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ETHICAL PRACTICES OF THE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSITY

by

Abraheem Qassim Fadhl

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF COMMERCE IN MANAGEMENT

In the Faculty of Economics and Management

University of the Western Cape, South Africa

Supervisor Dr. Abdullah Bayat

May 2019

<http://etd.uwc.ac.za/>

DECLARATION

I declare that “Ethical Practices of the Middle Managers in a South African University” is original and my own work. It is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Commerce in Management at the EMS Faculty, University of the Western Cape. It has not been submitted for any degree or examination at any other university. All references and sources of information to my knowledge are accurately reported.

Abraheem Qasim Fadhl

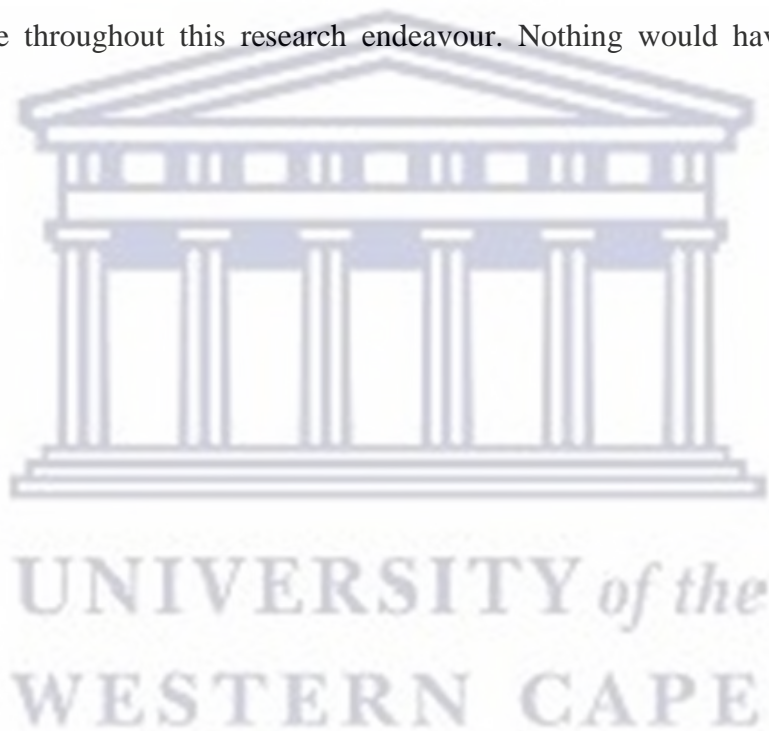
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In the name of ALLAH, the Beneficent, the Merciful.

To Almighty ALLAH, All praise and gratitude be to ALLAH and blessings and salutations on His messenger Muhammad (SAW). I thank the Almighty for giving me strength, patience and faithful guidance throughout this research endeavour. Nothing would have been possible without HIM.





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ABSTRACT

Middle managers play an important role in contemporary organisations, particularly in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Research on middle managers in a HEI environment suggests that their roles, work practice and identities are under-researched. Middle managers occupy a central position in organisational hierarchies where they are responsible for implementing senior management plans. In HEIs in SA academic middle managers/heads of departments (HODs) face many challenges that are not commonly found in conventional organisations. In this qualitative study the contribution is based on the participants' experiences in relation to an increasingly diverse workload and responsibilities. Using a fluid conceptualisation of identity and subjectivity, the researcher argues that academic middle managers are engaged in ethical and political practices through demands in the workplace. Drawing on theories on ethics put forward by Foucault, Levinas & Critchley, various aspects of ethics of 'the self' and ethics of 'the other' in relation to academic middle managers' identities and practices are discussed. A case study was used with a cross-sectional research design to gather the data on academic middle managers in a single faculty in a South African HEI. Information gathered particularly focussed on the implementation of ethical practices. The findings show that middle managers' work practices were dependent on their ethical goals and aspirations. This is crucial to achieving success in a HEI. The findings indicate that many academic middle managers engaged with the multiple demands of their positions but attempted to form and shape their identities and practices in the higher education system in response to their own ethical value systems. Thus, academic middle managers created and fashioned new and personalised hybrid identities based on their ethical values to cope with multiple demands. The recommendation is that academic middle managers receive contemporary management training (such as intrapreneurship, leadership, management, administrative etc.) on how to cope and manage the multiple demands within a higher education environment. It is further recommended that they be given more space and freedom to rely on ethics in dealing with their functions rather than following strict guidelines on what they ought to do within their respective departments.

Keywords: Middle manager, Academic Middle Managers, Higher Education Institutions, Ethics, Ethical practices, Discourse

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HOD	Head of Department
HE	Higher Education
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HR	Human Resources
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
SA	South Africa
NPM	New Public Management
SAHEI	South African Higher Education Institution
UK	United Kingdom
ODL	Open Distance Learning
CHE	Council of Higher Education
NPC	National Planning Commission
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
IMF	International Monetary Fund
SAPs	Structural Adjustment Programmes
EMS	Economic Management Science

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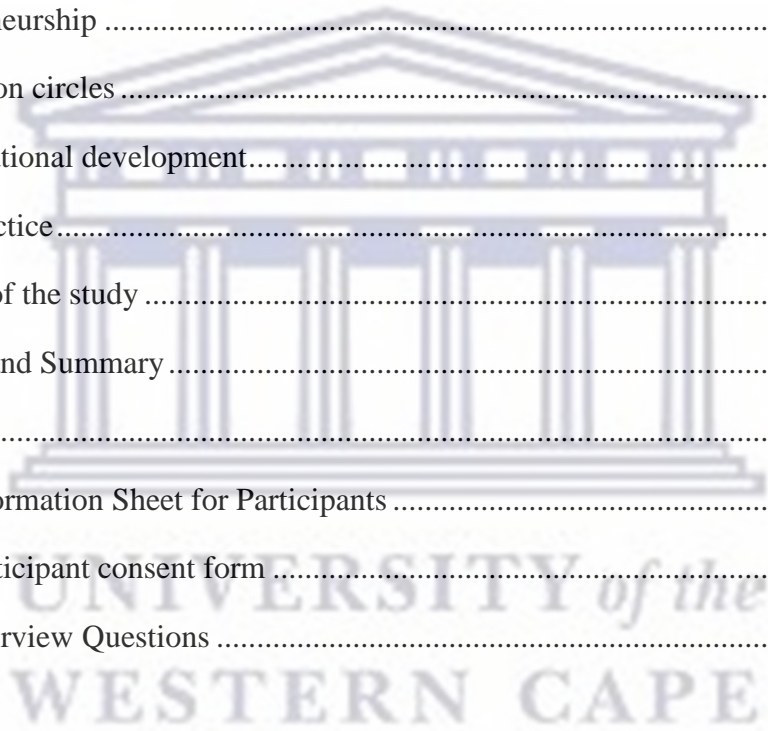
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides a background and overview of the higher education context in which this study takes place, the rationale for this research, the research aims, the research questions and the outline of the chapters.

1.1. Introduction

A university is an important institution for the development of South African society. Higher education is seen as a gateway to overall development. The success of societal and economic development in any country depends on the quality of education. Quality is assured via quality teaching but equally important is the effectiveness and efficiency of the management of universities. In this thesis, the focus is on middle managers. Education is perceived as one of the key mechanisms of achieving social transformation in SA (Grant, 2017). That is why one of the key strategic goals of the South African government is ensure equitable access to higher education for students with varied educational backgrounds (Leibowitz, Bozalek, Van Schalkwyk & Winberg, 2015). However, with increasing budgetary constraints and related challenges middle managers fulfil an important role (Thornton, Walton, Wilson, & Jones, 2018) in universities as large bureaucratic organisations to achieve the aforementioned goals.

Middle managers are in charge of intermediary management, particularly inside a bureaucratic setting. This means that any worker within an organization or business who overlooks or sees to at most one subordinate level of managers and who also informs or gives feedback to a higher level of managers such as the director or the executive body within that organization are called middle managers. This level of management lies underneath the executive managerial level which is liable for lower levels of junior staff (Aucoin, 1989; Leavitt, 2004; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). In addition, distinct from line management, middle management is regarded as a senior or semi-exclusive managerial spot, with an individual salary as well as a parcel of benefits (Dance, 2011).

A middle manager's main obligation is to put into practice the organisation's approach in the most resourceful manner through certain tasks like administrating the work procedure, establishing an effective work atmosphere and guiding people as well as reporting to the highest management level (Zhang, Ann, Yan et al., 2008). The duties of a middle manager typically include carrying out the strategic directives of upper-level managers at the operational level, supervising subordinate managers and employees to ensure a smoother functioning of the organisation. However, this study would be focusing on ethical practices of academic middle managers/Heads of Departments (HODs) who are entrusted to carry out their responsibilities in order to optimise service delivery, advance research and aspire to world class best practices.

1.2. Background

Middle management is important as they serve as a direct connection between the higher and lower management levels within a typical organization; especially as they are directly involved with the daily management of the organisation. Middle managers do have the chance to relate priceless information and propositions from within the organization to senior management levels (Likert, 1961; Leavitt, 2004; Huy, 2011; Harding, Lee, & Ford, 2014). Additionally, they are a great outlet for communication particularly as they go by on key assessments which are meant for both the executive and lower managerial levels focusing on the major objectives of the organization. This adds to an improved coordination among employees thus making an organisation more cohesive (; Leavitt, 2004).

In HEIs middle managers have diverse functions and this includes academic tasks such as publishing, teaching, and supervising students as well as administration; and managing staff on daily basis. This study will investigate the extent to which their tasks and ethical practices can affect their performance. Moreover, the study attempted to highlight the challenges that academic middle managements face, particularly within an environment that is highly demanding. On the other hand, they have some space to act freely - this freedom is termed 'ethics'. It is this space or area that this research aims to explore. This research study thus explores the ethical practices of academic middle managers within the University, to understand how they behave ethically as a practice of freedom and how they manage the challenges that bear down on them

from executive management and employees in their daily work life. I am of the view that ethical practices are important in order to improve the efficiency to which academic middle managers conduct their work.

This work begun in September 2016. I conducted interviews with selected academic middle managers in a previously disadvantaged public sector university in the Western Cape Province. For the purpose of this qualitative study, the sample is represented by eight academic middle managers selected from one faculty (the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) faculty). The participants were selected from eight different departments within the university - such as Business and Finance, Academic Development, Economics, Industrial Psychology, Government Studies, Political Studies, Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies and Information Systems. The focus of the study was on their daily practices and ethical aspirations and goals. The EMS faculty was selected purposively, because of the access to data and the fact that it represents the largest faculty in the university.

1.3. Problem Statement

Davis (2013) and Davis & Janse Van Renseberg (2016) are prominent researchers in studying (HODs) as middle managers in South African universities. However, there has been limited research focussing specifically on the practices of academic middle managers that are motivated by their ethical aspirations in HEIs. Previous studies have looked at what academic middle managers should do (see Floyd, 2012, 2016; Harding et al., 2014). With regards to higher education in particular, prior studies have investigated academic middle managers' strategic practices (Davis, 2013). There have been a few recent studies such as Samson (2018) and Chipunza & Matsumunyane (2018) which dealt with academic middle managers in South African higher education from the motivational perspective but do not focus on ethical practices. The work of HODs is examined in other studies such as the one by Rudhumbu (2015) where he examines the concept of role as understood by the academic middle managers and also how their work practices are shaped by the different contexts in which the academic middle managers perform their curriculum change roles. Similarly, the study by Wang, Morley, Cooke, Xu & Bian, (2018) on Chinese HE focuses on decision-making and role conflict. The study conducted by Pepper & Giles (2015) investigates the challenge of academic middle managers in HEIs. However, none of these studies focus directly on the academic middle managers ethical aspirations or goals. Thus, the present study aims to focus on the following

conceptualisation: academic middle managers' practices. In this study I will focus on the practices of the academic middle managers and the influence on decision making.

Due to the strategic position of academic middle management in HEIs it is important to understanding their contribution to the governance and management of the university system. This role appears very easy but as middle men and women, they do have a lot on their plates, especially as they have to run departmental affairs or programmes, meetings, and even play their immediate roles as lecturers. The challenging roles of academic middle managers and their expected ethical practices within HEIs in SA is a worthy area of research.

1.4. Significance of the Study

No one denies the fact that there is a difference in abilities from person to another, and it clearly shows at the management level, there are differences from a manager to another, there is someone who has an ethical goals emanating from within, so that he is willing to go extra mile in order to give a better performance therefore, it will leads to a better management level. I explored whether ethical goals within the people influence their ethical practices within the workplace. It is envisaged that the outcomes of this study will make a meaningful contribution on the work practices of academic middle managers by highlighting their contribution to the academic and disciplinary development life of the university. The findings of this study will advance research to understand how academic middle managers cope with the increased Managerialism within higher education. It is intended to show the agency and ethical practices which I theorise as an outcome of calculated ethical goals within a demanding context of academic middle managers within a previously disadvantaged university in South Africa.

In addition, there has been no direct previous research focussing specifically on the ethical and political practices of academic middle managers in institutions of higher education in South Africa. This will be a novel contribution to the literature on academic middle managers.

1.5. Research Questions

Main Research Question

- What are the ethical practices of middle managers in a previously disadvantaged university in South Africa?

Sub-Questions

- What do middle managers do at work?
- How do middle managers' ethical choices affect their work practices?
- How do middle managers reshape their identity according to different work demands?

1.6 Presuppositions, Assumptions and Expectations

My presuppositions are that every academic HOD can be regarded as academic middle managers. Another assumption is that academic middle managers experience a form of dissonance in their position as a HOD. Yet the same person has the power to choose and act with some degree of freedom which is within the realm of ethics. I expect that academic middle managers will act in relation to their ethical goals and aspirations.

1.7 Research Approach, Design and Methodology

In this research I utilised the paradigm of constructivism with a qualitative approach. Broadly this allowed for undertaking an exploratory research study. Thus the study explored the nature of academic middle managers' practices. I explored respondents' experiences as academic middle managers within the academic setting. I utilised a case study research design where the study was based on one university focusing on one faculty. It was adopted because case study designs a good explanation of their experiences and supporting reasons on why phenomena are the way they are. As such, a qualitative approach which entails interviews would be adequate.

