Employee Behaviour

Table 13: Occurrence of Behavioural Problems Amongst Staff

	ACADEMIC					ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
Stress	42%	25%	28%	5%	100%	37%	27%	30%	6%	100%	38%	23%	27%	13%	100%
Finances	44%	23%	30%	-	100%	40%	-	28%	32%	100%	30%	31%	28%	13%	100%
Drug Problems	6%	9%	75%	-	100%	4%	10%	73%	-	100%	4%	15%	69%	12%	100%
Marital problems	4%	17%	73%	6%	100%	2%	19%	66%	-	100%	12%	19%	54%		100%
Health problems	14%	38%	44%	-	100%	17%	25%	48%	10%	100%	25%	21%	42%	13%	100%
Absenteeism	10%	29%	53%	4%	100%	14%	21%	56%	-	100%	23%	31%	34%	12%	100
Tardiness	18%	24%	54%	4%	100%	28%	19%	46%	-	100%	34%	27%	28%	12%	100%
Alcohol	-	-	-	-	100%	12%	23%	53%	-	100%	12%	23%	53%	13%	100%

The significant finding is that academic staff experience stress. Colleges and Universities are becoming increasingly stressful work environments for academic staff. Unmet expectations constitute an important source of stress for academics (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000:770;Hosokawa, 1990:125; Xiao-Xing He, Zhu-Yu Li, Jian Shi, Rong-Hua Mu and Yi-An Zhou, 2000:253-278). Some view the problem as personal and others view it as systemic (Ryan and Jevne, 1993:80).

In addition, the academic is faced with extraordinarily limited job mobility. The infusion of new blood in the academic establishment via addition of young staff occurs only through retirement of older academic staff members. Universities and colleges must now work at keeping a largely middle aged tenured faculty educationally alive and growing during the next two to three decades (Ryan and Jevne, 1993:79).

Gaff (1976) as quoted by Thoreson (1984:125) further documented the frustrations of the faculty resulting from:

- the tightest job market in decades,
- the difficulty of older faculty in obtaining tenure, and
- a series of drastic budget cuts that have adversely affected departmental programmes and faculty morale.

The resources which facilitate smooth passage through the developmental stages of a single-career cycle, are becoming increasingly limited in academe, accentuating for many faculty members feelings of boredom, anger, frustration, depression, and a sense of being trapped or "stuck" (Baldwin and Blackburn, 1981:598-614).

Caplan et al (1980) on the other hand reported a contrary view that academic staff represent, overall, one of the least stressed professions.

They made this assessment based on the fact that unlike labourers in industry, where, heretofore, most of the stress research has been conducted-academics have the capacity to manage their workday and work week and therefore are able to make critical choices about teaching schedules, how much time to devote to research projects, and how much time they can spend away from teaching and research (Gmelch,1982:88-89). Other studies, however report that nationwide, University faculty are under extreme pressure and are reporting high levels of workplace stress (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000:771;Fisher, 1994:68;Smith and Witt, 1993:232; Xiao-Xing He, Zhu-Yu Li, Jian Shi, Rong-Hua Mu and Yi-An Zhou, 2000:253-278).

The findings indicated that administrative staff always experienced stress. This is probably because "organisations are under increasing pressure to perform to world class standards, or lose to new competitors in the global economy" (Global Practice Connections, 2000:02).

Low salaries and consequent economic pressures had prior to the 1960s and 1970s, always been a salient issue of the academic since academics are amongst the lowest paid employees in the whole world. In South Africa the Saturday Star ran an article that indicated that a bus driver gets more money than a lecturer at a University.

The findings indicated that the difference between those that were experiencing financial problems, those that did not and the unsure ones were minimal. Nevertheless one thing however is certain, namely that there were traces of financial problems even if the problem cannot be accurately quantified.

Studies have shown that sustained stress, reduced self-esteem due to unmet vocational expectations, threat of job loss, and financial problems contribute to increased alcohol and drug, emotional, marital, and family problems among the population at large (Barling and Handal,1980:31-39; Oliver and Pomicter, 1981:507-512; Xiao-Xing He, Zhu-Yu Li, Jian Shi, Rong-Hua Mu and Yi-An Zhou, 2000:253-278).

The rewards of an academic career are largely intrinsic. Successful academics tend to be self-motivated, are able to maintain an undistracted focus on a single research interest, and set exacting standards for their own level of expertise and performance in their chosen field. These qualities that facilitate creativity and productivity in an academic career also place the academic at risk of severe life disruption when an increasing number of work and personal life stressors go unaddressed.

The fact that more academics always experience financial problems is one of the reasons that call for the installation of the Employee Assistance Programme at the University of the North. The number of administrative staff who experience financial problems is less than the academics.

This may be as a result of the perception, real or unfounded, that at the University of the North, administrative staff earn more than academics. If this is indeed the reality, an Employee Assistance Programme may be more beneficial to academic staff than administrative staff.

The findings reveal that few academics were experiencing problems with drugs. The fact, however, that there are members of staff who experience this kind of problem, however minimal the number, suggests that something serious needs to be done.

