger process. Trade unions raised the issue of conditions of service as a cause for concern. The trade unions felt that there was not enough consultation and communication from top management prior to the merger and during the merger

process. The fear was that departments would merge before the conditions of service concerns were resolved (Chalufu, 2002:146).

M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal were officially merged on the 01 April 2002, resulting in the establishment of the Durban Institute of Technology. Although the merger officially took place on the 01 April 2002, the institutions continued as independent units until January 2003, when all departments were integrated (Jansen, 2002). Some departments were overstaffed after the institutions had merged. As a way of dealing with overstaffing, voluntary severance packages were offered to staff members. Some staff members, including lower level employees, took the severance packages and left the institution. The severance package was used by the Durban Institute of Technology as a way to cut back on employee costs and improve operational effectiveness and efficiency. The packages led to changes in team structures and departments at the Durban Institute of Technology, post-merger (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

3.2.3 Post-merger developments

The post-merger period was characterised by challenges that included a streamlining of institutional operations and costs. In 2003, Anderson Consulting was hired to assist with post-merger developments. An Audit and Institutional Management System (AIMS) report was compiled in order to improve the financial standing of the merged institution. The objective of the AIMS report was to minimise operational costs and maximise the resources of the institution. The AIMS report proposed recommendations on ways of strengthening and improving the financial standing of the merged institution through balancing costs and resources (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

One of the recommendations of the AIMS report was the application of Section 189 of the Labour Relations Act of South Africa. Section 189 covers the guidelines for retrenching employees within the Labour Relations Act framework (Chetty, 2010). The AIMS report recommended ways of reducing operational costs within the institution. The retrenchment of non-core employees was perceived as a method of improving operational efficiency at the Durban Institute of Technology. Potential job losses arising from the merger and closure of departments were a concern to staff members including lower level employees (Chalufu, 2002). Lower level employees may be considered a particularly vulnerable group as such employees may be easily replaced.

The AIMS report recommended the closure of academic departments that were considered to be non-value adding post-merger. Deliberations took place regarding the characteristics of non-value adding departments. According to the AIMS report recommendations, the photography department was an example of a non-value adding department. The expectation was that the closure of non-value adding academic and support departments would improve the financial standing of the merged institution (Chetty, 2010). Support departments included the maintenance and building and grounds departments where lower level employees were largely located in the institution.

The AIMS report recommended the outsourcing of some operational functions in order to cut back on operational costs and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the proposed merged institution. The closure of departments had implications for various stakeholders with an interest in the merger process. The AIMS report would prove to be an area of much contestation from the different stakeholders, particularly employees (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

Employees of the newly merged institution were going to be the most affected by the recommendations of the AIMS report. Trade unions vehemently opposed the recommendations of the AIMS report. The unions involved were NUTESA (National Union of Tertiary Employees of South Africa) and NEHAWU (National Education Health and Allied Workers Union). NUTESA represented mostly academics and administration staff members, whilst NEHAWU represented support and technical staff members. Trade unions felt that there was not enough consultation and communication from top management regarding the merger process including the AIMS report recommendations. The trade unions had an interest in the recommendations of the AIMS report as they wanted to protect their members against potential job losses (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002).

Friction continued post-merger with Makhanya referring to the “Durban Institute of Technology as a troubled institute... dogged by a series of contraventions since its formation, which seems to move from one crisis to the next with such frequency that morale was low: that divisions between groups is high, unless something radical is done very shortly the entire organisation fails” (Editorial, Independent on Saturday, 16.08.2003). Conflict amongst staff members that included lower level employees was rising because of uncertainty and tensions post-merger (Hay and Fourie, 2002; Jansen, 2002). There were reports amongst staff members that some former Technikon Natal employees perceived former M.L. Sultan Technikon employees with suspicion and vice versa (Chalufu, 2002). However, after a long and arduous process related to the AIMS report that had implication for employees, no retrenchments took place (Chalufu, 2002; Chetty, 2010).

During 2003, government provided guidelines for how mergers should be managed between institutions. Government was anticipating future mergers of higher education institution that would take place in South Africa. Government was hoping to use the lessons learnt from the merger of Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon as the first merger of its kind for future higher education institution mergers. According to Cartwright and Cooper (1996), mergers are largely conducted to improve the financial standing of merging institutions.

Difficulties were experienced by the Durban Institute of Technology with regards to the finances of the institution. There appeared to be no clear direction about the form the new institution would take in terms of reporting lines. According to Chalufu (2002), lines of responsibility and accountability were unclear, leading to difficulty in holding employees accountable. Some employees took the voluntary severance package, leaving uncompleted projects without handing over projects to remaining staff members. However, the merging of departments in the merged institution went ahead at the Durban Institute of Technology (Chalufu, 2002).

According to Chalufu (2002), the merging of departments occurred for the most part successfully. The institutions' facilities were not of the same standard with Technikon Natal having better facilities than M.L. Sultan Technikon (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002:141). This presented challenges with regards to the moving of departments and staff members. The move of departments to other campuses meant that some staff members found themselves in better or worse facilities than before the merger. Employees had to adjust to the new working conditions. The administration and support departments were the first to merge (Chetty, 2010).

A human resources task team was formed to deal with human resources related concerns. Disagreements were experienced regarding remuneration, which the human resources team had to manage. Technikon Natal attempted to effect parity in terms of conditions of service, especially in relation to pay prior to the merger taking place. This led to M.L. Sultan Technikon organising a court interdict to prevent Natal Technikon from going ahead with the parity changes. M.L. Sultan Technikon felt that Technikon Natal was acting in bad faith. The perception was that the proposed parity changes would further increase the debt Technikon Natal was bringing to the merger (Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002).

An academic merger committee was formed to facilitate the merging of academic departments (Chalufu, 2002). Some staff members found the merger traumatic, stressful and that it impacted on staff morale (Jansen, 2002). Post-merger, Technikon Natal staff members supported the merger as the remuneration and benefits of M.L. Sultan Technikon were comparatively much higher. Trade unions would prove to be instrumental in fighting for better conditions of service for its members. Each trade union wanted to protect the interests of its own members. Talks of merging between the two unions stalled (Chetty, 2010). This resulted in a new trade union being formed. Joint supervision of departments was used as a way of merging the institutions and encouraging unity. The job grading system was introduced to promote integration between the two institutions. However, the job grading system had many challenges (Chetty, 2010).

The integration process was not without contestation, with staff members questioning the academic credentials of other staff members (Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). For administration and support staff members the placement exercise was a cause for concern. Employees left the institution for various reasons, with vacant positions not being replaced. Placement was a concern for

employees at the institution, including lower level employees especially supervisors who were to be merged (Chalufu, 2002).

Interviews were conducted with prospective supervisors as there could only be one supervisor in each unit. The unsuccessful supervisor would be redeployed, although most unsuccessful supervisors resigned by taking the voluntary severance package (Chalufu, 2002). Pre-merger, during and post-merger, there appeared to be merger concerns that remained unresolved including human resource matters that affected lower level employees at the institution.

3.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the events and the process of merging Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon that took place over a long period of time. A number of stakeholders were involved in the merger process through various meetings and engagements. As a first merger of its kind in the South African higher education landscape, the merger between the two institutions faced challenges. The challenges included dealing with the integration of employees from respective institutions.

It is not evident in this Durban University of Technology case study whether there was a long term integration plan, especially in respect of employees. The merger had implication for employees with regards to job security, job satisfaction, motivation and staff morale. The involvement of trade unions was limited at the beginning of the process but grew stronger as they participated in subsequent committees. The merger process was long and arduous, with limited direction of where the institutions were going. This led to much contestation during the merger process, especially from employees of both institutions.

Given that this study focused on mergers particularly on lower level employees, the great difficulty has been to isolate lower level employees as a unique group in mergers. It seems that their treatment was largely no different to other employees. The purpose of this research study was to investigate the impact of mergers on job satisfaction and staff morale of lower level employees at the Durban University of Technology. Lower level employees appeared not to be the focus of events that occurred pre-merger, during and post-merger. This was characterised by the limited information available regarding lower level employees in the merger process.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers aspects that relate to the research methodology used for the study. The study employed the mixed methods technique for conducting the research. This method was deemed most appropriate to respond to the research questions of this study. Mixed methods are a developing methodology for conducting research. Mixed methods refer to the use of quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study (Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009:266).

The use of both quantitative and qualitative methods was expected to provide rich data to answer the research questions. This study aimed to ascertain the impact of mergers on lower level employees at the Durban University of Technology. In respect of the quantitative method, the following discussion addresses research design, data collection and analysis including validity, ethical considerations and limitations of the study. Quantitative and qualitative sections of the study will be explained separately to facilitate clarity of the mixed methods used.

4.2 MIXED METHODS RESEARCH DESIGN

A mixed methods paradigm is an area of research design that is developing in research studies. Mixed methods research uses quantitative and qualitative methods in the same study for understanding and corroboration (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010:395; Leech and Onwuegbuzie, 2009:265; Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009:31). In some studies, a single research design may not

adequately answer the research questions of the study. Mixed methods may follow different processes for collecting, analysing and presenting data. The process that is followed in data collection and analysis is determined by the research questions of the study (Teddlie and Tashakkori, 2009:33). Research questions for this study have necessitated the use of mixed methods of which there are different types of mixed methods.

There are different types of research methods that can be used in a study. These methods are sequential explanatory, sequential exploratory and concurrent triangulation. A sequentially explanatory method refers to conducting quantitative research and then qualitative research. A sequential exploratory method is about conducting qualitative and then quantitative methods. Concurrent sequential research methods involve conducting qualitative and quantitative methods at the same time resulting in triangulation. Triangulation is reporting results from different sources (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010: 399).

4.2.1 Rationale for mixed methods

A mixed methods methodology was expected to provide rich data to respond to the research questions of the study. The first research question was to ascertain the impact of mergers on lower level employee motivation and staff morale at the Durban University of Technology. The second research question was to determine the perceptions of employees towards the merger process pre-merger, during and post-merger.

According to Babbie and Mouton (2001), it is said that mixed methods may lead to confusion. Traditionally, research studies used a single research method. However this appears to be changing as noted by the increasing number of studies that use mixed methods for research purposes. Mixed methods may be

used to minimise possible bias from using a single research design (Babbie and Mouton, 2001). Questions regarding sampling, drawing research questions and credibility of the research may arise from mixed methods research. Concerns regarding the validity and reliability of the research design that use mixed methods may arise. The process followed in undertaking this study will be explained extensively to deal with some of these possible concerns.

In a study by Gwarinda and Chipunza (2010) on leadership in higher education during a merger process, a mixed method technique was used. This study focused on the responses of employees towards a merger process and leadership. In a study by Wanberg and Banas (2000) on change and employee satisfaction, descriptive statistics were used. In another study by Buitendach and De Witte (2005) on job satisfaction of maintenance workers in a parastatal, descriptive statistics were used. The information gathered from these studies and other studies will be used to guide the research methodology section of this study.

4.3 QUANTITATIVE METHODS

4.3.1 Research design

Non-experimental descriptive quantitative methods were used in this study. Non-experimental research is research that contains no manipulation of variables (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010; De Vos, et al, 2005). For this study, there was no intervention used on the participants during the investigation on mergers. Descriptive statistics is a statistical procedure that is used to describe something. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), the use of descriptive statistics is the most fundamental way to describe and summarise data, and it is indispensable in interpreting the results of quantitative research.

The process followed in collecting and analysing the data for the quantitative part of the study is discussed further.

4.3.1.1 *Research site*

The research site for this study was the Steve Biko campus at the Durban University of Technology. This site was selected because the potential respondents were located at the Steve Biko campus. The other Durban University of Technology campuses were not part of this study. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2010), site selection should be based on rich data being acquired based on the subject under investigation. Therefore, respondents who could provide rich data with regards to the merger and lower level employees were located at the site.

4.3.1.2 *Sample*

Purposive sampling was used for this study. Purposive sampling refers to selecting subjects with certain characteristics (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010; De Vos, et al, 2005). The sample was based on lower level employees at the Durban University of Technology, Steve Biko campus. Lower level employees were employees who belonged to Grades 14 and below in the Peromnes system of locating employees in an organisational structure.

Job positions associated with these grades included garden workers, plumbers, builders and drivers. Typically, these lower level employees were in support staff positions with low levels of education. This sample was characterised by largely illiterate, mostly older male employees. Some of these employees have worked for the Durban University of Technology for decades. These lower level employees worked for Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon respectively

before the merger took place. The population was 70 employees (N=70). This population was made up of lower level employees in Grades 14 and below. From the target population, the sample was selected for this study. The sample was 50 (n=50). Due to the size of the sample, the entire sample was targeted.

4.3.1.3 *Research instrument*

The research instrument used was a questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed based on the research questions and the literature reviewed. The questionnaire used in a study on mergers by Reddy (2007) was consulted for this study. The questionnaire used by Chetty (2010) was reviewed for the study. Questionnaires reviewed from various studies were adapted for this particular study on mergers. This study investigated the experiences of employees in a merged institution.

The questionnaire had the following sections: The introduction page mentioned that participating in the study was optional. The questionnaire was divided into two sections. Section A required demographic information of the participants. Section B had 24 statements that related to mergers in higher education and lower level employees. Section B of the questionnaire broadly covered five themes. The themes were leadership; job satisfaction; merger decision; pay and working conditions. A Likert scale of one to five was used in the questionnaire. The options on the questionnaire Likert scale were strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree and strongly disagree. The questionnaire had a general remarks column at the end. The questionnaire is attached as an annexure 1.

The focus of this study was on lower level employees where literacy levels were low. Therefore, the questionnaire was translated from English to the IsiZulu language. The translation was done by the researcher. The translated questionnaire was verified by a language expert. It may be noted that most of the participants in the target population were Zulu speaking. Questionnaires were piloted on a small group of about 20 participants. The participants in the pilot were identified on the basis of similarity to target sample. Recommendations from the pilot study were duly effected in the final questionnaires for IsiZulu and English languages. The pilot study addressed the reliability of the instrument.

4.3.2 Data collection

Prior to the collection of data, permission was requested from the line supervisor of the potential participants. There appeared to be reluctance from the line manager in granting such permission, but eventually the permission was granted. The researcher addressed employees in a public meeting forum. This address was conducted in English and IsiZulu. The purpose of the public address was to explain the purpose and process of the research study. Most prospective participants were concerned about the benefits of such a study for them. Eventually, most prospective participants were willing to participate in the study. It should be noted that low levels of education with this particular group required extensive elementary explanations of the research process which included English to IsiZulu translations. Rapport was built with the participants to put them at ease and the research process was reiterated in IsiZulu and English.

