

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSION OF THE RESULTS OF THE QUALITATIVE STUDY CONDUCTED AMONG MANAGEMENT

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focussed on the methodologies of the qualitative study. In this chapter the results of the qualitative investigations are reported and discussed.

The results of the interviews with management, that is Executive Management, the Management of CADS, Deans and HODs, are outlined. In the analysis of the responses, categorisation and the identification of themes for each group were applied to achieve a general understanding of the role and perceptions of management, about staff development and issues related to educational transformation. Some of the responses are compared with evidence present in the literature. Also, the results are analysed against the research questions and objectives generated in chapter 1. The qualitative study culminated in a paper which was presented at a conference (Hassan and Fraser 2003).

6.2 Results of the interview with the Management of CADS

This subsection is concerned with the outcome of the interview conducted with the Management of CADS where one person was interviewed. The interview schedule that was utilized is inserted as appendix B.

6.2.1 Staff development policies and practices

There are multiple factors that drive staff development at MEDUNSA. The respondent explained that the legislative context, changed higher education, national policy frameworks, for example, the SAQA registration requirements for 2003 have precipitated the need for staff to acknowledge that previous training may no longer be relevant. “Staff need to know new techniques and acquire new understandings in terms of teaching and assessing”.

To ensure that policies made at meso level are being realised, CADS works as an interface between what is happening at institutional level and what is happening at departmental level. The interviewee remarked that: “CADS’s role is to put forward policies and visions of

structures at various committees, for example the Academic Planning Committee (APC), the Curriculum Development Committee (CDC), the Academic Development Committee (ADC), which are chaired by senate. Our role is to translate the Executive Manager's vision for academic processes into system-wide processes. CADs play an important role in co-ordinating and designing systems. Therefore, ours is not just a supportive role but a driving role as well".

Implementation of meso level policies help the unit keep up with trends and practices in staff development. The respondent purported that she consults with people when it comes to evaluation of teaching and learning, and curriculum development. She also conducts interviews with key stakeholders and that information is put into an understandable policy document. This is constantly up for review and goes to Senate for ratification.

Unfortunately, staff development practices at the institution are not so successful. "The energy that is put in is really not worth it". She continued: "When you have workshops, you get about 30 people, usually junior staff. It's harder to get senior academics. People are highly resistant when asked by the head of department to come to a workshop".

Poor attendance was attributed to academics being responsible for service delivery, community development and clinical responsibilities; thus, they are overstretched. The mentality of clinicians is that they are not teachers. Another mitigating factor is that teaching excellence is not well rewarded. Promotion relies on research outputs not excellence in teaching. Junior staff attend programmes and are more prepared to admit that they don't know. Senior academics like HOD's are insecure about admitting in public what they should know.

Mostly, the visions of the Executive Manager are being realised in the implementation of staff development programmes. She extrapolated: "He is passionate about the quality of teaching and learning, to get students to think critically and to problem solve, in addition to "rural training" for doctors where they can use alternate methods in rural areas. The visions of the Executive Manager are not fully realised because people are not actively involved in academic issues. He's aware that constraints of facilities and resources exist. He wants to look at task teams to explore e-learning. He's requested that explore interdisciplinary connections, for example, a common bioethics course that could be shared amongst faculty".

6.2.2 Educational transformation and its impact on staff development at MEDUNSA

The role of CADS in implementing educational transformation at micro level involves:

- 1) Creating awareness of transformation initiatives, for example teaching/learning issues.
- 2) Dissemination of information on the NAP document and QA frameworks and to get people to critically discuss these documents and how it affects them.

Apparently, academics don't understand links between broader frameworks of educational transformation and policy documents like the White Paper on Higher education and the NCHE. This is why an attempt is made to keep them informed about the current trends in higher education transformation. The internet is used for this purpose but it is not always reliable. Hence, the medium usually used is faculty committees, for example the APC. Senate is informed and then hard copies of documents are sent to Deans of faculties who have the responsibility to disseminate information to HODs, who then inform academic staff. The respondent noted that: "This line of communication doesn't always work all that well but is still a better way to get departments and peers to engage in discussion".

The role of CADS in obtaining faculty buy-in is to serve as a link between institutional decision making and implementation at departmental level. She added: "To obtain faculty buy-in, it is important to get on well with faculty. I have good interpersonal relations with Deans and HODs and take every opportunity to become involved in their discussions. I sit in on all faculty boards, executive committees of faculties and APCs. I'm able to draw a link".

6.2.3 The training and development of academics in the implementation of novel curricula

The provision of training and development in the implementation of novel curricula is sparse. The following reasons were given: "CADS is still in a developmental stage. We only have one staff development practitioner. We've relied heavily on outside facilitators to provide training and guidance".

The support of outside consultants has not been adequate to prepare staff for the implementation of OBE. "Staff must understand what OBE is all about-its principles and all

of its implications in terms of its assessment and teaching. People need to understand it and then buy-in to it. People still don't understand much about continuous assessment, group-work or student-centred learning”.

Taking into account the difficulties associated with the implementation of new curricula, Cross et al. (2002:172) argue that ideals such as OBE require a great deal of technical and political skills that cannot be achieved overnight and that one would need to be realistic about what can be achieved given the circumstances of the institution.

The unit's stance on offering training in the implementation of PBL is not very positive. If programmes are not PBL based, CADS sees no need to offer training in this. Except for the pharmacy department, no other department uses PBL. She stipulated that: “We do not have the resources to offer training in PBL to people who don't use it- that would be an exercise in futility. CADS designs programmes in terms of the training needs of faculties”.

Arguably, since MEDUNSA is a medical university, it would seem obvious that it should follow the example of other medical universities world-wide, for example McMaster University (Bligh 1995:323), the University of Toronto (Bernstein, Tipping, Bercovitz and Skinner 1995:245-247) including Maastricht and Flinders University (Lloyd-Jones, Margetson and Bligh 1998:492), in the implementation of PBL (see subsection 2.5.2.3). The fact that staff at MEDUNSA are not implementing PBL could be attributable to a lack of knowledge and skills which is all the more reason that training in PBL should be offered.

Notwithstanding the reply that was given, the respondent still felt that academics could benefit from training in the implementation of PBL. This comment was substantiated by the following commentary: “If the principles of PBL apply to what people are doing and would be useful, for example, for doing things like facilitating group work and designing case studies, then training will be beneficial. I would take care not to emphasise something that they are not using. PBL needs people who know how to do it”.

6.2.4 The promotion of scholarship at MEDUNSA

In terms of the promotion of scholarship, the emphasis of CADS is on teaching since other departments are emphasising research. A new postgraduate programme is being put up to provide academics who are not competent clinical researchers to take a different route, that is research on teaching. This programme will also be for people in academia who have not

learnt how to teach. The CADS Manager stated that: “In the new programme we will be supervising postgraduate research. QA instruments are different in terms of what consultants will need in terms of training registrars”. Moreover, there are currently no postgraduate programmes in higher education (for example, the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education-PGCHE) for academics who wish to excel in the scholarship of teaching.

6.2.5 The role of CADS in promoting quality assurance (QA) among academics

The CADS does not have a QA policy for the development of academic staff. Neither are there assessment strategies in place to determine the improvement of quality among academics. She commented: “People are concerned about good quality in teaching and learning but it has not been formalised. We have external examiners, moderators but it is not part of a formal process. It’s the first time we are looking at it formally”. Also, criteria to assess the quality of academics have not been decided upon and there is still intensive debate on the subject.

Additionally, CADS addresses the problem of academics having to cope with limitations such as large classes and heavy workload through discussions in workshops and induction programmes

6.2.6 Training and development in the use of technology in the teaching/learning process

Training and development of academic staff, in terms of applying technology in teaching/learning, are not co-ordinated. The CADS runs courses on PowerPoint and the university has a video conferencing facility. The respondent was of the opinion that MEDUNSA does not have the budget or technical support to run e-learning effectively.

6.2.7 Distance education and equity as educational transformation issues at meso level

Staff development programmes that could assist educators in educating learners who have been previously disadvantaged are not being offered by CADS. Furthermore, distance education was reported as not being a strategic priority of the university.

6.3 Results of the interview with Executive Management

This subsection pivots around the responses of the Executive Manager. The interview schedule that was applied can be found in appendix C. As far as possible evidence from the literature has been included to support or argue against responses given.

6.3.1 Staff development policies and practices

The factors that drive academic staff development at MEDUNSA are influenced mainly by:

1) The need to train academics to teach since they lack an educational background, and 2) The national requirements in higher education. Further, MEDUNSA has staff development policies in place as was explained by the interviewee: “We have a few academic staff development policies in place to assist staff development and we are responding to macro policy requirements from the National Department of Education to conform with quality development and to fit in with requirements of the new academic policy of government. Policy requirements from the Foundation of Tertiary Institutions in the Northern Metropolis (FOTIM) are also being put into place to fit in with a number of other requirements, for example foundational courses. All this is in the infancy stage-it still needs to be developed”.

These policies compare with educational transformation policies made at macro level in that there seems to be compliance with national requirements with respect to curriculum processes as well as, programme and qualification registration in all faculties. Furthermore, to ensure that these policies compare with current trends in staff development, the university obtains advice from other institutions such as the University of Pretoria, Rhodes, the South African Universities Vice-Chancellors’ Association (SAUVCA), the Department of Education, the CHE, the National Department of Education, Technikon Pretoria and the Pharmacy Council, in order to regenerate staff development.

Staff development policies are put into practice through induction programmes for new staff and workshops have been held to expose academic staff to new policies, for example, the NAP, curriculum development and quality assurance. These programmes are being implemented with respect to the 2003 deadline for registration of qualifications. He added: “We think we are competing with national policies at the level of QA and developing staff development programmes at the level of regional arrangement. New staff have been appointed to look at foundation programmes”.

When asked about his perception on whether these staff development processes were successful or not, he answered: “In a milieu of rapid change, it is difficult to keep up with monitoring staff development within MEDUNSA. However, this is impacting on awareness for developing students who 1) are successful in academic work, 2) are lifelong learners and 3) would contribute to the socio-economic development of the community”.

The interviewee expressed disappointment and dissatisfaction regarding the poor attendance of staff development programmes, stating that it is below expectation. He acknowledged, however, that programmes are demanding and that some staff do not have free time to attend. He explained: “When people look after the lives of others, that takes priority and staff development is shifted to a secondary point of concentration. We need to balance this”. What he has witnessed, though, is that despite being experienced educators, some staff still look towards staff development for assistance.

In response to the question about his vision for academic staff development at MEDUNSA, the respondent replied: “I’m looking forward to a situation where staff may not be deployed in their various teaching functions unless they have gone through a teaching programme. We ultimately will have such a busy centre at CADS that we may need to muscle up staffing and quality of staff that mans CADS”.

In Britain, the Dearing report has suggested that all lecturers undergo initial and subsequent training with teaching quality being assumed through membership of a professional body (Dearing 1997: par 14.30). Similarly, Fullan and Stiegelbauer (1991:309) condemn HEIs for expecting that anyone with content knowledge is able to teach (see subsection 1.2.3).

6.3.2 The implementation of educational transformation at institutional level

There are two camps of individuals, based on their attitude towards educational transformation, at MEDUNSA. This is the opinion of the respondent who advocated that: “Educational transformation is occurring within an environment that resists change on the one hand and on the other wants to envisage change. This produces a lack of direction and anxiety”. In his estimation, there are some “good” people who recognise that change is necessary and they should be given support. It is documented that individuals will resist change when they see it as threatening to their status or well-being. People can also oppose change simply because of the sheer pleasure of resisting (Poole 1979:95).

In fact, the transformation that the Executive Manager envisages for the university in the next ten years, is a change in the mindset of staff in terms of what they can do for the institution rather than what they can get out of it. Also, faculty buy-in is a precondition to lead the institution into an era of development. The practice of gaining faculty buy-in is through information sharing processes which are intended to stimulate debate. He continued: “Ideally, I should be sitting in at meetings to be gaining faculty buy-in for a new way of looking at change, but we are operating at 50% management capacity”.

Change is also important in addressing the social aspects of the transformation process: “We should make education reach a level that is not only internationally recognised but of importance to local people as well”.

The respondent claimed that he does not have any longitudinal plans for institutional transformation but wants to have a one-stop shop at CADS where students and staff can get advice to fulfil the primary goal of the institution. He indicated that he would also like to see more change in extensions of human resources and facilities. On another point, there is no centralised budget that is allocated for educational transformation, however, since the budget is housed in “various outfits”.

According to the Executive Manager, academics are kept informed about current trends in educational transformation when information from the Department of Education is disseminated through the office of the Executive Manager to Deans, Directors, and HODs. He explicated that: “Information is shared at various senate committees, public relations and strategic management committees. Deans and directors should be sharing this information with their faculties and directorates”.

6.3.3 Curricula innovation as an element of educational transformation at institutional level

The role of senior management in the transition towards OBE has involved leadership in dissipating information from SAQA and the Health Professional Council of South Africa (HPCSA). They have also participated in setting up workshops in facilitating this process of information sharing. In QA committees and Senate planning committees, time is set aside for reporting on curriculum development, from faculties. Each Dean presents what the status is

regarding curriculum development in his faculty. Also in place are curriculum development committees of senate.

In spite of these efforts, the interviewee appreciated that curriculum development is a dynamic process. He expanded on this perception: “There can never be a time when we can say that we have done enough. The university is doing the best it can to support the process but more needs to be done. We need to review all the time to improve”.

On the subject of PBL, the respondent staunchly advocated that the university’s stance is that PBL on its own doesn’t seem to “demonstrate more than the orthodox way of learning”. While the Executive Manager feels comfortable with a hybrid system, the same does not apply to pure PBL. He added that the university wants to be wide in its mode of view of education and not fixed in one method. The reason for this decision was explained as follows: “The results world-wide do not show a definite superiority of PBL. We will learn more from wide modes of delivery”.