These findings confirm what obtains in literature namely that 10-20% of the total employee population in any corporation or institution are troubled employees (Storm,1977; Weaver, 1979; Parker and Brody 1981; Miller, Shain and McClellan,1998; Googins and Godfrey 1987: 163; Xiao-Xing He, Zhu-Yu Li, Jian Shi, Rong-Hua Mu and Yi-An Zhou, 2000:253-278). About 5-10% of these employees have problems with substance abuse and another 5-10% have problems around relationships, finances, health and other related problems (Roberts-DeGennaro, 1989:11). Personal problems that afflict employees disturb productivity.

Stress appears to increase job dissatisfaction, anxiety and depression. Relationships within the work setting and with family and friends may be affected (Collins and Parry-Jones, 2000:771; Xiao-Xing He, Zhu-Yu Li, Jian Shi, Rong-Hua Mu and Yi-An Zhou, 2000:253-278). The fact that there are people that experience marital problems is indicative of the need for some intervention in this area. An EAP can assist in resolving problem.

The fact that a small percentage indicated that administrative staff were always experiencing marital problems indicates the sensitive and private nature of the problem. The unskilled staff on campus said that they were carrying their problems silently and were hurt inside because they did not have anyone to share them with.

Some studies report that highly educated professors and researchers tend to deny that they need personal assistance, even when wrestling with serious personal problems (Yamatani, Santagelo, Maue and Heath, 1999:108).

The majority of the academic staff reported that they were never experiencing health problems at work. The few individuals who are experiencing such problems, however need assistance.

Health problems such as cardio-vascular diseases, gastro-intestinal conditions, allergies, skin conditions, sleep disturbances, and headaches appear to be associated with stress (Beehr and Newman,1987:665-669). The existence of whatever magnitude of health problems within the workforce should be a major source of concern for the employer because health problems lead to tardiness and absenteeism which in turn have a negative impact on the productivity of the organisation.

The rate of absenteeism amongst academics in terms of the table is 10%. This is cause for concern especially since Britain's Industrial Society, an independent training and advisory group, has estimated that absenteeism alone costs the United Kingdom's economy a

minimum of 13 billion pounds per year. According to a survey among personnel managers, the most common reason for absences, after colds and flu, was stress/personal problems.

The link between employee health and organizational performance is increasingly clear (Global Practice Connections, 2000:4). The findings from this study recorded the following rates of absenteeism;

- 10% among academics;
- 14% among administration staff; and
- 23% among support services staff.

These figures are indeed worrying and call for some intervention from the executive management of the university. From the researcher's point of view, an Employee Assistance Programme is needed on campus as soon as possible.

A small percentage of the academic staff have observed that some academic staff members are always slow while the majority asserted that academics are never slow. "It's a fact of life throughout the world: Employees bring personal problems to the workplace everyday. Those problems show up in chronic absenteeism, tardiness (slowness), poor safety practices and lost productivity... all of which undermine a company's performance" (Global Practice Connections, 2000:4)

> The respondents indicated that some of the administrative staff on campus experience alcohol problems. As this is precisely the reason that prompted the researcher to undertake this investigation, he gets satisfaction from the fact that it is not the researcher alone who made this observation. However, alcohol problems are symptomatic of underlying personal problems. This problem, more than any other calls for the existence of an Employee Assistance Programme.

7.3.11   **Employee Services**

7.3.11.1   **On/ off site: colleague referral (question 6.1)**

The majority of the academic staff (56%) said that if a colleague had a personal problem, and a facility existed on campus to deal with this, they would definitely refer the colleague to the on-site facility. Some staff members (2%) felt that they would utilise both the on-campus facility and the off-campus facility. On the other hand, some staff members (4%) felt they would use none of the facilities .Most respondents, nevertheless, would prefer to refer their colleagues to an on-site facility.

Geographical location and physical site factors can in several ways exercise influences on programme design. For example, concerns related to confidentiality may be more frequently voiced on the more closely knit campus in a small community, while the larger commuter campus will require considerably more attention to faculty outreach efforts (Hosokawa, 1990:128).

7.3.11.2   **On/off self-referral (question 6.2)**

A fair number of academic staff (58%) would prefer for their own service to an on-site facility whilst, 38% would prefer not to use an on-site facility for their own problems while 4% did not respond to the question.

In a study on EAP utilization, Grosch et al (1996:54) reported that academic staff, more than any other group, do not use EAP services as much as their representation in the overall workforce suggests they should.

7.3.12   **Can members of staff benefit from more information on the following (question 6.3)**

7.3.12.1   **Management of personal problems (question 6.3.1)**

The majority of the staff members (75%) indicated that their colleagues would benefit from more information on how to handle personal problems and 25% said they would not benefit. This is another call for an Employee Assistance Programmeme on campus. In a needs assessment for a University based EAP, Roberts-DeGennaro (1989:15) found that 85% of the respondents indicated that they had known employees who could have used professional help to cope with personal or family problems.

7.3.12.2   **Management of marital problems (question 6.3.2)**

The majority of the academic staff (65%) maintained that their colleagues would benefit from more information on how to manage marital problems and 35% did not believe they can benefit from such information. This finding suggests that academic staff may be aware of the existence of personal problems among colleagues but they do not know how to be of help. That is why it is believed that an EAP can be of benefit to academic staff.