1.8. Aim and Objectives of the Study

1.8a Aim

The aim of the study was to investigate the ethical practices of academic middle managers within the university, focusing on their ethical practices as well as their roles, challenges and experiences as they carry out their respective responsibilities. The study also focused on the challenges facing HEIs. The aim was to get a better understanding of managerial decision making with the HEI. In the next chapter, I will review the literature that dealt with middle managers with the aim of carefully reviewing the research that have been written in this regard. This literature review will inform the way I approach my empirical study.

1.8b Objectives

Objective 1: Investigate the ethical practices of the middle managers and how this affects the work environment within the University.

Objective 2: Investigate how middle managers respond to top management demands according to their ethical practices.

Objective 3: Examine how the challenge of these middle managers affects their academic identity.

Objective 4: Investigate how middle managers reshape their identities according to multiple demands that come from the top management.

Objective 5: Investigate what middle managers do at their works.

The following regards the objectives related to the literature review. In my literature view my objectives are to provide:

- An Overview of Higher Education in Africa
- Some of the Challenges in the South African Higher Education

A discussion of the following concepts:

- Collegiality
- Managerialism
- Middle Management
- Middle Managers
- Academic Middle Managers and their Identities

1.9 Chapter Summary

In this chapter I reviewed the background and also described the problem statement which contextualises the study. The research questions, aims and objectives are described. A qualitative methodology was described as the main research approach.

1.10 Chapter Outline

This thesis is organised in the following manner:

Chapter 1

This chapter provides the background to the study; problem statement; the research questions; the research aims and objectives; and the rationale for the study.

Chapter 2

Literature review critically reviews literature which is linked to this study and the research questions. It also provides a review of higher education institutions, higher education in South Africa, administrative staff, professional staff and middle managers. This chapter also addresses the roles and responsibilities of academic middle managers. I conclude the chapter with a summary.

Chapter 3

In this chapter discourses and the way in which they shape subjectivity are presented. Furthermore, managerial discourses and resistance to discourse are discussed. Foucault's "ethics of the self" framework and identity work are also examined. I conclude the chapter with a summary.

Chapter 4

HOD In this chapter an overview of the research design and method is provided. There is an explanation of the qualitative method employed; participant choice and sampling methods are identified and addressed; data management procedures and details of data analysis are explained. Validity and ethical issues relevant to the research are also discussed.

Chapter 5

Data Analysis-results and discussion in this chapter, presents a summary of the data collected from interviews with eight middle managers in the university and discusses the key findings by linking them to the literature presented in Chapter 2 and 3.

Chapter 6

This chapter also completes the thesis with the presentation of key conclusions of the study, possible limitations of the study and final recommendations with regard to practice and further research.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature is far reaching and very broad regarding middle management. A middle manager's main duty is to execute a plan created by executive management in the best proficient manner through regulating and interpreting the initial plan (Floyd & Wooldridge, 1992).

Other duties of a middle manager can be grouped mainly into human resources, strategic and technical duties (Dance, 2011). Human resources are attention-grabbing and stimulating, particularly in the application of employment equity, workplace and organisational performance. Strategic functioning involves analysing a subsidiary group in terms of production and pecuniary efficiency by creating a means of recuperating the existing situation and relating it to executive management mostly through effective communication. Technically, these middle managers are responsible for assisting with needed modifications within the organization, therefore generating a more effectual work setting. They aid in administering daily routines, scrutinize presentations and make certain that all is completed in conformity with associations' needs (Zhang, Tsui, Song, Li & Jia, 2008).

In this chapter the aim was to critically explore the literature pertaining to South African HEIs and the literature on middle management in general. In addition, I reviewed the literature on academic middle managers in HEIs. Moreover, I explored the challenges that come within the academic middle managers' role within a HEI environment. This includes exploring how the daily practices of academic middle managers are increasingly incorporating managerial tasks in addition to their academic tasks, in a HEI. The aim is to determine historic and contemporary contributions regarding academic middle managers in HEIs.

2.2 A Brief Overview of Higher Education in Africa

At the dawn of the new millennium, the demand for access to higher education in Africa has been overwhelming, since higher education is a key factor to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). There are approximately 1650 higher education institutions across the 54 countries of the African continent of which fewer than 300 are universities (Mpa, 9

2017). The majority of these institutions have seen the quality of their teaching and research productivity decline significantly, causing them to contribute less to their countries' socio-economic development.

Academic institutions in Africa face numerous challenges (Ensor, 2006). It is difficult to generalise in a continent as diverse as Africa, however, some elements are common and there are certainly some common problems. Governance and management remain a shared common problem amongst universities (MacGregor, 2009). Many African HEIs are encountering serious challenges that demand the intervention of various stakeholders such as national governments and development institutions so that their students can make the most of their learning environments and in so doing can successfully contribute to the development of a skilled workforce (Mpa, 2017). In SA for example, infrastructure and institutional funding and racial inequality to higher education are numerous challenges which the government is addressing (Badat, 2010). In other African countries, student massification, residential facilities and decentralisation are other challenges at higher institution (Mohamedbhai, 2014). In some African countries, especially for English-speaking countries, student loans were introduced to fund their education, but cost recovery had remained a challenge (Experton & Fevre, 2010).

For many decades with the exception of SA and some North African countries, the performance of other African HEIs has significantly declined, curtailing their ability to deliver high quality education. This is due among other things, to Africa's economic downturn, the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) imposed by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and a growing brain drain that severely affects African nations (Mpa, 2017). The significance of this finding indicates that the ability to successfully manage HEIs in Africa is influenced by contextual factors.

Most African countries face shortages of human resources and capacity within the areas of science, technology, engineering and mathematics. This is in addition to agriculture and health disciplines (Experton & Fevre, 2010; Mpa, 2017). There is a plethora of factors which has contributed to the disconnect of needs and skills demands of the economy, with other factors ranging from lack of quality faculties, insufficient sustainable financing as well as shortcomings in governance and leadership (Mpa, 2017).

2.3 South African Higher Education

Universities in SA are classified into three categories i.e. traditional, technical, and comprehensive universities. Traditional universities, as with the one in which this study was conducted, place emphasis on theoretical education, while technical universities are institutions where the orientation of education is more technical in nature. Comprehensive universities offer a blend of the above two classifications. Higher Education SA (HESA) (2014: 5) in their study points out that compared to its African counterparts, SA's knowledge production, research and innovation output are amongst the best in the world. It produces the greater part of scientific research in Africa and ranks 33rd worldwide in publications outputs.

Furthermore, the university in which this study was conducted may be ranked amongst the top 1 000 universities in the world and it is also ranked within the top ten universities in SA. It was originally built during the apartheid era and as such was under-resourced when compared to the 'for-White only' universities, but superior when compared with 'formerly black' universities (Sowetan Live, 2012). Unfortunately, it is currently operating while being in debt (Van der Merwe, 2016). All these factors need to be considered when reaching a conclusion regarding the ethical practices, as well as the functions of university middle management, as the same questions may yield different responses from various universities.

2.4 The South African Higher Education Landscape

The South African higher education landscape has evolved considerably, and this changing environment has affected the fundamental reorganisation of the distribution and identity of higher education curricula administered by the national qualification authority (Ensor, 2006). Significant changes have been identified in the SA higher education environment as compared to the past. Challenges are numerous, but progress has also been made (Jansen, Herman, Matentjie, Morake, Pillay, Schoole & Weber, 2007; Madepa & Tshiwula, 2012; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014).

The first and the most significant change in the higher education landscape has been the comprehensive reconstruction of the higher education system (Jansen et al., 2007). The number of South African institutions was reduced by government from 36 public sector institutions to 23 new institutions consisting of 11 universities, six universities of technology and six comprehensive universities (Leibowitz et al, 2015). Comprehensive universities offer both academic as well as career orientated (vocational) programmes. The objective of these mergers was to overhaul the South African higher education environment to increase the diversity and

integration, further equity and advance access (Pityana, 2004; Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014). Whilst the literature emphasises numerous challenges and resource constraints over time, challenges relating to adequate capacity emerged and research is limited in this regard.

As a result of the latter the growth in number of private HEIs has emerged and thereby impacting on the overall management of ensuring quality in higher education in SA (Davis, 2013). Furthermore, there are around 103 registered, accredited and provisionally registered private higher education providers in SA with an additional 24 new private higher education institutions registered with the South African Council on Higher Education in 2009. The literature is equally limited when exploring the role of academic managers in private HEI environments.

Thirdly, the perceptions in the value of higher education programmes has also been changing, with a decline in student enrolment for humanities and a subsequent increase in student enrolment of economic and management sciences programmes. This has led to the termination of several humanities programmes (Davis, 2013). This is indicative of a mismatch between subject choices and career outcomes due to limited information available to aspirant graduates in HEIs.

The landscape and legislation of the higher education sector has been reconstructed both in terms of the institutional landscape and the administration governing the legislation (Council on Higher Education, 2016). The pressures of regulatory changes have affected performance of academic policies, staff equity and quality assurance. These restrictions have resulted in greater executive challenges, adherence and assessments of workloads for many more staff members. While no clear policy regarding Open Distance Learning (ODL) exists, inflexible parameters have been put in place on the delivery of ODL (Council on Higher Education, 2016).

An important aspect of all the changes in higher education has been the intervention of the state regarding higher education. The objective of the changes is to improve the overall efficiency of the higher education system to achieve favourable student results. The extent of such interventions have been taking place at a macro level within the HEI environment and more than often this does not translate into effective results at the institutional level. The literature at the same time points out that it is incumbent on effective middle management to exercise

effective leadership in order to improve successfully operated departments (Leibowitz & Bozalek, 2014).

According to Altbach, Reisberg & Rumbley (2009) higher education has provided many opportunities for access and participation in post-secondary education in developing countries, including those in Africa (Davis, 2013). As is the case in higher education globally, the SA higher education is under increasing pressure to increase participation, particularly from previously disadvantaged communities and to produce the skills required in order to meet future needs in a rapidly changing economy. (Jaffer, Ng'ambi & Czerniewicz, 2007).

Due to the political and socio-economic policies instituted during the Apartheid era, SA's educational differences are manifested along racial lines. Redress of marginalised groups and social transformation is therefore central to post-1994 plans. Education is perceived as one of the key mechanisms of achieving social transformation in SA. That is why one of the most paramount goals of the South African government is to attain equitable access to higher education for previously disadvantaged students with varied educational backgrounds (Jaffer et al., 2007; Leibowitz et al, 2015).

In conclusion, there are many challenges and these have an effect on managers, particular middle managers.

2.5 Challenges in South African Higher Education

South African universities face many challenges such as financial constraints. This involves rising tuition rates for students with limited income (Badat, 2010) which has resulted in several protests especially the "#fees must fall" campaign, which arose in 2015 as a result of rising fees and on-going budgetary constraints. This resulted in a build-up of unpaid student tuition fee accounts which impacted directly on student access. Another challenge facing higher education in SA, in particular because of its apartheid legacy, is the issue of enabling previously disadvantaged students access and success (Badat, 2010). The four most significant challenges facing higher education in SA are listed below:

2.5.1 Student Access, Opportunity and Success: Expansion and Greater Equity, Low Participation, High Attrition and Low Completion and Variable Quality

The Green Paper for Post-School Education and Training of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2018) acknowledges that "despite the many advances and

gains made since 1994”, that the HE is “inadequate in quantity... and, in many but not all instances, quality”, and that it continues “to produce and reproduce gender, class, racial and other inequalities with regard to access to educational opportunities and success” (DHET, 2017). It notes that “universities are in general characterised by low success rates” (DHET, 2012:11). It accepts that “university funding (has) not kept pace with enrolment growth”, and that despite “attempts to bring about greater equity between historically black universities and those which were more advantaged in the past” a shortage of resources has compromised the historically black universities “properly fulfilling their prime function – providing good undergraduate degrees to poor, rural students” (DHET, 2012:42).

2.5.2 Research and Postgraduate Education: Expansion and Greater Equity, Low Participation and Graduations and Possible Stasis

Compared to its African counterparts, SA’s knowledge production, research and innovation output is amongst the best in the world. It produces the greater part of scientific research in Africa, and ranks 33rd worldwide in publication outputs (Pouris, 2012). Nevertheless, there are also weakness and limitations. Student enrolment rates in the graduate and post-graduate levels are still low compared to the national needs of economic and social development, although there was a slight increase of 1.8% in the number of the graduate student body between 1995 and 2010. Graduation rates remain unsatisfactory for the master's degree level (19% against the target graduation rate of the index of 33% set by the National Plan 2001 for higher education) and the PhD level (13% against a target of 20%) (National Planning Commission (NPC), 2011).

2.5.3 The Challenge of Funding of Higher Education

Government support for higher education in SA has been a key priority since 1994. University funding has been on the rise, from R26 billion in 2013 to slightly over R29 billion in 2018 (DHET, 2018b). While the increases have been clearly motivated, it should be noted that spending on tertiary education in SA is considered too low in both real value and student per capita terms when compared to countries at a similar stage of economic development (Leibowitz et al., 2015). The spending also fell as a percentage of the government budget and (GDP). This reduction in government subsidies has put pressure on universities to look for other sources of income. Income from tuition fees and third income (usually research grants, contract income, donations, etc.) have become increasingly important. While universities have increasing levels of third-party income to some extent, these increases do not in any way

compensate for reductions in government subsidies, leaving universities to experience a steady decline in their financial situations (HESA, 2014).

Globally, due to the increasing number of students and their need for institutions of HE, there has been financial pressure on the State which is struggling to meet all the financial needs of HEIs. Through the South African National Research Foundation (NRF) which receives most of its funding from the Department of Science and Technology, both financial and non-financial support and resources are provided to HEIs (Teferra & Knight, 2008). The need to generate additional financial resources especially for under-resourced HEIs in SA has prompted some Universities to resort to internalisation by recruiting students from Africa and the rest of the world. Higher fees are charged to international students as a strategy to acquire additional funds (Teferra & Knight, 2008).