Bligh (1998:325) cautions that a comparison between learners in the PBL track and those going through the conventional curriculum is difficult because conventional testing is geared towards traditional teaching methods and therefore will test knowledge recall rather than application and problem-solving. There is evidence by other researchers that PBL learners are better prepared to apply basic science concepts in clinical settings and are often judged better regarding clinical knowledge and skills (Boshuizen et al., in Albanese and Mitchell 1999:112).

Similarly, in other institutions where PBL was implemented, learners felt that PBL was superior in terms of retention and reinforcement of information, was more enjoyable (Bernstein, Tipping, Bercovitz and Skinner 1995:245-247), and was favourably received since learners indicated a high level of learning from fellow students during group discussions (Bhattacharya 1998:410). Clearly, the respondent in this investigation had ignored the numerous advantages that PBL has to offer.

Despite this negative sentiment towards PBL, the interviewee still felt that academics could benefit from training in the implementation of PBL. His rationale is that: “A great deal of PBL is outcomes-based, and more can be learned from outcomes-based learning”.

6.3.4 The promotion of the scholarship of research and teaching at MEDUNSA

The Executive Manager claimed that both the scholarship of research and teaching are being emphasised at MEDUNSA. Explicating further, he stated: “Since its inception the institution has concentrated on teaching. There has been a significant shift in commitment towards the generation of knowledge. We see the importance of teaching on the same level as research and research development”.

In order to promote scholarship the directorate of research is involved in investigating financial resources to encourage those researchers without sufficient resources. The university also amasses support from outside the institution. Collaboration with other institutions, for example the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Welcome Trust, is encouraged.

Additionally, research is encouraged mostly at graduate level although some departments, for example, the Department of Physiotherapy, also undertake research. Generally, there is more emphasis on teaching at undergraduate level. Since 1995, MEDUNSA decided that all masters programmes are going to have a significant research base. Teaching is still prevalent at postgraduate level but its role is taking a back seat.

There are more rewards accompanying research than teaching. In this regard, the respondent commented: “We need to encourage activity in research and teaching- this has not been done to our own satisfaction”.

The lack of recognition and rewards for teaching could impinge on the quality of outputs at institutions of higher education. In a survey conducted to characterise quality initiatives at higher education institutions in four different countries, implications for managers were drawn up. Arising from these implications was a suggestion that there should be recognition and support for the scholarship of teaching and that the responsibility lies with the institution to foster a culture with appropriate recognition and reward systems (Avdjieva and Wilson 2002:381).

6.3.5 Assuring the quality of MEDUNSA academics

External review is a quintessential part of life in the health sciences. Examinations are moderated and reviewed and evaluated by peers in other institutions. Professional

programmes have had a process of audit and evaluation. Therefore, QA is not perceived as a novel idea but rather to strengthen what is already being done.

The role of the university in enhancing the quality of the academe is to provide financial support for staff to attend conferences and workshops and to improve their qualifications. Measurement of an improvement in the quality of academics is through the production of research papers, presentation of new information at conferences, sharing with national bodies, and sitting in at editorial boards of journals in higher education.

The criteria that are employed to assess the quality of academics are manifold and include:

- 1) Participation in various bodies in the educational arena.
- 2) Participation in QA processes within and outside the institution.
- 3) Membership of committees that discuss various techniques for educational programmes.
- 4) External examination, nationally and internationally.
- 5) Service, research and teaching and whether graduates are able to meet outcomes.

In short, the quality of teaching, community development and leadership skills are used to assess the quality of the academe. Those who excel are considered for promotion.

It can be argued that in order that staff be given an opportunity to develop and excel in the aforementioned professional functions, they will need to be relieved of their heavy workload. The university finds it difficult, however, to give staff release time as the respondent explained: "It is difficult for a person who is attending to a patient to leave that patient and attend a staff development programme. The benefits of improving the quality of teaching have to be weighed against the nature of their work".

6.3.6 The application of technology in the teaching/learning situation

The application of technology in the teaching/learning situation was discussed in subsection 2.3.2 as an element of educational transformation. Are institutions able to cede to this requirement of educational transformation? The Executive Manager confessed that: "We are not adequately equipped in relation to facilities and staff are not prepared/trained to deliver computer-based programmes. We are muscling up at human resources level to support technology-based teaching and learning".

Regarding e-learning, rooms and facilities are available, but according to the interviewee, are not used as well as they should. Facilities are used more for computer literacy rather than to assist students with their own learning. The Department of Family Medicine, however, uses e-learning centre for grand rounds”. (Grand rounds are seminars on clinically related topics, including teaching and learning).

The Executive Manager’s contention was that while MEDUNSA has an adequate number of technical staff to run e-learning effectively, these people do not have the expertise to do so. In lieu of that, measures are underway to employ someone who can provide technical support in e-learning. In that way, academic staff will be supported in developing technology-based learning and to buy-in to technology-based learning. Moreover, the respondent is convinced that the budget can support e-learning.

6.3.7 Distance education and equity as educational transformation issues

In the opinion of the interviewee, MEDUNSA’s stance on offering distance education is that: “We do not believe the type of distance education can be categorized as distance education as distance education institutions offer it. Nevertheless, we have already penetrated that market since the NSPH runs from a distance mode”.

In subsection 3.2.2.3, it was debated that e-learning can be viewed as a form of distance education because the principles adopted in e-learning to help learners learn from a distance mode, would apply. Evidently, the respondent did not make this connection.

On another point, preparing academics to cope better with the challenges of empowering learners who have been educationally disadvantaged is not simply an excerpt from MEDUNSA’s mission statement but part of the educational transformation policies of South Africa as well (see subsection 3.2.2.2). Explaining the role of the institution in this matter, the interviewee stated: “The institution can and is poised towards improving the lot of those who are disadvantaged. We have programmes that have optimistic requirements for entry. We also need to address imbalances. Foundation programmes will assist in doing that”.

6.4 Synthesis, discussion and analysis of the interviews with the Executive Management and Management of CADS

This subsection gives an overview and discussion of the main points that emerged from the interview with Executive and CADS Management. Analyses of the attainment of general and specific objectives as outlined in chapter 1 are addressed. Items for inclusion in the quantitative study have been identified. It was decided to merge the discussion and summary of both interviewees because the two interviewees work synergistically in policy making and implementation regarding staff development. In this way the (in) coherence of responses were easily detectable.

6.4.1 Synthesis and analysis of the findings of the interviews

The data from both interviews with Executive Management and the Management of CADS are summarized and presented in tabulated form to highlight similarities and discrepancies in the responses obtained (see table 6.1).

In an effort to summarise further, the categories “staff development programmes” and “resources for academic staff development” were chosen because issues pertinent to these categories had come up throughout both interviews. Additionally, knowledge of the present situation regarding staff development programmes is essential as it would inform and guide the design and implementation of future programmes. Determining whether resources can support staff development adequately is also crucial as one could argue that there’s no point in designing programmes if the finances, facilities and human capacity is lacking.

- 1) Staff development programmes: Attendance is poor. Present strategies are workshops and lunch-time talks. Much of the content covered in staff development programmes are centred around OBE, QA, curriculum development and PowerPoint presentations. There is no training in e-learning, PBL or distance education. Neither are there training programmes to prepare educators to empower educationally disadvantaged students. There is very little dissemination of information about educational transformation issues to gain faculty buy-in, at the level of staff development programmes.

- 3) Resources for academic staff development: More change in the form of expansion of human resources and facilities at CADS is needed. The directorate of research investigates financial resources for researchers. A budget is allocated for staff to

Table 6.1: Responses of the interview questions with Executive Management and the Management of CADS

Staff development issues	Executive Manager's response	Response of the CADS Manager
Implementation of staff development policies	Institution responds to requirements from the National Department of Education and to FOTIM policies.	CADS co-ordinates, designs and drives academic staff development.
Success of staff development programmes	Participation is not good.	Not so successful. People are resistant towards attending workshops.
Visions for academic staff development	Staff may not be allowed to be educators unless they have gone through a teaching/learning programme.	The DVC is passionate about the quality of teaching and learning and to get students to be critical thinkers and problem solvers.
Educational transformation	This information is shared at various levels: senate, council committees, public relations and management committees.	CADS creates awareness and understanding of educational transformation. Academics are informed through faculty committee meetings and communication with Deans.
Curricula Innovations	Deans present the status of curriculum development at Senate planning committees. More training in OBE is needed. "We don't want to be fixed in one method like PBL".	Training in OBE is not much. Staff must still understand what OBE is all about. "There's no need to offer training in PBL if staff don't use it".
Scholarship	Emphasis is: research (at graduate level) and teaching (at undergraduate level). There are more rewards for research.	CADS emphasises teaching. No programmes exist for excelling in the scholarship of teaching.
Quality assurance	Criteria to assess quality will be participation in various bodies and committees, external examination, service, research and teaching.	There is no QA policy for academic staff development. Assessment strategies and criteria to determine quality is not finalised.
Alternate modes of delivery	Facilities and finance exist but not the technical support to run e-learning, except in the NSPH. Distance education is not run at MEDUNSA.	Training in CBE is not co-ordinated. No technical support or finance for e-learning exists. Distance education is not a strategic priority.

attend workshops. Facilities are available for e-learning but the human resource capacity is lacking. In the estimation of the respondent the budget is able to support e-learning. There is no centralised budget for educational transformation, however, since it is “housed in various outfits”.

Further the general and specific objectives of the study were achieved during the interviews. The general objective was “to establish the role played by management (including CADS) in the development of excellence in teaching and research among staff in an era of educational transformation and innovation” (see subsection 1.4.2.2). This objective was achieved because the interviews were able to demonstrate the role played by the interviewees in developing excellence among academics. Generally, this is achieved by the drawing up and ratification of policies including the establishment of committees by Executive Management (see subsection 6.3.1). The role of CADS is to act as a mediator between departments and the institution in conjunction with offering programmes for academic staff development (see subsection 6.2.1).

A specific objective of this research was to ‘investigate why MEDUNSA does not offer training in PBL’ (see subsection 1.4.3.2). Evidently, the stance of the university is to be “wide in its mode of delivery and not fixed in one method” (see subsection 6.3.3). There is another perception that there is no need for training in PBL since most staff are not using this curriculum (see subsection 6.2.3).

A further specific objective was to “compare educational transformation policies made at macro level with staff development policies made at meso and micro level” (see subsection 1.4.3.2). This specific objective was also fulfilled when it was determined that the institution draws up policies for staff development in response to the requirements of the Department of Education and FOTIM (see subsection 6.3.1). To ensure that these policies are implemented, the function of CADS is to work between the level of departments and the institution, in the dissemination of information, creation of awareness and facilitation of programmes relevant to educational transformation.

One of the specific objectives of the qualitative study focussed on investigating the general perceptions of Executive Management regarding staff development at MEDUNSA (see subsection 1.4.3.2). Many of the answers revealed the perceptions of the Executive Manager, some of which have been summarised in subsection 6.4.1. A few concerns were noted in response to certain questions contained in the interview schedule (refer to appendix C):

- 1) “Attendance at staff development is poor. When people look after the lives of others, that takes priority and staff development is secondary” (see question 3c).
- 2) “Educational transformation is occurring within an environment that is divided by those who support change and those who resist it. This creates anxiety, lack of trust and lack of direction”(see question 5a).
- 3) “Information regarding education transformation is not shared in the way people would like it to be shared, for example, through university assemblies”(see question 5e).
- 4) “It is a great pity that there are more rewards for research than teaching” (see question 8d).

An additional specific objective was to “identify the reasons why MEDUNSA has not adequately promoted and incorporated ICT in the andragogical situation” (see subsection 1.4.3.2). From table 6.1, it is clear that there is no technical support to run e-learning effectively and that training of staff in CBE is not co-ordinated. Furthermore, the budget of CADS cannot support e-learning.

Another specific objective was to ascertain the visions and mission of Executive Management for staff development (see subsection 1.4.3.2). His visions for staff development were also noted from the responses given in the interview:

- 1) The Executive Manager’s vision for academic staff development is that he is “looking forward to a situation where staff may not be deployed in their various functions unless they have gone through a teaching programme”.
- 2) “We do not use international peers as well as we should. There is scope for improvement in that area. We may still need to get external people to deliver programmes and allow our staff to share with other staff in other institutions” (see question 9a).
- 3) More can still be done for improving the quality of staff. “We’ll continue evaluating what we’re doing” (see question 9b).
- 4) “Transformation deals with socio-economic issues and not just curriculum development. We should make education reach a level that is not only internationally recognised but of importance to local people as well”.

Yet another specific objective was to determine if there is congruence between MEDUNSA’s mission statement and staff development policies and practices (see subsection 1.4.3.2). MEDUNSA’s mission statement focuses on empowering the educationally disadvantaged learner (see subsection 1.8.7). Except for foundation programmes, there are no programmes or training to prepare staff to empower educationally disadvantaged learners (see subsection 6.2.7). Therefore, this was a contradiction that emerged from the interview.

The next subsection pivots around a discussion of the interview with the Manager of CADs, especially in terms of validity checks.

6.4.2 Discussion of the results of the interview with the Management of CADs

Most of the questions had been adequately answered and had addressed the sub research question shown in subsection 1.3.2.2: “What is the involvement of management at MEDUNSA in assisting with the development of academics within the context of educational transformation? What are the perceptions, expectations and role of management regarding the nature and character of academic staff development in an era of educational transformation?”

Some answers, however, lacked validity as they did not adequately answer the question, that is, they did not measure what they were intended to measure. For example, the answer to question 4, in appendix B, did not fully answer the question in terms of staff development (see subsection 6.2.1 and appendix G). The respondent did not explain whether the visions of the Executive Management are being realised by the staff development initiatives of CADs. Although her answer to question 8b was that CADs is emphasising or developing teaching and learning, she did not say how this is *presently* being done. She merely spoke of a postgraduate programme that is to be run in the future. As for question 8c, the answer given does not focus on teaching at undergraduate level although the question asks if teaching is taken into account at graduate and undergraduate levels, in the development of the scholarship of teaching. This researcher was cautious not to probe too much as the interviewee might have gravitated towards giving an answer that she would have considered as being more acceptable. Thus, questions were stated as written in the interview guide and only when the respondent did not understand the question, was it explained.