The statements in the questionnaire were explained to the participants of this study. Participants were given the questionnaires to complete without assistance. Those participants who required assistance with completing the questionnaire were assisted by the researcher. Most participants completed the questionnaire individually at the same time. Because the researcher was present when the questionnaires were completed, this contributed to the response rate. The researcher ensured that the questionnaires were completed fully which resulted in no questionnaires being rejected. The absent employees filled in the questionnaire when they returned. The employees targeted for the questionnaire included transport, garden workers, printing and maintenance units at the Durban University of Technology, Steve Biko campus.

4.3.3 Data analysis

A Microsoft computer package was used to perform data analysis. Descriptive statistics were chosen for this study. Section A of the questionnaire had five items and section B had 20 items. The questionnaires were numbered to assist in easy data capture. Participants had to tick the appropriate box column on the 5 point Likert scale. The Likert scale was denoted by strongly agree (1); agree (2); neutral (3); disagree (4) and strongly disagree (5). The researcher entered the frequency responses on an Excel spreadsheet table. Standard summary statistics were used in tabulating the responses from the questionnaires. Accurate coding and entry of data was ensured by the researcher throughout the process. Original completed questionnaires have been kept in a safe place.

Based on the frequency responses, percentages were calculated using Excel software. Frequency and percentage scores were captured on Microsoft Word tables. A table that depicts the percentage responses is found elsewhere in this study. The percentages for each question and statement were then used to

compute graphs on Excel computer software. Questions that were going to be compared based on the research questions were also identified by the researcher. Figures for such comparisons were computed and captured in the study. The figures are presented and analysed in the study.

4.3.4 Research validity

The validity of a quantitative study refers to the truthfulness of the findings and the conclusions of the study. In quantitative studies there are many types of design validity. These include construct validity, internal validity and external validity. This study focused on the construct, content and face validity types. Construct validity is about ensuring that the measured variables are representative of the constructs of the study. The constructs that would be used for determining the representativity of items in the questionnaire were identified (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). The constructs were mergers, job satisfaction, staff morale and motivation. These constructs were defined elsewhere in this study. Definitions were provided to explain the use of such constructs in this particular study.

Content validity refers to the items of a research instrument such as a questionnaire, which should cover all related content to the subject under investigation. This study used an adapted questionnaire on mergers in higher education with a focus on lower level employee motivation and staff morale. The questionnaire was adapted from questionnaires that have been used in other related studies (Chetty, 2010; Reddy, 2007; Linde and Schalk, 2006; Buitendach and Dewitte, 2005; Wanberg and Banas, 2000).

The questionnaire was piloted before being administered to the participants and the recommended changes were duly effected. Therefore, pilot studies were conducted for this study. Furthermore, face validity is about checking an instrument in terms of items and whether items relate to the subject under investigation at face value. Face validity of the questionnaire was conducted for this study. In addition, the questionnaire for this study was checked by various stakeholders. The questionnaire is attached as annexure 1 in this study.

4.3.5 Research reliability

Reliability refers to the instrument, such as a questionnaire, and the consistency of scores in such an instrument (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). For this study, the questionnaire used was adapted from previous questionnaires in related studies. This questionnaire was piloted amongst a group of 20 participants who were similar to the group that the instrument would be administered to. The questionnaire was also verified by experts consulted prior to the administration of the questionnaire.

4.4 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The anonymity of participants was guaranteed for this study. Participants were provided with the choice of being anonymous in the study if they so wished. The anonymity of the participants is ensured in the final report. Due diligence and protection from any potential harm was undertaken. Confidentiality of data collected and participant identities will be guaranteed. The strictest care will be taken in this regard. Therefore, when participants decided to complete the questionnaire this was deemed as informed consent.

4.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon took place a decade ago. This study relied on the memory of the employees about the time the merger took place. In order to deal with this limitation, the quantitative and qualitative approach was used in this study. However, it should be noted that attrition has taken place during this study as some potential participants had left the institution. All potential participants were targeted as part of the sample to deal with attrition. The low level of education of the participants was a limitation for this study. Some participants were assisted by the researcher to complete the questionnaire because of an inability to read or write. The questionnaire was translated to Isizulu to assist participants. Therefore, the researcher used research guidelines to mitigate the research limitations.

4.6 QUALITATIVE METHODS

A qualitative case study research method was used for this study. The case study was based on the merger between M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal, which subsequently became the Durban University of Technology. There are advantages of using the qualitative methods in a research study. An advantage of using the qualitative method is that it is inductive in nature. In a qualitative study, the researcher is a subjective insider. Qualitative research concentrates on relationships between elements holistically (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

Research design is flexible in a qualitative study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Detailed descriptions of phenomena in narrative format are provided in qualitative research. This means that qualitative research is a naturalist, interpretive approach concerned with understanding the meanings people attach

to phenomena which are the actions, decisions and values within their social world (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010).

This study uses a mixed method and therefore the qualitative sub section of the study attempts to further explain the data collected in the quantitative sub section of the study. According to Bryman (2012:138), qualitative research draws on the social world which is depicted as socially constructed with a meaningful reality that is in a constant state of revision. The first research question for this study was to establish the impact of mergers on lower level employees especially from a motivation and staff morale position in a higher education institution. The second research question was to examine the perceptions and experiences of lower level employees during a merger process which includes pre-merger, merger and post-merger. The qualitative approach was used in this study to answer the research questions. Given the emotive nature of change, a merger in this particular study, qualitative techniques would provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon (Gwarinda and Chipunza, 2011).

4.6.1 Research design

4.6.1.1 Case study

A case study qualitative research method was selected for this study. Merriam (1998:27) asserts that a case study is an in-depth analysis of a singular episode, entity or unit with boundaries. The study focused on the merger of M.L. Sultan Technikon and Technikon Natal as a case study. Case studies are a type of qualitative research method in which the researcher explores a single entity or phenomenon bounded by time and activity, and collects detailed information by using a variety of data collection procedures during a sustained period of time

(Creswell, 2008:12). The pre-merger, during and post-merger periods were the focus of the mini case study for this study. Researchers produce detailed descriptions of phenomenon in order to develop possible explanations (Gall, Gall and Borg, 2007).

4.6.1.2 *Advantages and disadvantages of a case study*

Case studies are descriptive in nature which allows for reinterpretation of phenomenon. Case studies allow for the capturing of a multiplicity of voices regarding the case study. A case study can provide insights into similar cases. A case study may have unique features that distinguish the case from other case studies. A case study can be immediately used for many purposes such as research or assessments. A case study may be selective and biased in the way that the events are narrated. Case studies may be personal and subjective. There is potential for observer bias in narrating a case study (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). Case studies may depend on the memory of those who narrate the case study tale, in particular where evidence is unclear.

4.6.1.3 *Sample*

Participants who were deemed by the researcher to have in depth knowledge regarding mergers were selected from the population. These participants represented the sample. The participants interviewed could refer the researcher to other potential participants for the topic on mergers. Two participants from the former Technikon Natal and four participants from the former M.L. Sultan Technikon were selected for interviews. An attempt was made to find a mix of participants with a variety of views on the merger between Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon.

4.6.1.4 *Research instrument*

A semi structured interview and interview schedule were used based on the research questions of the study and the literature reviewed. The interview schedule was based on previous related studies. The questions in the interview schedule collected biographical data from the participants. This data explained the characteristics of the participants. The primary questions in the semi structured interview schedule were largely based on various areas that relate to mergers in higher education with an emphasis on lower level employee motivation and staff morale. The interview schedule was piloted on a sample similar to the targeted sample with regards to characteristics for this study. Participants in the pilot study were not part of the actual sample. Recommended modifications were made to the interview schedule after the pilot study. The interview schedule is attached as annexure 2.

4.6.1.5 *Research site*

The research site was the Durban University of Technology Steve Biko campus. This site was chosen because it was the location of the participants. Other Durban University of Technology campuses were not part of the study. The lower level employees were located in the maintenance, transport, printing and the buildings and gardens departments respectively.

4.6.2 *Data collection*

Permission was requested from the immediate supervisor to conduct the interviews. After the permission was granted the participants were approached for their contact details. Most participants preferred to come to the researchers' office for the interviews. The researcher built rapport with the participants

through small talk. Participants appeared relaxed in the researcher's office with regards to their body language. The researcher explained the purpose of the interview to each participant. It was explained to participants that the interview will be confidential. Participants had a right not to participate in the study at any time.

A notice was placed on the door to ensure privacy and minimise disruptions. The interviews were about one hour long. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder and notes were made throughout the interview. Probing questions were asked where applicable. Interviews were conducted in English and Isizulu depending on the preference of the participant. The interview questions collected biographical information from the participants. The rest of the questions focused on the perceptions of employees regarding the merger.

4.6.3 Data analysis

The recorded data was transcribed and translated where applicable. Transcribed data allow for access to responses which minimises the potential for distorting participant responses. The researcher went through each transcribed raw data for coding. The coding process was used to identify themes that emerged from the data. Related extracts from different interview responses collected were collated together in this study. The themes that emerged led to the compilation of categories. The data was described, interpreted and analysed for patterns that emerged during data collection (Creswell, 2008:491).

4.6.4 Validity

The researcher conducted one interview on a scheduled day. Therefore, the interviews were scheduled over many weeks. This was partly due to postponement and changes to dates and unforeseen circumstances. The one interview conducted in one day assisted with preparing for the interviews adequately. This process allowed for reasonable time during the interview and reflection after the interview. This included capturing rich information regarding the interview responses. The interviews were conducted in English or Isizulu to accommodate for an understanding of the interview schedule used.

Verbatim accounts of participant responses were captured in this study. The interviews were recorded on a digital recorder. Participants were given permission to verify the transcripts of the interviews if they so wished. Time for revisiting research questions and literature review was created between interviews. The interviews were conducted over three months within the premises of the Durban University of Technology.

4.7 RESEARCHER BIAS

The researcher acknowledges to have been employed by the Durban University of Technology pre-merger, during and post-merger. Therefore, the researcher was entrenched in the research site where the research was conducted. The researcher's access to the research site was facilitated by the relationship that the researcher has with the research site. Research training and experience of the researcher attempted to mitigate these potential biases through various processes that are explained in this chapter. The interview process was conducted with an open mind and using the experience of the researcher in conducting interviews.

The researcher was aware of potential personal subjectivities and reflexivities during the interview. The researcher did not interject when interviewees were responding to questions. The body language of the researcher was relaxed throughout the interview so as not to sway participants in any particular way. The researcher was aware that the impact of the researcher's level of education and position could intimidate the participants who are in lower level positions. The researcher clarified that the interviews were for research purposes only. This was done to ensure that the participants could be open with their responses.

4.8 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The participants in the interviews were informed about the purpose of the study. These participants were informed of the option not to participate in the study at any time. Therefore, informed consent was required from participants. Anonymity and confidentiality was guaranteed for the participants. The researcher ensured that there was no exploitation of participants at any time. Participants were guaranteed anonymity and that, in the final report, names would not be mentioned.

4.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The use of a recorder during interviews could have impacted on how the participants responded to the questions. However, the researcher attempted to put participants at ease by emphasizing anonymity and informed consent. The recorder was placed in such a way that there would be minimal intrusion during the interview. The location of the interviews could have intimidated the participants because of the academic books and the educational technology present. However, the researcher attempted to put the interviewees at ease by

showing high levels of respect and by explaining to the participants the reasons and benefits of the research.

4.10 CONCLUSION

This chapter of the study explained the research methodology used for this study. The mixed method was selected for this study. The rationale for selecting such a mixed method technique was explained in this chapter. This included discussing the quantitative and qualitative methods used respectively. The quantitative research design, data collection and analysis techniques were explained. The qualitative research design, data collection and analysis were explained in this chapter. Validity and limitations of the study were discussed. It is envisaged that the methodology used in this study will assist in contributing to the body of knowledge on mergers in higher education.

CHAPTER 5

RESULTS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The results contained herein address the key questions raised in this study namely whether higher education institutional mergers impact on lower level employee motivation and staff morale during the merger process. The focus of this study was on examining the perceptions of staff members, particularly lower level employees, in a merged entity. Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to collect demographic and pertinent statement responses from participants. In-depth interviews were conducted to gather relevant information from participants who were viewed as having extensive perceptions about the Durban University of Technology merger. The demographic results of the quantitative part of the study will now be addressed.

5.2 DEMOGRAPHICS OF QUANTITATIVE STUDY RESPONDENTS

5.2.1 An analysis of percentages for age distribution of respondents

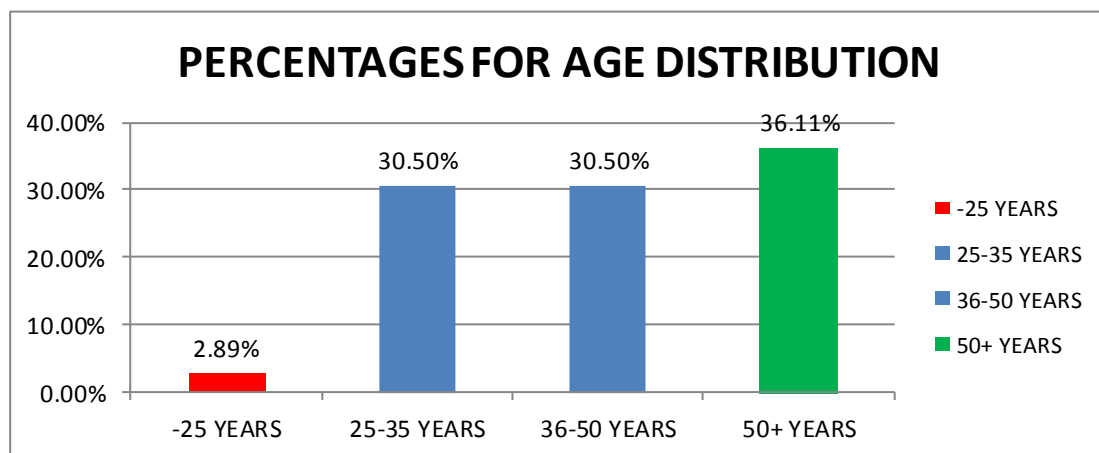


Figure 1. Percentages for age distribution

The percentages for age distribution of respondents are shown in Figure 1 where these responses pointed in part to the demographic profile of the respondents. Results in Figure 1 showed that 36% of the respondents were above the age of 50, whilst only 2% were below the age of 25. Most of the respondents were between the age range of 25 and 50 years. The gender of the respondents was predominantly male, at 94%. A majority (77%) of the respondents indicated their race to be African, whilst 23% indicated Indian. Figure 2 below indicates which previous institutions the respondents worked for prior to the merger taking place.