In SA, although the allocation to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS) is set to increase from R6.6 billion in 2016/17 to R14.901 billion for the 2018/19 (DHET, 2018a: 28) financial year, student protests at some universities in the past highlighted the sad reality that the allocation is inadequate to meet the funding needs of students eligible for NSFAS loans and bursaries (MacGregor, 2014)

2.5.4 The Massification of Higher Education in South Africa

From 1996 to 2011 for the general higher education system, stratified by race given SA's history, there was a 60% increase in the number of students between 1996 and 2011, from 590 000 to 938 000. Considering the registration of 495,000 in the year of democracy in 1994, and in 2016 the enrolment of approximately 975 837 students, there has been a doubling of student numbers (MacGregor, 2014, DHET, 2018c). Massification has had negative consequences on African HEI physical infrastructure, staffing, educational quality, graduate employment, and student mobility (Mohamedbhai, 2014). However, the large increase in student enrolments over the past 20 years “has not been accompanied by an equivalent expansion in the number of academics” (DHET, 2012:35). This has been exacerbated in SA with the announcement of free tertiary education in SA in 2017 (Fengu, 2019). After 1994, South African universities needed to deal with the challenges of how produce and retain the next generation of academics (DHET, 2012:35).

In summary, I have provided a discussion of some of the key problems evident throughout the continent as well as the situational context regarding SA HEIs. The problems

are difficult and may even be getting worse as the pressure for academic and institutional expansion continues to be fuelled by limited resources. All these challenges affect the work environment of academic middle managers and effect on their ethical practices as well.

2.6 The Governance and Management of South African Higher Education Institutions

Universities in SA are governed using a cooperation model (Fourie, 2009). Internal governance structures at South African Universities include the University Council which is responsible for the governance of the University based on the Institutional Statute as described in the Higher Education Act 1997. University Councils are primarily responsible for the strategic direction of the University and play an oversight role in terms of commitment and risk management within the University. Academic administration of universities is the responsibility of the Senate. Guidance and advice on the application and interpretation of higher education policies and procedures are the responsibilities of the institutional forum. These various groups provide the governance of the University.

In terms of the overlap between governance and management the leadership of vice-chancellors, vice-principals, chairs, deans, registrars and directors must co-operate with the academic jurisdiction that exists via the different governing bodies (Davis, 2013). Top executives are frequently empowered to initiate and enact tactics that mirror commands from different academic boards (Davis, 2013). With an increase in situational challenges it is becoming increasingly important for effective leadership from the executive levels considering the context.

HEIs are facing challenges that are becoming larger and more complex which require far more innovative approaches (Kolsaker, 2014). HEI management structures have tended to mirror the management mantra of the public sector that includes many hierarchical layers, costly administrative burdens (Chaharbaghi, 2007:319) and bureaucratic systems. Some of the challenges university managers face is declining state funding, changing student demographics, new technological developments and increased market pressures (Göransson, Maharajh & Schmoch, 2009; Weinberg & Graham-Smith, 2012). There is growing evidence that higher education is gradually adopting the managerial mantra of the private sector (Kolsaker, 2008, Kolsaker, 2014).

The higher education environment has been impacted by the changing and competing governance and management discourses as well as policies and regulations such as New Public Management (NPM) (Broucker, De Wit, & Leisyte, 2015). There have been many shifts including the entry of managerial discourses (Davis, Janse Van Rensburg, & Venter, 2016). Therefore, the major discourse that affected the HEIs in transforming HEIs is NPM, neo-liberalism and Managerialism (McKenna, 2010). Not only has higher education in general been influenced by government, management and market imperatives but the internal management of higher education has also been affected (Whitchurch, 2005). Against this background middle managers are required to become more entrepreneurial, adaptive and commercially responsive, however, challenges remain (Meek, Goedegebuure, Santiago & Carvalho, 2010).

It is noted that all level of management of an institution play an important role in ensuring productivity, efficiency, sustainability and competitiveness. Meek et al. (2010) affirm that the management of a university is not confined to top management alone, but extends and includes its constituents, namely, its faculties, departments, schools and research institutes. Furthermore, De Boer, Goedegebuure & Meek (2010) claim there is very little literature regarding the nature of middle level academic managers in the higher education systems of ten countries. In their research they did not address SA.

In the next section, the researcher will be discussing the discourse of collegiality. This is the discourse which was and is continuing to be practiced in higher education and is regarded as a system between academic employees who organise their own work through it.

2.6.1 Collegiality

There are many different definitions of collegiality. Collegiality according to Hardy (1991) offers legitimacy to multiple views and ensures that the views of various groups are considered when making decisions. For Bush (1995) collegiality involves the sharing of power in a situation where there is common understanding about the needs and purpose of the institution. Authors such as Terosky & Heasley (2015), Ning, Lee & Lee (2015) explain collegiality within a school setting as a faculty members' ability to belong to a community of colleagues who value their contributions to the institution.

Samson (2018) summarises all these definitions as the relationship among people within a profession, field, organisation, or office, and is characterised by trust, openness, concern, and

co-operation. The meaning highlights the opportunities for a faculty member or members to learn from one another by having a sense of belonging and inclusion. Collegiality includes colleagues following through on commitments to one another, helping one another carry the academic load and being a part of an environment where everyone can get along and where colleagues welcome reflection on one another's professional work (Stevens, Silver, Hayesn & Campbell. 2014) For the middle manager, collegiality is having to manage colleagues on one hand and meeting the demands of senior management on the other (Samson, 2018).

However, the problem is that the actual decision-making process can be slow and that encouraging multiple perspectives can result in resources not being used in the most beneficial way and that it may lead to multiple goals and directions within the university (Brundrett, 1998). In SA, the convention of the majority of South African universities' internal organisation was and still is to a large extent, based on the collegial model of self-governance (White, Bagilhole & Riordan, 2012). Barac & Marx (2012) state that the collegial model of governance represent a style or model of self-governance.

In the next section, the researcher will be discussing Managerialism. This is the discourse that is competing and pushing the collegial discourse to the wayside in higher education.

2.6.2 Managerialism

Managerialism is a discourse which refers to a set of values that can give the right to "one group to monitor and control the activities of others" (Kolsaker, 2008:3). Managerialism has impacted on changing the organisational culture, thus, the professional identities within institutions has been impacted by these changes (Davis, Janse Van Rensburg, & Venter, 2016). According to Davis et al. (2016) there is evidence that Managerialism has become entrenched in university contexts. It is an ideological approach to make sure that universities become responsive and efficient to market demands. This ideology is one borne out towards increasing accountability and efficiency procedures through measurable performance indicators that improves performance (Floyd, 2016). Therefore, the rise of Managerialism in HEI management has changed institutional culture at universities.

At the individual level it can be impacted on the behaviour of the universities' professionals (Santiago & Carvalho, 2004). Managerialism in public institutions is closely related to the concept of new public management (NPM). New Managerialism (Lynch, 2014) or state Managerialism (Fitzsimons, 2017) are some of the labels used to describe NPM. Burnes, Wend & By (2014) explored how Managerialism has affected academia in universities, stating that universities that model themselves on private sector organisations are eroding the collegial ethos that has administered their governance and management systems.

In contrast to the concept management, Managerialism indicates a discursive structure which sharpens, extends and prioritises what forms of administrative activities are undertaken, who is accountable for them and for what purpose(s) they are carried out (Deetz, 1992). Managerialism go beyond management as it combines management knowledge with an ideology that expands into organizations, public institutions, and society while depriving employers, employees and civil society of all decision-making powers (Klikauer, 2015; Samson, 2018).

2.7 Middle Management

Universities are sites where there are layers of managers. Cunliffe (2014) suggests that management refers to the technical and useful practices of administering an organisation; that is, the necessary financial, human resources and effective requirements of any work organisation. There are many levels of middle managers. These include academic managers and what can be called operations managers. Middle management is an important layer and must be regarded as a strategic advantage (Uyterhoeven, 1989). Middle managers therefore are people performing an intermediate role between top management and first-level supervision as well as being responsible for the operational work of colleagues (Samson, 2018).

Research has pointed out that organisational performance is deeply affected by what happens in the middle of the organisation, rather than at the top (Currie & Procter, 2005). This means that the actions in organisations at middle management level influence not only how the strategy is practiced, but also the performance of the organisations. Thus, middle managers are considered as the bedrocks of organisations, and administrative middle managers in particular render vital operational capabilities and support to the smooth-running of the organisation, both public and private (Samson, 2018).

Harding et al. (2014:1214) define middle management as:

“A point in organisational hierarchies between the functioning core and the apex whose occupants are responsible for a specific business unit at this middle level of the corporate hierarchy that comprises all those below the top -level strategic management and above first-level supervision”.

Harding et al. (2014) further argue that there is a general agreement on the definition of middle management as advocated by earlier researchers such as Mintzberg (1989) and Wooldridge, Schmidt & Floyd. (2008). The middle point represents an important feature of management as they are the in-betweeners, i.e. they are “at once controller, controlled, resister and resisted” (Harding et al., 2014:1231), whereas “top managers are controllers and resisted and employees and first-line supervisors are resisters and controlled” (Harding et al., 2014:1232).

According to Harding et al (2014:2) the literature on middle management tends to indicate either what middle managers “should do” or empirical studies show what they “actually do” or there is a discussion of “the effect of the role on the people” who occupy the middle management role. Wooldridge et al. (2008:1190) posits that there are valid reasons as to why there is an increased interest in studying middle management.

These reasons are:

- Middle managers play a significant role in interfacing between actors who do not connect to each other and fields such as top and operational-level managers. Nonaka (1988) claims that middle managers are the mid-links who are equipped with the ability to add to the strategic macro-information on the one hand and hands-on micro-information on the other hand. Floyd and Wooldridge (1992) agree suggesting that the middle management acts like a liaison between the internal and external activities within the management as a whole and the senior management, as well as providing top management with information.
- Middle managers also work as mediators between levels and units and geographically dispersed organisations (Balogun & Johnson, 2004). Nonaka (1988:15) explained that “Middle management is able to most effectively eliminate the noise, fluctuation and chaos within an organisation’s information creation structure by serving as the starting

point for action to be taken by upper and lower levels.” Nonaka (1988) continued that due to their position, middle managers have become the centre of strategizing in that they possess knowledge that will assist top management to formulate strategies, as well as being responsible for the development of core competencies (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

- Middle management is an essential point of monitoring from studying the organisational process associated with building and renewing the capabilities of the organisation. The middle managers are at the heart of the two processes that have become the foundation of the strategy: creating knowledge and developing core competencies. The perspective of social learning provides both the motivation and the theoretical basis for this transformation and remains the basis for much of the contemporary work in middle-level strategic management (Wooldridge et al., 2008).

In terms of the context and environment in which middle managers work, Academic middle managers are different to business managers who are typically employed in a corporate environment (Krücken, Blümel, & Kloke, 2013). In universities and colleges there is sometimes an ‘at arm’s length’ coalition between administrators (middle managers) -especially if they are not academics- and academics (Krücken, Blümel, & Kloke, 2013).

Even though all levels of university management perform valuable functions such as ensuring productivity, efficiency, sustainability and competitiveness of the institution, our focal point in this study will be on middle management in both the capacity of being an academic and also executing their non-academic duties. It is evident from the literature that the divergence found in the position and practices of middle management is a result of practical considerations and requirements. I therefore agree with the views of Wooldridge et al (2008).

The views of De Boer et al. (2010) who suggest that university management is not the exclusive function of top management alone, but these managerial responsibilities extend to its various faculties, departments, schools and research institutes as well. However, even though middle management is a very important departure point for the practical implementation of top management’s policies (De Boer et al., 2010).

Before concluding this section, I wish to highlight a few recent articles written on middle management which are not directly related to my topic. such as Branson, Franken & Penney, (2016) when he investigate on middle managers from different point view, which is the

relationship between middle managers and his colleagues she or he is leading, also between the middle managers and their own leaders. Moreover Thornton, Walton, Wilson, & Jones (2018) in their study *Middle leadership roles in universities: Holy Grail or poisoned chalice* the main focus was on the tensions and challenges that middle managers have to faces, and how they moreover tried to minimize these tensions and provide a more fulfilling experience for those in middle management positions. Another article about middle managers: “*What is in it for me?*” “*Middle manager behavioral integrity and performance*” by Way, Simons, Leroy, & Tuleja, (2018) point out that middle managers’ behavioral integrity positively affects middle managers’ own task performance ratings, both directly and via its positive effect on subordinates’ organizational citizenship behaviours.

The next section will discuss middle managers’ positions and identities.

2.8 Middle Managers Defined

Middle managers hold a central position in organisational hierarchies. They are responsible for implementing senior management strategies, exercising control over junior staff as well as occupying ambiguous positions in modern organisations and their position makes them vulnerable to experience conflicting role (Harding et al., 2014). Davis et al. (2016:2) defined middle managers as “those managers who link the activities of vertically related groups and are responsible for at least sub-functional workflow, but not for the workflow of the institution as a whole”.

Another definition is that a middle manager has a manager above him and has people working under him/her (Huy, 2011). Thus, Huy (2011) defines a middle manager as any manager two levels below the CEO and one level above line workers and professionals. While middle managers not only have the potential to re-interpret strategic plans, but they may also as with junior staff actively resist the implementation, as well reject or fashion the plans as they see fit (McCabe, 2011).

However, available proof on who the middle manager ‘is’ or how they are ‘becoming’ (Thomas & Linstead, 2002) is contradictory. Middle managers are known as influential strategic players (Currie & Procter, 2005; Mantere, 2008; Wooldridge, Schmidt & Floyd, 2008). The term ‘middle manager’ or ‘middle management’ has broad definitions. It may extend to managers

below top management but above lower management. A middle manager is someone who receives orders from top management but leads and delegates tasks to co-workers. Samson's (2018) definition is more appropriate for this study which is a middle manager is one who performs an intermediary role between top-level management and first-level supervision and being responsible for the operational work of others.