The next subsection is concerned with the discussion of the findings of the interview conducted with Executive Management especially in terms of validity checks.

6.4.3 Discussion of the results of the interview with Executive Management

The answers to the questions were analysed for validity and it was found that some answers were not valid, since they did not measure what was intended to measure.

Firstly, the answer to question 12 (see subsection 6.3.7) does not say if staff are being trained in educating learners who have been educationally disadvantaged. The interviewee stated that the “institution can and is poised towards improving the lot of those who are disadvantaged” and did not confirm that this was already being done. Thus, the question was not answered adequately. Secondly, in response to question 8b (refer to subsection 6.3.4), he talks about how research is being promoted and does not say how teaching is being promoted, although he also states that both research and teaching are being emphasised. Thirdly, question 9c (see paragraph 6.3.5) pertained to QA in terms of staff development, not professional programmes which the Executive Manager referred to. This question was also not answered satisfactorily.

6.4.4 Items for inclusion in the self-administered questionnaire

Another specific objective of the qualitative study was to obtain additional items for the needs analysis and perception survey questionnaire found in appendix A. In this regard, the following areas were identified for further exploration and cross-validated among academics:

- 1) How effective is the dissemination of information from Deans to HODs and academics? It is important to know this as it might be the only channel through which academics receive information about educational transformation. **Item 57 in the questionnaire addressed this concern: “I seldom receive information regarding national issues in higher education through my department”.**
- 2) Poor attendance at staff development programmes is a problem. Most educators at MEDUNSA have no formal training in education and although they are the ones who most need it, they don’t attend staff development programmes. What could be the reason? Is it that they are not aware of programmes that are run? **Item 54: “I have no time to attend staff development programmes” and item 56: “I am unaware of the staff development workshops run by CADS”.**
- 3) Training in OBE has not been enough and there was a point made by the Manager of CADS that more needs to be done. From the perspective of staff, it was deemed essential to pinpoint what more needs to be done in this regard. **Item 71 was included to find out: “What more needs to be done to better prepare academics for OBE implementation”?**
- 4) Another contentious issue is that research is better rewarded than teaching. What do academics feel about this? **Item 53: “I support the university’s practice of rewarding research more than it does teaching”.**
- 5) Further, the vision of Executive Management is that staff who have not gone through a formal programme of teaching should not be allowed to be educators. It was considered

important to compare the perceptions of academics on this matter, with this vision. **Item 55: “Only academics who have been through a formal education programme of teaching should be allowed to be educators”.**

Furthermore, it was evident from the results of the above interviews that Deans and HODs are also kingpins in the implementation of educational transformation and play an important role in the development of academic staff. It was decided that they could make a valuable contribution to this project and excluding them might affect the validity of the research. Therefore, it was decided that all four Deans in the various faculties would be interviewed including a sample of HODs who were chosen using the technique of stratified random sampling. The results of the interviews with these managers are given in subsections 6.5 and 6.6 respectively.

6.5 Results of the interviews with the Deans

This subsection gives an account of the results of the interviews with the Deans in each of the four faculties, namely the Faculties of Science, Medicine, Dentistry and the NSPH. Various categories and patterns were identified to facilitate a description and explanation of the responses attained. To understand the results more fully, the findings have been linked to recent and relevant discussions in the literature. The interview schedule that was used is located in appendix D.

6.5.1 What MEDUNSA should be doing that it is not already doing

One of the Deans had this to say: “What should happen is a Centre for Medical and Dental Education with a focus on curriculum development and evaluation within the arena of Health Sciences, to engage in Health Science educational research within the context of Africa, to stimulate teaching and learning theories and eventually to see the centre offering a masters (MPhil) for Health Science Education. Then you would have the road map that will impact on quality in teaching and learning that will assist us as a faculty. We want to uplift teaching and learning and include research. There is very little research on health science education”.

What was also stated was that workshops run by CADS should be made compulsory. There was a complaint that less than 20% of HODs and senior lecturers would have attended programmes offered by CADS. A reason offered was that many would feel that they “know it all” as they’re been here for so many years. It has also been reported in the literature that

problems are experienced with staff development programmes in that only a small proportion of academics attend (Blunt 1998:108).

Another Dean, however, remarked that people are nominated as departmental representatives to attend workshops run by CADS but fail to give feedback to the rest of the staff. There is unhappiness as to why some people can attend and others not. He acknowledged, however, that the space, time and workload (at CADS) make it difficult for everyone to participate.

The Dean of the NSPH remarked that he didn't think that MEDUNSA has an academic programme and that CADS has done nothing for his faculty. "The university has very little interest in academic staff development". He suggested that if CADS has to develop a cross-faculty programme, then junior academics should be given guidelines on how to become senior academics. Reiterating the importance of a staff development programme, he stated that academic staff development is not a minor programme- it's a major programme and that universities elsewhere in the world have a programme for that.

6.5.2 The role of Deans in educational transformation

The following subsections (6.5.2.1 and 6.4.2.2) focus on the involvement of Deans in preparing academics for educational transformation.

6.5.2.1 The management of departments for the delivery of goals for educational transformation

In the Faculty of Science, the Dean claims to have created an atmosphere of openness and co-operation, and information on transformation is being disseminated effectively. There was a complaint, however, that HODs are kept informed but this information is not disseminated to academic staff. In the Faculty of Dentistry, a CDC was established to ensure that the faculty achieves its goals in terms of teaching and learning in line with SAQA requirements. Module co-ordinators report to this committee. Every two months, the assistance of an outside consultant is solicited in the facilitation of workshops on curriculum development.

The Dean of the NSPH serves on a committee to redefine courses and the setting of standards and this information is brought back to the faculty. In the Faculty of Medicine, the APC addresses issues of educational transformation and the Deputy Dean chairs that meeting. They also have a Quality Promotion Committee (QPC) which is responsible for the

development of guidelines for QA. The QA mechanisms that are in place are external moderation of oral examinations. Regarding technologically based innovations, the Dean admitted that they don't have a planned programme to develop that. In educational grand rounds, speakers are invited to talk about innovations, at departmental level.

6.5.2.2 Assistance given by Deans in the development of academics in an era of educational transformation

In the Dental Faculty, staff in middle management are encouraged by their Dean to further their educational qualification and all staff are advised to keep teaching portfolios. Similarly, in addition to encouraging academics to further their own academic qualifications in their field, the Dean of the Faculty of Science encourages them to embark on a University Diploma in Education (UDE) in order to "sharpen their teaching skills". Exposure of staff to the community is also important and the Faculty of Science is involved with different schools, notably the "mobile science bus" and the "teachers assistance programme".

Academics in the NSPH were included in research projects that were initiated by the Dean. Furthermore, the Dean (NSPH) claimed to have created an environment that is friendly to academic freedom. The Dean of the Medical Faculty chairs the committee for curriculum development with the hope of helping others understand the process of educational transformation. In addition, a revised curriculum for the MBChB programme has been completed.

6.5.3 Training of academic staff for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation

In this subsection, the effectiveness of MEDUNSA and the support provided by Deans in assisting academics in the transition towards OBE is discussed.

6.5.3.1 Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in preparing academics for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation.

There was general consensus that MEDUNSA has done little to prepare academics for OBE implementation. It was observed that initially, staff were enthusiastic about OBE, but as time progressed and SAQA deadlines had to be met, this led to a "waning of enthusiasm. "People are tired of all these things", complained the Dean of the Science Faculty. Nevertheless,

regular meetings are held at departmental and faculty level to “keep the fire burning”. Each department was required to elect a driver in the department to address matters related to OBE. One Dean complained that: “Some departments are able to write outcomes on paper but when it comes to implementation they revert to traditional methods-the trusted way of doing things”.

The perception of another Dean was that OBE should be centralised, that is all Deans should have a common understanding and contextualisation of OBE which should then be managed by Deans within faculties. The curriculum needs to be integrated. There was a comment that if there were a Centre for Dental and Medical Education, the driver would be the Director. The Dean of the Medical Faculty stated that: “Less than 50% of senior professors and teachers know about OBE implementation”. Most educators do not know how to write learning objectives in an outcomes based format. A consultant was brought in who looked at previous objectives and rewrote it in an outcomes based format and this was sent to departments. They were successful in accomplishing what was required for registration with SAQA but whether the facilitator had succeeded in transferring skills to academics, was doubtful. The rationale given for choosing that route was that: “HODs, in the clinical departments especially are under tremendous pressure to do additional work and this (OBE) is more work”.

The lack of expertise among academics in writing course outcomes and the implementation of OBE is attested to by other researchers. A case in point is the investigation that was conducted at Rhodes University where it was discovered that most educators do not have the expertise and knowledge to write courses in an outcomes-based format nor how to facilitate teaching and learning that would lead to the demonstration of the outcomes (Goode and Thomen 2001:198).

One of the Deans, at MEDUNSA commented that most of their programmes follow the SAQA guidelines and that they had taken the initiative of writing programmes in an outcomes-based format by themselves. The university did not help them in this regard. In the study done by Goode and Thomen (2001:198), educators relied on the staff development unit to assist with the writing of outcomes.

6.5.3.2 Support, guidance and management strategies that Deans have in place for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation

In the Faculty of Science, “drivers” of the curriculum development process in their departments have the responsibility of ensuring that “things get done”. Meetings are held once a month or every six weeks to keep the flow of information and progress going. They have built a small “library” of books and documents on OBE which is made available to individuals.

The Dean of the Medical Faculty explained that he has no support, guidance and management strategies in place to expedite the transition towards OBE, apart from the services offered by CADS. He added that medicine has always been outcomes-based, for example taking a blood pressure reading. This response lends support to the assertion by Spady and Marshall (in Pretorius 1999:ix) that OBE is nothing new; it has always been with us and that most jobs are outcomes-based.

The Dean of the NSPH explained that he will “work with faculty and then bring in consultants and find funds externally so that we can finalise teaching outcomes”. In the Dental Faculty, an outside consultant is also used, in conjunction with CADS, in the transition towards OBE. They have established a curriculum development committee and have module co-ordinators to assist in this process.

6.5.4 The enhancement of quality among academics

The role of Deans and the effectiveness of MEDUNSA in improving the quality of academics, receive attention in the following two paragraphs (6.5.3.1 and 6.5.3.2).

6.5.4.1 Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in improving the quality of the academe

It was one the Dean of the Medical Faculty who advanced the view that MEDUNSA is trying very hard to improve the quality of the academe. Supporting this perception, another remarked that, through the effort CADS is putting in: “We’re going to be on the path for improvement”. Nevertheless, there are still complaints from students about availability of lecturers, quality of lecturers and learning materials to help them study better. There was a charge that: “Lecturers don’t interact with students in class. One can have interaction irrespective of the size of the class”. Furthermore, there was a perception from the Dean of

the Faculty of Science that the ideal situation would be if every educator could have had training as a teacher, to be more aware of the educational aspects of teaching. “We should encourage all people at this institution to do a university diploma in education just to get that perspective”

Contesting the antecedent perceptions, the Dean of the Dental Faculty felt that MEDUNSA ineffective in improving the quality of the academe and cited an example to support this claim:

“If you are taking someone with an M degree: MMed or MPhil who becomes a professor, that’s very dangerous and this is happening at this institution. He will not have the expertise in those areas of scholarship (teaching, research, integration and application). We overemphasise equity at the expense of quality. We must try and balance these two”.

In addition one Dean was disgruntled when he remarked that: “This institution does not have a research culture. We have no development in research. Without research, we can’t develop academics”. He added that there is a “QA process” regarding teaching and learning at MEDUNSA but there is no negotiation between faculties and he is yet to meet this “QA process”. This lack of communication is alluded to in the literature by Meade (in Newton 2002:196) who says that one of the major barriers to quality advancement at his university is “ineffectual communication”.

6.5.4.2 The role of Deans in developing the quality of academics

One Dean stated that he has turned over the task of developing the quality of academics to the Deputy Dean of academic affairs and research. “Its their function to improve academic issues and research”. On a personal level, he has implemented a Dean’s award for excellence and a certificate is issued at the end of each year, at the oath taking ceremony. Another Dean explained that they have support systems such as financial support for staff to improve their qualifications. The research budget within the university is limited, however, and they are dependent on research support from outside agencies.

In the NSPH, the Dean randomly “looks in at staff’s classrooms” which he claims is easy to do with e-learning. “I can go and check the comments made to students”. They also have a standard approach where every single course is evaluated by an external examiner. The contribution of the Dean of the Dental Faculty towards developing the quality of academics is

to ensure that when HODs are appointed, they have a good research profile and that a minimum qualification requirement is adhered to.

6.5.5 The use of technology in teaching and learning

The success of the efforts expended by the university regarding the training of academics in the use of technology in the teaching/learning situation, plus providing facilities in that regard and the perceptions of Deans on ICT is explicated below.

6.5.5.1 Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in training academics to use technology in the teaching/learning process

There was a perception that although this area is reasonably effective, it can be improved. It was stated that academics should be trained to be more confident to use technology. The point was made that anyone who knows how to do a PowerPoint or multimedia presentation has acquired those skills on the job, through learning on their own, from trial and error and from others, rather than being trained by the university. One Dean confessed that: "We're making progress but not on top of mastering technology that is available". According to Surry and Land (2000:145) most faculty at HEIs make little use of technology as a tool for teaching even though the technology might exist on most campuses.

The Dean of the NSPH was proud of the fact that his faculty is very effective in training staff to use technology in the teaching process. They use sophisticated methodology and every academic staff member who joins the faculty is required to use this technology.

6.5.5.2 Deans' perceptions of e-learning and computer-based programmes

The following responses regarding their stance on computer-based programmes and e-learning were received from the Deans:

- 1) "Very positive. To establish a computer-assisted learning centre is my dream. This is part of my leadership to establish such a centre" (Dean: Faculty of Dentistry).
- 2) "We do it. It has to be integrated into face-to-face teaching. Our programme is five years old. We are using cheaper technology, for example CD ROMs rather than web-based learning. We are working towards an intranet system together with electronic textbooks" (Dean: NSPH).