5.2.2 An assessment of former Technikon employers of the respondents

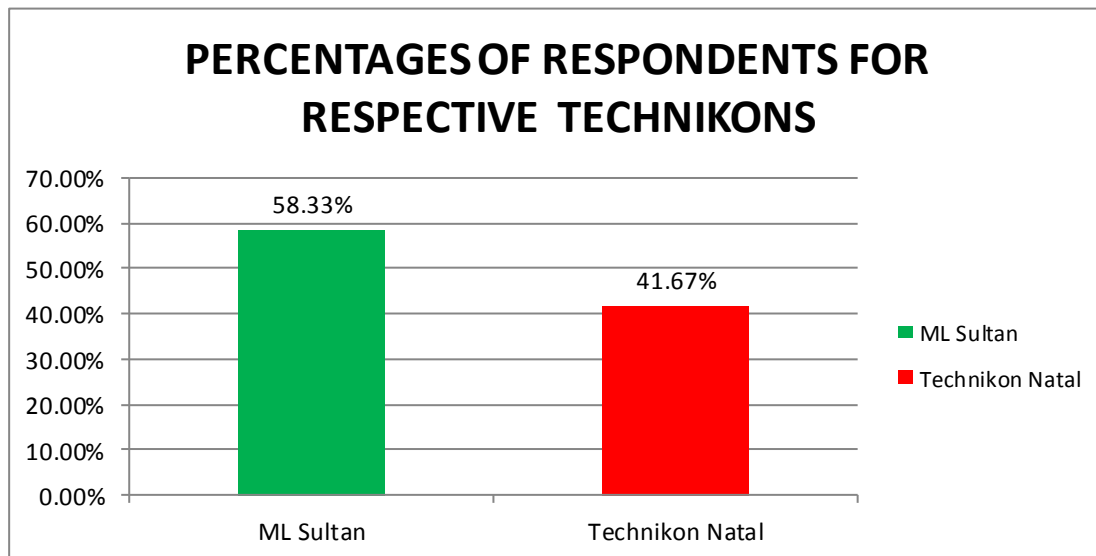


Figure 2. Percentages of respondents for respective Technikons

All the respondents in this study experienced all the various phases of the Durban University of Technology merger that is the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases. In this study, we established the former employer Technikons of the respondents. This was demonstrated by 58% of the respondents reporting that former M.L. Sultan Technikon was their employer whilst the rest came from

the former Technikon Natal as revealed in Figure 2. The former employer Technikon of participants could possibly influence the responses given to questions such as satisfaction with pay. This issue will be addressed at a later stage.

5.2.3 Length of service of respondents

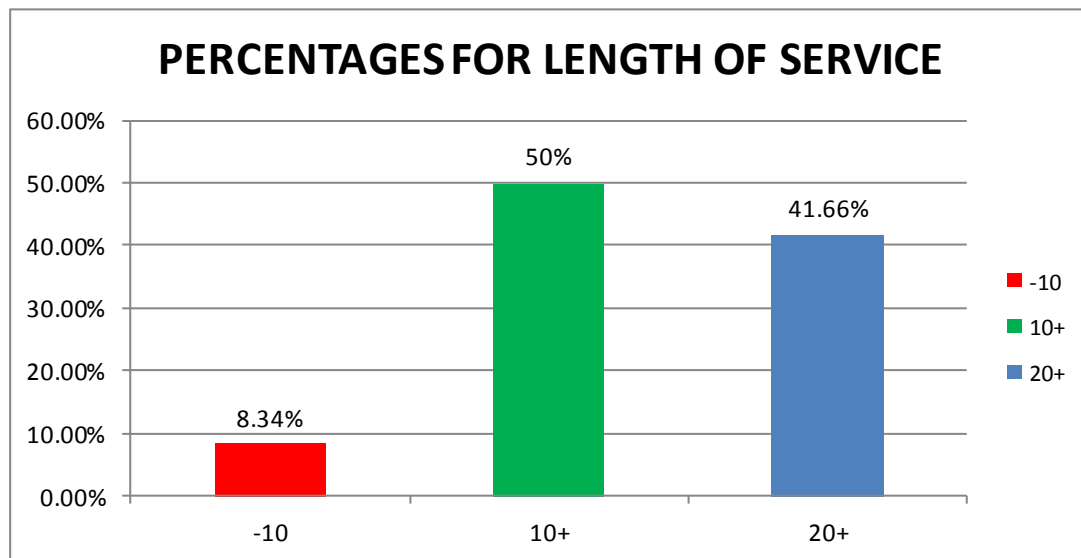


Figure 3. Percentages for length of service

Given that this study investigated the perceptions of respondents with regards to the various phases of the merger, it was critical to examine the length of service of the participants. Years of service tends to reflect the depth of knowledge including institutional history that the participants had regarding the merger process. This in-depth knowledge may well contribute to a far more critical evaluation of mergers and their impact on lower level employees over a period of time. The interplay between the entrenched and old organisational cultures from former Technikon to a new organisational culture in the merged institution reveals the openness of employees to change (Harman and Meek, 2002). It is against this backdrop that length of service of respondents is illustrated in Figure 3.

In respect of length of service, 41% of the respondents reported their length of service as more than 20 years. One respondent stated the years of service as 40 years with the same institution. Half of the respondents had work experience of between 10 and 20 years. From a research perspective, these were largely respondents who not only had long years of service with the same institution, but were also much older employees and could have been able to assess their experiences before the merger and post-merger. The length of service of the respondents tends to point to, amongst other things, loyalty to the institution and getting used to the work environment and conditions over time.

Most respondents who participated in this study were members of a trade union, revealing 95% membership. This is typically the case with lower level employees who join trade unions to assist with fighting for better pay and working conditions in organisations and institutions (Buhlungu, 2008:39; Bendix, 2001:152). Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) membership reflects that many lower skilled employees belong to unions, whilst semi-skilled and skilled employees are increasingly becoming members of trade unions (Buhlungu, 2008).

In the Durban University of Technology example, highly qualified staff members were also unionised. Whilst union membership reflected different levels of employees at the university, this was more likely the case in other higher education institutions as well. Furthermore, the demographic results of the quantitative and qualitative parts of the study were similar. The responses to the various statements on the questionnaire will now be discussed and the results provided.

5.3 A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF RESULTS ON PERCEPTIONS OF RESPONDENTS REGARDING THE MERGER PROCESS

5.3.1 Examination of perceptions of respondents regarding merging or not merging

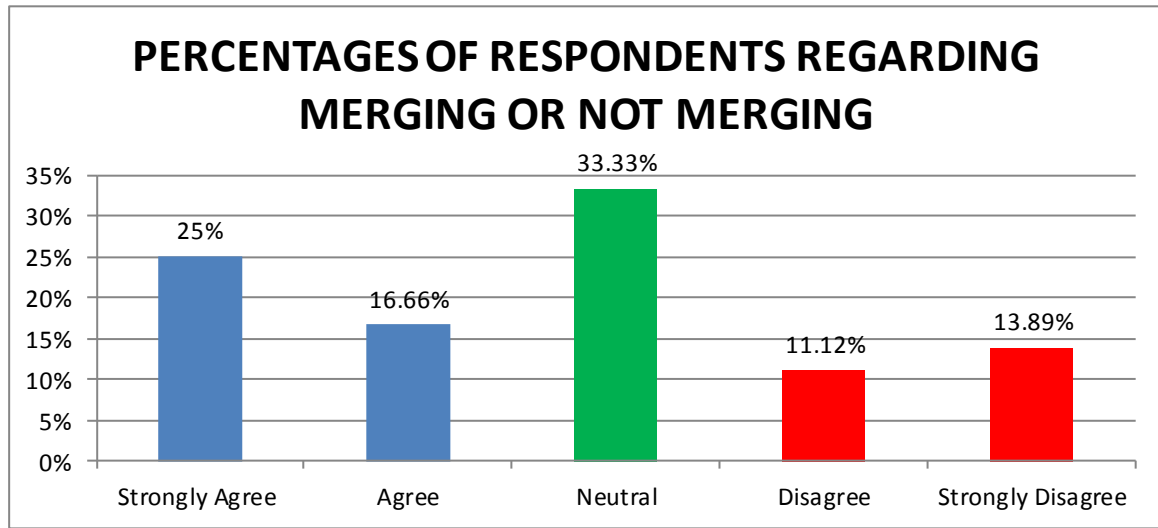


Figure 4. Percentages of respondents regarding merging or not merging

Critical for lower level employees were decisions made regarding the merger. Results of this study pointed to a relatively even spread of responses about the merger decisions statement. A statement that pertained to whether to merge or not to merge was posed to the respondents in order to establish their perceptions of the merger when it was announced. Given the length of service of respondents, such respondents could provide a rich and informed response regarding the merger decision. As observed in Figure 4, 41% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the merger between former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon was a bad idea, whilst 33% of the respondents were undecided about the merger decision.

Additionally, the undecided responses could reflect on the uncommitted respondents who were indifferent to whether the merger was useful or a disastrous option for lower level employees. This was borne out by a litany of evidence that confirmed that a large percentage of staff members taken into the merger were unhappy about it (Chetty, 2010; Sattar and Cooke, 2010; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). A combination of the perceptions, feelings and experiences of employees were critical to demonstrating their extended consternation, uncertainty and concerns regarding the merger process. In making an assessment of the staff morale of lower level employees, the specific activity that was considered was that of outsourced workers or external contractors. The use of outsourced workers appeared to gain momentum post-merger especially for jobs that were preferred by lower level employees.

5.3.2 An assessment of perceptions regarding mergers and staff morale

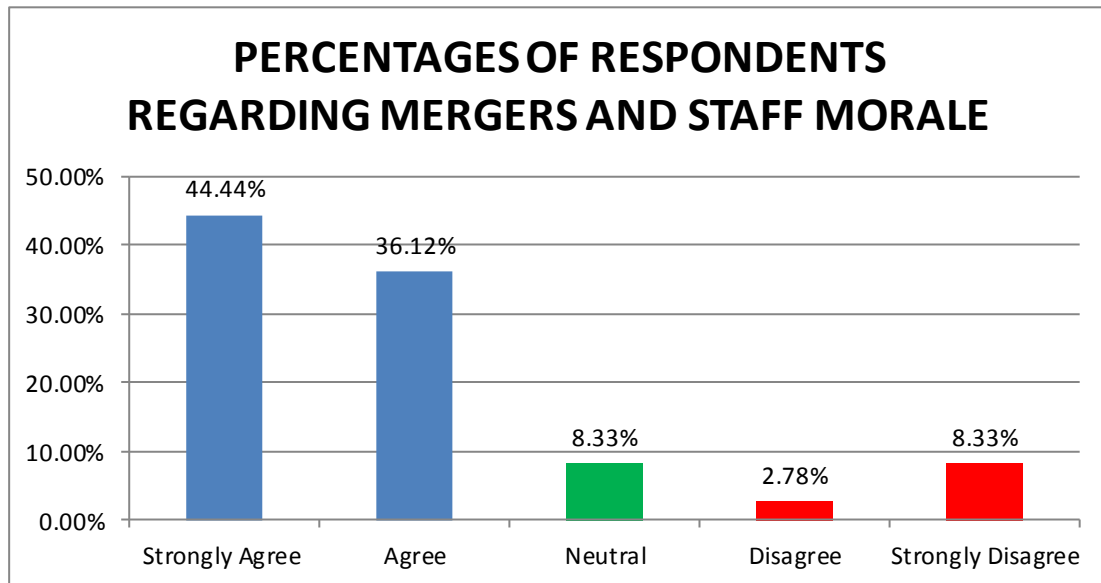


Figure 5. Percentages of respondents regarding mergers and staff morale

With regards to perceptions of mergers, it was essential to assess the impact of mergers on staff morale of lower level employees at the institution. The questionnaire statement was on whether the use of external contractors post-merger affected the work morale of lower level employees. A majority 80% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the external contractors used for maintenance work at the Durban University of Technology affected staff morale negatively as depicted in Figure 5. This was a significant finding in this study as external contractors in maintenance and building units were introduced post-merger.

It was plausible that the external contractors were perceived by the respondents as a threat to their jobs in the institution post-merger and hence merging was viewed in a negative light. This issue will be returned to at a later stage. Furthermore, Figure 5 pointed to a low 11% of the respondents who disagreed with the statement that external contractors affected staff morale in the merged institution. Approximately 8% of the respondents remained undecided on the issue of external contractors and staff morale. We now examine the results in respect of perceptions towards top management during a merger process, as depicted in Figure 6.

5.3.3 An evaluation of the perceptions of mergers and top management

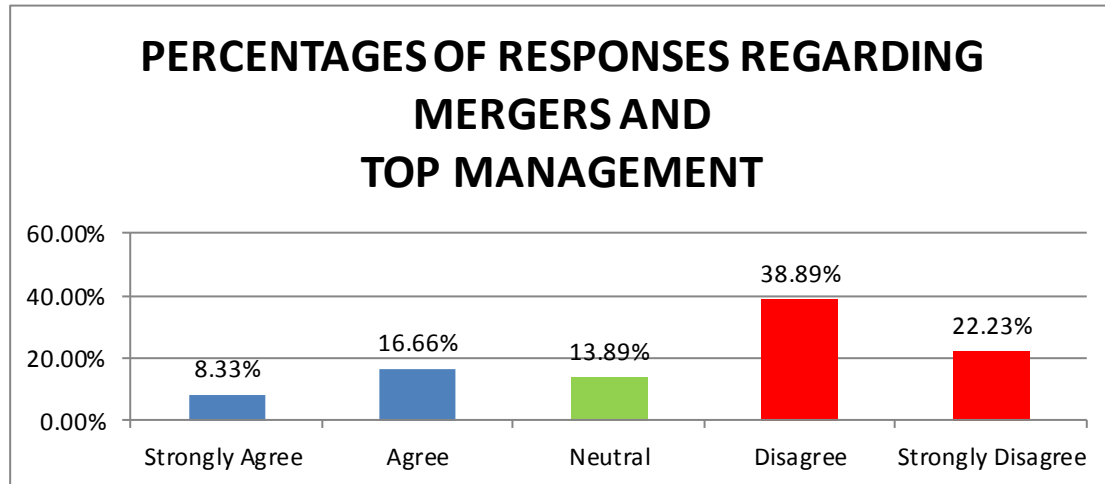


Figure 6. Percentages of responses regarding mergers and top management

Top management sets the foundation for whether a merger process will be a smooth or a difficult one. By many accounts the merger between former M.L. Sultan Technikon and former Technikon Natal was a difficult one (Chetty, 2010; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). Responses on perceptions of staff members regarding staff morale and institutional issues such as top management is indicated in Figure 6. In many ways the role of top management and supervisors was fundamental during a merger process. We will return to supervisors of lower level employees at a later stage.