In other words, middle managers roles comprise both management and supervisory responsibilities (Branson et al, 2016). This position that middle management occupies is the point of divergence in operational level and strategic level (Harding et al., 2014). Son (2017) views middle management as those who breathe new change and refined competitive and sustainable co-worker engagement strategies at work, thus resulting in a management revolution. Middle managers have the power to inspire and uplift their co-workers. (Thornton et al., 2018) However, this position also requires individuals who can operate with the basic fundamentals of self-leadership. There is a little room to discuss the copious amount of academic literature which argues back and forth regarding identity theories. Nevertheless, in our focus we feel the concept of identity has value due to it drawing attention to the complex nature of academics who become managers and leaders in universities and the paradoxical nature which is experienced by many academics who are also managers (Harding et al., 2014).

The research in strategic roles that have been redefined and rearranged in different levels of management created a new foundation of knowledge which confirms that middle managers have a significant impact on the process of developing strategies and the performance of companies (Floyd & Wooldridge, 2000, 2003; Balogun & Johnson, 2004; Ika^ovalko, 2005; Costanzo & Tzoumpa, 2008; Nordqvist & Melin, 2008; Wooldridge, Schmid & Floyd, 2008; Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk & Roe, 2011; Rouleau & Balogun, 2011, Harding et al., 2014, Branson et al, 2016). Ika^ovalko (2005) describes middle managers as those players who act as both employees and superiors.

In addition, Van Rensburg, Davis & Venter (2014) consider entry to top management connected with knowledge of operations as key determinants for someone to become a middle manager. The description used was, "Middle managers have managers reporting to them and are also required to report to managers at a more senior level" (Harding et al., 2014:1215).

In a study by Harding et al (2014:1216), they claim that, “it is therefore impossible to find answers to the question ‘who is the middle manager?’ in existing literature. Moreover, Branson, Franken, and Penney, (2015). suggest that the role ‘lacks clarity and precision’ (p. 2) and Gonaim (2016), in his article *A life guard without a life jacket*, describes the role of middle managers as a ‘greyish area, ambiguous and complex’ (p. 281).” My research aims to aid in closing this gap. Therefore, the researcher will conduct research on the ethical practices of middle managers in academia, their generic principles and values of the role of academics in a university, the practical behavioural patterns of everyday life in university and finally how academics are transformed into managers-academics and their understandings of their careers.

Studies conducted by Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin, Chiu and Schaefer (2015), Ahearne, Lam and Kraus (2014), Ly, Asplund and Andersson (2014), Leask and Terrell (2014), Ou, Tsui, Kinicki, Waldman, Xiao and Song (2014), Van Rensburg et al. (2014), Birken, Lee, Weiner, Chin and Schaefer (2013), Floyd (2012), Slowey (2012), Sharma and Good (2013), Birken, Lee and Weiner (2012), Fauré & Rouleau (2011), Huy (2011), Raes, Heijltjes, Glunk and Roe (2011), Rouleau & Balogun (2011), Degn, (2015); De Nobile,(2018), Floyd,(2016); Thornton et al, (2018), Wang et al, (2018) and Gonaim (2016) the focal point for many of these studies was business management-related and the research centred on their roles, attitude and leadership development.

Research concluded that the roles were changing, and managers encountered many unique challenges within their working environments. Within higher education, the concept of what constitutes an academic function is shifting (Floyd, 2012). Thus far, there are fairly recent research on academic middle managers in South African universities as highlighted by Floyd (2012), Davis (2013), Davis et al. (2016), Chipunza & Matsumunyane (2018) and Samson (2018). With higher education, Middle managers have many different tasks. These demand skills and abilities that may differ from traditional academic managers.

Studying middle managers within the realm of universities may uncover new insights in management practices. It is envisaged that the findings of this study would produce new ways of understanding the dynamics of contextual influences and middle managers’ practices (Davis, 2013).

2.9 Academic Middle Managers and their Identities

My study is on academic middle managers in the universities. Those who are directly involved in the academic programs. Middle managers balance a very delicate set of instructions, authority and methods for they must interact with two spheres of management: that is, top management and staff as well as those who fall under the authority of middle management (Huy, 2011, Rudhumbu, 2015). Given the nature of this position, middle managers are required to be problem-solvers and as such their position is seen as pivotal for they are the ones who ensure radical changes are implemented successfully (Huy, 2011, Son 2017, Thornton et al., 2018), which includes amongst other means, managing the emotional state of their employees (Clegg & McAuley, 2005).

The differences in working conditions, such as the increase of fixed-term contracts and a perceived lack of loyalty from both organisation and individuals, has meant that the notion of an academic career today is very different to one of 15 or 20 years ago (Deem, 2012). Academic careers are no longer deemed as linear. Deem (2012) argues that there is an increase in academics staff being employed on fixed-term contracts. Furthermore, more academics are forced to keep up with changes, particularly relating to research. These changes to academic careers together with evolving accountability across the sector have meant that the role of the academic Head of Department (HOD) is also changing and becoming increasingly complex and unstable (Deem, 2012, Floyd, 2016, Pepper & Giles, 2015, Walford, 2019).

Taking this view into account Floyd (2012) indicated that some colleagues feel that the pressures associated with being middle managers are much more than the rewards perceived to be derived from the position. It is understood that HODs are taking on an increasing amount of managerial and bureaucratic roles at the expense of their academia which involves teaching and research. These of course will result in reduced involvement in academic work, for which they were originally recruited to undertake (Floyd, 2012).

Ironically, while the roles of middle managers or academic managers are recognized as complex and tedious, there are those who seem to enjoy this managerial roles and responsibilities (Deem, 2012). Deem (2012) sees these individuals as 'career-track managers. Furthermore, Floyd (2012) found that some academics, may want to deliberately move away from teaching, research, and see the role of middle management as rewarding to achieve their personal goals. There are also instances where academics have a deliberate desire to move from

teaching and research to specifically enter management as the role of an academic in this millennium is very different compared to two decades ago (Deem, 2012). Research conducted by Wolverton, Ackerman & Holt (2005) suggest when randomly selecting academic HODs a manager with a thorough understanding of a department is often produced, however, these individuals may not be competent to render effective leadership.

Even though it is important to develop middle managers' leadership abilities, it is surprising to note the few researches published on these traits, specifically centred around the nature of middle management (Gmelch & Miskin, 2011) as well as research specifically studying effective leadership in universities in particular (Bryman, 2012). However, there has been research conducted in the United Kingdom was on exploring the changing climate of academic leadership and management in universities as a whole (Deem, Hillyard, Reed & Reed, 2007a) as well as numerous studies researching the academic middle in general (Bolden, Gosling, O'Brien, Peters, Ryan, Haslam & Winkleman, 2012).

It is important in this study to give examples of a middle manager is so as not to give readers a perception, but rather a clear idea of what is talked about. Examples of middle managers in an academic setting include but not limited to: head of department, faculty manager, senior administrative manager). Some of their duties include promotions, staff leave, faculty expenditure and purchasing etc. (Branson et al., 2016).

This in turn may also result in middle managers experiencing a sense of being 'stuck in the middle' between the staff they are leading and their academic responsibilities. Within SA educational setting the restructuring and re-branding of some Universities meant middle managers have to work across functional boundaries and this has affected their organisational lives (Samson, 2018). These restructurings are likely to increase with the introduction of New Public Management which will in all likelihood place them even further in the pivotal role of central management predilections, academic values and control (Meek et al., 2010). Knights & Clarke (2014) argue that academic identities have become unstable due to challenging these traditional collegiality notions. This in turn has also led to contestation in a greater capacity of management and leadership in HEIs. With the changing environment of academic liberty, academic executives are often found in contrasting positions that demand adaption and also resistance (Davis, 2013).

Davis (2013) in her research at a SA university cites that academic middle managers activities such as undertaking practice strategy through daily experiences within a university context as well as how these academic middle managers act and interact in the entire strategy-making process. Another study at a SA university Chipunza & Matsumunyane (2018) explored an approach to investigate the relationship between the methods of leadership and motivation; and how the relationships between leadership and followers can be shaped a style of leadership, in order to analyse these relationship this study adopted three leadership styles and tested in terms of how they are influenced by motivation sources, these styles are: the transformational leadership style, the transactional leadership style and the charismatic leadership style. These styles have received much attention in the literature and have been explored in similar studies in the private sector. This study refers to the fact that work motivation is an internal state that encourages an individual to perform outstandingly to achieve organisational goals and although this overlaps slightly with an individual's ethical goals the study does not pursue the ethical angle. Furthermore, the similarity between my study and this article by Chipunza & Matsumunyane (2018) is that both concentrate on middle managers behaviour. However, the difference is that, my study examines the behaviour of middle managers in dealing with the requirements in their work environment and how to respond to these requirements according to priorities, and that these requirements have contributed to the redefinition of the identities of middle managers. Samson (2018) also conducted research at a South African university that concludes that administrative middle managers use micro-level strategizing practices.

I found many knowledge gaps in the literature of academic middle managers. Academics managers concerns around the increased work load in South African universities have not been addressed. Academic middle managers work practices in relation to their ethical aspirations in South African universities have not yet received sufficient investigation either.

2.11 Summary

In this chapter the literature on higher education in Africa and SA was highlighted. Particular attention was given to the literature relating to the traditional and contemporary roles of middle managers and academic middle managers. The review of the literature has revealed that there is limited research on academic middle managers in public HEIs in SA. The available literature is dated with current literature comprising of articles mainly from a Northern perspective rather than from a South African perspective. However, two recent articles by Samson (2018), by

Chipunza & Matsumunyane (2018) indicate that research on middle managers in SAHE is increasing. The literature that I found revealed that the role of middle managers is heterogeneous and undervalued. With the drive towards Managerialism in higher education understanding, the role of managers is critical. As HEIs evolve so does the role of middle managers which requires development opportunities that enable middle managers to fulfil their leadership practices to enhance organisational success.

The literature review confirms the relevance of the research topic and research questions. In the next chapter I discuss my research design and methodology. The chapter provides an overview of the methodology with justification for the constructivist paradigm adopted as well as the data collection methods chosen.



CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 will attempt to explain the theoretical framework guiding this study. The chapter starts by explaining ethics as a general concept. Thereafter, a review of few theoretical conceptualisations of ethics such as those proposed by Foucault, Levinas and Critchley will be discussed. Lastly, a discussion of how managers' ethical practices result into discourses chosen by these managers to shape their subjectivity.

3.2 Discourse and Identity

Conceptually, the researcher subscribes to a post-structuralist position. His reading of post-structuralism is that it deploys a discursive¹ theory of power as positional, positioning and requiring a subject's self-positioning as it is about identity/identifications. Yet this cultural move is never dislocated from the structuring dynamic interplay of social and material forces that stand beyond the linguistic.

Discourse, as defined by Foucault, refers to:

Ways of constituting knowledge together with the social practices forms of subjectivity and power relations that inhere in such knowledge and relations between them. Discourses are more than ways of thinking and producing meaning. They constitute the 'nature' of the body, unconscious and conscious mind and emotional life of the subjects they seek to govern (Weedon, 1987:108).

In other words, subjects gain their subject positions or identities through dominant discourses. However, Foucault suggested that persons are able to resist the totalisation of this process of subjection by enacting an "ethics of the self" or engaging in identity work (Watson, 2008: 130). Therefore, the researcher considers that through dominant discourses identities, subjectivities,

¹ Discursive in a sense that power is wielded through particular languages or positions within language. Power is used via linguistic means.

selves and subject positions are made available that both subjectify (provide the holder with an identity) and subject (constrain and control that identity) (Butler, 1997).

In my theoretical framework I reject the concept of fixed identities (Alvesson, Ashcraft & Thomas, 2008; Watson, 2008; Ybema, Keenoy, Oswick, Beverungen, Ellis & Sabelis, 2009). I understand the concept of identity as fluid and malleable (Kreiner, Hollensbe & Sheep, 2006), fleeting and fragmentary (Bendle, 2002), multiple and contextual (Alvesson & Deetz, 2012; Ford, 2006) constantly negotiated, renegotiated and always in the process of becoming (Tsoukas & Chia, 2002; Watson, 2008) without denying the influence of dominant and hegemonic discourses. From Foucault's perspective, one can foresee that the ethical subject as being entangled between the confines, possibilities afforded by discourse and between freewill and responsibility of self-formation. We see that, *"it is not the free subject that just chooses whether to behave ethically, but the practice of ethics that constitute the subject"* and from the former that *"power and discipline actively construct conformist selves"*. Marrying these extremes, we can assert that the ethical subject is constituted both *"within and against the constraints of the particular regimes of truth [they] in habit"* (McMurray, Pullen & Rhodes, 2011).

In summary, I consider identities as fragmented and fractured, multiply-constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions and in a constant process of change and transformation (Watson, 2008). I now turn to a discussion on ethics. Ethics plays a role in shaping the subjects' subjectivity.

3.3 Ethics

A brief introduction as to how ethics has been conceptualised is presented. In general, ethics is the branch of philosophy that looks at moral behaviour, moral concepts (such as justice, virtue, duty) and moral language. According to Rossouw & Van Vuuren (2003) ethics concerns what is good or right in human interaction.

Ethics in this study is viewed and understood as various ethical theories pose various answers to the question, "what is the greatest good?" and elaborate on a complete set of appropriate behaviour for individuals and groups. Ethical theories are closely related to forms of life in various social orders (MacIntyre, 2003).

There are three well-known approaches to ethics: utilitarian ethics (outcome-based), deontological ethics (duty-based) and virtue ethics (virtue-based). Each of these methods has a distinctive way in which to carry out ethical tasks. It is very important to know that all these methods have a common element among them (Lopez, 2012). The common element is self or one's self.

3.3.1 Utilitarian Ethics

The utilitarian approach is one of the most common methods practiced by people, especially when engaging in commercial activities. This method asks a very important question, which is: "How will my actions affect others?", (Kaptein & Wempe, 2011). By this it attempts to quantify the effect of one's actions based on some common denominators, such as happiness, pleasure or wealth. As such, utilitarians are also referred to as "consequentialists" as they tend to ponder over the consequences of their actions to determine whether any particular act is justified or not.

