5.1 INTRODUCTION

The first chapters of this study are a reflection on the literature study which underpins this research. This chapter sets an outline of the empirical research of this study within the framework of the literature study that the researcher conducted. The following aims for this study were discussed in chapter 1:

- Develop a quality management system based on the TQM philosophy for the U1 which integrates key elements of quality management that will have a wider application for institutions of higher learning.
- Conceptualise and clarify the concept institutional quality management (with special reference to continuous improvement).
- Conceptualise and clarify the concepts planning and resource allocation.
- Identify good practices with regard to systems that provides for sufficient monitoring and evaluation to generate management information.

The above research aims were operationalised into the following sub-objectives:

- To reach a deeper understanding of quality management, quality systems and quality mechanisms in higher education which include the integration of planning and resource allocation (cf. 1.3.3).
- To utilise good quality management practices from other universities as well as information gathered from published literature in order to identify applications that support the integration of planning and resource allocation.
- To identify useful and effective monitoring and evaluation systems as the basis for management information.
- To relate and utilise the HEQC's conceptualisation of quality management and the outcome of the empirical and literature study to the development of a model for the integration of quality management, resource allocation and planning.
This study will investigate the degree to which institutions' quality management systems succeed in integrating quality management with planning and resource allocation. It will identify the contributing factors which will inform the development of a model that is suitable for universities in South Africa.

5.2 RESEARCH METHOD

The grounded theory is a suitable approach for this research. The grounded theory approach will help the researcher to investigate and to describe concepts, quality mechanisms and systems in South Africa. It will help the researcher to explore the "new territory" (Denscombe, 2003:113), the new territory in this study is how to integrate institutional planning, resource allocation and quality management. The grounded theory will also be of great value to develop a conceptual framework for the integration of quality management, planning and resource allocation.

Data and information collection with regard to the primary sources will be conducted by means of a quantitative and qualitative research method. The information obtained from the literature study will be used to inform the development of a questionnaire (closed and open-ended questions) in order to explore and to understand the current practices of institutions of higher learning with regard to the integration of planning, resource allocation and quality management. The data gathered by means of a questionnaire will help the researcher to:

- identify universities that implements good quality management practices that are related to the objectives of this study;
- explore, understand and identify practices of effective integration of quality management, resource allocation and planning; and
- inform the development of a model for the integration of quality management, planning and resource allocation.

5.2.1 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature study forms an integral part of this study as it informs the researcher's conceptualisation of key concepts and models that are related to the research questions and objectives. The literature review reflects on certain theoretical frameworks which may help the researcher in this exploratory study to identify certain gaps and broad research issues.
Secondary sources (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:152-153) will be used to collect relevant information with regard to the following key aspects of the study:

- Systems theory.
- Quality management systems for institutions of higher learning.
- Planning (strategic-, tactical- and operational planning).
- Budgeting and resource allocation models in higher education.
- Continuous improvement.
- PDCA model.
- Total Quality Management.
- New dispensation in higher education (South African context).
- Decision making.
- Self-evaluation.

5.2.2 EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

Quality managers or senior staff members of public universities (cf. 1.1, 1.4.4) in South Africa will complete questionnaires in order to conduct an experience survey. Investigative type of questions will be utilised. The size of the population is N 21. The size of the population makes it practical to involve all institutions of higher learning in South Africa.

5.2.2.1 Questionnaire

Each institution of higher learning in South Africa will receive a questionnaire to be completed. The questionnaire will be utilised to collect quantitative as well as qualitative data. Questionnaires are suitable research instruments to convert information of people into data. Following the literature study, questions will be drafted once a complete list of investigative questions is developed.

a) Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires as data-collection methods

The overall purpose of the questionnaire is to collect information easily in a non-threatening way. The following are the advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires (Coldwell & Herbst, 2004:48; Kidder, 1981:148):
TABLE 5: Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires as data-collection methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Can be completed anonymously</td>
<td>Might not get careful feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inexpensive to administer</td>
<td>Wording can bias respondents’ responses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy to compare</td>
<td>Are impersonal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can be administered to many people</td>
<td>May need a sampling expert</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can collect lots of data</td>
<td>Does not get full story</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a) The selection of appropriate questions

The following questions will guide the researcher in selecting the appropriate question content (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:365):

- Should this question be asked?:
  The questions should contribute significant information with regard to the research question.

- Is the question of proper scope and coverage?:
  Questions may not be “double-barreled” (multiple questions), incomplete or unfocused.

- Can the participant adequately answer this question, as asked?
  Although the respondents will be quality managers or senior staff members that are familiar with quality concepts, to assume that participants have knowledge or an understanding of quality management, planning and resource allocation in higher education is risky (Cooper & Schindler, 2003:367). The questions will therefore be asked in such a way that the respondents will be able to adequately answer it.