7.3.12.3   **Retirement (question 6.3.3)**

Most of the academic staff members (79%) also indicated that their colleagues would benefit from information on how to deal with retirement issues although 19% believed they could benefit from this. A minority of 2% did not participate in answering the question. This suggests that information in this regard is desirable and perhaps long overdue.

7.3.12.4   **Downsizing (question 6.3.4)**

A large number of academic staff (77%) maintained that their colleagues would benefit from more information on reactions to downsizing while 19% did not believe they would benefit from this information and (four) 4% did not respond to the question.   Downsizing and rationalization of higher education as contained in the Higher Education Act No of 1997 poses a threat of job insecurity amongst academics. The AUT (1989:19) in a recent survey of stress among its members, described the results as "disturbing" with work overload, long working hours, job insecurity, and a range of other problems causing stress for many.

7.3.13   **Can you benefit from more information on the following (question 6.4)**

7.3.13.1   **Management of personal problems (question 6.4.1)**

The majority of the academic staff (71%) did believe that they could benefit information on the management of personal problems and 25% did not think so. A small number of participants did not answer the question. There is consistency of attitude on this variable for academic staff and their colleagues which may mean some concrete facility needs to be put in place.

As EAPs address all kinds of personal problems such as substance abuse, mental health disorders, marital strife, financial difficulties and legal matters (Harlacher and Goodman, 1991: 32), they can be extremely useful to staff members, especially in current times characterized by change and resultant uncertainty and stress.

7.3.13.2   Management of marital problems (6.4.2)

The majority o (60%) in the sample believed that more information on how to handle marital problems would benefit them, 35% thought differently whereas 5% did not answer the question. In a needs assessment for a university based EAP, Roberts-DeGennaro (1989: 16) found that 93% of the respondents suggested that the University should offer help to employees with personal problems that interfere with their work.

7.3.13.3   Retirement (question 6.4.1)

An overwhelming majority of staff members (79%) would benefit from information on how to prepare and address issues relating to retirement while 19% do not think they would benefit from such information. Two percent (2%) of the respondents did not answer the question.

7.3.13.4   Downsizing (question 6.4.4)

Most members of the academic staff (83%) felt they definitely needed information on how to deal with personal reactions to downsizing while only 15% did not think they would benefit from this kind of information while (2%) of the respondents did not answer the question.

Threats of downsizing are currently brought about by widely heard assertions about the decline of Universities, staff attrition, deteriorating infrastructure, reduced numbers, and vitality of services (Court, 1991:337; Amuwo, 2001:11; Bunting, 1993:17; CUP, 1987:121-122; Task Team Report, 2000:17-22).

7.4   **Heads of departments (Appendix D)**

7.4.1   **Identifying particulars**

7.4.1.1   **Rank (question 1.1)**

The majority of the heads of departments (52%) were at lectureship level (lecturer and senior lecturer) and the others were at professorial level (48%). In a University based needs assessment, Roberts-DeGennaro (1989:15) established that managers (100%) and supervisors (91%) are most likely to identifying those employees that need help.

7.4.1.2   **Number of years employed by the university (question 1.2)**

       Table 14:Number of years employed by the university

Value	Count	Percent
1	1	2.85714
2	3	8.57143
3.00000	4	11.42857
4.00000	4	11.42857
5	2	5.71429
6	1	2.85714
8.00000	1	2.85714
9	2	5.71429
10	7	20.00000
13	1	2.85714
14	1	2.85714
16	1	2.85714
17	1	2.85714
19.0000	1	2.85714
20.0000	1	2.85714
22.0000	1	2.85714
30.0000	1	2.85714
1MTH	1	2.85714
2MTS	1	2.85714
Total	**38**	**100**

From the information gathered in this survey, it transpires that the number of years a staff member has been employed is not a factor in the appointment of individuals in headship positions. The table above indicates that some people who have been employed for only a year already serve as heads of departments.

However, the researcher is of the opinion that a person who has been in the University for only a year cannot be expected to carry out performance appraisal, supervision, mentoring or coaching to his subordinates or colleagues.

The findings may further suggest that entry requirements for academic staff at the University of the North could have been low at the time of the study.

7.4.1.3   Age (question 1.3)

Table 15: Age of heads of departments

Value	Count	Percent
24-29	1	2.85714
30-34	3	8.57143
35-39	7	20.00000
40-45	8	22.85714
46-51	6	17.14286
52-57	6	17.14286
58-63	4	11.42857
Total	35	100

The majority of the respondents (43%) were in the age group 35-45; followed by those in the age-group 46-57 (34%). People in the age group 58-63 exit the work place through retirement and the university of the North conducts an exit interview with such employees .

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An EAP is the ideal vehicle to prepare staff members for retirement and the conducting of an exit interview.

7.4.1.4   **Gender (question 1.4)**

The majority of heads of departments (83%) were male, with females in the minority (17%). An almost similar finding was obtained in the sample of deans (see page 135). It was found that there were more males than females in deanship positions. Like in all other Universities leadership positions at the University of the North are dominated by men (Sandler, 1986:31) while women are more likely to support an EAP than men (Minelli et al, 1998:27).