- 3) “As an aid to understanding and supporting students, I’m all for it. Our subjects are hands-on, practical. Students, however, can get 100% on an experiment set up on the computer but in the laboratory that might be difficult” (Dean: Faculty of Science).
- 4) “This is the way to go for the future. However, we have several constraints, the major one being funds. The second problem is an inability of HODs to utilize the system because they’re not trained. Therefore, they need training in developing e-learning material. That should not be an activity under individual departmental or faculty budget- that should be a university centralised entity” (Dean: faculty of Medicine).

This lack of training that was mentioned by one of the Deans has also been reported in the literature. Rogers (2000:21) purports that although training and technical support is critical, most faculty have had little formal training on how to make effective use of IT resources in their instructional and scholarly work. Taking this point further, Grant (2002:2) argues that it is not just training in ICT that is needed-educators need reassurance that technical support is there in a thorough and timely way.

6.5.5.3 Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in providing facilities for using technology in the teaching/learning process

Regarding the effectiveness of the institution in providing facilities for using technology in the classroom, there was a unanimous response from three Deans that MEDUNSA is not effective at all in this area. As one interviewee asserted: “I don’t think there is a fundamental commitment in this direction since there’s no commitment to put aside funding to use technology in teaching and learning”. Another lament was that there is no space and no funds for a proper computer laboratory. This is handicapped by HODs who are reluctant to relinquish their territory and by the unwillingness of Executive Management to usurp space for this purpose. This reluctance in sharing facilities was reinforced by another Dean who commented that: “Each department wants to build a little kingdom for itself”. It was suggested that perhaps better control and better co-operation would be the answer to the problem. It is documented that due to increased enrolments, limited space is a problem experienced by universities elsewhere as well. For example, most UK universities struggle with issues related to physical capacity (Green 1995:227).

The scenario differs in the NSPH where all senior staff have lap top computers and everybody has access to high level technology. Commenting on funding for such facilities, the Dean

(NSPH) remarked that, in his estimation, it is the responsibility of the Dean to find funding for what is important in his faculty.

6.5.6 The role of Deans in promoting innovative practices in teaching and learning

According to the Dean of the Dental Faculty, not much is being done to promote innovative practices in teaching and learning, in his faculty but he is negotiating with a private company to purchase computers and software packages to achieve this. The Dean of the NSPH stated that his faculty is already innovative since they teach on line. They have an asynchronous based virtual classroom. They also develop and write their own electronic textbooks.

Another Dean (Faculty of Science) commented that some staff are dedicated educators but others are not interested and teach as they were taught. He also claimed that the development of innovative practices and supporting materials is a time consuming process and that “a lot of thought has to go into it”. In the Faculty of Medicine, the Dean passes on educational material to various HODs to make them aware of what is being done in medical education.

6.5.7 The promotion of scholarship

The support given by the Deans in the promotion of the scholarship of teaching and research is elucidated in the following subsections (6.5.7.1 and 6.5.7.2).

6.5.7.1 The role of Deans in promoting the scholarship of teaching

In the Dental Faculty, the promotion of the scholarship of teaching is done via teaching portfolios. Prizes are awarded to the best educators which is driven by students themselves. The link between rewarding teaching and participation of faculty in staff development programmes has been made by Lawler and King (2000:13) who advise that one needs to be aware of the way in which faculty are rewarded. They maintain that if faculty are rewarded for research but not their classroom activities, they may see no extrinsic incentive to participate in faculty development programmes.

The Dean of the NSPH admitted that he is not a formally trained educator but works through educational articles to obtain “standard educational theory” that would help drive the electronic learning process. The Dean of the Medical Faculty confessed that he is not putting

much energy in developing the scholarship of teaching and learning except for “educational grand rounds” that are held in the faculty. Nevertheless, he encourages research in education, and teaching and learning among staff and motivates them to further their qualifications; “but they complain that they are overworked and underpaid”. That academics are overworked is not unique to MEDUNSA. A survey conducted by Enders (1999:77) showed that many academics consider their teaching-related workload as too high.

The Dean of the Science Faculty claims to encourage a collegial type of interaction. He is “breaking down barriers between departments by becoming more multi-disciplinary in the teaching/learning process”. Staff from other departments are invited to present talks to students to allow them to see the relevance of what is being taught. Regarding collegiality, the findings of a study by Boyden (2000:105) indicated that new faculty especially, could benefit from a more collegial, intellectually supportive environment. A lack of collegial relations was reported by many as the most disappointing experience of their first year.

6.5.7.2 Managing staff to achieve research excellence

One of the Deans said that he includes staff who lack research experience, into his own research programmes and also supervisors research work undertaken by his staff. Two Deans reported that research is delegated to HODs. In another faculty, the Dean passes on research issues to be handled by the Deputy Dean of research affairs.

6.5.8 Support for the development of women and blacks

A comment from one of the Deans is that he identifies people with potential early and advises them to enrol for a registrar or masters programme. Also, while he tries hard to fill middle management positions with people from disadvantaged backgrounds, he stresses that he is reluctant to do so at the expense of quality. From another Dean, the response was: “I hire based upon skills but I’m sensitive to making sure women are well represented”. One Dean explained that when appointing people, the equity plans for the department are considered and an attempt made to achieve them. Another Dean stated outright that he does not provide support in enhancing the development of women and blacks since he treats all people equally.

6.5.9 The mission and vision of Deans

The mission and vision of the four Deans and how they are delivering on their mission and vision are tabulated in table 6.2. The importance of leaders having a vision for their staff is emphasised by Wright and Ashton (1992:50) in this quotation:

“Managers must understand the process of bringing about organisational change in line with the changing environment. This requires the ability to create a vision of the future and to gain the commitment and involvement of employees in the design and implementation of change”.

Thus, the essence of the mission and vision of the Deans is to strive for academic excellence through the promotion of high quality teaching and learning, research and community service while preparing graduates with a high level of competence. This is aligned with the mission statement of the university (see subsection 1.8.7). Of some concern though, are the remarks by two Deans relating to problems of delivery.

In conjunction with the aforementioned categories already discussed were several themes that were identified during the transcription of the interviews. These themes are outlined in subsections 6.5.10-6.5.15.2.

6.5.10 Perceptions and expectations of CADS

The attitude towards CADS and the services of CADS as needed by faculties emerged as important during the interviews.

6.5.10.1 Expectations of faculties regarding academic staff development

The Dental Faculty needs guidance on compiling teaching portfolios. The NSPH requires a well-trained educator who can advise staff on the writing of electronic books. The Dean also suggested that “all new junior academics must be given guidelines on how they can become senior academics”. Another Dean was of the opinion that staff development programmes run by CADS should be made compulsory.

Table 6.2: The mission and vision of the Deans

Faculty	Mission and vision of Deans	Delivery of mission and vision
1. Dentistry	<p>Vision: To be an institution of academic research and clinical excellence with local and regional relevance. Mission: To provide integrated, community orientated training.</p>	<p>Core strategic directions are teaching, curriculum development, research and community orientated training. Faculty is currently very proactive in developing first year programmes (Bachelor of Dental Surgery) in an outcomes-based format.</p>
2. Science	<p>Mission and vision: To grow, to expand and to be on top on all aspects of academic life.</p>	<p>Delivery of mission and vision is impacted upon negatively by insufficient facilities, especially laboratory facilities.</p>
3. Medicine	<p>Mission: To ensure that the current programme being offered in the faculty will continue to be offered at a high level of competence and delivery so that graduates will be better prepared to serve the people of South Africa. Vision: There should be a new Faculty of Health Sciences based up North (Polokwane) that collaborates with hospitals in Garankuwa, Philadelphia, Rustenberg and Brits.</p>	<p>The Dean has no idea how he will get faculty to “buy into” his vision.</p>
4. NSPH	<p>Mission: The improvement of the health of South Africans through education, research and strategic intervention in public health in partnership with communities, constitutional structures and a national and international network of teachers, scholars and public health agencies.</p>	<p>Achievement of mission is through intensive on-campus learning experiences and e-learning.</p>

6.5.10.2 Attitude towards CADS

The following comments regarding CADS were noted during the interviews and are transcribed. The Dean of the Science Faculty noticed a positive change:

“I have become aware of an attitude change amongst people towards CADS as they don’t see the unit as cracking the whip but as being supportive. People feel free to consult with CADS staff and that’s a good thing. If we come across problems with OBE, we will knock on their door” (Dean of the Science Faculty).

The same Dean also was full of praise when he exclaimed that: “The effort put in by CADS is commendable”. The antithesis of this came from the Dean of the NSPH who felt that he was not receiving any support from CADS: “There’s a section called CADS but they have done nothing for my faculty”.

6.5.11 Lack of resources

The grievance of one of the Deans is that there is no space and no funds for a proper computer laboratory. There was a further complaint that management does not do much to create funding and posts to run e-learning units. “I dislike management’s status that I have to find money from my own budget-that’s shortsightedness”. A contradictory comment from the Dean of the NSPH in whose faculty e-learning is being implemented, was that it is the responsibility of the Dean to find funding externally if it can’t come from within the university. Another Dean also complained about the lack of facilities and the reluctance in sharing facilities.

Even funds for research are limited and financial support for research has to be sought from outside the university. This often implies that research that is done is dictated by the needs and prescriptions of the possible funders. One Dean said that he does not understand how money for research is allocated within the university as his faculty received a very small amount.

6.5.12 Criticisms levelled at the university

There was a candid statement that “the university has little interest in academic staff development”. Additionally, emphasising the importance of research at MEDUNSA one Dean stated that:

“One way to go for the university is to create a real university that both imparts knowledge and creates knowledge. Historically black universities are not places where knowledge is created. If you don’t do both, you can’t call yourself a university but something else”.

With respect to providing facilities for using technology in the teaching/learning situation, one of the Deans was dissatisfied with the unwillingness of Executive Management to reclaim space from certain departments for conversion into computer laboratories. “They pussyfoot and hopefully the person with the idea for using technology will go away”.

6.5.13 Perceived readiness of staff for educational change

According to the Dean of the Science Faculty, there is evidently a lack of preparedness among academics in the implementation of OBE. Furthermore, in the Medical Faculty most educators are unable to write courses in an outcomes-based format. Another Dean claimed that the structure of his faculty is designed for the traditional curriculum. He admitted that they needed to start “breaking walls” since staff are now driving an integrated, modularized curriculum. He substantiated this by saying that departments need to interact in terms of general teaching/learning and research.

6.5.14 The impact of the merger on staff

The proposed merger between MEDUNSA and UNIN has impacted negatively on the staff at MEDUNSA. The Dean of the Science Faculty summed up the uncertainty and insecurity felt by staff:

“This uncertain time of the mergers impacts negatively on many people. They’re not as motivated as they should be. They want to know how the merger will affect them on a personal basis”.

The same Dean stated that staff in his faculty do not want to hear news about the merger from him but rather from Executive Management, but they are “silent on the matter”.

Research which focussed on staff perceptions regarding mergers of tertiary institutions in the Free State showed that despite the apparent acceptance of merging, respondents indicated a feeling of insecurity (Hay, Fourie and Hay 2001:103). Similarly, in a study undertaken by Curri (2002:139) of institutional mergers in New South Wales, it was found that open communication with staff was critical to reducing their fears. Equally critical was the need of management to meet with staff, to listen and to respond to their concerns and to explain the effect of the merger on them.

In this study, the Dean of the Medical Faculty predicted that some people might not want to move (to Polokwane) when the merger goes ahead. In that case he suggested that his faculty should determine what it can do to ensure that those staff are in a better position academically when they have to leave. He felt that this is where staff development will be crucial. If such people can obtain a certification from CADS to show competence in teaching and learning skills, they will be more marketable.

6.5.15 Further qualifications

From the responses of the interviewees, it was evident that Deans often encourage their staff to improve their qualifications in their field of specialisation as well as in education. This is explicated further in the paragraphs below.

6.5.15.1 Educational qualifications for educators

During the interviews a few of the Deans mentioned the importance of an educational qualification for educators.

The Dean of the Dental Faculty stated that he would like to see a Centre for Medical and Dental Education offer a masters programme for health science educators. In harmony with this desire, the Dean of the Medical Faculty remarked that: “A masters programme in education (similar to the PGCHE) would have been an excellent way to go”. (CADS was to offer a PGCHE but the programme was not approved by the Ministry of Education). Some universities, for example the University of Natal, offer formal courses in higher education leading to a Postgraduate Diploma in Higher Education or a Master of Education degree.

Such programmes are aimed at developing capacity by professionalising the educational role of academic staff (Frame 1999:105).

Acknowledging the importance of training in education even further, the Dean of the Science Faculty said that it would be ideal if every educator could have had training as an educator: “We should encourage people to do a UDE to sharpen their teaching and educational skills”.

Indeed, there is international interest in educational training for educators. In the UK one of the recommendations of the Dearing Report was that higher education institutions should develop or seek access to teacher training programmes for their staff and to seek accreditation of these programmes from the Institute for Learning and Teaching in Higher Education (see subsection 2.7.3).

6.5.15.2 Encouragement of staff to further their qualifications in their discipline

Three of the Deans interviewed claimed that they encourage academics to further their qualifications. One Dean said that he encourages academics to develop and further their own academic qualifications in their fields as well as in education. Another encourages HODs to “get on” with their PhDs. The Dean of the Dental Faculty also advises his staff to further their qualifications, for example, to embark on a registrar or Masters in Dentistry (MDent.) programme.

6.5.16 Discussion of the interviews with the Deans

From an analysis of the interviews with the Deans, it was evident that the sub-research shown in subsection 1.3.2.2, was satisfactorily answered. The involvement of the Deans in the development of academics was determined to be multifaceted. Also, the Deans provided copious data regarding their perceptions and expectations of the nature of academic staff development within the context of educational transformation.