- Will the participant willingly answer this question, as asked?
  The questions will be asked in such a way that the participants will be willing to answer them, topics that are regarded as “too sensitive” will not be asked. The questionnaire will be completed by professionals and not by the general population (Moser & Kalton, 2004:73). Vocabulary and technical terms that are common to the researcher as a
quality manager and the respondents as his colleagues at other institutions of higher learning will be utilised. Moser and Kalton (2004:73) state that technical terms may be used in a questionnaire that will be completed by professionals that are using common concepts, especially if they have a single precise meaning. The researcher will ensure that the word chosen means what is intended, that the context of the question will make the intended meaning of a concept or word clear.

5.3 CONCLUSION

This chapter explained how the researcher will conducted this research in order to reach the research aims as discussed in chapter one. The first five chapters were based on the secondary sources of the research and reflect on the researcher's literature study. The literature study reflects on recent and historically significant research that was conducted (Cooper & Schindler, 1998:101), on quality systems, models, practices, processes and concepts relevant to the topic of this research. This secondary data that is derived from a comprehensive point of view, contributes to a great extent to the understanding of the research problem. The researcher views the following issues as crucial elements that should be investigated as possible impediments to the integration of quality management, planning and resource allocation in higher education:

- **Silo management and the systems approach**: The lack of integration of functional areas leads to silo management. If "invisible walls" exists within an institution, functions and departments may be regarded as separate entities. Institutions are complex systems comprising of subsystems. Institutions should function as systems with interdependent components or subsystems that strive as a whole to reach common goals. There is a mutual support of subsystems within a system. Subsystems cannot operate as independent entities. The university is a complex system with subsystems that are geared to achieve the mission and strategic goals of an institution. Synergy is therefore central to this approach. Effective quality management at an institution depends on its quality assurance policy and system which provides a framework for continuous improvement in ALL functional areas.

- **"Culture for quality" and participation**: Members of top and middle management, members on operational levels and students should take part in the initiatives of an institution in order to enhance its quality. They should be empowered and equipped with regard to quality mechanisms to be used in order to detect...
deficiencies, to plan and to implement remedial action plans. They should have knowledge of the institution’s quality assurance policy and system. Every individual should be responsible for the enhancement of quality.

- Decision making and information: Informed decisions should be made by an institution’s decision makers. Management information (quantitative and qualitative), this includes the outcomes of quality assurance activities such as self-evaluation exercises and audits, should be reliable and should feed into the institutional strategic goal setting exercises, planning activities and resource allocation processes.

- Customer satisfaction and continuous improvement: Within a competitive environment and from an accountability point of view, it is important to take cognisance of the needs and expectations of the customer, both internally and externally, to identify deficiencies and gaps against minimum standards. Minimum standards should be on par with stakeholder requirements as well as the strategic, tactical and operational goals and plans of the institution. Institutions should conduct internal quality assurance and control continuously irrespective of the demands of external quality assurance bodies (Jacobs, 1997:153). Continuous improvement is a hopeful travel without arriving at the destination (Morley, 2003:13). Cyclical planning and reviews is therefore an important mechanism to ensure that continuous improvement takes place.

- Accountability and improvement:

External quality assurance focuses on the notion of accountability while internal quality assurance is conducted in order to enhance quality.

An institution should, with regard to its quality management arrangements, assure, support, develop, enhance and monitor the quality of its core business. This is done by means of a process of self-evaluation. Two concepts underpin self-evaluation exercises i.e. accountability and improvement. There is a tension between these two approaches. The approach of an institution of higher learning towards quality assurance as entirely a focus on accountability or on improvement is an enduring one. Institutions should rather strike a balance between the two. Nevertheless the merits of the discourse on governmentality, for an institution of higher learning not to take cognisance of the demands of the meso and macro environments (globalisation, economy, politics, national imperatives, etc), and specifically the requirements of bodies such as the Higher Education Quality Committee (HEQC) or the Department of Education (DoE) may have serious consequences (e.g. an impact on funding, on programme accreditation, etc).
The HEQC states clearly that it views quality assurance as the processes of an institution to ensure that specified standards or requirements have been met (CHE, 2004a:16). Traditionally this is done by means of self-evaluation exercises. The HEQC (CHE, 2004a:16) describes self-evaluation as a process by which an institution reviews the effectiveness of its quality management system for assigning, developing and monitoring the quality of the core business. Accountability and improvement underpin the concept of self-evaluation. It seems that a strong focus on accountability might end up in a bureaucratic adhering to required administrative processes while the notion of continuous quality improvement is neglected (Pretorius, 2004:106). A quality management system should therefore be designed to detect and rectify quality problems on all levels of an institution on a continuous basis without disregarding the requirements (needs and expectations) of the client i.e. the students, staff and external stakeholders.