In examining the statement on “Top management has shown interest in lower level staff post-merger”, top management refers to the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor levels of management in a higher education institution. More than half of the respondents at 61% asserted that top management had not shown interest in lower level employees post-merger. This may well support the perception that lower level employees were not viewed as core employees

in a higher education institution. Similarly, the tendency of management to be disinterested in lower level employees as a group during a merger process may impact on staff morale in a negative way.

5.3.4 An analysis of perceptions of mergers and supervision during a merger

STATEMENTS	AGREED/ STRONGLY AGREED	NEUTRAL	DISAGREED/ STRONGLY DISAGREED
Good supervision pre-merger	36.11%	33.33%	30.56%
Good supervision post-merger	36.11%	41.67%	22.22%
Better supervision pre-merger than post-merger	30.55%	50%	19.45%
Current supervisor from previous Technikon	49.99%	19.44%	30.57%

Figure 7. Perceptions of mergers and supervision during a merger

Immediate supervisors of lower level employees played a crucial role in managing such employees in the organisation. Depending on the quality of supervision, supervisors may or may not create a work environment that was conducive to employee job satisfaction and motivation in a merger process. Whilst top management was responsible for managing various stakeholders in an organisation broadly, supervisors contributed to the operational functions of a unit or department. Furthermore, lower level employees may be viewed as located much further down the organisational hierarchy and supervisors are at the fore front of managing work flow in departments or units at that level.

The critical analysis of results of this study pointed to lower level employee concerns that emerged regarding supervision in the institution and data gathered from in-depth interviews further corroborated the findings. It is in this context that an analysis of perceptions of mergers and supervision is assessed. Figure 7 indicated an even spread of percentages regarding whether the level of supervision was good pre-merger. Respondents who agreed or strongly agreed with receiving good supervision comprised 36% of the sample, whilst those who disagreed or strongly disagreed were at 30%, during the pre-merger phase.

Some of the respondents (34%) were undecided regarding the level of supervision pre-merger. However, post-merger most respondents (41%) selected neutral as an option with regards to whether they received good supervision at the institution. Crucial to supervision was the high percentage of neutral option respondents that possibly arose out of fear of reprisals and intimidation from immediate supervisors. In addition, the fear of reprisals was mentioned by participants during in-depth qualitative interviews conducted for the study.

In relation to whether there was better supervision post-merger, the percentage of participants who were undecided was 50%. This result further pointed to the likelihood of reluctance to respond to statements regarding immediate supervisors. About 30% of the respondents agreed with the statement that there was better supervision post-merger. The results further pointed out that approximately half of the respondents reported that their immediate supervisor was from their previous Technikon. The perceptions of lower level employees may have been influenced by the institution they came from and their supervision experiences.

5.3.5 An evaluation of perceptions of top management communication and job satisfaction in a merger

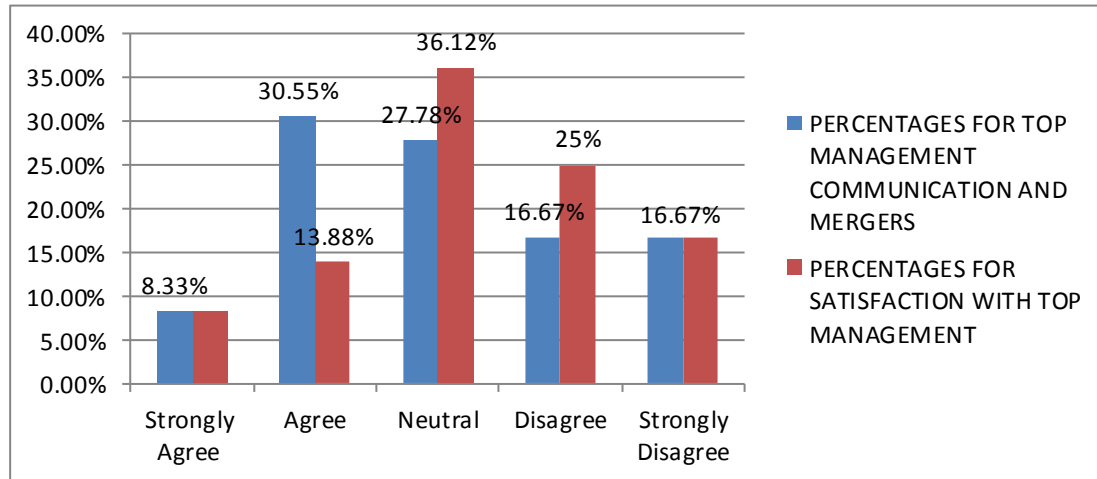


Figure 8. Perceptions of top management communication and job satisfaction in a merger

During a merger process, communication has been identified as critical in disseminating information to employees in an organisation (Cartwright and Cooper, 1996). Employees at different levels of the organisational structure may experience communication messages in various ways during a change process such as a merger. Figure 8 points to the responses as to how top management managed communication with lower level employees during the merger process. Approximately 38% of the respondents felt that top management communicated with employees during the merger discussions. Another 32% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that top management communicated sufficiently during the merger process. Almost a third of the respondents were indecisive as to whether top management communicated sufficiently or not.

Regarding the statement as to whether staff members were satisfied with top management performance during the merger, 42% of the respondents pointed to being dissatisfied with management, as indicated in Figure 8. A minimal 22% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with top management, whilst 36% of the respondents were undecided about management. The undecided responses could be as a result of avoiding criticising top management for fear of reprisals which some participants pointed to during in-depth interviews with key participants. Similarly, the reluctance by respondents to respond to statements regarding top management as indicated by the undecided responses was observed with regards to statements on supervisors in this study.

5.3.6 Analysis of perceptions of job security and voluntary severance packages in a merger

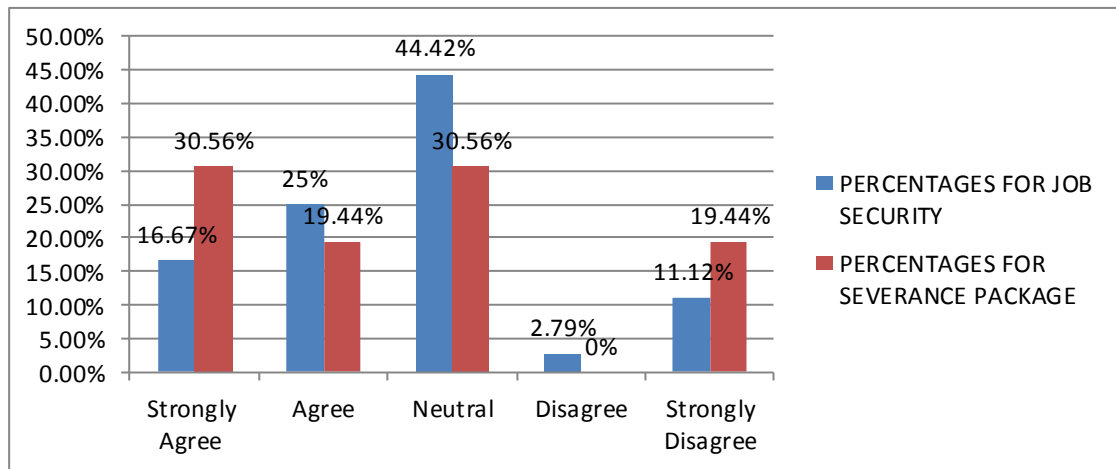


Figure 9. Perceptions of job security and voluntary severance package in a merger

Cartwright and Cooper (1996) agreed with Coffey et al (2002) that job security was a concern for employees during a merger process. Furthermore, mergers brought about changes in organisations which may or may not be detrimental to employee's sense of belonging and fitting in the merged entity. When examining

Figure 9 on job security during a merger, 44% of the respondents indicated to be non-committal about the decisions to be made in the future regarding job security. Possibilities of significant change processes could lead to job losses for lower level employees.

Perceptions of fear of losing jobs would have influenced lower level employees to take the position of being neutral, which reflected being affected or not affected by the fear. In this instance, the results pointed to 41% of the respondents being concerned with job security, whilst a large percentage of 44% appeared to be indifferent about job security. A minimal percentage (13%) of respondents was not concerned about job security. It may well be that the job security concern applied to other groups of employees in the merged institution. In a study on higher education mergers, Chetty (2010:287) posited that some employees in various positions were concerned about job security during the merger process.

Whilst job security concerns may not have been unique to lower level employees as a group, it was probable that this group would be particularly concerned about job security as a result of limited job options that may be evident in the public and private sectors. This further suggested that lower level employees in the South African context were likely to find it particularly difficult to move between different jobs because of the poor employment situation and economic conditions. Whilst these employees tended to be motivated to perform their duties, job mobility was an issue that they faced which affected issues of job security and decisions regarding voluntary severance packages.

In contrast, Figure 9 indicated that half of the respondents did not consider taking the voluntary severance package when it was announced, although there were invariably job security concerns. Chetty (2010:269) was of the view that staff members had negative perceptions of the finances of the institution partly as a result of voluntary severance package payouts. The results of this study indicated that 30% of respondents were undecided about taking the voluntary severance package when it was announced. A minimal 20% of respondents did consider taking the severance package when it was announced. Comparing this result on the basis of other studies, therefore employees would have been less concerned about job security at the time of the offering of severance packages.

5.3.7 An examination of perceptions of mergers and job resources

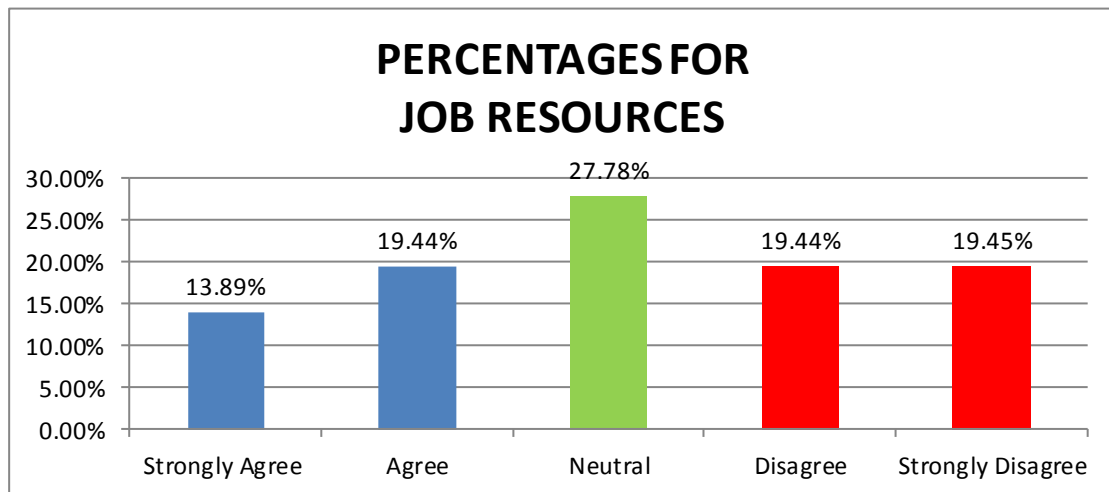


Figure 10. Perceptions of mergers and job resources

One of the concerns of a merger process was weakened general access to resources (Harman and Meek, 2002:1; Skodvin, 1999:69). Therefore, top management was responsible for the allocation of usually limited resources in an organisation in order to meet strategic imperatives. In respect of the statement on “resources given to employees to do their job”, 33% of respondents reported to have received the resources they needed to do their jobs, whilst 39% disagreed with the statement.

Given the nature of the work conducted by lower level employees, job resources were needed to support the quality of the workmanship and services provided to an institution. It was crucial to the work performed by these employees that there was access to quality job resources on regular bases in order to maintain institutional infrastructure and related services. As observed in this study, the qualitative results corroborated the quantitative results that sometimes there were concerns with job resources which were necessary for lower level employees to perform their duties in the merged institution.

5.3.8 A critical summary of the perceptions of motivation and job satisfaction in a merger

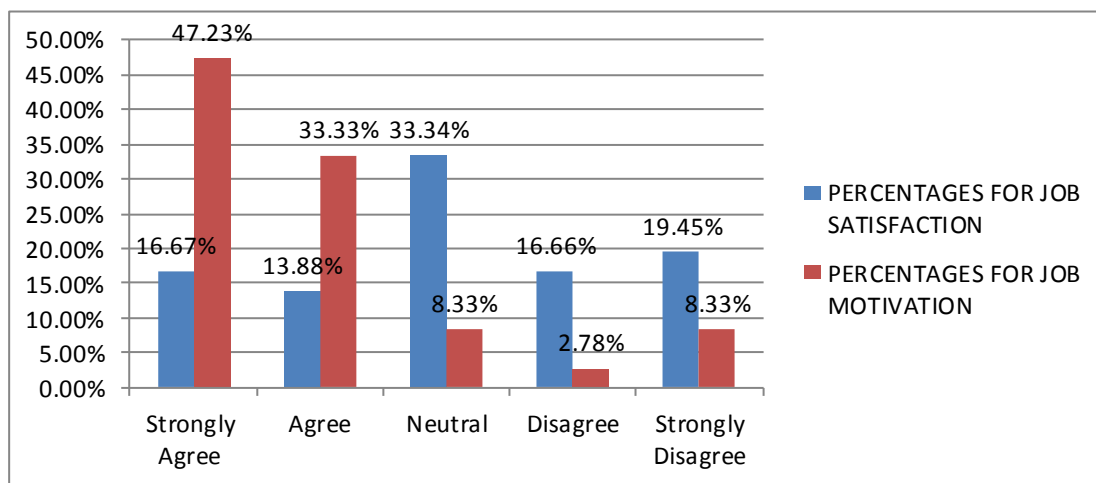


Figure 11. Perceptions of motivation and job satisfaction in a merger

In examining job satisfaction amongst lower level employees during the merger process, it would appear that the responses were evenly spread with 36% of the respondents reporting to be satisfied, whilst 34% were unsure whether they enjoyed job satisfaction or were simply uncomfortable post-merger. The remaining respondents (36%) reported that they were not satisfied with their jobs in the post-merger period. Mullins (2010) and Ivancevich et al (2008) including Kinicki and Kreitner (2008) postulated that job satisfaction was a

critical indicator of how employees perceived and experienced their jobs in an organisation. Organisational restructuring such as a merger invariably impacted on job satisfaction, experiences and perceptions of employees.

In contrast to job satisfaction responses, most respondents pointed to being motivated to do their jobs in the institution. Figure 11 indicated that an overwhelming 80% of the respondents were motivated to do their jobs. This was a high percentage from the respondents regarding motivation at the merged institution. A small 10% of respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement on motivation and 8% were neutral. Whilst respondents were highly motivated to do their jobs, it appeared that their job satisfaction levels varied.