3.3.2 Deontological Ethics

Deontological simply means the study (or science) of duty. Duty-based ethics is enormously important for it is considered crucial to a better understanding of our responsibilities as members of teams. Teams (like work groups or political campaign committees) are narrowly focused on achieving very clearly defined goals: winning the election, successfully introducing a new product or winning a sailboat race. Sometimes a coach or a boss will say, "look, just do whatever it takes." Ethically, "whatever it takes", means the end justifies the means (Kaptein & Wempe, 2011). This was a fundamental criticism of the utilitarian (Lopez, 2012).

3.3.3 Virtue Ethics

For Aristotle and other Greek thinkers, virtue meant the advantage of a thing. The virtue of a knife is to cut, the virtue of a doctor is to cure, and the virtue of a lawyer is to seek justice. In this sense, ethics becomes the discipline of discovering and practicing virtue (Kaptein & Wempe, 2011). Ethics becomes the discovering of oneself. Just as the virtue of the knife is to cut and the virtue of the boat is to sail, the virtue of the self is to become the best of who we can be. Thus, virtue ethics means to work on oneself in order to be better, to enhance and improve oneself. In recent times, Foucault has suggested an alternative view on ethics, an ethics of the self. This will be discussed in the next section.

3.4 Ethics of the self

Cooper & Blair (2002:513) defined ethics from a Foucauldian perspective as, “that relationship you ought to have with yourself” since an ethical subjectivity cannot be imposed onto another person by somebody else. However, people are born into dominant discourses that frame the relationship they ought to have with themselves.

Foucault’s ethics of the self is the way in which individuals can work on themselves and thereafter form the foundation for an ethical subjectivity. Self is a part of identity linked to the feelings of the individual (Ivanič, 1998). For this reason, Foucault referred to human beings as ‘subjects’ rather than ‘individuals’ (Clarke & Hennig, 2013). Foucault proposed considering the self as formed through different discourses. Discourses provide forms of subjectivities or subject positions like a head of department, faculty manager, dean, administrator or student. Ethics is not explained as inscribing universal moral codes or prohibitions, but an increase of the relation to oneself by which one constitutes oneself as the subject of one’s acts (Foucault, 1986).

According to Foucault, shaping ethical self of the individual is achieved through ‘care of the self’, which cannot be achieved without the existence of adequate freedom (Infinito, 2003), which Foucault recognised as ‘ontological condition of ethics’ (Besley, 2013). Foucault’s ethics is an ethics of autonomy that concerns how people, while working within powerful ‘regimes of truth’ (Foucault, 1980) can still form themselves with a level of freedom that dispels discursive determination (Foucault & Rabinow, 2010). Forming a sense of ethical subjectivity requires a kind of ethical practice (Chan & Garrick, 2002). In doing so, people should manage and work upon themselves to determine their ethical position through their everyday practices. Foucault outlines that to form an ethical subjectivity, requires that the individuals not be completely subsumed by dominant discourse but to exercise a form of freedom with regard to the individual’s own conduct (Foucault, 1984).

Therefore, if discourse shapes the person then ethics is a way for the person to choose how he wishes to act differently from the discourse. This can happen when there are multiple discourses or when a person chooses an alternative discourse. Through Foucault, one can clarify that following ethical subjectivity requires one not to be completely subjectified by

discourse but to train a form of freedom in relation to one's own subjectivity and conduct (Foucault, 1984).

3.5 Levinas' Ethics of the Self

Levinas (1969) conceptualises ethics in terms of the relation with the 'other' - a relation is understood as one having an endless responsibility to the other. Therefore, although Levinas' ideas "for the most part, agree with the claims made by Foucault about the nature of the human person" what his perspective adds is that the "founding moment of subjectivity [is] in confrontation with the other" rather than with a creative aestheticisation of the self (Fryer, 2004:21). For Levinas "the only absolute value is the human possibility of giving the other priority over oneself" (Levinas, 1998). When multiple demands face people at work by multiple others, it will be always in violation of ethics in the way that they are shaped by their own subjectivity (Levinas, 1998).

To give others priority regardless of oneself is the only absolute value (Levinas, 1998). According to Levinas the other who demands one's ethical response is a radical alternative that is not itself but a unique set of personality traits that resist comparison with the identity of the others. Building on the foundation of irreplaceability, the other lies outside of my full understanding and should be kept untarnished with unchangeable characteristics in order for its moral distinctiveness to remain intact. The rational thus requires that the other is a spiritual encounter that is unceasing (Levinas, 1969), an experience of perpetual responsibility to the other, a duty that extends beyond the scope of reciprocity and self-serving in which responsibility to others is formed from a selfless origin (Levinas, 2003). The other sternly requests one's responsibility, not in a tit for tat exchange, but as one's duty in giving. Ethics emanate from sympathy and concern (Hansel, 1999).

3.6 Ethical Subjectivity and Politics - Critchley's Ethics of the Self

Following Foucault, Critchley (2013) suggests that rather than the self being a pre-given entity that goes about choosing moral acting, it is in fact the character of one's ethical experience that constitutes the self. He describes this by stating "ethical subjectivity is not just an aspect or dimension of subjective life, it is rather the fundamental feature of what we think of as a self, the repository of our deepest commitments and values" (Critchley, 2013:23). In addition, Critchley (2013), drawing on Levinas argues that all questions of ethical explanation can be

connected to what he terms as an 'ethical experience' being an experience in which a person is facing a demand and where that demand is met with acceptance and confirmation.

By approving such a demand, the self is being created by making the ethical commitment to a particular discursive formulation of what is considered to be good. Critchley (2013) who argues from a Levinasian conception of ethical experience states that one's ethical comprehension is built in such a manner that the requirements of the other cannot be fulfilled but it must be chased. One cannot fulfil the demand of the other but one must always aim to fulfil it.

Ethical formation is a pursuit beyond the self, because it involves encountering others. Thus one's subjectivity is formed by seeking the other and it never returns to itself (Nealon, 1998). Levinas argument is the inability of the self to sustain itself because of the fundamental act of ethics. There must be an 'other' that renders itself to the 'I' in a manner which resists absorption. Without question this tension between self and other, where the 'other' precedes and overwhelms the self, makes Levinas' theory of ethical formation so curious and valuable (Dalton, 1999).

Even in consenting that ethics is founded on the tension between the self and the other, it is still insufficient in expanding the concept of ethics in an organisational setup. Critchley (2008) expands on Levinas and suggests that it is a political act to choose between the many others that present itself to the self.

3.7 Ethical Political Subjectivity

In this section a connection between ethics and politics will be attempted. Instead of ethics being a restraint on power i.e. one where politics comes first and then ethics, following from Levinas, the researcher suggests that politics is the act through which the ethical demand is chosen and responded to. In this ethico-political sense politics is how ethics becomes actualised in practice. In other words, acting politically is inherently ethical. This forces us to acknowledge that, 'ethics without politics is empty' if it does not motivate action. At the same time, 'politics without ethics is blind' if the action that is taken is not adequately motivated by an ethical demand (Critchley, 2013: 120). This relation between ethics and politics is thus one where '[t]he moral-political order is inspired and directed by ethical responsibility to the other [...] and not the other way around' (Diprose, 2002:169). This means that politics is the means one has available to respond to the ethical demands one takes up by seeking to change the way

things are organised. Subsequently, it is the conduct through which one's ethical subjectivity arises or comes into being.

The researcher understands that the formation of an ethical subjectivity in organisations comes about when individuals recognise and resist the restrictions that the dominant discourse places on people's subjectivities (Deem, 2012) in relation to forming a good self (Foucault, 1980) and responding to the ethical demand of the other (Levinas, 1998). Ethical subjectivity is formed through self-composition and is thus formed through people exercising their power in response to the personalised ethical demands. The ethical subject, albeit not entirely restricted by organisational discourse must also form itself in relation to other people. However, as there are multiple others to respond to, the nature of the ethical subject is shaped out of the necessary political response to choose from among the multiple demands that it recognises from those others. This is illustrated in the following Figure 1.

It is noteworthy to state that the researcher adopts Foucault and Levinas theoretical framework of ethics of self as both posits the notion of self as well as the other.

Figure 1: Foucault's ethical framework



Source: Foucault, M. (1980). *Power/knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings, 1972-1977*. Pantheon.

3.8 Summary

This chapter attempted to explain ethics using Foucault, Critchley and Levinas perspectives. Three approaches to ethics are discussed namely, utilitarian ethics, deontological ethics and

virtue ethics. A review of few theoretical conceptualisations of ethics by Foucault, Levinas and Critchley were discussed. In my theoretical framework I reject the concept of fixed identities. I understand the concept of identity as fluid and malleable fleeting and fragmentary multiple and contextual constantly negotiated, renegotiated and always in the process of becoming without denying the influence of dominant and hegemonic discourses. Middle manager's ethical practices are highlighted and a translation of the result into discourses chosen by these managers to shape their subjectivity is also highlighted. Instead of ethics being a restraint on power i.e. one where politics comes first and then ethics, following from Levinas, the researcher suggests that politics is the act through which the ethical demand is chosen and responded to. In this ethico-political sense politics is how ethics becomes actualised in practice. In other words, acting politically is inherently ethical.



CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the research methodology. In this chapter I provide a rationale for adopting a “constructivist² approach” for this study and I explain why I chose a qualitative approach. In addition, I will provide a description of the research design, outline of participant selection and sample is provided. I also offer a brief description of the data analysis framework. A discussion of the validity and ethical considerations relevant to the study conclude this chapter.

As stated in the beginning the goal of this research was to explore the ethical practices of middle managers. This topic calls for ‘deep’ data gathering procedures to uncover the unique characteristics of managers in organisations. According to Balogun, Huff & Johnson (2003) the researcher is close to the phenomena of the study and concentrates on the context and detail while remaining broad in the scope of studying strategizing practices.

4.2 The epistemological and ontological approach of the study

According to Creswell (2007) epistemology and ontology are branches in the philosophy of science maintaining that scientific knowledge is built by the scientific community, who seek to measure and construct models of the natural and the social world based upon the interpretations that they had. In particular, social science thoughts and concepts therefore consist of mental constructs that aim to explain sensory practices and measurements based on people’s understanding. The notion of constructivism described by Bryman (2004) is an ontological position that emphasises that organisations and culture are socially constructed and are in a continuous cycle of revision. Therefore, in line with Creswell (2002) who confirms that individuals seek to grasp an understanding of the world in which they live and work, this will mainly rely on participants’ views of the ethical practices, work challenges and its overall impact on other factors.

2. A constructivist approach is a popular learning theory but can also applied to the way humans make sense of their world. It is thus a suitable research paradigm. The constructivism paradigm in some classifications of paradigms is called the “interpretative paradigm” but I have decided to use the constructivist nomenclature.

On another note, Davidson & Tolich (2003) explain that a constructivist paradigm gives the researcher the chance to reflect on the experiences of those being researched and look for interpretations that will help the understanding and description of what is happening. This study would also reflect on the experiences of these middle managers.

4.3 Pure and Applied Research

According to Pellissier (2007) the result of pure research is theoretical development, whether the research has practical implications or not. Applied research aims to solve a specific issue and find answers to specific questions. Research strategies may range from a purely quantitative approach to a purely qualitative approach, as well as a mixed-method approach.

Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin (2010) explain that business research is the implementation of the scientific method in searching for the truth about business phenomena. Social research is different to research in the natural sciences. Research activities include defining business opportunities and problems, generating and evaluating ideas, monitoring performance and understanding the business process. Pellissiers (2007) definition of applied research is in line with this study; aiming at investigating the ethical practices of academic middle managers within the University of the Western Cape by concentrating on their roles, work related-challenges and personal experiences.

4.4 Research Design, Strategy or Approach

A research design refers to the steps and processes used by the researcher starting from a broad idea to more detailed methods such as data collection and data analysis; the research design to be applied in this study is the case study design. A research strategy or approach is the general plan of how the researcher will go about answering the research question(s) (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009) or meeting the research objectives; the strategy here in my research study is the qualitative research strategy. In all, even though this work is qualitative in nature, overall it is an exploratory study design to answer the research question.

4.5 Research Setting

The study setting is the previously disadvantaged South African University. This study would be focusing on the ethical practices of individual middle managers within the University such as the HODs. They would be asked requested to answer questions about their work life, work-related challenges vs. targeted goals/outcomes as well as the interaction between middle managers and other organisational members.

As a student at the University of the Western Cape obtaining access to the data proved to be less challenging. In addition, all the departments within the EMS are all in the same building, thus reducing the number of hurdles in the study, however, research timing (for interviews) did vary as all participants' extent of availability varied. To make my work easier I arranged for an appointment with the HOD through his/her secretary. As soon as the appointment was scheduled, an interview was scheduled with the participants. I later followed up with the respective time slots and dates.

4.6 Research Methodology

When determining the most appropriate method for the participants to answer the research questions in this study a qualitative approach was adopted. The primary reason for this selection was based on detailed explanation of participants' experiences and supporting reasons on why these practices are the way they are. The appropriate methods that go with case study designs are in-depth interviews. Thus I used interviews as my primary method to collect the data in this study.

4.7 Notes on Questions

A major concept that needed to be answered was ethical practices which included variables like, time management, work goals, work outcomes, good work relationship with other staff within the department, good work relationship with students and managing work pressure. Semi-structured interviews were used including three sections; module (a) - demographic and individual questions, such as age, sex, marital status, level of education, etc. In module (b) - participants would be asked about work-related goals and targets vs. outcomes - this section includes variables like work goals, time management, work pressure and recruitment and quality of staff. Finally, the third module would comprise of work relationship variables. In this section participants would be asked questions on the following variables - relation with students, relationship with other staff (below and above them) and student. These sets of

questions would be typed on a paper and participants are requested to answer these questions face to face while the researcher recorded the data. Each participant had agreed to be audio recorded and I used a small digital recorder as well as computer recording software as a backup recorder. Before the actual recording began, I made time to introduce myself to the participant and explained my background and why I was conducting this research. This was vital as I had not met the interviewees prior to this. Participants signed a consent form as previously agreed.