The findings indicate that the leadership positions at the University of the North are still dominated by men (see also pages 78 and 79; Task Team Report on Shape and Size 2000:19) and prove that the Employment Equity Act is far from being implemented at the University of the North (Employment Equity Act No.55 of 1998; see table 3).

**7.4.1.5**   **Population group (question 1.5)**

The majority (54%) of heads of departments were black while whites constituted 46% of the heads of departments.

These findings show that leadership positions are racially divided between the two major races in South Africa, black and white. However, in the deanship positions coloureds were also represented.

7.4.1.6 **Marital status (question 1.6)**

Pie-chart 2: Marital status of heads of departments
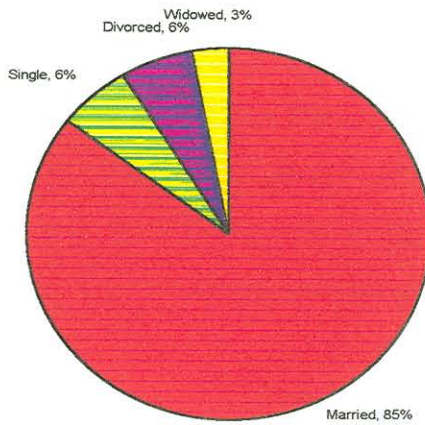
The majority of the respondents (83%) were married while the divorced respondents (6%) and single ones (6%) were also represented in the sample. A minority of the respondents (5%)were widowed.

7.4.1.7　　　**Number of dependents (question 1.7)**

Table 16: Number of dependents of heads of departments

Number of staff	Number of dependents	
Value	Count	Percent
0	2	6
1	5	14
2	12	34
3	10	29
4	4	11
5	1	3
Missing	1	3
Total	**35**	**100**

The majority of heads of departments (34%) reported that they had two children. This is followed by those who had three children (29%) while there are a few respondents (6%) who had no children and those with more than 3 children (14%).

7.4.1.8　　　**Qualifications (question 1.8)**

The majority of the respondents (71%) reported that they had a doctoral degree, 23% had a masters degree whilst the minority (6%) had an honours degree. It is actually disturbing that academics with only an honours degree could be a head of a department since such people tend to have very limited knowledge to teach at a University let alone become a leader of an academic department.

On the whole, the qualifications of heads of departments are quite impressive. The problem, however, is that very little staff development in the form of performance appraisal, supervision, coaching and mentoring ever take place in the academic departments. The problem could be caused either by the fact that heads of departments are not expected to carry out this function in their job description or if they are expected to fulfil it, they have simply ignored it.

7.4.2   Changes in higher education   (question 2.1)

A significant number (89%) of heads of departments were familiar with changes taking place in higher education. Unfortunately, there was still a minority (11%) that were not familiar with the changes in higher education and this is a cause for concern.

The minority that was not familiar with the changes in higher education is disturbing because these are people who are supposed to provide leadership to academic departments as far as the restructuring of programmes is concerned. The Business Times (2001:23) reported that "the higher education landscape in South Africa is marked by dissent, corruption and generally low morale among academic staff" which is another reason why the Universities in South Africa need to introduce EAPs on their campuses.

7.4.2.1   Modularisation   (question 2.2.1)

The majority of the respondents (69%) were comfortable with the modularisation of curricula at the University. However, a lesser number (31%) were not in favour of modularisation.

Those that were not in favour of modularisation of courses tended to feel frustrated and infuriated by the modularisation of courses. Such feelings of discomfort at work bring down the level of productivity.

7.4.2.2   South African Qualifications Authority   (question 2.2.2)

It transpired from the questionnaire that the majority (63%) of the staff members were comfortable with the function of the South African Qualifications Framework, whilst a minority (32%) were uncomfortable about SAQA. A small number of respondents (5%) did not participate in the study.

The researcher's opinion is that those people that are uncomfortable and unfamiliar with the changes in higher education would also be uncomfortable with the processes of change such as modularisation and the new structures and bodies such as the South African Qualifications Authority.

7.4.2.4   Council on Higher Education (question 2.2.3)

A minority of the respondents (43%) reported that they were not comfortable with the Council on Higher education. The majority (51%) of the respondents, however, reported that they were comfortable with the Council on Higher education while only 6% did not respond to the question.

7.4.2.5   Accreditation (question 2.2.4)

The majority of the respondents (64%) reported that they were comfortable with the accreditation of curricula and programmes offered by the University while a small number of respondents (27%) were not comfortable with accreditation of programmes. Six percent (6%) did not respond to the question. Accreditation is a

process whereby the comparability and recognition of educational standards are promoted (Strydom, 1993:85; Millard, 1993:85).

The sad reality about these findings is that whether people are uncomfortable, undecided or in favour of accreditation of curricula is immaterial. Accreditation and modularisation of curricula and the National Qualifications Framework were established as part of government policy which has to be implemented. Since a significant number of people will experience severe anger and resentment about implementing something that they do not like, this anger and resentment may cause resistance which will eventually lower productivity. As a person with low productivity is in turn a potential consumer of EAP services, the need for such services is once more underpinned.