5.3.9 An in-depth assessment of perceptions of job options and voluntary severance packages in a merger

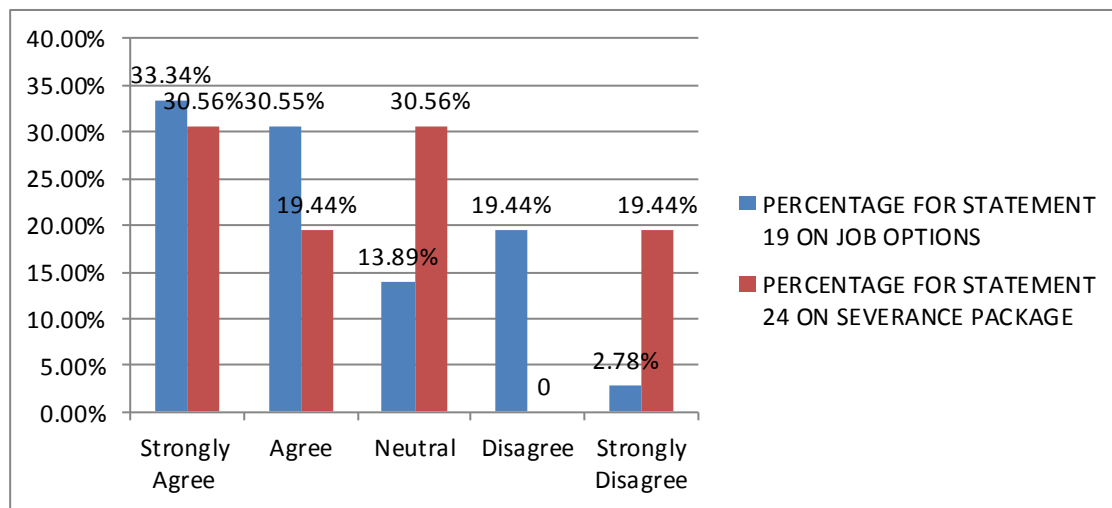


Figure 12. Perceptions of job options and voluntary severance packages in a merger

When assessing the responses to the statement “I continue to work for Durban University of Technology because of limited job opportunities”, 63% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement as indicated in Figure 12. Approximately 22% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement, whilst 13% remained undecided regarding the statement. These responses were probably not too uncommon across wider public and private sector firms given that a large number of workers remain largely unskilled or semi-skilled even after sometimes painful organisational restructuring processes. Part of the complexity of the problem of the limited job mobility of these workers was the implications of economic growth and expansion or lack thereof in tandem with required employment opportunities.

Figure 12 further indicated the percentage of staff members from the respondents that opted for voluntary severance packages. Almost 50% of the respondents did not consider taking the voluntary severance package when it was offered by the institution. When assessing the decision on taking the severance package, the respondents may have considered the state of the South African economy. During in-depth interviews, it became clear that the respondents were concerned about the limited job prospects and need to take care of their family responsibilities. Hence the need to take a voluntary severance package was not a viable option for these employees’ personal goals.

Lower level employees could have been far worse off after taking a voluntary severance package which explains the 50% of the respondents were very wary of taking the package. Furthermore, it is likely that retrenchments which may take place as part of offering voluntary severance packages, affect lower level employees than higher level employees. Approximately 30% of the respondents were undecided about the severance package, whilst 20% did not consider the

severance package when it was announced during the merger process. Therefore, the quantitative results were corroborated by the qualitative results regarding the voluntary severance package in relation to the merger. A focus on the responses to questionnaire/statement now follows as depicted in Table 6.

5.4 RESPONSES TO QUESTIONNAIRE/STATEMENTS

TABLE 6: Percentage responses per question/statement

	STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	I was supportive of the merger when it was announced.	22.22%	13.88%	47.22%	5.56%	11.12%
2	Merging of the two institutions was a good decision.	30.55%	19.45%	36.11%	2.78%	11.11%
3	Job security was a major concern of mine when the merger was announced.	16.67%	25%	44.42%	2.79%	11.12%
4	I was happy with the working conditions at my previous Technikon.	25%	25%	30.55%	8.33%	11.12%
5	Working conditions at DUT post-merger are good.	22.22%	22.22%	22.22%	19.45%	13.89%
6	Merger affected my job security at the institution.	5.55%	22.22%	25%	30.56%	16.67%
7	Salaries and benefits after the merger have been harmonised for employees.	11.11%	8.33%	19.44%	36.12%	25%
8	Top management kept staff well informed during merger discussions.	8.33%	30.55%	27.78%	16.67%	16.67%
9	I am satisfied with the leadership provided by top management post-merger.	8.33%	13.88%	36.11%	25%	16.68%
10	A plan was in place to integrate lower level workers.	2.77%	16.67%	30.56%	25%	25%
11	Top management has shown interest in lower level staff post- merger.	8.33%	16.66%	13.89%	38.89%	22.23%
12	The merger was a bad idea.	25%	16.66%	33.33%	11.12%	13.89%
13	Conflict between me and my colleagues from the other Technikon took place immediately after the merger.	13.89%	13.88%	33.33%	27.78%	11.12%
14	I received good supervision pre- merger.	11.11%	25%	33.33%	8.34%	22.22%
15	I receive good supervision post- merger.	13.88%	22.23%	41.67%	0%	22.22%
16	DUT has taken care of my work related needs e.g. training, protective clothing.	22.23%	44.44%	16.67%	2.77%	13.89%
17	I am given the resources to do my job.	13.89%	19.44%	27.78%	19.44%	19.45%
18	Greater satisfaction exists in my job post-merger than pre- merger.	16.67%	13.88%	33.34%	16.66%	19.45%
19	I continue to work for DUT because of limited job opportunities.	33.34%	30.45%	13.89%	19.44%	2.88%
20	The supervision that I received before merger was better than the supervision I received after the merger.	16.67%	13.88%	50%	11.12%	8.33%
21	The use of external contractors post-merger affects my work morale.	44.44%	36.12%	8.33%	2.78%	8.33%
22	I am motivated to do my current job.	47.23%	33.33%	8.33%	2.78%	8.33%
23	My current supervisor is from my previous Technikon.	19.44%	30.55%	19.44%	19.45%	11.12%
24	I did not consider the Voluntary Severance Package when it was offered at the time of the merger.	30.56%	19.44%	30.56%	0%	19.44%

5.4.1 A critical review of responses to questionnaire/statements

Table 6 on respective statements that have a direct bearing on the research questions is now examined. Table 6 indicated the percentage responses to the 24 statements in the questionnaire. In respect of whether merging was a good decision, 50% of the respondents supported the idea of a merger, whilst 13% disagreed or strongly disagreed with the idea. These percentage responses pointed to a large extent why 50% of the respondents did not consider the voluntary severance package when it was announced. As a result of a possible lack of wider job mobility for lower level employees, it was likely that such employees would therefore continue to work for the merged institution.

The percentages that relate to questionnaire statement 2 on merger decisions may be viewed in conjunction with Figure 4 in this chapter. Figure 4 referred to perceptions regarding the decision to merge or not to merge the two higher education institutions. The percentage responses pointed to the perceptions of lower level employees regarding the merger process where employees were largely in favour of the merger at that time. Table 6 illustrated that 36% of the respondents agreed with the merger between former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon when it was announced. Almost half of the respondents (47%) were indifferent about the merger when it was announced. Given that this was the first merger of its kind in South Africa, employees may have taken a view of awaiting the outcome of the merger process. A minimal 17% of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the merger when it was announced.

Table 6 indicated that a majority of 80% of the respondents reported to be motivated to do their jobs at the merged institution. This is a significant finding that a majority of lower level employees were motivated to do their jobs at the

Durban University of Technology. Crucial to this high employee motivation may well be the fact that employees had accepted that they had to make the best of the jobs that they held in the merged institution.

In assessing the statement on integration, half of the respondents disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement that there was a plan to integrate employees from the respective former Technikons post-merger. Additionally, 30% of the respondents were undecided about whether there was an integration plan for employees. The neutral option respondents may have been undecided about the plan because the plan was not communicated to them or the plan did not exist. Chalufu (2002) in a study of the Durban University of Technology merger, maintained that the integration plan was not evident during the merger process. In this study, only 17% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that there was an integration plan for employees during the merger process. Whilst the integration plan appeared not to exist, continued interactions between the two groups of employees may have led to improved relations at the merged entity. Furthermore, perceptions regarding the integration and interactions between employees may have been influenced by the respective former Technikons of the respondents.

With regards to conflict, 28% of the respondents indicated that there was conflict amongst employees immediately after the merger. Almost 33% of the respondents were undecided about whether or not there was conflict immediately after the merger. The neutral position taken by some respondents may have been as a result of conflict that invariably took place in the institution. Some 38% of the respondents pointed to no conflict taking place certainly between lower level employees immediately after the merger. This suggested a further justification that employees may have had to find ways of getting along for the benefit of themselves and the institution.

Employees from the former M.L. Sultan Technikon came with better conditions of service, whilst former Technikon Natal staff members had improvements made to their conditions of service. However, the percentage responses to the statement on salaries and benefits pointed out that most participants at 61% felt that pay was not harmonised between the former Technikons. A minimal 20% of respondents were undecided about whether pay was harmonised after the merger process. Approximately 19% of participants agreed that salaries and benefits were harmonised between the two former Technikons. These quantitative results regarding pay were further corroborated by in-depth interviews conducted where pay parity appeared to be of critical importance to these employees after the merger.

In relation to working conditions, 44% of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that the working conditions at the Durban University of Technology were good. In contrast, 33% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that working conditions were good at the institution. A small 22% of the respondents were undecided on working conditions. Whilst these employees may work in the same environment post-merger, it was plausible that their perceptions of working conditions may be influenced by their experiences at their former Technikons. In assessing such employee experiences during a merger, participants were asked about the working conditions in their previous Technikons.

Half of the respondents agreed or strongly agreed that they were happy with the working conditions in their previous Technikons. Over 30% of the respondents were undecided, whilst 19% disagreed with the statement. With regards to working conditions, these responses point to most employees perceiving working conditions in a positive manner in their previous Technikon. Crucial to the issue of working conditions, it should be pointed out that post-merger lower

level employees were moved to facilities at the former Technikon Natal which by many accounts were regarded as better facilities. More broadly though, issues of supervision and access to job resources were critical in creating good working conditions in merged institutions.

In response to the statement on “Greater satisfaction exists in my job post-merger than pre-merger”, 30% of the respondents strongly agreed or agreed with the statement. Approximately 33% of the respondents were undecided, whilst 36% of the respondents disagreed with the statement. Lower level employee perceptions pointed to an even spread of results regarding job satisfaction in the post-merger period. One can conclude that, for some, the merger proved to be less satisfying than for others who adapted to the new changes. The results indicated that the merger process brought about changes for these employees’ job experiences which were largely unfavourable to them as a group.

5.5 QUALITATIVE RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The qualitative results of the study will now be discussed. Six in-depth interviews were conducted using a semi-structured method during qualitative data collection. Data collection was followed by the transcription, translation and coding of the data collected. The data indicated the demographic profile of the respondents. The results of this part of the study pointed to the gender of the participants as entirely male. The participants were between the ages of 37 and 59 years. Years of service ranged between 18 and 30 for the participants in the qualitative study. All participants were members of a trade union.

In analysing the qualitative data, five themes began to emerge out of the in-depth interviews conducted during the collection of data for the study. The themes identified were merger decision; job satisfaction; top management/supervision; working conditions and pay. The participants expressed views about a variety of topics regarding the merger between the former Technikon Natal and the former M.L. Sultan Technikon. The themes, categories and subcategories are provided in Table 7.

TABLE 7: Themes, categories and subcategories of qualitative results

THEMES	CATEGORIES	SUBCATEGORIES
THEME 1		
MERGER DECISION	BENEFITS	PERCEPTIONS
	SUPPORT	
	INTEGRATION	
THEME 2		
JOB SATISFACTION	JOB SECURITY	CONTRACTORS
	MOTIVATION	
THEME 3		
TOP MANAGEMENT/ SUPERVISORS	COMMUNICATION	MEETINGS
	MANAGEMENT STYLE	
	SUPERVISION	
THEME 4		
WORKING CONDITIONS	RESOURCES	QUALITY
	SUPERVISION	
	RELATIONS	
THEME 5		
PAY	CONTRACTS	PARITY
	CONDITIONS OF SERVICE	

With regards to theme one in Table 7, when the decision to merge former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon was announced, most participants as a group supported the merger with an expectation that they would benefit from the merger. Cartwright and Cooper (1996) and Coffey et al (2002) pointed out that employees had needs and expectations that they wanted fulfilled after a merger process. During interviews, one participant stated that:

But it (the merger) didn't work out that way...
in how we talk at least things will change.
But we have agreed that it got more worse.

The perception was that the merged institution would lead to needs and expectations of lower level employees being met. Post-merger, many participants reported unhappiness with the way the merger had turned out for them as a group of lower level employees. A participant expressed that:

We have settled into the merger but the
thing is with regards to our jobs, no major
improvements have taken place.

In relation to theme two on job satisfaction, most participants expressed fears of job losses as a result of the merger. According to Cartwright and Cooper (1996) and Coffey et al (2002) job losses were a concern during merger processes. The issue of job losses may not be unique to lower level employees in merger processes, which meant that public and private sector employees may well experience similar job concerns. A participant felt that:

If I get retrenched, who is gonna employ me at my age.
They are looking for young skilled labour.

As much as these circumstances may apply to other groups of employees in a merger process, it was likely that the issue of skills was largely unique to lower level employees. It should be expected that lower level employees would have less skills than other groups of employees in an institution. With regards to job satisfaction, the qualitative results indicated that the issue of external contractors, which were introduced after the merger, appeared to cause the most job dissatisfaction and frustration amongst the participants. A participant stated that:

It (external contractor) makes us look stupid because we can do the job. We are qualified to do the job.

The third theme that emerged from the qualitative study was regarding top management and supervisors. Some participants felt that management did not communicate adequately with lower level employees during and post-merger. A participant stated that:

We always felt that we at the ground level as maintenance that people didn't give us the respect we deserve as in informing us and getting us involved.

Furthermore, some participants expressed that changes in top management levels caused instability in the institution. Whilst some participants were unhappy and dissatisfied with top management, other participants expressed satisfaction with the current top management at the merged institution. The satisfaction appeared to be influenced by benefits such as the opportunity to study through adult learning programmes and free tuition for employees' children at the university. Whilst there was satisfaction with management from

participants, there were concerns raised regarding the immediate supervision received by lower level employees which affected the staff morale of the group. A participant expressed that:

With regards to morale, it is very low.
We do sit as a group and discuss it, when you go in front of a superior....everybody becomes tight-lipped, they are afraid to be victimised, because we have seen many cases of victimisation.