Furthermore, when the interviews were completed, I began transcribing and began the initial analysis for themes. Within the interpretive framework, thematic coding identified the meanings behind the experiences and perceptions of the middle managers. A hermeneutic perspective, where the researcher creates a reality by interpreting text provided through the interviews, was applied to the analysis (Check & Schutt, 2012). This meant that I became the main instrument in this highly interactive process between the researcher and the data (Check & Schutt, 2012). However, I was guided by my theoretical framework and literature which had been read and reviewed. A limitation of thematic analysis as claimed by Lichtman (2013) is that it functions from a reductionist perspective, that is, it questions whether the themes paint an adequate picture of what an individual think.

4.8 Data collection

4.8.1 Interviews

The data were collected through interviews that were conducted with the participants. Interviews were face to face with eight of the middle managers, all of whom agreed to record the interviews. The interviews were conducted in English during which I have also written down the responses from the participants. Semi-structured interviews with an interview guide was utilised to enable the researcher to become more extensive in questioning.

Participants confirmed their availability about a week in advance and the interviews were kept to schedule. Each participant had agreed to be audio recorded and I used a small digital recorder as well as computer recording software as a backup recorder. Before the actual recording began, I made time to introduce myself to the participant and explained my background and why I was conducting this research. This was vital as I had not met the interviewees prior. Participants signed a consent form as previously agreed via e-mail (see Appendix 2) and sent this in prior to the interview taking place.

Although everything seemed so perfect, it was my first time carrying out research this complex. Transcribing one interview seemed okay, but after transcribing 8 interviews it was so tasking and time consuming. Lacking transcribing skills, I had to keep going back and forth just to get a clearer sound of the words. Again, some respondents spoke very fast, all these made my work difficult but worth the experience. In addition, during these interviews, I used recordings - being the only one, I sometimes had to adjust my recording device in order to get a better record of the respondents' voice. On the other hand, there were some distractions and I had to wait and continue after a break. All these kept me on my toes, however, in all the diary helped me to keep track of every.

4.9 Population

Coldwell & Herbst (2004) refer to a population as a body of people or a total collection of items that are under consideration for research purposes. Furthermore, the population must comply with a set criteria determined by the researcher for the purposes of generalising the results (Andrew, Pedersen, & McEvoy, 2011). Thus, for the purposes of the current study, population includes all middle managers employed in a previously disadvantaged University in Western Cape Province of South Africa. Since time and costs make it impractical to use the all the elements of a population, a sample is used for research purposes.

4.10 Sampling

Rubin & Babbie (2011) define a sample as a small number chosen from the entire population of a certain study. For the purpose of this qualitative study, the sample is 8 middle managers all in one faculty (the Economic and Management Sciences (EMS) faculty) from within eight different departments within the university - such as Business and Finance, Academic Development, Economics, Industrial Psychology, Government Studies, Political Studies, Poverty, Land and Agrarian Studies and Information Systems. The EMS faculty was selected purposively, because in terms of gathering information it was much easier especially as all the departments are within the same space, and it is one of the largest faculties within the university. In addition, it is easy for me as one of the enrolled students in EMS faculty to have an access to conduct the present study.

4.10.1 Respondent Characteristics

Respondents were selected using purposive sampling; only academic middle managers within the faculty with the university. Participants were included after they had met the criteria and

signed the consent forms stating their interest to participate in the study. Data was collected through in-depth interviews within the EMS faculty. Amongst all of these respondents, 6 are HODs, one is a director and another is a dean. Some demographics pertaining to these respondents; gender, race, tenure, academic background or support responsibilities were recorded. They were all males, mostly coloured (25%), (37.5 %) black, (37.5 %) white and 10% non-south African. Two of these HODs had been in the post for three and four years, while 50% have been HOD on an average of 2 years each, there were a few outliers of as low as 8 months and as high as 11 years.

4.10.2 Inclusion Criteria

Only participants who met the following criteria were included; must be currently employed at the university as an HOD, they are all within the EMS faculty and must have been a lecturer or is currently one.

4.10.3 Exclusion Criteria

Only participants with who met the following criteria were excluded; is not currently employed within the university as an HOD, they are not from the EMS faculty.

4.11 Data Saturation

Regardless of what researchers understand their interviewees' responses to be, interview based researchers in many field conclude that almost invariably itemise their findings by grouping similar expressions of meaning relevant to the research questions (Coleman, Irvine, Lemon & Shao, 2013). In this regard the utterances from the participants were similar in relation to the research questions. After completely exhausting all the concepts generated from the interviews i realised that all responses were becoming evidently similar. Consequently, I had to stop as no additional new information was being revealed, especially as the majority of the interviews were generating the same information. This was the case even though new categories were obtained mostly in the area of academic responsibilities - like lecturing, tutoring, marking, publishing articles and supervision. The literature indicates that six to ten interviews are sufficient in order to extract meaningful themes (Coleman et al., 2013).

4.12 Research Design

As I mentioned earlier I examined a present-day phenomenon such as academic middle managers in-depth and within its real-life context, particularly when the boundaries between

event and background are not obviously apparent” (Yin, 2009). In addition, this design would also be used in order to explore data sources and participant respective perspectives while trying to cover contextual conditions of the participants (Yin 2003). In this regard the research design entailed a cross- sectional approach.

4.13 Data analysis

Data analysis means changing collected data into findings (De Vos, Strydom, Fouché & Delpont, 2011) and consists of “examining, categorizing, tabulating, testing, or otherwise recombining qualitative evidence to address the initial propositions of a study” (Yin, 2003). The study results would be interpreted using the thematic analyses where themes are highlighted and analysed. In addition, a phenomenological approach would be used to analyse data since the data gathered focuses on human experiences and interpretations (Trochim, 2012). In this scenario, the work experiences of these middle managers need to be explored in order to better understand the impact of their work within the existing academic environment.

However, I adopted Lichtman’s (2013) approach on data analysis suggesting the 3Cs (coding, categorising and concepts); a process moving from raw data to themes. For example, in this data chunk I identified the following codes.

“Well, there is a certain paradox. You select people for senior positions based on their academic qualifications and then you give them administrative and managerial work.”

The following “**administrative and managerial work**” was coded as administrative tasks. This was then categorized with other similar codes like ‘management’, ‘directing others’. Then I formulated the following concepts, for example, the responsibilities of the academic middle manager.

In summary, these steps include - initial coding, revisiting initial coding, initial listing of categories, modifying the initial list, revisiting categories and moving from categories to concepts.

In addition, as I conducted interviews, reviewed the literature and embarked on analysing the data, I used memos to make notes for myself since they act as prompts as well as an avenue for reflection (Bryman, 2012). This organised approach allowed relevant themes to unfold. The data was then combined thus permitting me to summarise key findings at the end of the

transcription. These themes that emerged from the analysis process have been linked to the themes which the literature produced in Chapter 3.

Furthermore, I made use of two coding elements, initial and focused coding. Initial coding is when you go through your interview transcript line by line and identify key words and ideas (Bryman, 2012; Flick, 2014; Lofland, Snow, Anderson & Lofland, 2006). Meaning that, I highlighted the interviews to sort the data into sub-themes to complete the initial coding whilst reading and re-reading and then grouping and re-grouping them into sub themes and then narrowing them down into major themes. This focused act of coding (Lofland et al., 2006; Flick, 2014) meant I had to select the major themes that emerged and attempt to identify links. Once this was complete all these themes were laid out in relation to the interviews.

4.13a) Conformability

Conformity relates to neutrality. In essence, it questions to what extent the results were affected by individual benefits and preferences? All participants were HODs so this made neutrality more evident in the data especially as most of the information was related. In all, it gives more insight on the study reliability.

4.13b) Transferability

The study's transferability does question its applicability, in essence its 'relevance or 'validity'. In other words, are the study results applicable to other subjects in different contexts or the extent to which these results can be compared to other settings? In terms of generalization the study is applicable beyond the study sample to similar universities within SA and beyond.

4.14c) Credibility

This section of validity questions the 'truth value' or 'research focus' of this research. In other terms, did the study really measure the ethical practices of middle managers at the university or did it measure something else? Well, in terms of identifying the various ethical practices of selected participants, contextually the study was able to collect data on type of work, responsibilities, work ethics, timelines and outcomes as aimed. In addition, the data analyses were sound in line with the research question; focusing on the effect of these practices in the context mentioned.

4.15d) Dependability

In relation to consistency the study can be replicated within the same context with the same subjects as well as within another context with different subjects? Throughout the entire study process, the investigator was able to explain endless altering circumstances of ethical practices of middle managers within the University of the Western Cape. In addition, using two different memos, the investigator was able to follow up with the trend of the discussion during the interviews alongside the recording device.

4.16 Ethical considerations

The following ethical concerns that applied to this study: (1) informed consent and (2) minimisation of harm (Bryman, 2004; Check & Schutt, 2012; Bell, 2010; and Davidson & Tolich, 1999). Participation in the study was entirely voluntary, without pressure and enticement.

4.16a) Permission

I obtained permission from the faculty of EMS as well as all the departments within the EMS faculty. Before carrying out the research I had to submit a copy of my consent form, my proposal as well as a copy of my ethical clearance to the respective secretaries of these departments within the EMS faculty so that permission could be granted for me to conduct this research. I later proceeded to meet with the various respondents speaking to them about my work, before arranging for a scheduled interview with them.

4.16b) Study information and benefits

There was no reason for me not to be open about information on the proposed study and participants were allowed to withdraw their participation and their data after the interview, change their responses or add additional information. It was equally important that participants were informed of what would happen to the data gathered. Participants who engaged in the interviews were provided with an information sheet (Appendix 2) that fully informed them of the nature of the research and the process. Informed consent was also sought from the participants' employers. Participants were informed that their identities will not be disclosed both on the study and outside the study as it will compromise their study quality.

4.16c) Harm minimisation

The issue of minimising harm is extended to providing anonymity and confidentiality over the participants' records. In the interviews, it was not possible to maintain anonymity as I

conducted the interviews. However, pseudonyms were applied to interview participants and I was the sole transcriber of the interview data. I did not release any details publicly and have removed any identifying features from the transcripts and data. Participants were assigned random (not gender specific) codes beginning with alphabet to indicate their role as a HOD respectively. For example, a HOD was allocated to a code – P, M, MK, M, A, S, T, O and R. All participants have been referred as a code to protect their identity.

Participants were invited to ask questions and clarify any issues. The raw data were locked in a cupboard and electronic files were password protected. Voice recordings were kept on a separate drive from the transcripts. Access was restricted to the research supervisor and I. Data was kept secure from unauthorised access in an electronic format, up-until a maximum of ten years following the conclusion of the study and destroyed thereafter.

4.16d) Research bias and limitations

I paid attention to research bias in the study by asking indirect questions. I attempted to take great care about leading questions toward a particular perspective during the interviews. I acknowledged that the responses obtained from the participants may contain an element of inaccuracy. In this regard I obtained multiple inputs senior academics to triangulate the findings. I did my best to remain neutral when posing the questions. Many questions asked during the interviews were open ended to allow for a broader interpretation. In order to reduce selection bias I took great care to select the participants that were representative of middle managers in a HEI environment. It is a common occurrence that middle managers in general have diverse workloads. In this regard the participants selected in the EMS faculty were similar to the population of middle managers.

4.17 Summary

This chapter presented an overview of the adoption of a constructivist approach and the rationale behind the adoption of the chosen epistemology. I explained why I used a qualitative approach and why I chose a case study research design. An outline of participant selection, purposive sampling approach and method of data collection adopted by this study was also discussed. The chapter concluded with a discussion on the issues of validity and ethics that were relevant to this study. The next chapter presents the findings of this research study.

CHAPTER 5

DATA ANALYSIS-RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents my analysis of the data collected from the middle managers. It includes data gathered describing their activities and practices via the interviews conducted with the eight middle managers. Middle managers were selected to be interviewed to provide an institutional perspective of their own experiences.

In my data analysis I employed the framework that was based on the ideas and concepts developed earlier in my thesis. As stated in the previous chapter, a cross-sectional research design was used with the aim of investigating the role of academic heads of department (HODs) in the faculty, examining the daily activities and work experiences of these middle managers.

In the next section, I have analysed the answers of each HOD individually, as illustrative cases. Extracts of their transcribed interviews are shown in bold print, within each illustrative case. Thereafter I will extrapolate their daily work practices and then I will extract themes from the interviews. These themes will be based on the ideas that are repeated in most interviews, in order to obtain an answer to the research question.

5.2 Illustrative Case 1: HOD (P)

HOD (P) has been a HOD for almost four years. HOD (P) loves his job, especially the academic component. He is looking forward to making a difference in his department. He explained what he does as a middle manager by saying that there are many functions he has to deal with at the same time. He has a lecturing workload, supervises post-graduate students as well as conducting other academic duties. He is also responsible for addressing student problems, for example, student registrations and overseeing the administrative staff in the department. This includes taking care of developing the staff and supervising their work in order to ensure that their work is correctly performed. Therefore, a middle manager must satisfy several functions at the same time which affects their performance in other areas. HOD (P) indicates that:

“Well, if you look at the job definition of the HOD, it’s basically everything being done at university is delegated to the HOD, so we are responsible for teaching, research, administration, finances, everything.”

To a large extent middle managers are expected to organise their own tasks. At the same time they operate between staff and top management in the organisational chain of command and they are also subjected to diverse requirements and restrictions (Tengblad, 2012). The middle management role requires him or her to work between the staff and top management. The work is characterised by a great responsibility with minimal instructions and little official prescriptions about how the work should be performed (Harding, Lee & Ford, 2014; Osterman, 2013). The need for coordination demands that middle managers structure and organise their own work space and time in order to cope with multiple tasks. What I understand from this interview with HOD (P) is that there are many ways for middle managers to handle the increased individual responsibility. One way is for the middle managers to reflect and try different strategies for self-leadership. One of the strategies he adopted was to make a plan for his goals for the entire at the beginning of the year and he tried to ensure that he followed these goals. This means that he has to shift and bring changes to his academic identity and incorporate a managerial orientation to his academic identity.

HOD (P) besides having a lecturing workload has to do his own research, supervise postgraduate students and find financiers. He is also required to do office work, to register students, take care of their problems and to organise staff work. This cycle creates multiple requirements from competing directions within the work environment.