The specific objectives outlined in chapter 1 (see paragraph 1.4.3.2) were attained. One of the specific objectives was to investigate the general perceptions of the Deans regarding staff development at MEDUNSA and subsections 6.5.1, 6.5.10.2 and 6.5.12 deal with this issue. Another specific objective was to “ascertain the vision and mission of Deans for staff development initiatives in their department”. Subsection 6.5.9 describes the vision and mission of the Deans. A further specific objective was to identify the reason (s) MEDUNSA

has not adequately promoted and incorporated ICT in the andragogical situation. It emerged from the interview discussions that there is a problem of facilities, funding and lack of training amongst academics to make ICT a practical possibility (see subsections 6.5.5 and 6.5.11).

Additionally, “to detect the reason (s) for a lack of preparedness among academic staff in the implementation of OBE”, was a specific objective that was also adequately achieved (see subsection 6.5.3). Yet another specific objective pertaining to the determination of the role of management in improving the quality of academics, was met and is covered in subsections 6.5.4, 6.5.4.2, 6.5.7 and 6.5.15. A further specific objective was to “identify the steps that have been taken to develop black and female staff at MEDUNSA”. This was covered in subsection 6.5.8.

Another specific objective of the interviews with the Deans was to obtain additional items for the needs analysis and perception survey. A few items for inclusion in the questionnaire given in appendix A, were identified and are shown below:

- 1) Academics might not understand the concept of quality fully. It is a nebulous term which defies definition. Most of the Deans talked about external assessors/examiners. There is more to QA than that. It would be beneficial to determine whether academic would want to know more about QA. **Item 58 addresses this: There should be staff development programmes to guide academics to improve the quality of their teaching and learning.**
- 2) Deans also mentioned that staff feel insecure and have fears about the merger. It was considered important to ascertain the perceptions of academics on this point since that would impact on staff development. **Item 59 was designed to address the merger issue: Attending staff development programmes is a waste of time in this uncertain period of the merger.**
- 3) One of the Deans indicated that most people cannot write course objectives in an outcomes-based format. It would be useful to discover to what extent this assertion is valid. **Item 60 deals with this problem: I feel that I need support on the writing of courses in an outcomes-based format”.**
- 4) Deans acknowledged the importance of an educational qualification and expressed their wish to see a formal programme in education being offered by MEDUNSA. **It was considered significant to find out what academics felt about this comment which is why Item 49 was included: If a postgraduate programme in higher education were offered at MEDUNSA, I would be interested in enrolling for such a programme.**

The following subsection is concerned with the results of the interviews conducted among twenty HODs, representing a 30% stratified random sample.

6.6 Interview with the Heads of Department (HODs).

The interview schedule contained in appendix E was used for the interview with the HODs. Twenty HODs, who were selected using the technique of stratified random sampling, participated in this investigation (see subsection 5.7.1). They spoke very candidly about their perceptions and expectations regarding the imperatives that drive educational transformation, for example QA, OBE, the application of technology in teaching and learning, use of innovative methods in teaching and learning as well as equity and redress. These responses are discussed in this subsection. There were several other issues that were identified as being important in that they would impact on the development of academic staff and these are also outlined towards the latter part of this subsection.

6.6.1 What MEDUNSA should be doing regarding academic staff development that it is not already doing?

Notwithstanding that MEDUNSA makes it easy for staff to improve their qualifications through financial support, this is perceived as not being enough. “The amount of time MEDUNSA allows for completion of a Masters or PhD degree is insufficient”, remarked one HOD. Another HOD suggested that MEDUNSA provide paid study leave for people who want to further their qualifications. “You shouldn’t have to serve six years for one year of study leave”, was another comment on this issue. In referring to networking for academics, one HOD commented that MEDUNSA needs to empower qualified people by linking them with other institutions that offer similar programmes. Interestingly, Boice (in Colbeck 2000:42) points out that faculty who spend as much time networking with colleagues as they do writing, are among the most productive scholars.

There was a suggestion that the number one priority regarding staff development is to develop CADS and that there should always be workshops on OBE, QA and so forth. Staff should be updated through workshops about educational developments in the country. A further request was that CADS should “follow up on courses or have more advanced courses for those who have been on basic, developmental courses”. There was also a call for workshops that have already been run to be held in individual departments to “review practical application”. An

additional need that was expressed was for young lecturers to be taught “what to do and what not to do in front of a class”. One HOD observed that “new, young lecturers are being thrown into the deep end”. Another request was that there be in-service training and mentors who will help staff.

Indeed, the literature is supportive of the need for mentorship programmes especially for new educators since these programmes could “facilitate a smoother introduction into the academic environment”. The rationale cited for this was that many educators are new to teaching and therefore lack teaching/learning skills. Additionally, they have to cope with an educational climate very different from the one in which they may have received their own tertiary education (Buchner and Hay 1998:19). Mentor systems also benefit experienced faculty who grow professionally since it creates an environment for reflection and keeping abreast in their field (Healy in Buchner and Hay 1998:34).

Another HOD remarked that at the moment nothing is being done regarding staff development, at MEDUNSA. “We go outside on our own and try and develop ourselves”. He added that if there were programmes for development, they could develop themselves. Further, in one of the clinical departments, the HOD stated that most of the senior staff are unhappy about overwork in academia and lack of rewards from the university. They are paid by the provincial health administration which demands more clinical service rather than academic work. Indeed, Arana and McCurdy (1995:1074) acknowledged the dilemma of clinicians who are academics when they say that: “To become a truly successful researcher in a college of medicine in a university hospital setting, a good deal of commitment and time is required and this pulls faculty away from clinical teaching responsibilities”.

That the development of staff is linked to adequate numbers of academics in a department was well as financial considerations was emphasised by many interviewees. Six out of the twenty interviewees complained that their departments are short-staffed which had culminated in a heavy workload for academics. There is no time for staff development. “The support provided to staff is negligible because of all the constraints, for example, financial. If you really want to develop staff you must have adequate numbers (of staff) and facilities”, argued one HOD. Another ventilated angrily: “They must not overload us with work. People resign with overload of work and look for places with an easier job”. One respondent lamented: “MEDUNSA is not employing enough staff. As a manager, I cannot manage my department effectively since I have to do the groundwork in the department. I’m also responsible for delivery of all lectures in my department. There is no time for anything else”.

6.6.2 The role of HODs in educational transformation

The following subsection focuses on how academic departments are managed by HODs to ensure that educational transformation is being implemented. What are also discussed are the measures undertaken by HODs to assist in the academic development of their staff in an era of educational transformation.

6.6.2.1 The management of departments for the delivery of educational transformation

Among those who were against educational transformation was one HOD who stated bluntly: “Transformation is another buzzword. You can’t transform medicine. You can transform people within medicine. Transformation means nothing as far as I’m concerned”. Regarding the imperatives of educational transformation, for example OBE and QA, some interviewees had a negative perception and were honest about their feelings. For instance, one respondent exclaimed: “I’m not very much in favour of OBE. I can’t say whether we turn out a better medical student”. Another HOD spoke candidly when he said: “QA doesn’t mean anything at all” since he claims he measures himself against his colleagues”. “Nobody can tell me how to do QA”, he added.

Rowland (2002:57-58) warns about the way in which ‘external forces’ or “bureaucratic imperatives” are likely to be viewed with suspicion by academic staff who feel threatened by them. He refers to this as a “remote system of control” which has led to a widening gap between educators and their managers. Furthermore, the work of an academic development unit is most often led by such external agendas as teaching quality. This could induce further resistance in academics initially opposed to being expected to comply with bureaucracy. All this, says Rowland (2002:52) contributes to the fragmented nature of higher education.

For some respondents who were in favour of educational transformation, there were several complaints to the effect that MEDUNSA does not have the infrastructure to support educational transformation. “Previous imbalances of the university have not been corrected- its worse off than ever. Policies mean nothing if we don’t get the infrastructure right especially as far as technology is concerned”, was one insightful remark by an interviewee who expressed his contempt for the situation. The lack of human resource is another major mitigating factor against the implementation of educational transformation. Some HODs are the only ones in their department with no additional staff to manage. This was a comment

made by one of them: “As far as staff is concerned, I couldn’t do anything because I have no staff”.

Other HODs are actively involved in issues related to educational transformation, especially curriculum development, QA and equity and redress. For example, they have revised their curricula for accreditation by the HEQC, written programmes according to the SAQA format, devised teaching/learning materials for educationally disadvantaged students and are making sure that continuous curriculum development is taking place. One HOD maintained that she went to SAQA to get books and consulted with other departments (at MEDUNSA) which were ahead in designing programmes in outcomes-based format, for assistance in designing programmes in her own department. This (latter) initiative is commendable since many leaders are reluctant to seek help from people on their own campuses. This is acceded to by Colbeck (2000:35) in this quotation:

“I have seen university administrators implement major teaching and curriculum initiatives without so much as a brief phone consultation with experts on their own campuses who are renowned for their research in those areas”.

Another interviewee reported that his staff participate in whatever programmes the university or CADS has to offer. Moreover, Some departments have started “modularization” while others have already totally modularised their courses. Departmental seminars, meetings, and academic days are held regularly to discuss issues pertaining to curriculum development and the utilisation of novel teaching/learning methods.

The goals of five out of 20 interviewees (25%) centred around equity and redress. There is a priority to train blacks. One (white, male) HOD pronounced that his goal is to train a MEDUNSA graduate to eventually take over his job. He emphasised that his contribution is to establish a core of black oral pathologists to rectify the imbalance of “having more than sufficient white pathologists”. There was also a statement from another interviewee that “they are striving for equity to reflect a department that has none of the legacies of the past and to enhance, discover and nurture the potential in the black community”. According to one respondent, when posts are advertised and appointments made, applicants were selected on the basis of both race and merit. It is, however, not always possible to address equity and redress, as one HOD succinctly put it. “If there’s no one to appoint, there’s nothing we can do. If we don’t have posts, there’s nothing we can do. We cannot hire and fire as we wish”.

6.6.2.2 Assistance given by HODs in the development of academics in an era of educational transformation

Three out of 20 HODs (15%) indicated that they motivate their staff to further their qualifications in their field as part of their professional development. Time is given by the HOD for staff to study and study leave is allowed. The department also assists with funds for postgraduate study. In addition, academics are encouraged and given support by their HODs to engage in research. As one interviewee explained: “I try to lead by example. I go to congresses and present and get them to present on their own or together”. One respondent, however, complained that it is “very difficult to get people in gear”. From another was a complaint that most of the specialists are currently relatively de-motivated and don’t avail themselves of opportunities that exist.

Interviewees also encourage and allow staff to attend relevant workshops, run by CADS or other universities, which could be informative towards educational transformation. Staff also get the opportunity to attend programmes abroad for which external funding is usually obtained, rather than funding from MEDUNSA. (An attempt was made by this researcher to obtain information from the Research Office at MEDUNSA regarding the number of academic staff who have received support from MEDUNSA to attend workshops or conferences but such figures were not available. MEDUNSA only has figures for conference attendance that was supported by both MEDUNSA and outside funders). In one department, staff are encouraged to engage in exchange programmes with other universities and visitors from abroad, who are experts in their field, are invited to MEDUNSA. Other opportunities for academics to develop include an orientation programme organised by the HOD where new inductees are taught how to review research proposals, how to teach using electronic media and how to grade examination papers.

Additionally, meetings, ward-rounds, face-to-face interaction during clinical sessions, weekly tutorials for registrars and periodic meetings on issues relating to one’s own work are also held. Also, one HOD claimed that in his department, staff are encouraged to “shift paradigms and be more student-centred”. There was mention by another HOD (in the Dental Faculty) that staff are working towards designing the whole course based on the SAQA requirements and that they are all working together in teams and in committees to accomplish this.

Two (10%) of the interviewees declared that there is not much development of academics in their departments because “there are no staff to develop”. The HOD is the only staff member

employed in the department. According to one of them: “I am the only academic in the department so I’m doing nothing except my own development”. In the second department, there are only two members of staff (including the HOD) who are nearing retirement and are not concerned with academic development.

6.6.3 Training academic staff for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation

In this subsection, the perceptions of HODs regarding the effectiveness of MEDUNSA in preparing staff for the implementation of OBE is given attention. In addition, HODs were interviewed about what support, guidance and management strategies they have in place to assist their staff in OBE implementation. The analyses of the responses obtained from the interviewees are outlined below.

6.6.3.1 Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in preparing academics for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation

Six out of 20 respondents (35%) said that MEDUNSA was effective in preparing academic for OBE implementation while eight out of 20 (40%) perceived MEDUNSA to be ineffective in this regard. Five out of 20 (25%) said that they “did not know much about OBE” or were not concerned about OBE.

Interviewees claimed that MEDUNSA has not been playing a major role in assisting academics towards the implementation of OBE and that departments were left to “do their own things” and received no supervision. “Implementation of OBE for me was brought on by individual efforts”, purported one respondent. Many felt that MEDUNSA has not really prepared academics for OBE implementation. “There is a struggle to develop courses according to OBE format and we are lagging behind” and “At this stage, there is quite a way to go still”, were some of the responses received. “There’s a lot of resistance from staff-staff are not keen”, explicated one HOD. Some were doubtful if MEDUNSA would be able to offer implementation of “true” OBE. To add to that, one remarked that “OBE has been spoken about for a while now but follow up to check implementation is lacking”. Another expanded: “I’m not very impressed. I don’t think they’re doing as well as I would have liked. They’re not preparing us that well”.

One HOD complained that the university had neglected the implementation of OBE by not supporting departments or establishing a centre to deal with OBE. Further, one interviewee commented that: “it helps to speak about issues on QA, OBE and e-learning. We tend to concentrate on our own areas of specialisation and not be concerned with education. This is a problem in a medical university where people come from different specialisations. We should have presentations on major issues”.

Taking into account the difficulties associated with the implementation of new curricula, Cross, Mungadi and Rouhani (2002:172) argue that ideals such as OBE require a great deal of technical and political skills that cannot be achieved overnight. Attention should be focussed on what can be realistically done and achieved given their legacies and circumstances in which they operate.