7.4.2.6   Quality promotion   (question 2.2.5)

A large amount of the respondents (75%) reported that they were comfortable with the quality promotion function of the Council on Higher Education. A minor number of 19% were not in favour while a small number (6%) did not respond to the question.

The quality function of the Council on Higher Education will go ahead regardless of the respondents and heads of departments' reservations. However, their feelings of resentment may make it impossible for them to enjoy their stay at the university.

It should be emphatically stated that quality promotion is desirable because in recent years governments and employers in many countries have been concerned with reducing expenditure on higher education while at the same time increasing access to larger numbers and a greater diversity of students. This has had implications for the perceived quality of higher education (Strydom, 1993:83; Webstock, 1999:13; Dowling, 1991:1; Kallie and Strydom, 1999:18).

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7.4.2.7   **Report on shape and size of higher education (question 2.2.6)**

The report of the task team on size and shape of higher education has almost divided the heads of departments into equal groups. Fifty seven percent (57%) of the respondents were not comfortable with the report, 35% were comfortable and 8% did not respond to the question.

The findings indeed communicate the feelings of heads of departments around issues of mergers and collaboration of institutions of higher learning. Although it would seem that heads of departments are not unanimous about the direction the university has to take, one may hasten to add that perhaps such uncertainty is perhaps not exclusive and unique to the University of the North, as staff members at most Universities experience the same anguish caused by rapid and drastic change. This has been observed by discussions with colleagues from other Universities especially at conferences and workshops.

7.4.2.8   **National Qualifications Framework**   **(question 2.2.7)**

Most of the respondents (54%) have reported that they were comfortable with the National Qualifications Framework while a minority (37%) were not comfortable with the National Qualifications Framework and 9% of the participants did not respond to the question.

In general this finding indicates that heads of departments are familiar with the changes taking place within the sector of higher education. They are, however, not very keen with the report from the task team on shape and size of higher education.

7.4.2.9   **Conditions of service**   **(question 2.2.8)**

A minority (43%) were also comfortable with the conditions of service as reflected in section 34 of the Higher Education Act. However, 48% were not in favour of the conditions of employment as prescribed by the Higher Education Act and 9% did not respond to the question.

7.4.2.10   **Employment Equity**   **(question 2.2.9)**

Although most heads of departments (54%) were comfortable with the Employment Equity Act a minority (36%) were not in favour of the Employment Equity Act and 10% did not respond to the question.

The fact that some people are choosing the middle way in responding to questions such as these may imply that they are unaware and unfamiliar with issues that are being asked. If respondents are indeed ignorant about these processes, one wonders whether academe should be their home. If on the other hand academics cannot say whether they like something or not, it also does not say well about people who have to teach the nation to make correct choices.

7.4.3 **University processes**

7.4.3.1 **Mission** **(question 3.1.1)**

Histogram 2: Understanding of university mission by heads of departments

Understanding of University Mission by HOD's
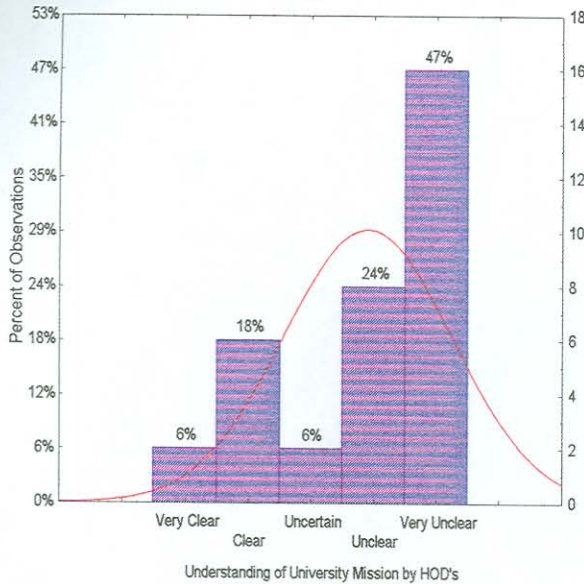
The mission of the University is to achieve distinction in scholarship, professionalism, and community renewal amongst its staff and students in order to improve the quality of life of the community it serves (see page 74). The majority of respondents (75%) reported that the mission of the University was clear but 23% felt that the mission was not clear whilst only 2% did not respond to the question.

The few respondents were uncertain about the mission of the University should not have been in leadership positions for they do not know what they should be doing on a daily basis to attain the mission of the University. The researcher can further deduce that those who are unclear about the mission of the University may have perhaps just joined the University and that they have not been part of the institution's strategic planning.

7.4.3.2   **Vision**   **(question 3.1.2)**

The University of the North strives to be a quality institution of higher learning and critical reflection, which is innovative, responsive to change, is rooted in the issues of the society it serves, and is recognised world-wide as the centre for relevant theory and practice of people centred development (see page 74).

The majority of the respondents in the sample (63%) were comfortable with the vision of the University while 34% were not comfortable with the vision of the institution and 3% did not respond to the question.