Another participant reported on supervision post-merger:

doing your own thing, the way I see staff doing now. They just do their own thing now; there is no management in our department.

With regards to theme four on working conditions, many participants expressed that job resources were scarce in the merged institution. Part of the problem included access to basic job resources such as work uniform or equipment. Many participants reported having better access to resources before the merger than after the merger. A participant indicated that:

we have so little resources to work with, then you look at material we not getting enough material to work with.

Theme five was the last theme on pay at the merged institution. Many participants expressed that there were pay disparities amongst employees which had not been resolved since the merger took place. Most participants argued that former M.L. Sultan Technikon had better pay than former Technikon Natal which caused job dissatisfaction in the merged institution. A participant stated that:

Salary wise we thought we from Natal (Technikon)
we thought things would be better
salary wise, working conditions
and nothing has changed.

These qualitative results have revealed emergent themes regarding perceptions of lower level employees during a merger process in a higher education institution. The perceptions of the participants were crucial in attempting to corroborate the results of the quantitative study regarding the observations, perceptions and experiences of the merger process.

5.6 CONCLUSION

This research was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative methods. The in-depth interviews conducted pointed to a close correlation with the percentage responses on the quantitative side of the study. It is envisaged that these data results may contribute to a better understanding of lower level employee perceptions and experiences as a group during a merger process in a higher education institution, thereby informing higher education and human resource discourse and practice. Furthermore, the data may expand on knowledge regarding lower level employee motivation and staff morale during a merger process in higher education institutions.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 INTRODUCTION

There are several pieces of research on higher education mergers which attempt to contribute to a body of knowledge on mergers and their impact on organisations in South Africa and internationally (Stephenson, 2011; Chetty, 2010; Harman and Harman, 2008; Chalufu, 2002; Jansen, 2002). However, there is a paucity of attention on a specific grouping, such as lower level employees within a larger organisation in the higher education sector. This research sought to establish the effects of mergers on lower level employees with a focus on two key research questions. The first question was to establish the impact of mergers on lower level employees from a motivational and staff morale point of views. The second research problem was to examine the perceptions of lower level employees regarding the various stages of the merger process that is, pre-merger, during and post-merger.

Studies that focused on lower level employees in higher education mergers did not feature in the literature on mergers generally. A plausible conclusion to be reached is that lower level employees may have been researched as part of the general workforce during mergers. Whilst literature and studies that focus on the public and private sector will be referred to in order to further understand lower level employees in higher education, it was found that most studies focused on professional employees during mergers in higher education. The five themes that emerged from this study, namely working conditions; job satisfaction; merger decision; top management/supervision and pay are discussed. The first research question of this study was *“to assess the impact of mergers on lower level employee motivation and staff morale”*.

6.2 DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

6.2.1 A discussion on perceptions of working conditions in a merger process

Working conditions are considered important for the occupational well-being of employees in an organisation (Greenberg, 2011; Ivancevich, et al, 2008; Anthony, et al, 1996). Such conditions included employee access to work resources required to do a job that meets organisational requirements. In respect of resources, Hay and Fourie (2002:101) postulated that South African mergers in higher education were meant to lead to shared resources between merging institutions. Similarly, Goedeguure (1992:16) asserted that mergers did lead to shared infrastructure and resources. As a result, mergers in higher education would naturally be about shared or enhanced resources. This study found that 66% of the respondents pointed out that they continued to be assured of resources on the job. This finding was consistent with Hay and Fourie's (2002) and Goedeguure's (1992) studies on higher education mergers regarding shared resources. Almost 44% of the participants agreed or strongly agreed that working conditions were generally good post-merger.

In contrast, 50% of the respondents were happy with the working conditions in their former Technikon employer. A majority 66% of the participants reported that the Durban University of Technology took care of their work related needs. This was consistent with Stephenson's (2011:125) study on United States of America higher education institutions where, after the merger, working conditions improved for many institutions. Work related needs included provision of protective clothing and training of employees in an organisation. These results are significant as they point to the perceptions of empowering lower level employees with skills and job safety. Furthermore, Seijts and Roberts (2009)

pointed out that employees could be concerned about their competence preparedness in a merged institution.

Employees are generally concerned about organisational changes such as mergers and the impact they may have. Such concerns may include whether employees will have the required skills after the merger process. Walton (1999) pointed out that concern about employee existing skills and required skills in a merged organisation emerge after a merger process. In the Durban University of Technology case study, lower level skills were required in the merged institution as lower level employees were retained post-merger. Whilst lower level employees were retained post-merger, this group could have been particularly vulnerable with regards to whether their skills would continue to be utilised over time as a result of the changes that were taking place post-merger.

Critical to merger perceptions were employee responses to the working conditions they found themselves in. Perceptions pointed to lower level employees who were largely satisfied with their working conditions. In many ways, working conditions required employees with requisite skills to perform organisational tasks. Working conditions of lower level employees may be generally poor in organisations. When an assessment is made of typical lower level jobs such as gardeners and packers, it was critical to examine the implications of working conditions on job satisfaction and staff morale of employees in an organisation. Given especially that lower level employees may tend to work in challenging conditions, this study noted that the Durban University of Technology appeared to have provided satisfactory working conditions for such employees.

During the merger process, employees were invariably transferred between the two merging institutions which had different infrastructure and facilities. In the case study, it is reported that lower level employees were moved to the former Technikon Natal premises which had better facilities and infrastructure than the former M.L. Sultan Technikon (Balintulo, 2003; Jansen, 2002). The slightly better facilities at former Technikon Natal may have contributed to the satisfaction of lower level employees with working conditions in the post-merger period. We now turn to the examination of perceptions of job satisfaction in a merger.

6.2.2 An examination of perceptions of job satisfaction in a merger process

Job satisfaction of employees was crucial to the implementation and outcome of a merger process. However, Cartwright and Cooper (1996:5) argued that “people issues” received minimal attention during a merger process whilst mergers impacted on people in organisations. Whilst people were not the primary focus in a merger, it is generally expected that people would be more satisfied with their jobs pre-merger rather than post-merger. Pertaining to employee motivation, an overwhelming 80% of respondents reported that they were motivated to do their jobs at the Durban University of Technology. This is generally a significant response for this study given that some literature tends to point to a decrease in worker motivation as a result of merger processes.

The studies of Robbins and Judge (2007), Greenberg (2011) and Mullins (2010) suggest that organisational change such as a merger affected employee belonging and motivation negatively. Crucial for employees in adapting to a new organisational culture as a result of changes in a new entity was the extent to which job satisfaction was affected by such adjustments. It was critical that

employees felt part of the new organisation and embraced the new organisational culture for the realisation of enhanced job satisfaction and staff morale.

In reflecting on the reasons for working for the Durban University of Technology, over half of the respondents (64%) reported that they continued to work for the institution because of limited alternative job opportunities post-merger. This result points to a contradiction between high motivation and limited job options responses of lower level employees. This contradiction may point to the plausibility that, given limited job opportunities, low level employees, independent of all other issues, made the best of their work environment. Therefore the observation in this study is that lower level employees were largely noted for long years of service, which meant that employees made the best of their limited work mobility and therefore set out to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to operate under circumstances that include a lack of mobility.

Critical to the low levels of education and skill required to perform low level jobs, limited job alternatives may have contributed to long years of service of lower level employees in the institution. Whilst legislation has been passed in South Africa for skills training, by many accounts, low levels of education and skills persist in the public and private sector. Part of the challenge was that it was not unusual for employees to remain in low-level jobs over time even after major changes and restructuring such as merger processes had taken place because these jobs did not necessarily disappear in organisations.

Whilst the case study of the former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon reported that no lower level employees lost their jobs, the results of this study indicated that employees had a negative post-merger perception of the merger. The value of this statement is that the perception pointed to the level of comfort of the respondents regarding their positions in their pre-merger institutions. Given that mergers brought about change in an organisation, it was plausible that the comfort position of most employees would have been affected after the merger process. Interestingly, despite the negative perceptions towards the merger, other merger issues did not negatively affect the motivation of lower level employees to perform their duties in the institution.

In contrast to the high motivation levels of employees, close to half of the respondents (47%), reported lower satisfaction with their jobs post-merger, whilst 33% were undecided about their satisfaction at the institution. Whilst there may have been any number of reasons for the low level of job satisfaction post-merger including possible salary disparities, supervision perceptions and favoritism, a factor that appeared to contribute to this was the use of external contractors by the institution.

Low job satisfaction may be perceived generally as reflecting low staff morale amongst employees at the Durban University of Technology. This finding is consistent with the various studies reviewed, which included Ngambi (2011) who concluded that mergers in higher education led to decreased staff morale which caused dissatisfaction. On assessment of staff morale, Chetty (2010) posited that staff morale declined during the merger process. Higher education mergers affected employee job satisfaction negatively as Jansen (2002) asserted that employee perceptions and feelings of unhappiness and frustration were reported in many merger cases which created human resource challenges for institutions.

Similarly, Harman and Meek (2002:1) and Skodvin (1999:69) agreed that low job satisfaction and job redundancy may be experienced during a merger process. Whilst lower job satisfaction was reported amongst employees in this study, no jobs were made redundant as a result of the Durban University of Technology merger. To experience high job satisfaction and staff morale, Gulliver, Towell and Peck (2003) postulated that employees should be involved in the integration process post-merger. The experience in the Durban University of Technology merger points to a general lack of a clear integration plan which may have created perceptions of a poor merger (Chalufu, 2002). In addition, the lack of an integration plan for employees may have affected job satisfaction and staff morale of lower level employees in the institution.

Furthermore, the use of external or outsourced contractors at the Durban University of Technology gave the appearance of rendering lower level employees redundant, although such employees were never made redundant as evident in the case study. A significant 80% of respondents indicated that the use of external contractors post-merger affected their morale in the institution. It may well be that the use of external contractors by the management of the Durban University of Technology was for expediency purposes and to get traction in relocating academic and administration departments across campuses. Harman and Meek (2002:107) maintained that an environment that led to employee loyalty and a sense of belonging after often difficult changes such as a merger was envisaged for institutional advancement.

A sense of belonging or lack thereof affected staff morale of employees in an organisation after a merger process. Giessner et al (2011) were of the view that employees needed to identify with an organisation after the merger. This appeared not to be the case with lower level employees who felt alienated at the Durban University of Technology. However, lower level employees to a large

extent would have been fully included under general discussions during the merger process. It is generally expected that lower level employees in support departments such as maintenance and transport would have been satisfied with their jobs and therefore helped in providing a better service and productivity within institutions.

With regards to supervision and satisfaction, the results indicated that many respondents were neutral regarding the immediate supervision they were receiving within the institution. Prior to the merger, the respondents stated that they were largely satisfied with their supervisors. However, the respondents appeared reluctant to share their perceptions and experiences regarding the effectiveness of supervision they were receiving from their respective line managers. During the data collection process, the researcher observed in one instance that a supervisor tended to give an impression to the staff members that supervision could not be the reason for the prevailing merger concerns experienced at the Durban University of Technology. It was also plausible that employees had gotten used to the kind of supervision they were receiving irrespective of whether it was good or bad to a point where they did not pay much attention to it.

Furthermore, the supervisor influence could have led to the reluctance of lower level employees to be forthcoming with their perceptions and experiences regarding supervision. Fears of intimidation and reprisals may not be uncommon amongst employees who would be reluctant to state their perceptions regarding immediate supervision. This study noted that during in-depth interviews with key participants, the participants indicated their dissatisfaction with immediate supervision which led to low staff morale and job satisfaction amongst lower level employees at the institution.

In relation to pay, 61% of the respondents expressed dissatisfaction with their pay at the institution post-merger. It would appear that lower level employees perceived a disparity with regards to their pay in the merged institution. This perceived disparity led to experiences of unhappiness and frustration amongst lower level employees within the institution post-merger. The results indicated that there appeared to be differences with regards to pay between employees from former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon which affected their level of job satisfaction however, this seemed not to affect motivation. Former employees of Technikon Natal pointed to a discrepancy in respect of their pay relative to former M.L Sultan Technikon employees, which led to consternation and concerns with the merger outcomes. Critical to the perceived differences in pay of employees was the impact on staff morale of employees in the merged institution.

Post-merger, employees were motivated to do their jobs despite the working environment they found themselves in, as Bergh and Theron (2007) remarked that employee motivation was critical to the success of an organisation. An overwhelming 80% of the respondents were motivated to do their jobs post-merger. This was particularly significant for lower level employees who noted that as a result of family responsibilities and the communities from which they came, they had to be motivated to do their jobs. Crucial to the issue of motivation was that these employees continued to provide services required by institutional operations throughout the merger process. Whilst an organisational change process can be devastating for some employees, it may well be that low level employees may be viewed as particularly more susceptible to being demotivated and devastated because of the nature of their work however, this was certainly not the case in this study.

There are many reasons for employees to be highly motivated in an organisation, for example, having a permanent job and slightly better salaries and benefits. The relatively high employee motivation in this study was likely in part as a result of improved relations between employees from both Technikons. Employees were largely able to relate to each other for support in the merged entity as the results of this study indicated. Whilst there was no clear integration plan for lower level employees and other employees in the institution, it appeared that employees were able to get along with each other post-merger. In examining integration between employees which would have assisted with the provision of services to the institution, Chalufu (2002) noted that there was no integration plan for employees during the Durban University of Technology merger.

The results of this study indicated that half of the respondents stated that there was no defined plan to integrate employees from the respective institutions post-merger. Despite the lack of an acknowledged integration plan for employees, conflict at this lower level group of employees appeared to be far better managed during the merger process which would have further assisted the institution in managing the merger process. Furthermore, the maintenance and other lower level units and sections in former Technikon Natal were largely stripped of leadership post-merger.

The study pointed to an even spread of percentages regarding conflict amongst employees post-merger. This finding was consistent with Chetty's (2010:253) study which found that the Durban University of Technology merger experienced human relations problems, which sometimes led to conflict in the institution. Greenberg (2011) was of the view that during a change process such as a merger, conflict could arise amongst employees. This issue of conflict pointed to the possibility that there was conflict sometimes between lower level employees

and sometimes there was no conflict which would have served employees and the institution well during the merger process. Beyond the many arguments about mergers, it was plausible that as a result of lower level employees having limited job options and choosing not to take a voluntary severance package, employees had to be integrated in the merged entity for the benefit of the institution post-merger.

This study has concluded that lower level employees were satisfied with some parts of the merger process such as working conditions, whilst they were not satisfied with other parts such as pay. In addition, this study found that staff morale was low amongst lower level employees in particular as a result of the introduction of external contractors or outsourced workers at the Durban University of Technology. Interestingly, despite an even spread of job satisfaction results and low staff morale, lower level employees were highly motivated to do their jobs.