Those HODs who perceived MEDUNSA to be effective in preparing academics for OBE implementation substantiated this claim as follows:

- 1) “We’re moving. We have continuous assessment which gives us the feedback we need as far as outcomes is concerned”.
- 2) “I think we are quite exposed through CADS”.
- 3) “If OBE is to prepare students for what they are going to do, then MEDUNSA is doing well. For example, a student knows he is going to be a doctor or a dentist”.
- 4) “MEDUNSA has done quite a lot to make OBE more user friendly”.
- 5) “Our department has done well in terms of OBE. The urgency from the Deans to address OBE has been very clear. Drivers in each department have been doing major work at interfaculty level”.

6.6.3.2 Support, guidance and management strategies that HODs have in place for Outcomes-based Education (OBE) implementation

Seven out of 20 HODs (35%) admitted that they do not provide support for the implementation of OBE. The responses, quoted verbatim, to the question: “What support, guidance and management strategies do you have in place to expedite the transition towards OBE in your department”, are given below:

- 1) “ I have none basically because there is no reserve capacity in the department because of lack of staff members”.

- 2) “None. I don’t even know what you are talking about”.
- 3) “Nothing”.
- 4) “Very little, because our first year course is not an OBE course. I’m not convinced that OBE is any better than the previous way of teaching”.
- 5) “I don’t think we have any specific plans which is known to everyone at this stage”.
- 6) “Nothing specific”.
- 7) “Currently, not much support and guidance is being given”.

The remaining 13 HODs (65%) claimed that staff in their department are being given guidance and support in the transition towards OBE. This support comes from various sources like outside consultants, CADS, guidelines from the Dean’s office and support at faculty level. One HOD claimed that through the assistance of an outside consultant who is a qualified educationist, their new curriculum is now expressed in an OBE format. Another HOD stated that he doesn’t have any support from management but requested an outside consultant to expedite the process of writing outcomes. More specifically, continuous assessment was being incorporated into the new curriculum in keeping with the principles of OBE.

From one respondent was a claim that he is putting guidelines and protocols in place and sees to it that journal clubs are run to help staff make the change towards OBE. A few HODs explained that they hold regular departmental meetings and OBE is on the agenda. Staff also get the opportunity to attend international congresses, symposia and workshops on OBE. Some HODs remarked that OBE is already in place in their departments. For example, a comment was made that: “My doctors know the objectives that we have in place and the outcomes that we expect”. Also: “We have a new curriculum being developed for Dentists and we are changing towards OBE”. Further: “our programmes are already structured along those lines (OBE); we always spell out outcomes” and “our whole system (course content) is transferred into a more outcomes-based policy”.

In a study conducted by Stark, Briggs and Rowland-Poplowski (2002:329-357) wherein 44 HODs from randomly selected institutions were interviewed about their roles in curriculum planning, seven themes were identified that captured these leadership roles. They are the following (Stark et al. 2002:337):

- 1) Sensor (senses difficulties with the curriculum).
- 2) Facilitator (Establishes a milieu for curriculum change but doesn’t put forward own ideas).

- 3) Initiator (Introduces proposals, ideas or drafts changes).
- 5) Co-ordinator (Provides structure and paperwork support for faculty in curriculum implementation.
- 6) Advocate (Provides resources and builds capacity for the department).
- 7) Standard setter (Acts as a role model or monitors quality in the department).

Therefore, it is important to recognise that HODs may exercise very different roles in the curriculum development process. Most frequently, these HODs saw themselves as facilitators (Stark et al. 2002:339). Likewise, it would seem that the role most HODs at MEDUNSA adopt is that of facilitator since they spend a lot of time organising departmental meetings and workshops for the training and development of staff in curriculum development. Much emphasis is placed on dialogue-getting staff to exchange ideas rather than HODs imposing their own ideas about curriculum development. What the study by Stark et al. (2002:352) did not demonstrate, however, is that some HODs might completely neglect or reject curriculum development, as was found in this study among HODs at MEDUNSA.

Resistance towards OBE from some were also noted: “The world was able to send people to the moon, treat 90% of diseases and build cars before OBE, so we weren’t doing too badly. Outcomes-based education is not the turning point in the history of mankind”. Also: “We find OBE is quite a burden-it increases our workload tremendously. Staff development is hampered by additional workload created by OBE and the fact that MEDUNSA does not advertise vacant posts”.

Resistance towards OBE is not uncommon. In the USA, OBE became a political target of the ‘religious right’ since OBE was perceived as being secular and anti-authoritarian, particularly when values were included in exit outcomes (Nelson 1998:680). In 1992, more than 30 conservative groups met in Hamburg with a single goal- to stop OBE (Boyd, Lugg and Zahachak 1996:352).

6.6.4 The enhancement of academic quality

The role of the institution as well as HODs in helping to improve the quality of academic staff is discussed below.

6.6.4.1 The effectiveness of MEDUNSA in improving the quality of the academe

The response to the question: “How effective is MEDUNSA in improving the quality of the academe?” elicited three categories of responses. Ten out of 20 (50%) said it was ineffective, six (30%) were satisfied that the institution is effective and four (20%) were not sure or were vague about the promotion of quality by the university.

To capture the ethos of the sentiments of interviewees, the table below reflects the responses received from interviewees who perceived MEDUNSA to be ineffective in improving the quality of the academe. The major problems identified were staff shortages and large classes.

Table 6.3: Perceptions regarding the effectiveness of MEDUNSA in improving the quality of staff

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. “Its not the priority of MEDUNSA-we are not quality orientated but quantity orientated, that is, we produce more graduates. Another problem is availability of teaching staff. We are understaffed and management s not taking timeous steps to get qualified people”. 2. “Not effective at all. With the impending amalgamation there have been massive resignations of staff. People are demotivated at MEDUNSA”. 3. “It has failed because it doesn’t supply sufficient people to allow individuals to improve themselves”. 4. “MEDUNSA is not doing anything”. 5. “I don’t think we’re effective”. 6. “There’s a lot of drives to improve quality but that’s not been very successful. If you have 300 students, you can’t produce quality staff”. 7. “Totally ineffective. We should have experts to run this place. We have people who don’t know how to run this place. Some HODs don’t know how to be HODs”. 8. “The budget does not increase annually to keep up with inflation. Acquisition of equipment (technological) for staff development and research is an ongoing problem because of money and further development is hampered”. 9. Lecture halls are inadequately equipped and this decreases the quality of teaching and learning.

The problem of poor quality management (see point 7 in table 6.3) has been identified by research undertaken by Ruth (2001:162) at UNIN. Heads of Department who were interviewed in that study indicated that there were “too many people who cannot do the job they are appointed to do”. That MEDUNSA is to merge with UNIN poses interesting questions relating to the quality of management in the newly merged institution.

With further reference to point 7 in table 6.3 regarding the comment that “some HODs don’t know how to be HODs”, Van der Westhuisen (2002:71) has this pronouncement:

“Academics are mainly trained in their field of study, for example mathematics. At institutions of higher education it is expected that staff members should also be able to fulfil other functions for which they have little or no training, for example being the HOD. Staff members who are promoted to be managers should be trained and supported to assure quality management at these institutions. Management means to get things done, to have direction, to work in groups, to plan effectively and to make decisions”.

Therefore, it can be argued that ensuring quality management by providing leadership training programmes is one way of improving the quality of the academe.

Regarding point 8 in table 6.3, a study undertaken by Hay and Herselman (2001:131-140) at nine different HEIs in South Africa revealed similar results to the outcomes in this research regarding financial dilemmas. That is, less than half of respondents reported that staff development is run regularly because of financial constraints. Also, 71, 7% of respondents indicated that they were unsure whether their institutions have sufficient resources to ensure that quality in teaching/learning occurs (Hay and Herselman 2001:138).

In tandem with the comment made in point 8 in table 6.3, Van der Westhuisen (2002:72) highlights the problem of funding QA since the levels of funding required are not always affordable. The problem that “South African higher education has to do more, with less” captures very well the dilemma faced by academics at MEDUNSA.

In contrast, some HODs were of the opinion that there are opportunities on campus to improve and that infrastructural support is available, for example, the support given by CADS was mentioned. Another cited that the programmes run by CADS is effective because “it gives an idea of something and we are not in the dark”. She added that these programmes should be available for everyone to attend and not only for HODs, which is usually the case. One interviewee praised the university for giving individuals “space to expand” and for not dictating to staff. This helps academics to grow at MEDUNSA and in this way the quality of academics is improved. A similar sentiment came from another respondent whose comment was that despite low funds, people leaving and uncertainty of the merger, MEDUNSA is still doing well.

In addition, some interviewees stated that they don't know what is happening in other departments but were able to explain what is being done in their departments. For example, staff attend conferences, congresses and seminars. One HOD in the NSPH admitted that while a number of interesting programmes are being held on campus, he has never attended any of them because of poor publicity. A suggestion by another respondent was that if the university wants to enhance quality, it must recognise the existence of excellence within the institution.

6.6.4.2 The role of HODs in developing the quality of academics

It was clear from the responses to this question that HODs use various methods and techniques to assist in the improvement of academic quality. Staff are encouraged to:

- 1) Attend programmes run by CADS.
- 2) Do research.
- 3) Further their qualifications.
- 4) Stay abreast in their fields of expertise.
- 5) Attend workshops on teaching and learning.
- 6) Present at conferences at national and international level.
- 7) Use student feedback to identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- 8) Attend research methodology courses held at MEDUNSA.

Additional support provided by HODs are given in table 6.4:

Table 6.4: Additional support given by HODs to promote the quality of academics

<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Financial support for research through the HODs' own research funding.2. Staff are sent to congresses.3. Regular, combined meetings and exchange programmes are arranged with other universities, nationally and internationally.4. Inter- and intra- departmental discussions are arranged.5. Sharing of information with colleagues and assistance with drawing up research proposals.6. Orientation of new staff in the use of e-learning (in the NSPH).7. Journal clubs and regular academic programmes.

A couple of HODs, however, stipulated that there is no time to educate academics and that it is left to each individual to improve their skills as educators. Another interviewee acknowledged that he cannot do anything to improve the quality of educators since he has not

been trained as an educator himself. There was an observation that academics who are also clinicians and who have their own private practices, are not motivated to do research. One HOD said that his researching days are over as he is 63 years old. Three out of 20 HODs (or 15%) responded that they do not have staff in their departments and so nothing can be done to develop the quality of academics.

6.6.5 The use of technology in teaching and learning

The effectiveness of MEDUNSA in training academics and providing facilities to successfully implement technology in the teaching/learning situation is elucidated below. In addition, the perceptions of interviewees regarding e-learning and computer-based programmes are indicated.

6.6.5.1 The effectiveness of MEDUNSA in training academics to use technology in the teaching/learning process

Twelve out of 20 respondents (60%) were of the opinion that MEDUNSA is ineffective in training academics to use technology in the teaching/learning process while seven (35%) perceived MEDUNSA as being effective in this regard. One HOD (5%) said that he does not need much training in the use of technology since he had taught himself whatever skills he had needed. Some of the HODs (seven out of 20 or 35%) who said that MEDUNSA was effective in providing training in technology also remarked that while the opportunities do exist (for example the Information Technology Department), few individuals make use of them (refer to table 6.5).

Table 6.5: Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in training academics to use technology in teaching and learning

Perception	Raw scores	Percentage
Ineffective	12	60
Effective	7	35
Did not need training	1	5

Identifying a contradiction, one respondent reported that even though people undergo training in the use of technology, it becomes a problem when one wants to apply that technology in the lecture halls because of the lack of resources for presentation of lectures using “modern lecturing aids”. On the other hand, the two HODs in the NSPH commented that they are

confident in using technology in teaching and learning and that their classes are held on-line. “We have a modern class with an electronic blackboard which has access to the internet and we can access journals” was one of the responses.

The clarification for saying that MEDUNSA is ineffective in providing academics with training in the use of technology in teaching and learning, was varied. The reasons gravitated around staff shortages which culminated in a heavy workload with little time to attend training programmes. Also, budget cuts had meant that there was little money to sent staff for training. What is more, MEDUNSA’s technology was perceived as being too outdated to be effective. To highlight these problems further, several quotations were extracted from the transcribed interviews and are shown below:

- 1) “Academics at MEDUNSA are still technologically wanting”.
- 2) “Its an area that needs attention”.
- 3) “We don’t have up-to-date equipment”.
- 4) “I’m not aware that we’re offered courses. With the current situation of staff shortages, we wouldn’t be able to attend”.
- 5) “MEDUNSA doesn’t have the financial backing or the technological facilities”.

Similarly, the responses that follow further illustrate the hurdles faced by academics which mitigates against the application of technology in teaching and learning:

- 1) “There’s no time to read e-mails and look at the internet because of the heavy workload”.
- 2) “People do not have the time to go into extensive IT tricks because we are short of staff..
- 3) “If you want to train you’ve got to pay for training and there’s no money so I can’t send staff for training”. In large departments especially, HODs feel that the cost of training has an impact on the departmental budget.

6.6.5.2 The effectiveness of MEDUNSA in providing facilities for using technology in the teaching/learning process

Sixteen out of 20 HODs (80%) claimed that MEDUNSA is ineffective in providing facilities for using technology in the teaching/learning process. Four (20%) were satisfied that MEDUNSA was effective in this respect (see table 6.6).



Table 6.6: Effectiveness of MEDUNSA in providing facilities for using technology in teaching and learning

Perception	Raw scores	Percentage
Effective	4	20
Ineffective	16	80

The majority of those interviewed complained that funding and facilities were a major problem. One HOD recognised that a lot more has to be done for availability of equipment. Another complained that he had been buying computers “out of his own pocket”. Exacerbating the problem of financial constraints was the uncertainty of the merger. According to one interviewee: “The budget can hardly afford a desktop. Private partnership is a solution but its not very easy because of current uncertainty of the merger-we might locate, we might not locate”. Another remark was that facilities and technologies are inadequate and management is not doing much because of financial problems and the political threat of the merger.