One wonders whether persons who cannot decide whether they like the vision of their organisation or not; or rather people who are ignorant of the vision of their institution should be placed in academic leadership. The findings thus clearly indicate that there are probably no set of criteria in place that people have to satisfy before they can become heads of departments.

This position is on a silver platter so that it is apparent that anybody can get it. This is a serious cause for concern, especially in current times when more demands are placed on university staff.

7.4.3.3   **Goals of the University**   **(question 3.1.3)**

More than half the respondents (54%) were comfortable with the goals of the University, 43% reported that they were not comfortable with the goals of the University and 3% did not respond to the question.

This finding communicates that more than a quarter of the respondents probably work against the goals and mission of the University because they are not comfortable with them.

This poses the crucial question of why such people continue to work for and lead a system that violates their value systems. The researcher can only surmise that working for an organisation that goes against the grain of your values must be stressful. It would therefore not be surprising if the majority of those that are uncomfortable with the goals of the University experience a severe degree of stress which undermines productivity. Of importance once again is the fact that a lack of productivity is one reason why employees are referred for counseling by EAP professionals.

7.4.3.4   Promotion criteria   (question 3.1.4)

Less than half of the respondents (37%) reported that promotion criteria on campus are clear and 60% said they were not clear about the criteria for promotion. Only 3% did not respond to the question.

It is significant to note that less than half of the respondents indicated that they were not clear about the criteria for promotion. The majority of the academic staff also revealed that they were not happy with the criteria for promotion. The lack of clarity on promotion criteria means that vertical mobility is lowered or at worst non-existent. The situation described above resembles Thoreson's (1984:125) reflection that the academic is faced with extraordinarily limited job mobility.

### 7.4.3.5   Conditions of employment   (question 3.1.5)

Less than half the respondents (46%) reported that they were very clear about their conditions of employment while 51% reported that they were unclear about conditions of employment and 3% did not respond to the question.

It is encouraging to observe that the some heads of departments were clear about conditions of employment at the University. Anyway, heads of departments have to see to it that subordinates in their academic departments comply with these conditions. Those who are unclear about their conditions of employment can only deduce that they may be relatively new on campus or newly appointed to their positions (see pp 84-95).

7.4.4   **Staff development processes**   **(question 3.2)**

7.4.4.1   **Performance appraisal**   **(question 3.2.1)**

Histogram 3: Performance appraisal as observed by heads of departments
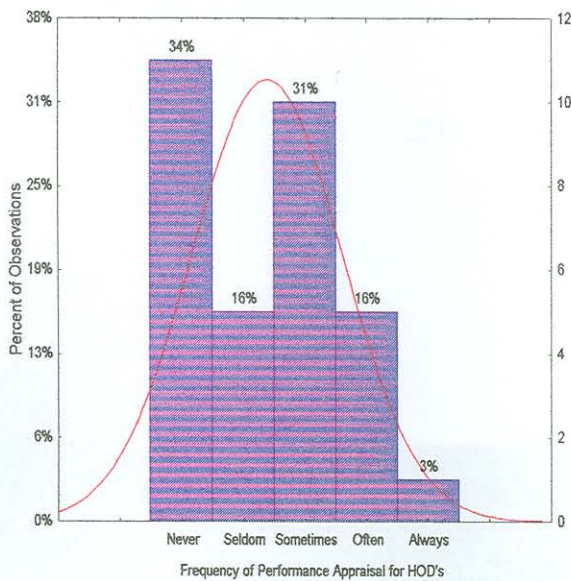
The majority of respondents (45%) indicated that performance appraisal never took place within their departments and 17% said it did take place. A further 29% reported that they were uncertain about the existence of performance appraisal in their departments whereas 9% did not answer the question.

Promotion should be based amongst other things on performance appraisal. Since the majority of the respondents reported that performance appraisal takes place and they are clear about criteria for promotion it is clear that the majority of heads of departments did not know their responsibilities.

7.4.4.2   Supervision   (question 3.2.2)

The responses were divided with 28% indicating that supervision never took place and 26% reporting that supervision always took place. A higher number of the respondents (34%) said they were uncertain about this process which minority (12%) did not answer the question.

From these findings one can simply conclude that supervision of staff rarely takes place in the academic departments. According to Thoreson (1984:125) this may suggest that academic staff are tenured and that the academic environment is further characterised by minimal supervision of the academician. Baldridge (1984:55) reveals the other reason that makes supervision difficult in higher education namely that the system in this sector is not tight, it is indeed inherently sloppy.

7.4.4.3   Mentoring   (question 3.2.3)

Although a minority (34%) of the heads of departments were uncertain about mentoring processes for academic staff within their departments, a majority of 39% reported that mentoring did take place within their departments. Twenty percent (20%) of the respondents reported that there was no mentoring in their departments while 7% did not answer the question. Since mentoring means giving support, the absence of support means employees are left on their own to battle it out.

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7.4.4.4   **Coaching**   **(question 3.2.4)**

The majority (32%) of the staff reported that they were uncertain whether coaching took place within their departments and 11% did not respond to the question. Twenty eight percent (28%) indicated that coaching never took place whereas the other 29% indicated that coaching always took place within their departments.