Given that there was no clear integration plan pre-merger, during and post-merger, improved relations were nonetheless experienced between employees from both former Technikons, which would have benefitted the merged entity from a 'people's point of view'. Lower level employees should be focused on during a merger process through, amongst other plans, planned communication and feedback sessions for merger success. Crucial for lower level employees who may not be perceived as core employees in institutions is that they should be considered strategic partners in higher education institutions for operational and support functions during institutional mergers.

The focus now turns to the second research question for the study. The second question for the study was “*to examine the perceptions of lower level employees during a merger process which includes the pre-merger, merger and post-merger period*”. A discussion of results that relates to the second research question is provided.

6.2.3 An assessment of perceptions regarding the merger decision

In this study, the quantitative results indicated that half of the respondents asserted that the merger was a good idea when the merger was announced. Almost 42% of the respondents stated that the merger was a bad idea, whilst 33% remained undecided. A minimal 15% of the respondents disagreed with the statement that the merger was a bad idea. It was clear that lower level employees had concerns and expectations from the merger process and these were borne out by similar analyses in other studies. Greenberg (2011:523), Cartwright and Cooper (1996) and Coffey et al (2002:2) argued that employees had expectations and concerns during a merger process which needed to be addressed by organisations for there to be favourable employee perceptions of mergers.

Critical to employee wellbeing in an organisation were possible staff redundancies and uncertainty about the future which were of concern to employees during a merger process. In this instance, lower level employees would have felt particularly vulnerable with regards to job security. The uncertainty would have been as a result of not knowing whether the merger would succeed or not including change from comfort of the pre-merger stage. Similarly, Harman and Meek (2002) and Skodvin (1999) maintained that employee concerns that were not met led to low job satisfaction. Part of the challenge was that such employee expectations and concerns needed to be

addressed during the merger in order to influence perceptions of job satisfaction.

Employee concerns in respect of the merger process were consistent with a study by Harman and Harman (2008) on the merger between Victoria University of Manchester and the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology. In the Harman and Harman (2008) study, employees raised concerns about the merger between the two institutions and concluded that employee concerns and expectations were largely not met during the merger process. In the Durban University of Technology case, employee expectations that were not fulfilled influenced the perceptions of employees towards the merger especially at the integration phase. In particular, certain lower level employees expected that their pay, working conditions and supervision would improve after the merger process however, for some this was not the case, as expressed by a respondent:

Now I feel we shouldn't have merged! We should have just been, we were better of then. In the working environment we are facing lot of difficulties

The interviewed respondents supported the merger during the pre-merger phase however, they were disappointed with the merger processes post-merger. It was clear that most respondents had a negative perception of the developments following the merger. Part of the negative perceptions of the merger may be as a result of the lengthy duration of 'really' merging institutions, especially the integration processes and unfulfilled expectations. Similarly, Harman and Meek (2002) and Skodvin (1999) were of the view that it took a long time for institutions to 'really' merge. This was consistent with the findings of this study, which confirmed that the duration of merging was long as a result of persistent outstanding employee issues such as perceived pay disparities.

Pertinent for employees during a merger was going beyond the issue of name changes and integration of infrastructure to ensuring that many employee needs were fulfilled post-merger. One plausible explanation is that lower level employees may have not been recognised as the core employees of the institution, resulting in such employees feeling alienated from the processes unfolding and hence developing a negative attitude towards the merger.

6.2.4 Perceptions of top management and supervision in a merger process: An effect on lower level employees

When examining how top management and supervisors were perceived by lower level employees, Jansen (2002) observed that top management was an important stakeholder in a merger process, but was also equally responsible for providing the direction during the merger process and effecting decisions made by institutional councils. Given the role of top management during a merger, perceptions of whether their role led to an effective or ineffective merger process would certainly arise in an organisation. The voluntary merger between former Technikons Natal and M.L. Sultan was in many ways directed by top management who were navigating through an often complex and massive task over a period of time, with many expectations from various stakeholders.

Given the various stakeholders that managers had to focus on lower level employees who were part of a larger workforce did not receive any special treatment, nor were they given a special place in the various forums that were established for the merger. However, there were individuals through their union membership who participated in the various forums. Therefore, it is not surprising that a majority of respondents (61%) indicated that top management did not show interest in lower level employees during the merger process. Approximately 24% of the respondents agreed with the statement that top

management showed interest in lower level employees. A further 38% of employees indicated that top management communicated with lower level employees during the merger process. More worrying for top management is that 62% of the respondents disagreed or were undecided regarding top management communication at the institution.

Part of the explanations, as observed by Chetty (2010) in the Durban University of Technology merger, was that these staff members were all affected by the merger and did not know their own fate until well after the merger integration began. Nevertheless, it does point to the inability of those that held top management positions at the time of the merger to give sufficient attention to lower level workers for these perceptions to have set in. Hunsaker (2005) pointed out that communication was critical in an organisation during a change process.

The findings of this study on top management communication were consistent with Schraeder's (2001) study that recommended early communication with employees pre-merger for employee commitment to be established and maintained. Whilst there was communication with staff members in general during the merger, it may have been that the communication strategy was not tailored to the needs of lower level employees. Lower level employees typically were less educated and skilled, which meant that targeted communication to this particular group may have been prudent during a merger process.

Furthermore, the case study on the merger between former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon reported that some employees, including lower level employees, were not part of the steering committee in the pre-merger stage (Chalufu, 2002). The significance of this statement was that early communication with employees may not have taken place adequately in the

early stages of the merger process, which could have affected the perceptions of employees towards the merger.

This is not unusual during a merger process as Cartwright and Copper (1996) noted that the focus tended to shift to financial and strategic imperatives with minimal focus on employees. In the Durban University of Technology case study, trade unions pointed out that lower level employees as well as other levels of employees felt there was insufficient consultation and communication during the merger process. Chetty (2010: v) pointed out that a consultative and engaging process during a merger process was encouraged whilst Chalufu (2002) and Jansen (2002) argued that communication during a merger process was critical.

Representation of employees in the initial stages of the steering committee may have further improved communication between management and lower level employees during the merger process. Crucial to the understanding of the issue of communication was that there were various difficulties experienced during the merger process which were interpreted by employees to be a lack of adequate communication from management. This assertion was consistent with Chetty's (2010:253), Chalufu's (2002) and Jansen's (2002) studies which indicated that there were numerous difficulties experienced during the Durban University of Technology merger process. With regards to satisfaction with leadership provided by top management, a minimal 22% of respondents were satisfied with the post-merger events that unfolded. A respondent expressed that:

So every Vice Chancellor (VC) comes here, he listens to your problems then after five years he is gone, then he (VC) blames last principal and says then he will try and sort things out and it's the same. He is here for five years or three and half they want him out, or three and half years he takes his bags and he is gone and it's the same old thing.....it's going on and on and on.

The case study certainly confirms that the post-merger period had a number of leadership changes which further reinforced the notion of instability of management, thereby confirming the perceptions of lower level employees of a poor merger. The issue of top management instability would have been an experience of all employees and was not unique to lower level employees in the institution. There is no doubt that the merger led to the formation of a larger institution which was more challenging to manage as a result of complexities and nuances, which was further compounded by instability at top management level. The fact that this merger was the first merger of its kind in South Africa may have further added to these complexities. Whilst it is acknowledged that there were difficulties with the merger, the sheer size of the institution with many campuses further created distances between various levels of employees and no more so than amongst lower level employees in the institution.

Kinicki and Kreitner (2008) observed with Ivancevich et al (2008) that part of the problem of mergers was that it brought about perceived instability and unpredictability in an organisation, which impacted on employee comfort zones experienced before the merger. There were many considerations that top management had to focus on as reported in the Durban University of Technology case study with some aspects certainly affecting the intended merger outcomes.

It is quite plausible that of the various personnel groupings in the university, lower level employees may not have been viewed as a priority given that they were in support functions and not in work that was considered core to the institution. Critical to the efficiency of an institution was the maintenance of an institutional infrastructure and provision of services which were necessary to meet the strategic imperatives of the merger process. In many ways, the institution needed to function and be productive in order to meet organisational goals whilst the merger process was taking place. Lower level employees may not have been a focus group during the merger process however, they were tasked with maintaining institutional infrastructure and with providing better services to higher education institutions. These employees provided services that would benefit the institution with regards to teaching, learning and research which are core functions of the higher education sector.

In relation to supervision, 36% of the respondents reported that they received good supervision pre-merger and post-merger. The results indicated that 41% of the respondents were undecided on supervision post-merger which may point to a mixture of good and, at times, bad supervision in the institution. This result was a significant percentage of respondents selecting a neutral position regarding supervision at the institution. The neutral position may have been selected by respondents for fear of possible intimidation and reprisals as a result of the responses of the participants in this study.

Immediate supervisors generally wield a lot of power and influence over their subordinates in an organisation. The supervisor power involves an influence of career prospects and advancement of subordinates. During the collection of data, there were implicit remarks made which appeared to influence respondents to respond in a particular way regarding supervision. This may have influenced the reluctance from participants to respond to statements

regarding immediate supervisor performance. However, a respondent made the following comments regarding supervision:

To start off with, we are starting to get qualified and he is sitting (referring to their supervisor) in a position without qualifications so if he is sitting there how can somebody unqualified manage somebody who is qualified

Another respondent expressed that good supervision was experienced before the merger than after the merger. The literature reviewed indicated that supervision and leadership influenced employee experiences such as job satisfaction and staff morale during the merger. Robbins and Judge (2007:579) agreed with Ivancevich et al (2008:681) that strong leadership and direction during a merger was required, which included responding to employee experiences and expectations in a merger process.

Higher education institutions may improve or not improve on the basis of strong leadership and direction. The presence or absence of leadership could derail or support an institution in achieving its institutional mandate in conjunction with government policy. For such achievements to be realised, employees contributed to the support function of the institution which would enable the achievement of institutional strategic imperatives. In addition, the role of management and leadership was of critical importance for employees to have a sense of belonging during a merger process and settling into a merged institution. Harman and Harman (2008:117) postulated that public sector employees should feel part of the merger process in order to meet merger outcomes. A work climate which affected the perceptions of employees towards a merger was created by supervisors and management for employees to feel part of the merger process.

Cartwright and Cooper (1996) were of the view that management of the people's side of a merger is often the most challenging part of a merger and is usually a focal point. Management challenges were identified by lower level employees based on their perceptions in this study. The results indicated that, although trade union representatives were part of the merger process, lower level employees felt that their concerns and expectations were not adequately addressed by management. It may well be that these concerns and expectations were not unique to lower level employees but were reflective of the change taking place during the merger process at the Durban University of Technology at the time.

6.2.5 Implications of pay in a merger process

Pay was of critical concern and had wider implications for lower level employees in public higher education institutions and organisations. Therefore, focus on pay during change processes such as a merger was crucial in influencing employee perceptions during the merger process. This study reported that most respondents (61%) indicated that salaries and benefits had not been harmonised post-merger. A relatively small 19% of the respondents were undecided regarding salaries and benefits at the institution. This meant that lower level employees felt that there were persistent pay inequalities at the Durban University of Technology. During the collection of data, several respondents also pointed out their dissatisfaction in respect of pay. Of paramount importance regarding the concern of pay parity for lower level employees was that this may be typical of the South African employment context for this group.

From a historical perspective, many employees in South Africa were relegated to menial jobs that paid very little because of the apartheid system. There may have been expectations that the plight of the lower level worker would have changed for the better regarding issues of pay in the public and private sectors in the democratic dispensation. One of the difficulties for public higher education institutions was that they are not necessarily profit driven however, they have to be financially sustainable.

Nevertheless, such institutions were also tasked with addressing socio-economic imbalances of the South African society. Higher education institutions are microcosms of society and therefore the pay scales of employees had to be viewed within a broader South African context. Hunsaker (2005:212) and David (2001:78) were of the view that mergers were perceived as a response to socio-economic challenges faced by corporations and organisations on issues such as pay disparities, whilst Balintulo (2003) posited that equity and redress were required in higher education to respond to South Africa's history of inequality.

Whilst the perceptions of employees were negative regarding pay in this study, their pay scales may not have been unusual for employees at lower level jobs such as gardeners in the public sector generally. Lower level employees indicated that there were differences regarding pay between employees from both former Technikons which resulted in low staff morale and low job satisfaction in the post-merger period. Critical to the issue of pay was the limited opportunities for growth and career advancement for lower level employees which meant that their pay would not increase significantly over time which further impacted on job satisfaction and staff morale. These perceptions of pay differences between two merging partners could have contributed to the broader unhappiness towards the merger generally.

A respondent in this study reported that they had 40 years of service with the same institution in a lower level job. It may not be unusual for lower level employees in the South African context to be loyal to an organisation by remaining for many years in low level jobs. This study's finding was in contrast to those of Harman and Meek (2002) and Skodvin (1999) who argued that mergers led to staffing and salary level improvements. Whilst there may be institutional attempts to create opportunities for learning for lower level employees, it may well be that the education and skills levels of these employees were not improving significantly to affect their job positions and pay substantially.

Whilst policy makers have passed various training and education legislations there appeared to be continuing work-based inequalities that persist in South African society. These inequalities are simply about social justice and most, if not all, lower level employees were from poor communities and families, which further points to the challenge faced by government and the higher education sector.

Higher education institutions as a sector may have been perceived by these employees as a sector that would create opportunities for advancement and better pay. As observed in this study, the perceptions of the participants point out that this was not the case. In reality, a substantial number of employees that comprised the maintenance department were from the former Technikon Natal and could have felt aggrieved that former M.L. Sultan Technikon staff members were perceived as better paid post-merger. Part of the problem is that the perceived pay disparities in the institution conjure up experiences and feelings of unhappiness and frustration for lower level employees in the post-merger period.

With regards to the voluntary severance packages, half of the respondents in the quantitative study did not consider taking the voluntary severance package offered at the time of the merger. Very few employees accepted the severance packages offered. For many employees who remained in the institution, there may have been expectations of better pay in comparison to the severance package offered by the institution at the time. This argument correlated with the findings of this study that employees were largely disappointed with how the merger process had turned out in the integration phase in comparison to what was anticipated at the beginning of the merger process.

The institution offered voluntary severance packages as a way of streamlining and restructuring the workforce for cost saving purposes. Cost saving is not unusual during a merger process as Cartwright and Cooper (1996:20) pointed out that financial benefits of a merger and not human resource were the focus of mergers. Given that lower level employees may not be viewed as core staff members in a higher education institution, this may be reflected in terms of their pay and grades including the severance packages offered to them. This study concluded that most respondents had a negative perception of their pay post-merger. The findings of this study pointed out that some respondents were for the merger whilst others were against the merger between former M.L. Sultan Technikon and former Technikon Natal. In addition, participants in the study had a negative perception of the merger integration phase.