Also, some HODs supplied specific examples to emphasise the intensity of the problem around lack of facilities:

- 1) “I need videocassettes, radios and computers. Students come to my office to watch videos on the examination of patients”.
- 2) “I have a pathology atlas on CD-ROM and students want it to be printed for them because the computer centre can’t provide screens for viewing a CD”.
- 3) “We’re ten years behind regarding the use of computers. Even the schools are better off than us”.

In contradiction, the two HODs from the NSPH indicated that they were using technology effectively in their programme. “For our department, the university has been very effective in providing technology. I have access to the internet and have a laptop in my office. I think our electronic classrooms have the best electronic resources in the country, if not the world. Two other HODs were also satisfied about the facilities that are available. One of them cited that he has the best teaching mortuary that he has seen in the country.

6.6.5.3 The perception of HODs on e-learning and computer-based programmes

There was an overwhelming support for e-learning and computer-based programmes since 19 out of 20 respondents (95%) gave favourable responses in this regard. Some departments are already implementing or currently working on implementing computer-based programmes. In the NSPH, e-learning is being fully implemented. There is no face-to-face contact with students except for the summer and winter school sessions which last for six weeks at a time when lectures, seminars and workshops are held at MEDUNSA . In one department, a student interactive website linking that department to other websites internationally, is being created. In another department, courses are being loaded onto a CD. Tele-medicine which operates between the Ga-Rankuwa and Polokwane campuses of MEDUNSA is being implemented. Another department is working towards loading the entire set of modules in electronic format.

Other HODs support e-learning and computer-based programmes but cannot implement it because of lack of resources, facilities and expertise. A selection of reasons cited for not being able to implement e-learning and computer-based programmes are given in table 6.7.

Table 6.7: Reasons for not being able to implement e-learning and computer-based programmes

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1) “We don’t have a good IT system and support”.2) “Some departments don’t have computers. Only the HOD has a computer”.3) “Only the secretary has a computer. Doctors do not have computers”.4) One HOD said that he had “bought computer stuff (for example a printer) with his own money”.5) “We feel we need the technological training in e-learning. There is no expertise within the department and no time to acquire the expertise”.6) Lack of sufficient programme material within the subject, and software. |
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6.6.6 The role of HODs in promoting innovative practices in teaching and learning

Eighteen out of 20 HODs (90%) reported that they are involved in promoting innovative practices in teaching and learning while two (10%) admitted they were doing nothing. In many cases, interviewees did not understand the phrase “innovative practices in teaching and learning”, so this had to be explained to them.

From the responses, a few categories were identified regarding the attempts made by HODs in encouraging innovative teaching/learning practices. For example, some HODs stated that they give freedom to their staff to use innovations. Furthermore, HODs pointed out that revising their courses, protocols and methodologies makes staff creative and motivated to acquire new methods. Other respondents are involved in inter-departmental collaboration: “We’re looking at a diseased patient within a multidisciplinary team and teaching students to do the same”. Some HODs hold regular meetings where “innovative programmes are discussed”. Academics are also encouraged to participate in conferences and workshops on innovative practices in teaching and learning, OBE and new technology.

Many interviewees proclaimed that they already have innovative practices in place. An interviewee in the Dental Faculty said that students are divided into smaller groups for clinical sessions. The benefits of group work are well documented. For example, according to research done by Venter, Blignaut and Stoltz (2001:169) involving innovative teaching methods, students reported that working in teams contributed to their understanding of the subject and benefited them more on the social and personal level than if they had learnt individually.

During the interviews, what also came to the fore was that the clinical situation lends itself to group work when working on a case study, but group work is difficult to implement in large classes. As one HOD poignantly put it: “You can’t group them –it ends up being the old method of giving a lecture. In the clinical situation its possible, in the lecture halls, its difficult”. From a respondent at the NSPH: “We are innovative enough- its on-line education”. Another HOD (from the Faculty of Science) explained that the laboratories where most teaching takes place are equipped with closed-circuit TV system which includes video cameras, video machines and microscopes. Through this system, everything taught can be demonstrated on monitors.

6.6.7. The role of HODs in promoting the scholarship of teaching and research

There are numerous techniques employed by HODs to promote the scholarship of teaching and research. These are covered in greater detail in this subsection.

Twelve HODs (60%) were actively promoting the scholarship of teaching while eight (40%) admitted to not doing much. In some cases the term “scholarship of teaching” was not understood by respondents and had to be explained by this researcher. From the analysis of the interviews, there emerged various techniques that were being utilised to promote the

scholarship of teaching (see figure 6.2). Four interviewees (20%) said that they are doing nothing at all to promote the scholarship of teaching.

Regarding the scholarship of research, 14 HODs (70%) pronounced that staff in their departments are involved in research and explained how they were managing staff to achieve research excellence (see figure 6.2). Six HODs (30%) maintained that it is difficult to manage staff to achieve research excellence since their staff are not actively involved in research.

This problem was encountered mainly in clinical departments where staff were instrumental in providing clinical service as well as teaching, leaving little time and energy to do research. In lieu of this, Evans (1997:479) suggests that although academic health centres want to preserve cross-fertilisation across research, teaching and patient care, perhaps it is not necessary for each faculty member to excel in all three activities. It would suffice if the institution could simply cover all these bases. Further, this scenario at MEDUNSA appears to differ from that described in the literature since clinicians cum educators at MEDUNSA spend more time on teaching and clinical service, than on research. A case in point is the article by Lemmer (1998:29) who writes that academics are being tempted to withdraw from community service or to reduce teaching responsibilities in order to devote more time to the measurable products of research.

In figure 6.2 an account is given of the techniques that are used to promote the scholarships of teaching and research.

SCHOLARSHIP

TEACHING

RESEARCH

TECHNIQUES USED TO PROMOTE THE SCHOLARSHIP OF TEACHING:	TECHNIQUES USED TO PROMOTE THE SCHOLARSHIP OF RESEARCH:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *The use of student evaluation of teaching and the evaluation of learning styles of students as a means of improving teaching and learning. * Encouragement of staff to attend programmes run by CADS. * Interdepartmental discussions, departmental meetings to address issues of teaching and learning. *Encouragement of staff to be innovative and to have interesting clinical cases to teach with. *In clinical departments, staff learn from clinical presentations. *Programmes and course materials are constantly reviewed and updated with relevant topics. *Mentoring of new staff by senior staff, including the HOD. *Outside consultants are invited to give presentations on teaching and learning. *Academics are required to write study material for students. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Staff are encouraged to engage with other departments in research projects. * Regular meetings are held to motivate staff to develop and review research projects and strive for NRF ratings. *Peer review of research programmes are conducted. *Encouragement of staff to attend research methodology courses. *Staff are requested to stay abreast in their field of expertise and to publish at least once a year. *Arrangements are made for novice researchers to attend international conferences. *Junior staff were made co-authors to “enjoy the benefits of having their name in a publication”. *Mentoring of inexperienced researchers. *Staff are given time off to do research. *HODs help to organize external funding, and provide chemicals and equipment.

Figure 6.2: Techniques used by HODs to promote the scholarships of teaching and research

Notwithstanding that much is being done to promote the scholarship of research and teaching, there were several criticisms about the difficulties encountered in trying to achieve this. A case in point was the complaint by one HOD who was disgruntled at the lack of recognition and rewards by management for academics who excel in their work, especially teaching. He argued that: “You must reinforce all the time otherwise the initiative dies down”. From the literature it is evident that high research outputs are rewarded more than excellence in teaching and MEDUNSA has arguably fallen into this mode of practice (Lazerson et al., in Cronje, Jacobs and Murdoch 2002:33). The literature also shows that this dis-equilibrium is starting to shift. Research done by Cronje et al. (2002:32) involving 20 higher education institutions world-wide have shown that these institutions are increasingly implementing formal reward systems for recognition of quality teaching. These strategies included:

- 1) Awards with or without prize money
- 2) Promotion/tenure
- 3) Teaching improvement grants



- 4) Merit pay (once off)
- 5) Special professorship
- 6) Pay raise

Commenting on the need for teaching/learning courses, another respondent pointed out that: “We are good doctors but terrible teachers. The university must give us a methodology course in teaching. I’ve never been taught how to teach. My expectation is that we should have more workshops, for example, a certified course on teaching methodology”.

As far as promoting research is concerned, one respondent said that she is trying to coerce her staff to become involved in research by encouraging and supporting them as well as giving them literature on research methodology, but has found it difficult to “get people in gear”. From another HOD, was a comment that because of lack of staff (she is the only one in her department), “research falls by the wayside since there is no time for research under this situation”. She also angrily proclaimed that: “Research is not a priority of this university and the university doesn’t support it”. Further clarification was offered by another respondent who stated that there were lack of funds and little time to do research. Yet another interviewee declared that staff are too tired and that there are inadequate facilities for research.

6.6.8 Support for the development of women and blacks

While 14 HODs (70%) claimed that they were providing support for the development of women and blacks, six interviewees (30%) indicated that they do not provide support. The reasons provided were that women and blacks do not have special requirements and that they (HODs) don’t distinguish between race and gender (refer to table 6.8).

Table 6.8: Support for the development of women and blacks by HODs

Response	Raw scores	Percentage
Support given	14	70
No support given	6	30

It has been documented that although the gendered, masculine nature of the modern university is outmoded, the masculine culture is still pervasive. This implies that academic women are likely to continue being disadvantaged in their employment until a shift occurs (Halvorsen 2002:348). Therefore, it can be argued that the attitudes of HODs in this study,

who admit that they treat their staff “as equals” might be perpetuating the status quo and thus hindering the advancement of women in academia. In support of this argument is this statement by Halvorsen (2002:357):

“It would seem that rather than embrace societal change, universities want to cling to traditional structures. One casualty of this defence is the advancement of women”.

On the other hand, 14 HODs (70%) claimed that they were making a concerted effort to support blacks and women towards their academic development (refer to table 6.8). The nature of the support given was categorised into the cognitive and affective domain. On the cognitive level, women and blacks are encouraged to further their qualifications for which they obtain financial support from the university. They also receive financial support to attend congresses and workshops. One HOD stated that he ensures that they visit other universities so that they become more aware of their field of specialisation. Also, departmental meetings are held to look at progress made in terms of research and networking with other universities. Citing a specific example, one HOD elucidated how he had supported a black, female employee when she needed to attend an international conference. He specified the support given as financial, support in choosing a topic and providing her with a statistician when she needed to analyse data as well as providing her with a mentor.

On the affective level, One HOD claimed that he encourages them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and then counsels them on their weak points. Another HOD pointed out that she was giving personal support and can be quoted as saying: “You become a mother, you act like a social worker when they come crying”. Another HOD said that as a woman herself, she shares her experiences, difficulties and strategies.

Further, MEDUNSA was criticised for not giving sufficient recognition to additional qualifications received by staff. One HOD gave an (ironic) example of a person in her department who was in this situation: “A black person with a PhD is still in a lecturer’s post”.

6.6.9 The mission and vision of the HODs

The mission and vision focussed predominantly on providing excellent service to patients and student, to have high quality teaching and learning programmes, to be active in research and to be involved in community service. Also of significance was the training of people from previously disadvantaged backgrounds. Furthermore, the quality of academics was deemed

important to establish “the best department” and to ensure service of a high standard. The training of doctors, dentists and other health care professionals and scientists was also considered a high priority by many HODs. Table 6.9 gives a more detailed account of the mission and vision of the interviewees.

Table 6.9: The mission and vision of the HODs

Mission	Vision
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training of doctors, dentists and scientists. • To provide excellence in service and teaching. • To do research, increase research outputs and play a role in community relevant research. • To be involved in community service. • To improve facilities in patient handling. • To develop effective programmes. • To attract high quality registrars. • To produce more graduates with more than acceptable standards. • To make sure that “we train as many traditionally disadvantaged people as possible” (HOD: Nuclear Physics). • To provide facilities to train students with skills to deal with different conditions of health care in SA. • Quest for academic excellence and continued personal and professional development of all staff. • To have a vibrant, innovative and dynamic undergraduate programme. • To develop young, black academics. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear about vision because of merger. • To have state of the art facilities for research, teaching and to provide quality education and training from students from disadvantaged backgrounds. • To acquire own wards. • To attract private sector patients to get money. to uphold high standards. • To have programmes and research activities to address needs of the population of SA. • Establishing postgraduate degrees and strengthening linkage with Polokwane campus. • To improve the quality of Medical Physics by providing more black physicists (HOD: Medical Physics). • To establish partnerships with companies to make clinical service bigger. • To take research further. • To have a well run department and producing good specialists who are competent doctors. • To have a department with staff who are dedicated in their work and who care for students and patients.

According to the respondents, the delivery of their mission and vision are effected in the following ways:

- 1) The necessary curricula are in place.

- 2) Resources for rendering service exist.
- 3) The field of specialisation is marketed at conferences.
- 4) Ensuring that departments are well staffed and that staff are academically advanced.
- 5) External funding is sought to advance the mission and vision.
- 6) Expansion of clinical facilities.
- 7) Expansion of community-based training.
- 8) Ensuring that training of students is of a high quality.
- 9) Supervision of teaching and research programmes by HODs.
- 10) Consultation with staff and management about links with Polokwane campus.
- 11) Establishment of a skills laboratory.

In the analysis of data obtained during the interviews, several issues surfaced which had significance for the development of academic staff. These issues were placed into themes and categories and are elucidated below.

6.6.10 Other categories and themes identified

During the interviews there were many other issues that featured prominently because the HODs felt very strongly about them and these are discussed below.

6.6.10.1 Difficulty of attracting and retaining staff

There is a problem of attracting and retaining staff because of the rural, remote geographical location of MEDUNSA. Most people live in the city and have to travel a long distance to get to work. This problem is fuelled by the impending merger. Most people are reluctant to apply for posts advertised by MEDUNSA because of the possibility of locating to Limpopo Province (see subsection 1.8.7) which could prove disruptive to their personal life. According to one respondent: "Its going to be difficult to attract staff. People do not want to apply for posts at MEDUNSA". Another factor that contributes to the problem of staff shortages is a lack of recognition of academic achievement which has been cited as the main reason for staff leaving MEDUNSA. As one HOD argued: "Why excel if there is very little or no recognition for what you do. MEDUNSA needs to create possibilities to grow, create possibilities of promotion and recognise excellence".