These findings suggest that there is very little staff development taking place within academic departments at the University of the North. Since a large number of the heads of departments, the majority of whom are at a professsorial level, do not invest time and energy in building young academics to reach their level.

7.4.5   **Bringing about change on campus   (question 3.3)**

An overwhelming majority of the respondents reported that bringing about change ranged from somewhat difficult (29%) to very difficult (54%). Only a minority (3%) did report that bringing change on campus was somewhat easy while another group of respondents (11%) reported that they were uncertain and 3% did not answer the question.

The respondents that expressed their uncertainty and those that did not respond to the question may actually have been late comers to the university of the North, because the researcher's experience is that it is difficult to bring about change on campus. Baldridge (1984:51-52) as well as Wyers and Kaulukukui (1984:170) maintains that the history of academic innovation is a history of failure brought about by the following factors:

- an enormous resource crunch;
- management is politicised;

- there is a strong attack on the human service side of the university and

- there is centralisation of authority.

7.4.6 Dual allegiance   (question 3.4)

An overwhelming majority of the respondents (86%) belonged to professional associations while 14% did not. Thoreson (1984:126) as well as Baldridge (1984:54-57) mention that the role of the professor includes the opportunity and problem of dual allegiance. Since academics are members of both a particular University faculty and a specific discipline. The academic is thus faced with professional versus institutional identification.

This bifurcation has led to a major commitment by academics to off-campus activities and constituencies that consume considerable time and energy (for instance, for the professor at risk, it provides an unparalleled opportunity to spend hidden time off campus away from the scrutiny of colleagues and students in the socially sanctioned high drinking habitat found at conferences and conventions).

Roman (1984:37; Hosokawa, 1990:126; Sorcinelli and Gregory, 1987) all mention that higher education shares with other types of organizations such as hospitals and laboratories the tension producing mixture of dual loyalties to professions and organizations.

7.4.7 Trade union membership (question 3.5)

The majority (83%) of the heads of departments did not belong to trade unions while a minority (17%) were members of a union. The reason why so many respondents reported that they did not belong to trade unions is simply because heads of departments are middle managers and joining a trade union will be like shooting oneself in the foot. Besides, the researcher had already indicated that academic staff have a variety of governance structures at their disposal to deal with their bread and butter issues unlike, for example, members of the administrative staff or the support services staff. On the other hand it has been suggested that union involvement in the establishment of an EAP results in greater acceptance of the programme since employees feel an increased sense of ownership, and the perception of the EAP as being more rehabilitative than punitive (Macdonald and Dooley, 1990:97-105).

7.4.8 Communication patterns (question 4.2)
7.4.8.1 Weekly communication among academics (question 4.1.1)

The majority of the respondents (86%) reported that they always communicate with academic staff and 9% reported that they never communicated, while 5% were uncertain of the frequency of the communication.

It is not surprising that heads of departments always communicate with academic staff because the former are leaders and overseers of academic departments.

The minority that do not communicate with academic staff create an unfavourable working environment for the latter group because isolation and boredom are precursors of alcoholic drinking (Thoreson, 1984:128).

7.4.8.2   **Weekly communication between academics and administrative staff (question 4.1.2)**

The responses to the questionnaire revealed that the majority of the respondents (63%) always communicated with the administrative staff while 14% never communicated while and 20% were uncertain of the frequency of communication. A few (3%) did not, however, answer the question.

The fact that most respondents always communicate with administrative staff also confirms that heads of departments have severe of administrative responsibilities and to successfully execute these they always need to be in communication with the administrative staff.

7.4.8.3   **Weekly communication between academic and support services staff (question 4.1.3)**

Most of the heads of departments (55%) reported that they were always in communication with the support services staff and 14% never. Another 28% reported that they were uncertain about the frequency of communication with support services staff and 3% did not answer the question

The findings confirm that headship at the University of the North involves doing some liaising activities. Basically, heads of departments need to be in communication with everyone for the smooth functioning of the department.

Table 17: Weekly communication patterns: Observation by head of departments

Kind of communication	ACADEMIC					ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
face to face	57%	17%	23%	3%	100%	57%	17%	23%	3%	100%	57%	17%	23%	3%	100%
telephone	63%	23%	11%	3%	100%	63%	23%	11%	3%	100%	37%	11%	49%	3%	100%
memo	46%	17%	34%	3%	100%	46%	17%	34%	3%	100%	14%	23%	57%	6%	100%
circular	15%	8%	75%	2%	100%	15%	8%	75%	2%	100%	12%	11%	72%	5%	100%
fax	18%	8%	71%	3%	100%	18%	8%	71%	3%	100%	6%	14%	80%	-	100%
e-mail	12%	14%	71%	3%	100%	12%	14%	71%	3%	100%	11%	9%	75%	5%	100
meetings	18%	30%	49%	3%	100%	18%	30%	49%	3%	100%	20%	17%	60%	3%	100%

From table 17 one discerns a striking similarity of responses about the frequency of communication among the three groups at the University of the North. Face to face communication yielded the same kind of responses amongst the three groups. An overwhelming majority of heads of departments always communicated with academic staff on a face to face basis.