This finding confirms what Deem (2006) mentioned that the HOD is distracted from doing his core activities of research and teaching. Academics have multiple tasks that they have to accomplish, and these demands compete for their time and attention. Thus, these two (teaching and research) significant elements (Deem, 2006) are also often in conflict with one another in terms of “the deployment of resources in higher education systems” (Deem & Lucas 2007: 7). Similarly, I found that HOD (P) has highlighted that the additional activities and tasks such as administration and assisting students with registration kept him away from doing his core tasks

which is the academic part. This finding is very illuminating. Therefore, these additional activities ‘eat up’ the HODs’ time and effort. HOD (P) said:

“What I like most is research, I quite enjoy the actual classes, but the administration around teaching can be painful and everyone complains about the marking which is mostly an issue of volume.”

I observed here that the HOD expressed a high level of job satisfaction in relation to research and lecturing. Additionally, he expressed discomfort with administration and the large volume of marking. By emphasising research, the HOD gives preference to himself and also by emphasising teaching, he gives preference to others. His ethical relationship with himself can be seen as well as his ethical relationship with others in that he tends to give others ‘priority over himself’ (Levinas, 1991/2006).

One of the hard parts within the educational institution is the high amount of administration tasks, especially at the middle managers/HOD level. HOD (P) has to carry out office work, for example, student administration, marking, dealing with students’ problems and he has to perform his academic work. The excessive administrative work relates to additional activities that he has to deal with. He indicated that the additional workload should not be within his job description. This is considered a challenge for the HOD. He sees himself as a person with high academic experience, but the work requirements at this level have imposed a new reality for him, especially with the huge number of students in the department. Despite this he finds joy in this role and due to his love for his department and executes his job functions to the best of his ability. Because of this he pointed out that:

“I would say I enjoy research the most, but I like the teaching and I like playing this role because now I can live in a department where I like to be because it’s collegial and people get on. We try and recruit people who are team players. So I do like the leadership too. I didn't know if I would initially, when I took it and it was quite stressful to start with.”

Here I found the HOD expressing that his ethical subjectivity is orientated to care for others, when he talks about having a good relationship with his staff he is in fact expressing his ethics with regard to others. This implies that he wants to ensure that the people in his department are team players and as a result make his work environment a successful workspace. Therefore, he does his best to ensure that the new employees fit into the organisational culture. The latter describes his approach and how it is influenced by his ethics and beliefs.

Due to the large number of tasks, the question is, how can the middle manager organise all this work? HOD (P) answered by saying:

“So, I try to operate collectively and I try to do what I’m going to do, which is actually quite hard I have to say, it’s quite tricky.”

The main way that he manages his department is to work collectively with all people around him, by taking their opinions into consideration and he admits that it is not easy to do, but that is his way. In this instance he attempts to reach his ethical goals by considering the others in the department. His approach is to consider ‘others’ and he puts this into action, actualising his politics, by including his department members in his decision-making. Here one can see that the HOD (P) takes into consideration the requirements of others. He feels obligated to them and their needs. This is an expression of his ethical orientation to others.

Working in such an environment is somewhat difficult because, as stated previously, the middle manager has to focus on more than one side and this requires an ethical-political practice that considers the multiple requirements placed on the HOD. These politics involve negotiating the competing demands of those third parties, making practical decisions about which demands to respond to and how to respond to them, without forgetting that any response must gain its ultimate foundation in “the ethical responsibility of the face-to-face relation” (Critchley, 2003:24).

He said to me that before making a decision he requested a general staff meeting to obtain staff members' opinions. He then makes his decision collectively to ensure that he has not neglected any members. This is how he puts his ethics into political practice. Ethically, he listens to others and politically he makes sure that his decisions include the competing demands of all the staff members or a decision was made based on an agreement of all members.

HOD (P) appears to be an organised person. He organises his work in his agenda, held at the beginning of the year. It has a full-year work plan and serves as a reference for the work throughout the entire year.

“Organising my time, I will show you, I make lists, I put things in my diary and I work off my diary. My diary is booked for almost years in advance now. In addition, I try to structure on a weekly and monthly basis what needs to be done, and that helps. It doesn't always solve the issues but it does help.”

From among the many ways to choose how to organise his work, HOD (P) chose this particular way. The management of future time is important for HOD (P) for his ethical-political practices. Time is a crucial factor that HOD (P) focuses on and he tries through organising his work, to conserve every moment in order to timeously reach his ethical goals, for which he planned in advance.

From Foucault (1984) I can conclude that ethical self requires one not to be entirely subjected to the discourse but to use a form of freedom in relation to one's own subjectivity and behaviour (Foucault, 1984). Confronted by many discourses and attendant subject positions, the ethical self is creative in that it styles itself in relation to resistance to and in excess of those discourses that would discipline it into particular positions. HOD (P) decides on his ethical practice and which discourse he chooses based on how to best utilise his time for this. In the view of HOD (P) relates to how he practises his ethical beliefs as well as interacts with 'the other'.

HOD (P) uses his freedom considering the time and how to use this time to attain his ethical goals and shape his ethical subjectivity. Organising his time far in advance relates to his ethical political practices. Practices of the self are the practical side of ethics of the self. These practices and activities bring ethical goals and aspirations into being. To be an ethical person requires individuals to work on engaging in ethical practices, practices of which reflect what and who they deem important in their work situation. In my interview with HOD (P) it is evident that he uses a schedule and sees it as the best way to deal with managing others. This is what is termed ethical-political practices. He believes that adopting a systems schedule approach enables him to deal appropriately with people and in attending to problems. For him, solving problems entails using a systems schedule approach in his thinking and his ethical practices in managing the staff around him.

Even though, these systems do not organise all of his work, it assists due to the plethora of tasks that he has to address. HOD (P) emphasised that the system at work is the foundation and that you cannot rely on hard work only without a plan or strong system that leads you to organise your work and you also need professional staff around you to help. Indeed, I found that most middle managers are dependent on organising their work in their own unique systems, developed according to the ethical need in the ethical performance of their work. Here he says:

“It is really about planning and making lists, I do not know what else to say, working, working hard, it’s not rocket science, you have to work it out yourself so for me you have to work out your strengths and weaknesses, so if I am going to write I write in the morning when I am sharpest and then I will do other things in the afternoon.”

He says that everyone has to work according to their abilities and to take advantage of their strengths to avoid not working on their weaknesses. In this regard HOD (P) emphasises Foucault's theory. Foucault's ethics of the self is the way in which individuals can work on themselves and thereafter form the foundation for an ethical subjectivity. The part of an individual's identity linked to their feelings is known as 'The Self' (Ivanič, 1998). HOD (P) knows his strong points and he uses these in his work, which is his ethical practice. In terms of

how to use your strengths, you should firstly know your strengths and it is required to look deep within yourself to find out what you are qualified to work with to obtain the best results that you need, instead of exerting extensive effort without knowing yourself, which will cost you more time with poor outcomes. This is what Foucault meant when speaking about working on the self. Foucault's ethics of the self represents the way in which individuals can work on themselves which forms the basis for an ethical subjectivity. "With this conception, ethical self-formation by no means implies that one can become anything else or decide who one wants to be by completely ignoring the social and historical context in which one lives and has grown up in" (Hennig, 2010:30). According to Foucault, shaping one's ethical self is accomplished through a 'care of the self', which cannot be exercised without the presence of adequate freedom (Infinito, 2003). The latter is the freedom that Foucault recognised as the 'ontological condition of ethics' (Besley, 2013). Therefore, the HOD when he is planning for his ethical goals, which is to organise himself and his work, he needs to create ethical politics that he may rely on to work timeously. The ethical practices he chooses is to organise his time and to work through his strengths, e.g. when he is going to write, he will do so in the morning, when he still has a lot of energy at the beginning of the day and he will reserve other things for the afternoon. This is a form of ethical practice.

Discussion: Goals and ethical instruments of HOD (P).

"Work is a big part of life goals, definitely and the other things I have achieved quite frankly, which is basically a happy family which is very important to me."

HOD (P) has his own ethical goals in his work such as how to make all staff around him and under his authority satisfied, which is reflected in his own ethical politics onto the others within his department. He is showing consideration for 'the other' and that is what I consider as an ethical practice to gain ethical goals, which is a successful department. He cares about others at work and organises his time and effort according to them. That is the relationship between ethical goals and daily practices. He has the ambition and goal of bringing joy to his co-workers.

“Work is important for me. So for work there are two things very important. When I first came here I wanted to build a good department, so I want to make this the best political science department in the country.”

The steps he took (which I consider to be political action or political movement) in order to achieve another goal is considered. His goals at work motivated him to take it upon himself to increase the staff compliment in the department, thereby encouraging political ethics.

“When I arrived we only had four posts, in fact there were only two people here. I was the third and now we have eight posts, which we managed, by hook and by crook and a little bit of theft, to create basically in five, six, seven years now!”

Regarding the politics concept connected to ethical goals HOD (P) set for himself ethical goals, which in his case was about developing his department and increasing the number of assistants in his department and according to him that is not something easy to do, as it requires much effort to accomplish such a goal. Therefore, he took it upon himself and made extra effort (that is what I call politics) in order to obtain his ethical goals through planning and hard work. Through ethical work in this department, he was able to develop it and increase the number of employees. His actions to improve and develop the department were his ethical-political practices. What he did displays that ethical-politics practices were not easy choices to make. He makes decisions according to his ethical goals. To increase the number of employees mean engaging the top management and in order to obtain what you require from them, you have to have a convincing argument. To accomplish his ethical goals he was able to do this, even engaging in what may be considered as unethical behaviour.

5.3 Illustrative Case 2: HOD (M)

HOD (M) is new in the position and he has been working as a middle manager for only eight months. At the same time he has much experience because he has been in this department for 25 years. When I asked him about his definition of the HOD position, he said:

“The way I understand HOD is to sort of manage the department, overseeing the normal running of the department obviously working, supporting, motivating the staff and having a vision for where you want the department to be. We have workshops to discuss the plans for the department to see how the department grows and develops. That’s the way I understand my role as HOD.”

Here he clarifies the nature of the ethical goals that is at the core work of the middle managers. This is to ensure that the main activities such as lecturing and research are done by staff members. He also wants to grow and develop the department. This is known as his ethical objective. As for the ethical-political dimension, I note here from the outset that this middle manager said it is to provide assistance to others within the department and to motivate them in order to reach the ethical goal that referred to in the beginning.

“Obviously everything comes from the top, it comes with the structure. They want to do certain things and you must escalate this down to the staff. Your role is that whatever must be done, it must be done. In that sense until now, if the structure that comes from the top says that X, Y, Z must be done. I will escalate this down normally. So I will contact all my staff via email and say what we have done and this our due date. Also, I will talk about them in our department meeting and then I will try to facilitate and see if there are any problems, to please let me know before the time and I will see if I can help.”

Floyd & Wooldridge (2000) suggested that individuals at middle levels within any organisation must have the consciousness and understanding to link dissimilar philosophies generated from within the organisation to premeditated matters. I would maintain that HOD (M) establishes that he has this capacity. Furthermore, the single locus of middle-level managers makes them the linking dashes within the categorized social networks that constitute the university decision-making system. Costanzo & Tzoumpa (2008) elucidate that through the use of middle

managers' personal networks, middle managers are information investigators in that they have the capacity to collect unambiguous and understood information by mere looking for intuitions, result and indulgent. Consequently, with respect to information transfer, these middle managers become key links in the knowledge process within organisations as well as a network through which information is transported. This formulates the undertones for complex network-broadening to include various functional sub-units. In reference to middle managers' role of assigning info from top management to employees, HOD (M) is willing to do so; however, his ethical activities do permit him to explain to his staff the top-rules, instead of giving abstruse instructions and information that serve as guidelines for obeying top-rules.

The nature of the work in these departments is in fact collective work. In other words, the goals that the department seeks to achieve are aimed at team work. The role of HOD (M) here is to emphasise the achievement of goals. Each manager has his own way in which to achieve those goals, known as ethical politics. The way that HOD(M) works is that he tries to make the staff around him as satisfied as he could; even though he has many demands to deal with at the same time, he chooses to communicate with 'the other' staff ethically.

The middle manager explains his approach here to achieving the goals that he seeks by interacting with others, as Critchley (2003) pointed out. This interaction with others is summarised when the middle manager explains to the staff that the goals are coming from the top management. Furthermore, when they have to do this work and also when he tries to help them if there is any confusion in understanding, he is in fact working on ethical politics. On the other hand, from what he stated previously, it is proof that he follows the structure that comes from the top management literally, without any intervention from his side to change that structure or to develop it to be aligned with the staff. This may be due to the fact he is still new in this position. In addition, he does not have enough experience to find his own way to lead his staff yet.

“So far I must say my staff are really supporting in that sense; whenever they know something needs to be done, they actually do it.”

From the statement above, I note that the relationship between the HOD and his staff is an integral (dyadic) relationship, implying wherever there were ethical goals, there are others you need to deal with in order for these goals to be achieved. This relation is confirmed by Critchley (2003) who said that the core of all ethical experiences is the ethical relations with the other

person, a relation understood as one having an infinite responsibility to the other. So, although Levinas' ideas "for the most part, agree with the claims made by Foucault about the nature of the human person" what his contribution adds is that the "founding moment of subjectivity [is] in confrontation with the other" rather than with a creative aestheticization of the self (Fryer, 2004: 21 & 28). For Levinas "the only absolute value is the human possibility of giving the other priority over oneself" (Levinas, 1991/2006:93). It is responding to (in Critchley's terms) the demand of this possibility, which marks ethical life. From what he said in the interview in general, especially when he explained the charity programme that he worked on and how he sponsored more than 30 students by finding funding resources for them and despite his multiple demands, I can infer that, his ethical practices tend to more to a dyadic concept than aestheticization (self-formation) concept.

When I asked HOD (M) about his role in the department, the multiple demands in his work, and which part in his work he needs to focus on, his answer was:

"I would have more time and more assistance because you know at the moment I am doing my job because I know the demands of the job and I am willing to sacrifice my nights, sacrifice my free time because first and foremost, I am an academic and I don't want to be negligent. In my case I love to do research, publishing books, writing articles and attending conferences. Now some HODs are lucky that they only teach postgraduates, I teach undergraduates, there is no relief for me and we have large numbers, we have classes of 800 - 900 a semester.