Consequently, the lack of staff puts pressure on other employees who end up with a heavy workload and become de-motivated to do research or improve their teaching/learning skills

by attending workshops, seminars etcetera. Thus, this has a negative impact on the development of academic staff. In extreme cases, staff resign because of the pressure of being overworked.

6.6.10.2 Perceptions and expectations regarding academic staff development

There was a call to start taking staff development more seriously and to focus on the development of quality of academics as educators and researchers. One of the interviewees expressed his concern about MEDUNSA's involvement in staff development in terms of developing educators: "I don't think the department can solve it as we are not trained as educators. We are trained as specialists in a subject". There was a comment that the development of academic staff is not taken seriously in this country and that it has to be one's own effort. An additional lambasting came from one HOD who accused MEDUNSA of neglecting its staff especially because management does not share a passion for research. "Our standard of education is poor because staff don't have an opportunity to develop themselves and do research", criticised one interviewee. For this reason she was of the opinion that MEDUNSA is not a "true" university.

Another remark was that: "if we want to improve ourselves we need formalised QA. We need examples of how well other places are doing". Reiterating a call for QA was this plea: "To be on a par with educational transformation we need to improve the quality of research and teaching and the quality of staff members. Also, from one interviewee was the request for the recognition of excellence within departments to ensure that the motivation of staff is maintained at all times. In line with this argument is Ramsden's (in Newton 2002:193) assertion that a "critical aspect of staff alienation from their universities is their feeling of lack of reward and recognition for academic work, especially teaching".

6.6.10.3 The impact of the merger on academic staff

Many HODs brought up the feeling of uncertainty and insecurity that pervades at the institution regarding its merger with the UNIN. Whether or not the infrastructure of MEDUNSA will be located to Limpopo Province has not been finalised yet. Staff are also concerned that they might lose their jobs once the merger takes place. From one HOD was this statement: "It would be nice if we could soon have clarity on the future of MEDUNSA so that we can settle down and start working. You don't sit down and plan for the next five years because you don't know where you will be in five year's time". Continuing in the same

vein, another purported that the uncertainty about the merger creates problems for governing the department. When people are uncertain about their own future, that will reflect on the academic activity of the university. People are leaving and not replaced in time.

Studies have shown that staff react with uncertainty and fear when faced with the issue of merging. Staff fear they may lose their jobs and the financial implications of that. For others it spells the end of a career and everything they worked for (Broadbent, in Hay, Fourie and Hay 2001:103). The following quotation further illustrates the frustration and anxiety experienced by staff:

“Perceptions of unfairness and symptoms of depression, stress, fear of change, loss of commitment, demoralisation, unwillingness to do anything beyond the minimum, feelings of not being kept well informed and loss of confidence in oneself and in management co-exist” (Broadbent, in Hay et al. 2001:103).

Similarly, Hay et al. (2002:107) discovered in their investigation that whilst a majority of respondents (90,5%) accepted and supported the merger of their institution (that is the University of the Free State and Vista University), many (97,2%) experienced insecurity. Additionally, fear for retrenchment was on most people’s minds. Furthermore, in a study on merging higher education institutions in Australia, undertaken by Curri (2002:140), it was found that all institutions had a good understanding of the need to keep staff informed and involved from the start of negotiations about the merger. Their reasoning was that once staff are assured they will not be cast aside by the new institutions, they are more likely to co-operate.

6.6.10.4 Lack of facilities and funding

Many HODs complained bitterly about the lack of funding especially for research and developing staff in teaching/learning skills. Another problem is a lack of facilities. Several departments do not have computers except for the secretary and HOD. One HOD reported having sought external funding for the establishment of a skills laboratory and gave no thanks to MEDUNSA for this achievement. Some HODs buy computers and computer accessories from their own pocket. To add to this, there were complaints about the state of the lecture halls and the lack of audio-visual equipment at these venues. If you don’t have a laptop, you can’t do a PowerPoint presentation. One interviewee lamented: “Students get an inferior training because of inferior infrastructure”.

6.6.10.5 Perceptions and expectations of CADS

Several respondents observed that the staff at CADS were doing their best to train academics in the implementation of OBE and teaching staff about QA. One HOD suggested that it would be preferable if everyone were given an opportunity to attend the CADS workshops to which HODs only were usually invited. Another said that a “follow-up” in individual departments of workshops already run would be beneficial in helping them to apply what was learnt. Further, there was a request for workshops to be held wherein young lecturers could be taught how to teach. It was also pointed out that staff make use of CADS as a support structure on campus.

The following paragraph gives a summary and discussion to conclude this subsection of the interview with the HODs. An explanation is supplied as to whether the aim, objectives and intentions of the interviews have been met and to what extent the research questions have been answered.

6.6.11 Discussion of the interviews with the HODs

In this subsection an attempt is made to evaluate and discuss to what extent the research question, hypothesis and objectives of the study, discussed in chapter 1 have been addressed by the findings of the interview study.

6.6.11.1 The development of academic excellence by HODs

It can be gleaned from the analysis and synthesis of the interview with the HODs that the general objective (see subsection 1.4.2.2) of the interview study was achieved. The role played by the HODs at MEDUNSA in achieving academic excellence in an era of educational transformation, was found to be diverse. Many of the interviewees acknowledged the importance of addressing equity and redress and had made that a priority in their goals towards transformation (see subsection 6.6.2.1).

6.6.11.2 The development of academic excellence through staff development programmes

A specific objective was to: “To investigate the general perceptions of HODs regarding staff development at MEDUNSA” (refer to paragraph 1.4.3.2). From the responses obtained it was evident that, generally, HODs were of the opinion that CADS is “doing well” in training academics in terms of QA and OBE (see subsection 6.6.10.5). This was evidently not enough though, because outside consultants had to be brought in when courses needed to be written in an outcomes-based format. To add to that, there was a perception that MEDUNSA needs to start taking staff development “more seriously” and should be doing more in this regard. Staff need more training in areas such as teaching and learning, research, curriculum development and QA (see paragraphs 6.6.1, 6.6.10.2 and 6.6.10.3). Unfortunately, staff shortages were impacting negatively on the development of staff because of overload of work, leaving little time for attending staff development programmes or becoming involved in research (see paragraph 6.6.1).

The sub-research question given in subsection 1.3.2.2 was also addressed. The involvement of the HODs in assisting with the development of academics within the context of educational transformation was found to be mainly in the form of support, encouragement and arranging meetings concerned with curriculum development. Interviewees suggested that there should be more workshops at institutional and departmental level, on OBE, QA and so forth, so that *all* staff can be kept informed about educational developments. There were also requests for in-service training and mentorship programmes for new inductees especially (refer to paragraph 6.6.1).

6.6.11.3 Preparing academics for (Outcomes-based Education) OBE

The perception of eight HODs (40%) was that MEDUNSA is ineffective in preparing academics for OBE implementation (refer to subsection 6.6.3). Therefore, 13 of them (65%) took it upon themselves to ensure that staff receive guidance and support in acquiring the necessary skills to write courses in an outcomes-based format and adopting the principles of OBE (see subsection 6.6.3.2). The sub-research question that asks: “Why is there a lack of commitment at management level and among academics to come to terms with a new paradigm of thinking such as OBE?” (see subsection 1.3.2.5), was answered in the analysis of the interviews. For example, 13 HODs (65%) do not provide support for OBE because of

lack of staff and subsequently there is no time, they do not know much about OBE and some are resistant to OBE (see subsection 6.6.3.2).

6.6.11.4 The mission and vision of HODs

A further specific objective of the interviews was to: “Ascertain the vision and mission of HODs for staff development initiatives at MEDUNSA” (see paragraph 1.4.3.2). It can be interpreted from subsection 6.6.9 that HODs are striving towards providing excellence in teaching, research and community service while promoting the advancement of disadvantaged students and addressing national needs. This is in alignment with the mission statement of MEDUNSA (see paragraph 1.8.7).

6.6.11.5 Equity and redress

An additional research question was: “What is MEDUNSA doing to promote the scholastic development of previously disadvantaged people in terms of equity and redress” (see paragraph 1.3.2.7), and this was also adequately answered. It was determined that 14 HODs (70%) were making an effort to support blacks and women in their academic development and were using a repertoire of techniques (see figure 6.2). These included encouragement to improve their qualifications, helping them become involved in research and giving support for presenting at conferences (refer to paragraph 6.6.8).

Another specific objective was to “analyse the reason for MEDUNSA not adequately addressing employment equity issues” (refer to subsection 1.4.3.2). It is evident from the data gathered that six HODs (30%) did not think that women and blacks have any special requirements and should be treated differently which is why they were not given support in their academic development (see subsection 6.6.8 and figure 6.3). Another reason could be related to financial problems as this came up repeatedly during the interviews.

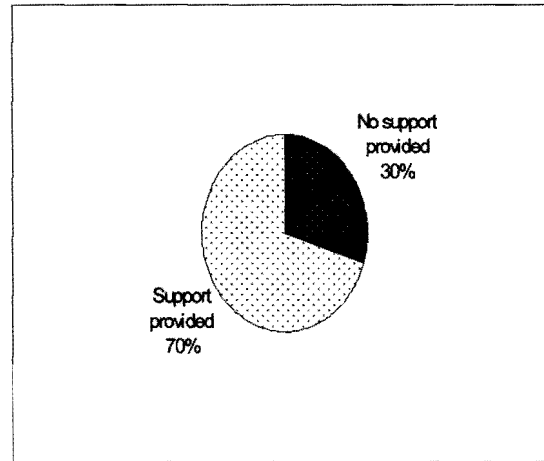


Figure 6.3: Support by the HODs for the advancement of women and black academics

6.6.11.6 The promotion of quality among academics

Additionally, HODs adopt various strategies in the contribution towards the improvement of academic quality. For example, HODs make a concerted effort to encourage and provide support to staff to 1) further their qualifications, 2) become involved in research 3) improve their teaching/learning skills by attending workshops, seminars etceteras run by CADS or outside organisations as well as 4) present research findings at conferences (refer to 6.6.4.2).

Notwithstanding these efforts, the HODs pinpointed several barriers which were hampering the implementation of QA at Medunsa (see table 6.10). Thus, a specific objective as outlined in subsection 1.4.3.2 was to: “Identify possible barriers in the implementation of QA at MEDUNSA” and this objective has been met. The barriers to QA pertain to a shortage of resources, lack of managerial skills and the uncertainty created by the impending merger. Referring to financial constraints one HOD lamented: ‘The budget does not increase annually to keep up with inflation. Acquisition of equipment for staff development is an ongoing problem because of money and further development is hampered’.

Table 6.10: Factors that impede the promotion of QA at Medunsa

Purpose of interview	Findings of interview
1) Identify possible barriers in the implementation of QA at MEDUNSA.	a) Staff shortages and heavy workload. b) The impending merger has demotivated staff. c) Financial constraints. d) Classrooms are inadequately equipped. e) Lack of managerial skills of some HODs. f) Large classes.

6.6.11.7 The application of technology in the teaching/learning situation

Further, an intention of the interviews was to “identify the reasons why MEDUNSA has not adequately promoted and incorporated ICT in the andragogical situation” (see paragraph 1.4.3.2). A sub research question was: “Why has MEDUNSA not put sufficient mechanisms in place to develop academic staff in the use of technology in the teaching/learning situation” (see subsection 1.3.2.4).

From the responses received, it could be determined that due to staff shortages and consequential heavy workloads, there was little time for staff to attend training programmes on the use of ICT in the teaching/learning situation. Even though many staff lack the expertise to implement ICT, they could not be sent for training because of budget cuts. Other constraints identified were that MEDUNSA’s technology was perceived as being too outdated to be effective and the application of technology in lecture halls is difficult because of the lack of resources and facilities for presentation (see subsection 6.6.5.1). Some departments did not even have computers and could not afford to purchase them (refer to paragraph 6.6.5.2).

6.6.11.8 The implementation of policies related to staff development by HODs

Finally, another specific objective of the interview study was to: “Explore the involvement and role of HODs at micro level in implementing policies made at meso level” (see paragraph 1.4.3.2). This research has shown that the successful implementation of policies would

depend heavily on adequate staffing and finance. Heads of department are generally supportive of the factors that drive educational transformation, for example QA, OBE, ICT including equity and redress, and it is clear that there is commitment for their implementation. What is hindering the actual implementation, however, are: 1) staff shortages which have culminated in a heavy workload and lack of time, 2) budget cuts, 3) lack of support at (executive) management level, 4) lack of facilities, 5) an inferior infrastructure and 6) demotivation of staff due to the uncertainty of the merger (see paragraph 6.6.2.1). Despite these constraints, however, some HODs have made progress in designing their programmes according to the SAQA requirements for curriculum design.

Finally, there were no additional items from the analysis of the interviews, for inclusion in the self-administered questionnaire, since there were no items that could be identified that were not already included.

6.7 Conclusion

This chapter provided a report on the results of the interviews with management in terms of their roles, perceptions and expectations concerning academic staff development within a climate of educational transformation. It came to the fore that management feel that academic staff are not being adequately prepared for the implementation of educational transformation especially regarding OBE, the application of innovative methods in teaching and learning and ICT, by this institution. Concomitantly, there was also a perception that staff development programmes are not well attended due perhaps to academics not having enough time to attend these programmes because departments are short-staffed. Financial constraints were also pinpointed as hampering the enhancement of academic excellence.

Additionally, discussions of interviews with the CADS Manager, Executive Management, Deans and HODs were instrumental in achieving the objectives of the research and in answering the main and sub research questions. A critical analysis was also undertaken on the extent of reliability of answers received during the interviews.

The following chapter gives an account of the results of the quantitative study which involved determining the perceptions and needs of academic staff, regarding academic staff development.

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