These findings contradict Thoreson's (1984:128) assertion that academics work in an environment of isolation and low visibility (Thoreson,1984:130). Most heads of departments communicate with academic staff telephonically but this was not at the expense of face to face communication as Thoreson (1984:136) had suggested. The minority that never communicated are probably those who are described by Thoreson (1984:130)as working in an environment of low visibility and minimal supervision. The majority of the heads of department reported that they never use an e-mail to communicate with academic staff.

There could be a number of reasons as to why an e-mail is not intensively used amongst the respondents. The reasons may be the following:

- not all heads of departments' offices have computer facilities;
- not all offices of academic staff are fitted with computer facilities;
- heads of departments could be instructing their administrative staff (secretaries) to post communication on e-mail;
- face to face communication may be the most preferable one on campus as this very study had vindicated on several occasions; and
- the e-mail service on campus is mostly down.

Meetings are quite popular at the University of the North. It is interesting to note that none of the heads of departments ever reported that they never hold meetings.
Meetings are used on a regular basis to discuss the following:

- academic operations in the departments/schools;
- University policy decisions;
- curricular offerings and delivery;
- job allocation; and
- addressing of staff concerns and problem

7.4.9 Employee behaviour and problems

Table 18: Employee Behaviour and Problems as observed by heads of departments

Problem behaviour	ACADEMIC					ADMINISTRATION					SUPPORT				
	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total	Always	Some times	Never	No response	Total
stress	35%	30%	35%	-	100	17%	40%	19%	24%	100%	14%	26%	37%	23%	100%
financial	11%	49%	40%	-	100	17%	34%	26%	23%	100%	11%	43%	23%	23%	100%
alcohol	3%	5%	92%	-	100%	-	11%	66%	23%	100%	3%	14%	60%	23%	100%
drugs	2%	-	98%	-	100%	-	11%	69%	20%	100%	-	14%	63%	23%	100%
marital	3%	8%	89%	-	100%	3%	11%	63%	23%	100%	-	23%	54%	23%	100%
health	9%	34%	57%	-	100%	3%	40%	34%	23%	100%	3%	37%	37%	23%	100
absenteeism	3%	17%	80%	-	100	3%	26%	48%	23%	100	3%	29%	45%	23%	100
tardiness	9%	20%	71%	-	100%	6%	26%	46%	22%	100%	5%	26%	46%	23%	100%

Table 18 indicates that a significant number of heads of departments could not respond on the administrative and support services staff behavioural problems. The reason for this could be that heads of departments are directly in charge of academic staff and that contact with administrative and support services is minimal and less frequent.

Regardless of the percentages involved, one issue is, however, certain and that is all staff members do experience stress. The stress on young academics at the stage of getting into the adult world and settling down are now significantly greater. The difficulty in attaining tenure, lack of advancement opportunities and severe restrictions in salaries make both alcohol misuse and the likelihood of leaving academe strong possibilities (Thoreson, 1984:129).

A significant number of heads of departments also reported that support services staff never experience stress. The figures and statistics notwithstanding, the problem of stress seems to be present albeit at a lesser scale. It should be borne in mind, however, that stress is not necessarily negative but may actually prompt and motivate people to achieve. By contrast, negative stress which is called distress is a phenomenon that needs to be addressed. In this regard, Balgopal and Stollak, (1992:90)mention that "like other work settings, Universities face problems of work stress and absenteeism on the job as well as external pressure such as alcoholism, substance abuse and family problems".

The majority of the heads of departments reported that academic staff sometimes experience financial problems as well. These findings indicate the sensitivity around financial matters and that academic staff do not complain about financial matters to the heads of departments for the latter can do very little about these.

A few respondents, however, confessed that academics always experience financial problems, another valid reason for the establishment of an Employee Assistance Programme.

Almost all the heads of departments reported that academic staff never experience alcohol related problems, a finding which contradicts Thoreson's (1984:129) observation that the difficulty in attaining tenure, lack of advancement opportunities, and severe restrictions in salaries make alcohol misuse a strong possibility.

Most heads of departments reported that academic staff never experience marital problems. There may be a number of reasons for this finding. First, it may indicate that academics do not discuss their marital issues with their heads of departments. Second, the finding may mean that academics are competent to deal with their marital problems and that is why it is not obviously evident that they do experience marital problems. Third, it may mean that academics indeed do not have problems in their marriages.

It should also be highlighted that this finding contradicts existing literature (Thoreson,1984:129-130;Gross,1977:752-755) who express the opinion that most academics in the mid-life stage experience marital problems. The two authors mention that academics at this stage modify their relationships including their marital relationships since men at this stage enter into serious love relationships with younger women.

It is difficult to point out the absenteeism problem among academics as they work within a flexible environment and operate on flexible hours. Another significant factor is that senior academic staff have a limited teaching load (Thoreson,1984:132).

Most of the heads of departments also reported that administration staff never experience problems of absenteeism This result confirms the fact that if staff members seldom complain of stress, marital problems, alcohol and drug related problems and they are relatively healthy so that there is absolutely no reason why problems of absenteeism should be an issue amongst them.