Responses to the qualitative and quantitative sections of the study were largely similar which meant that there was a correlation between the results. Participants in the quantitative study did not participate in the qualitative study. Where certain responses were given during the quantitative study, such responses were corroborated by the in-depth interviews conducted. Given the relatively small sample used in the qualitative study, in-depth interviews with key participants contributed to the results and discussions of this study.

Furthermore, it should be noted that merger integration generally occurs over a much longer time period as pointed out by Harman and Meek (2002:1) and Skodvin (1999:69) in the literature. Similarly, the Durban University of Technology merger case study supported the notion that mergers took long to implement. Nevertheless, this first merger of its kind in South Africa may inform future mergers in higher education. The impact of such a merger particularly on lower level employee motivation and staff morale was found to suffer from a paucity of literature.

This study has concluded that mergers were large scale tasks with implication for a number of interest groups and stakeholders in the higher education sector. The pre-merger stage was crucial in setting the nature of the merger process in lieu of post-merger outcomes. Similarly, top management and supervision were critical to the success of a merger as they set the direction for the merger process. This study further found that employees were concerned about top management instability and supervisor effectiveness. In addition, management needed to communicate using targeted messaging for various employee groups including lower level employees regarding merger processes before, during and after the merger.

Furthermore, pay was critical to the perceptions of employees, particularly lower level employees regarding pay parity after the merger which affected job satisfaction and staff morale. It emerged in this study that there were pay disparities between former Technikon Natal and former M.L. Sultan Technikon lower level employees, which negatively influenced the perceptions of such employees towards the merger. Whilst mergers lead to discomfort and frustration for the employees involved with the higher education sector, factors such as pay parities, communication and strong leadership were necessary for the success and achievement of merger outcomes. The recommendations for the study follow.

6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst the recommendations of this study apply to lower level employees, such recommendations may broadly apply to higher education institutional employees generally. Based on the results and discussions of this study's findings, the following recommendations are made:

- It is important to recognise all employee levels including lower level employees, during a merger process. Top management as a stakeholder in a merger is involved in a mammoth task of implementing a merger and recognising employees during merger stages. Evident from this research was that there was unhappiness about the merger in many areas that are useful in influencing the perceptions of employees, including lower level employees. To this extent, lower level employees were critical to the merger process and should be recognised through representation in various forums and committees for a 'buy in' into the entire merger process.
- Without a shadow of a doubt, communication is key during a merger process. Therefore, an early effort should be made to include as many stakeholders as possible in the pre-merger stage. Better communication between top management and lower level employees should take place in a merger process. This includes feedback sessions after communication has taken place, which can only improve such issues as loyalty, productivity and growth in an organisation. Therefore, there should be a better understanding of the needs of different employee groups in a higher education institution during merger processes in order to implement targeted communication strategies and language for different groups of employees in institutions for better merger outcomes.

- Supervisory skills training and the development of supervisors of lower level employees are encouraged in order to strengthen institutional departments in preparation for the post-merger period. Emerging experiential training programmes targeted at supervisors in anticipation of a post-merger phase should be implemented in institutions and organisations. Such continuing training and development interventions should empower supervisors to operate in merged entities and improve job satisfaction and staff morale of lower level employees, thereby further enhancing the quality of work produced for an organisation.
- It is critical to examine issues of pay disparities prior to implementing a merger process. Dealing with pay issues assists with minimising consternation and unhappiness amongst employees in the post-merger phase. Therefore, a comprehensive compensation plan to address employee salaries and benefits is encouraged in the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases. Furthermore, the compensation plan should address perceptions of unfair pay between former respective institutional staff members including lower level employees, as this affects staff morale and job satisfaction in the post-merger period.
- Crucial to the well-being of employees is their working conditions in an organisation post-merger. Working conditions of lower level employees should be maintained and improved by management in order to improve job satisfaction and staff morale in a merged institution given that lower level workers' working conditions are not always satisfactory and usually not an area of focus for improvements. In many ways, satisfactory working conditions may lead to higher productivity, improved employee performance, better services and a strong competitive advantage for institutions.

- During merger processes, it is likely that external consultants or outsourced workers are utilised during various stages of the merger to fulfill various organisational needs and operational functions. Where the need arises to bring in specialists and external contractors to assist during a merger process, such roles should be clearly defined and explained to all stakeholders in order to prevent possible challenges with internal employees in higher education institutions who may feel threatened and uneasy about such specialists.
- Regular consultation and participation of lower level employees in the pre-merger, during and post-merger processes is recommended in higher education institutions for enhanced job satisfaction and staff morale. In addition, such consultation processes influence the perceptions of employees regarding the managing of the merger process by stakeholders in organisations.
- Maintained and improved motivation of lower level employees in a merger process should be supported to encourage better services and maintenance of infrastructure, including faculties and academic departments of higher education institutions for better teaching, learning and research. Therefore, motivated lower level employees should contribute to the strategic imperatives of higher education institutions, which assist in improving the higher education sector as a whole.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Mergers are a period of change for employees in the public and private sectors. These mergers are not about merging infrastructure and systems. They include the people in the institutions and organisations. By virtue of their position in an institution, lower level employees may not be a main consideration during a merger process. Given that lower level employees in particular may not be a focus group in a merger process, it was significant to conduct research on this particular group to better understand them in a higher education merger in order to contribute to the literature on mergers in higher education.

This study focused on employees with a particular emphasis on lower level employees during the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases which set the tone for the outcome of the merger. Studies of higher education mergers were significant as they attempted to establish a better understanding of mergers in various phases particularly through an examination of stakeholder points of view. This study was aimed at understanding the impact that mergers have on lower level employees in the higher education sector.

This study found that whilst lower level employees were satisfied with some aspects of the merger, they were dissatisfied with other aspects. Lower level employees had needs and expectations of what the merger would bring for such employees as a group or individuals. Given that the Durban University of Technology merger was the first merger of its kind in South Africa, it was bound to experience challenges throughout the merger process. The merger challenges appeared to have influenced the perceptions of employees towards the merger.

This study concluded that lower level employees largely had a negative perception towards the merger in the post-merger period as a result of expectations that were not fulfilled by the institution. Job satisfaction ranged from high to low amongst the respondents. Staff morale was low amongst lower level employees in part due to the use of external contractors and pay disparities which led to unhappiness and frustration with the institution. Therefore, the wider implications of mergers in terms of the impact on lower level employees could not be ignored. Pay disparities appeared to impact on not just employees but their families and communities which were part of a broader South African society.

Lower level employees reported unhappiness, frustration and disappointment with the merger on various matters such as pay, supervisors and top management. This was not unusual as Hawkins et al (2005) found that mergers led to anxiety, demoralisation and pain for employees, which were largely consistent with this study. Job resources were sometimes in short supply as a result of possible institutional financial constraints and lower level jobs not being the focus during a merger process. In many ways, the impact of mergers on lower level employees and other employees could not be overstated in the public higher education institution sector, locally and internationally.

In contrast, lower level employees were mostly satisfied with the training and development opportunities provided by the merged institution and relations between employees from respective institutions had improved in the post-merger period. Employees were largely satisfied with the working conditions at the Durban University of Technology as they had moved to better facilities at the former Technikon Natal premises. A significant finding of this study was that lower level employees were highly motivated to do their jobs at the merged institution. These employees were highly motivated to do their jobs post-merger

in part as a result of taking the option of remaining in the institution in comparison to accepting voluntary severance packages.

Whilst lower level employees may not be perceived as core staff members in higher education institutions, this study recommended that such employees should be an integral part of the merger process in the pre-merger, during and post-merger phases. Lower level employees are largely found in support functions such as building and grounds, security, printing, maintenance, transport etcetera. They fulfil a largely important role in supporting the academic enterprise including faculties. Given that the infrastructure and grounds of a higher education institution required maintenance and other services post-merger, lower level employee involvement in the merger process was recommended in the study.

This study found that the infrastructure maintenance and service offerings of lower level employees were of strategic importance to a merged entity regardless of the assertion that they could be easily replaced by the organisation. A post-merger integration plan and regular communication with lower level employees were recommended based on the findings of the study. The high levels of motivation of these employees could be used to establish a sense of pride, workmanship and service for the institution to achieve strategic imperatives.

This study has concluded that it may well be that employees in organisations exhibit similar ways of behaving after a change process such as a merger. However, it should be noted that lower level employees had some unique challenges. Challenges included that lower level employees tended to have low levels of skills and education in organisations. Such skills-sets influenced the job options that were available to lower level employees in the public and private

sector. Whilst these employees may be viewed as being easily replaced based on skills-set requirements, it was critical to understand their strategic importance to an institution with regards to maintenance of infrastructure and providing a better service to institutions and organisations. Such institutional infrastructure and services contributed to effective teaching, learning and research that were critical to the core business of the higher education sector.

This study has attempted to contribute to the body of knowledge on mergers in higher education, with a particular emphasis on their impact on lower level employees. The findings of the study should inform higher education and human resource policy, theory and practice with regards to mergers especially in areas of employee motivation, perceptions and staff morale. Society and interest groups as custodians and stakeholders in education and human resources should benefit from this study's findings and recommendations. However, further questions for future studies begin to emerge from this study. These questions include the examination of the impact of socio-economic conditions on lower level employees in the higher education sector. Another question could investigate whether trade unions serve the needs of lower level employees in higher education institutions during merger processes.

Mergers impacted on employees in organisations in various ways. The merger process pursued influenced the nature of the impact of mergers on employees and the outcomes thereof. These mergers presented opportunities and challenges for the stakeholders involved in the process, with implications for society. Whilst there were successes and difficulties that mergers created for institutions and organisations, mergers would continue to take place in public and private sectors as a result of macro and micro changes and developments locally and internationally.

This study was undertaken through a particular lense of the microcosm of lower level employees within a larger general workforce in the higher education sector. Whilst there appeared to be minimal differences between lower level employees and the general workforce in higher education in respect of job satisfaction, motivation and staff morale, it was essential to understand lower level employees and their perceptions towards a merger process for future higher education mergers, policy and discourse.

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RESEARCH ON LOWER LEVEL EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS ON POST-MERGER ISSUES

Dear Respondent

I am a student registered for a Masters Degree in Human Resource Management. The purpose of this research survey is to ascertain post-merger perceptions of lower level employees at the Durban University of Technology. I request your assistance and cooperation in completing the following questionnaire, which will only be used for the purposes of this study. Note that participation in this study is VOLUNTARY. When you choose to participate in this study, you consent that you are participating freely. Your assistance and cooperation is greatly appreciated. Please forward questionnaire to the following email baphiwed@dut.ac.za. My contact details are 031 373 5493.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDENTS

- 1) Kindly tick one box for each statement.
- 2) Kindly respond to all statements.
- 3) Names of respondents are not required to ensure confidentiality.
- 4) Please be assured that all responses will be kept strictly confidential.

SECTION A

1. AGE	-25	<input type="checkbox"/>	25-35	<input type="checkbox"/>	36-50	<input type="checkbox"/>	50+	<input type="checkbox"/>
				<input type="checkbox"/>				
2. Gender	Male	<input type="checkbox"/>	Female					
3. Race	Black	<input type="checkbox"/>	Coloured	<input type="checkbox"/>	Indian	<input type="checkbox"/>	White	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Previous Technikon			ML Sultan	<input type="checkbox"/>	Technikon Natal	<input type="checkbox"/>		
5. Length of service	-10	<input type="checkbox"/>	10-20	<input type="checkbox"/>	20+	<input type="checkbox"/>		
6. Are you a union member?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>				

SECTION B

	STATEMENTS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEUTRAL	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	I was supportive of the merger when it was announced.					
2	Merging of the two institutions was a good decision.					
3	Job security was a major concern of mine when the merger was announced.					
4	I was happy with the working conditions at my previous Technikon.					
5	Working conditions at DUT post-merger are good.					
6	Merger affected my job security at the institution.					
7	Salaries and benefits after the merger have been harmonized for employees.					
8	Top management kept staff well informed during the merger discussions.					
9	I am satisfied with the leadership provided by Top management post-merger.					
10	A plan was in place to integrate lower level workers.					
11	Top management has shown interest in lower level staff post- merger.					
12	The merger was a bad idea.					
13	Conflict between me and my colleagues from the other Technikon took place immediately after the merger.					
14	I received good					

	supervision pre- merger.					
15	I receive good supervision post- merger.					
16	DUT has taken care of my work related needs e.g. training, protective clothing.					
17	I am given the resources to do my job.					
18	Greater satisfaction exists in my job post- merger than pre- merger.					
19	I continue to work for DUT because of limited job opportunities.					
20	The supervision that I received before merger was better than the supervision I received after the merger.					
21	The use of external contractors post- merger affects my work morale.					
22	I am motivated to do my current job.					
23	My current supervisor is from my previous Technikon.					
24	I did not consider the Voluntary Severance Package when it was offered at the time of the merger.					

25 Any comments on your perceptions of the merger as a lower level employee.

Please forward questionnaire to my e-mail baphiwed@dut.ac.za. My contact details are 031 373 5493.

Thank you for your participation and time



RESEARCH ON LOWER LEVEL EMPLOYEE PERCEPTIONS ON POST-MERGER ISSUES

INTRODUCTION

I am a student registered for a Masters Degree in Human Resource Management. The purpose of the interview is to ascertain post-merger perceptions of lower level employees at the Durban University of Technology. I request your assistance and co-operation in doing the interview. Note that participation is voluntary. When you participate in the study, you consent that you are participating freely. Your assistance and co-operation is greatly appreciated. Your responses will remain anonymous. I will ask questions and request your truthful responses. The interviews will be recorded to remember your responses. You may ask questions of clarity at any time.

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHICS

1. What is your age?

2. What is your gender?

3. What is your race?

4. Which Technikon did you work for before the merger?

5. Are you a union member?

SECTION B: MERGER

6. How did you feel about the merger when it was announced?

7. How do you feel about the merger post-merger?

8. What were relations like between former Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon lower level employees during the merger?

9. What are relations like between former Technikon Natal and M.L. Sultan Technikon lower level employees post-merger?

10. How did you feel about top management's handling of the merger during the merger process?

11. How do you feel about the current top management?

12. How were relations between you and your supervisor before the merger?

13. How are relations between you and your current supervisor?

14. What is the support needed to do your job like?

15. How motivated are you to do your job?

16. How do you experience staff morale in your department?

17. How did you feel about the voluntary severance package when it was offered?

18. Why do you continue to work for Durban University of Technology?

19. Any other general remarks?

Thank you for your participation