So there is no teaching relief, I am teaching two lecture groups at this moment, I am taking tutorials myself. HOD responsibilities and roles on top and then I am also expected as an academic to do research, to supervise, which I am doing, so literally, I came in and wanted to open my emails, but I couldn't."

Here the plethora of tasks and multiple demands which affect the academic work as a result of diverse management tasks. These situations show how people at work are faced with multiple others in relation to whom an ethical demand may be formulated. In such a context the dyadic ethical relationship is disrupted by what Levinas calls the 'third party', the other-other, who also demands responsibility and "interrupts the proximity or approach of the neighbour" (Levinas, 1998:150).

With all others, any practical legislation of ethics becomes more complex because of competing demands from these different people. However, this does not mean abandoning ethics, but more to accept that ethics actually raises politics in the sense of how one can exercise the authority of the individual against all these demands of responsiveness and responsibility. (McMurray, Pullen & Rhodes, 2011). Following Levinas, what this calls for is to “build a bridge from ethics, conceived as the non-totalizable relation to the other human being, to politics, understood as the relation to [...] the third party (le tiers), that is, to all the others that make up society” (Critchley, 2003:24). These politics involve negotiating the competing demands of those third parties, the other others and making practical decisions about which demands to respond to and how to respond to them without forgetting that any response must gain its ultimate foundation in “the ethical responsibility of the face-to-face relation” (Critchley, 2003: 24).

When the HOD has many tasks to complete, he has a choice to address those demands he regards as important to him. That action expresses the ethical-politics he needs to consider to achieve his ethical goals. In other words, politics is the machinery through which the ethical demand may be addressed. From his words, HOD (M) prefers working on his research academic part, however, when faced with multiple demands affecting his research academic part and his own free time, hereafter chooses to respond to those demands deemed urgent. Even though it will take away his academic research time, he does not respond to emails and other tasks as they appear secondary, in his perspective, to students demands.

In addition, the demands that come from students utilise academic research time, leading him to complain about the multiple demands that he has to attend to. This case shows that ethical behaviour towards the self and to others can be demanded at the same time. When he chooses to answer the demand from his students, it is evidence of his ethical goals towards the others, more so than himself. Moreover, he has to shift and bring changes to his academic identity and incorporate a managerial orientation to his academic identity.

“Well we are busy getting there, absolutely, that is one of visions for our department, to really work together, that we have trust and that we will hold each other accountable. And I think by meeting with them personally, we had a nice chat and I explained to them that this is what I envision for the department, whether it is a strategic workshop at the beginning of the year or so. I think everyone is willing to come on board to work together

and for me that is important, because if your team is working with you, it can just make your life as HOD easier. So that is what I am trying to do.”

In terms of relationships with others, HOD (M) gives priority to his relationship with the staff around him by allowing them to express their views, through personal meetings to explain the process of work and also to identify the ethical goals he seeks to achieve. HOD (M) believes in collective action, he utilises politics with the staff that would strengthen the relationship with them for the purpose of reaching its goals, which he indicates will create trust with others to make the work environment better and easier. In this ethical-political sense, politics is how ethics becomes actualised in practice.

These steps taken by the HOD are a statement of his politics, which must be followed to make his goals possible and this is what was summarised by Critchley who stated “ethics without politics is empty” in that it does not motivate action and “politics without ethics is blind” in that the action that is taken is not adequately motivated (Critchley, 2008:120). Critchley emphasises that at the core of all ethical experiences are the ethical relations with the other person, a relation understood as one having an infinite responsibility to the other.

“Our context is we don’t have enough resources, period. We don’t have enough human resources, we don’t have enough financial resources and we don’t have enough resources period. So my advice, I always think we have people that have been dedicated fund raisers. My advice would really be, to let and to give those people the instructions to really go and find funds, because that is our biggest problem. I have started an NPO programme (Non-Profitable Organisation) where I raise funds. I go and speak to funders, possible funders to help our needy students, so for me that is the way forward, get enough funds and sponsors so that we can grow, so that we can have more staff, so that we can enable everyone to do the best of their ability. We have started in 2012, this year will be our fifth year and I just got the biggest sponsor at the end of last year so that is good and I am planning to get an even bigger one, because for now we support between 40 and 50 students per year, but I would really want to support more students and obviously we can do that if we get bigger sponsors, but we’re slowly getting better and better sponsors. It’s really good and I am prepared to go out and look for sponsors.”

I could not find a better example than the above to display ethics to others. He saw the problem and took steps to try to resolve this problem, which is termed politics. Even though he started

the programme before he became HOD, he took it upon himself to continue this programme. In addition to the responsibilities he has as HOD. The only thing that drives a person to continue such a programme, despite the responsibilities and concerns around him, is his ethical identity, which has made him responsible to source funds for nearly 50 students to enable them to continue their studies.

“In the strategic workshop we looked at three ways as a department. One was to develop us so that we can work as a team and we are getting there. The second was to develop the staff, because some of the staff, most of the staff don’t have their master’s degrees, so I am encouraging them to personally develop because they are academics. The ones who have their master’s degrees, I encourage to do their PhDs; so the second one was personal development. The third one just supports our students even better, so that we can become the best department in SA. So those are the three goals we are working towards.”

Within the work plan framework of the administration, which the middle manager and staff work towards implementing, regarded as ethical politics of the manager to reach his ethical goals, I observed that the ethical impact that tends to be most prominent is being ethical to others. This ethical identity affects the action plan by focusing on developing and providing others with opportunities for academic achievement as well as support for students, by doing so with the aim of becoming the best in SA, thereby displaying the HOD’s ethics to the others.

In conclusion I found that HOD (M) has ethics to the self but in general his ethical practices lean towards the others more than to the self.

5.4 Illustrative Case 3: HOD (T)

HOD (T) is a person who has good experience. He has held very important positions in the university. He assumed the position as director in this department since the beginning of the department and discussed his responsibilities in this college, his role, and how he manages his department.

“Well, I started this position in 1994. I was the founding director of this school, so I had responsibilities for setting up this school, building it and raising funds for it. Then there was a hiatus after 11 years during the time when I was Dean, closer to 12 years because I

went on a sabbatical, so I have been back in this position since 2013 and I retire in six months' time. So my responsibilities here are back to the ones I had before, which is to manage a postgraduate school with divergent units within it. The responsibilities have changed since I first started. In the first instance, it was about building an institution raising funding and basically trying to position the school within the university and pioneer an academic environment.”

HOD (T) has been working for such a long time within this institution. He regards this department as a second home. Especially as he started everything from the beginning in this department, I can infer that he built a strong relation with this institution.

When he mentioned his responsibilities and role in the department, he reminded me about what HOD (P) had previously said: “Basically everything being done at university is delegated to the HOD.” Consequently, I will explore why he has deep relations with his department, why he accepted all these responsibilities, the motivating factors behind the politics that he chooses and whether these are ethical to the self or to the others.

Ethical actions of middle managers are established through connections, the authenticity around the work setting. These therefore, are those ethical actions that emerge from HOD (T) as outcomes of many interconnected sentiments, connections and certainties within work on a day-to-day basis. This was evident, at the start of his position as an academic manager he stated that the institution was wanting in many areas; which thus pushed him to offer the institution with those much-needed resources. He started by searching for sponsors to reduce the obvious gap within the institution, even though this was not his main duty. However, this reality mandated him to take a bold step to alter his main duty; termed ethics intermingling. Additionally, instead of focusing more on book or article publication as well as various academic responsibilities that would personally help him, he otherwise decided to concentrate more on responding to those work hassles which are labelled as serving ‘others’.

Well, there is a certain paradox. You select people for senior positions based on their academic qualifications and then you give them administrative and managerial work. And SA is still very confused on this point of view. Americans are, I think, actually better. It's a person who is a manager, who manages, underneath it you will have an academic leader but because of financial constraints these are conflated into one.

HOD (T) is a purely academic person, who concentrates on the academic aspects of his work. He explains that this focus on the academic aspect is because he is supposed to have an interest in this area. He was originally chosen for this position based on his qualifications and academic experience. However, the administrative work that accompanies the responsibility of middle managers is too much for him and it is exhausting for many of HODs. Moreover, those activities draw him and other academics away from their academic work, which is the main task for him. From those multiple demands, which one is the middle manager going to choose? In other words, what ethical practices will enable him/her to achieve his/her ethical goals? For this middle manager it would seem that focussing on the academic tasks is the practices that he has chosen.

HOD (T) refers here to the issue of identity within the university and how the shift from collegiality to Managerialism has had an impact on middle managers. There are conflicting demands on his time. He is no longer confident that he must be an academic director of the first degree or that he should concentrate on managing staff or finding resources for the institution. According to HOD (T) the pressures of administrative work has placed additional pressures on the academic duties of the HOD due to him not being able to concentrate on his academic work. Therefore, in his interaction with the environment around him he chooses to attend to the ethics of the self and ethics of the other. This requires shifting and effecting changes to his academic identity to incorporate a managerial orientation to his academic identity.

The paradox that HOD (T) refers to is when the top management employs middle managers according to academic efficiency, however, the job requirements are different, being that they have to take up administrative tasks and manage staff, which is the reality faced by middle

managers. And the university in which the research is conducted recognises that knowledge gap and has begun to provide middle managers with training as a first step to resolve this problem.

“So you are expecting deans for example to come with a PhD when they select a dean. Now what are your qualifications? They want an academic leader, but I can tell you, from 10 and half years as a dean, you do very little academic work.”

It is financial management, student resources and it is organisational matters related to the university as a whole. At one stage I was on 23 committees! And I think universities as a whole are in a state of crisis. From funding objectives, the bottom line universities are increasingly less self-reliant, they are getting less and less funding from the central government and they have to create their own money.”

Once again, the multiple demands that ensue in middle management makes some of the middle managers reconsider their priorities, their ethics as well as their research academic duties or other administration responsibilities. Once he starts and focuses on one of the multiple demands facing him, he takes a steer-political action towards his ethical goals. In his case HOD (T) chooses ethics towards the others which are part of the job requirement and he tried to neglect the ethics to the self.

Also, I note that he highlighted one of important points that higher academic education suffers from, which is the lack of financial support from the government and the consequent tension within institutions of higher education. This perceived lack of government support for higher education greatly affects all levels in management and creates a state of work instability. Short-term employees result from financial pressures, although they belong to and operate within this department. At the same time, they (universities) must create their own income. The HOD explained this in saying:

We still have quite a large proportion of staff which is on short-term contracts. And they are funded through third-stream income projects, which are generated by the school through training, commissioned research and what-have-you.

So there are a lot of issues related to contractual work, there are issues that are related to additional work that people are doing and how much of extra work they are allowed to do. This is a contentious issue within the faculty and the dean, having to deal with it at the moment. But I have to say unfortunately there are a lot of interpersonal challenges among staff. Universities, this one in particular, are under some financial stress. There are uncertainties of people on short-term contracts. We are one of the lowest paid universities in the country. We certainly get paid a lot less than our neighbouring institutions, so for example at the University of Cape Town, people get paid in what they call the 75th percentile, I think Stellenbosch is the 65th percentile and we are barely at the 50th percentile.

The lack of funding within the university and lower staff salaries may impact on their performance in the department. Therefore, HOD (T) has a sense to help staff as some of them need second jobs in order to cope financially. He therefore forgives them for any shortcomings on their tasks. He has compassion to assist staff, considered as ethics to the others.

The shift from the Collegiality discourse to the Managerialism discourse is one of the reasons for this contradiction, but in this particular university, there is a reason that made it more complicated as this transformation was unintended, according to the perspective of HOD (T).

“When I was dean we had a four-year extended programme so in the first year of your undergraduate we try to finish high school, with extra emphasis on writing skills and on mathematical literacy. But it is almost impossible to catch up on 12 years of education in one year.”

As for the ethical politics he adopts in his work technique, I have noticed through the interview that he shows ethical consideration towards himself and also towards others. After asking him about the new students at the university and how they performed, he replied that some of the new students face some problems; they are not ready for university level, especially those who come from the poor class due to the low level of education received. To address this problem, the university proposed working for one year in an effort to develop students' writing skills and also to develop mathematics. At this point, the HOD showed empathy and a great desire to help these students prepare and develop for the university stage. This interest and desire in helping his new applicants represents ethics of others.

5.5 Illustrative Case 4: HOD (A)

HOD (A) started working in his department in 1995 and became a director in 2010.

“We are an organisation that depends on all of its funding from external donor agencies. So we have staff of about 20 - 25 people. The majority of them are not dependent on the university funds for their salaries at all. So, most of the researchers who work here, their salaries are actually paid by external donors. That has a lot of implications for how I, as a manager, operate. So the researchers typically need to have quite a lot of independence in raising funds and doing their work. So, I think our department is an organisation where it is very much up to the individual researcher to determine what they work on and how they work.”

The section of the department has a different set-up. It belongs to the EMS faculty but does not have the same support when compared to other departments. Therefore, this department relies on itself to obtain funds. HOD (T) does not do many lectures for students, but the majority of his focus is how to manage his staff and addressing problems within the department. He works in such a unique environment and has a large number of staff who does not depend on university funds for their own salaries, but on donors instead. This situation puts the HOD in a position where he tries to achieve a balance in the department, to make the employees feel part of the department even though the department does not pay their salaries. That shows us how eager he was to help. Despite it not being his fault, he tried to help close this gap.

As I discussed previously, one of the most significant reasons for this situation is the decline of government commitment to and funding of higher education. HOD (A) tries hard to manage his staff and he makes extra effort to keep the staff feel that they are still part of the department. As a result of his effort towards his staff, I would argue that his ethical actions towards the others are clear. Even though he needs to focus on his own research, he chooses to help others.

“So as management, what we try to do is, firstly, to create a strong core that can sustain and support people’s work that is enabling and to find ways of reducing the isolation within which people work. So a lot of it is about the balance between allowing people the independence as professionals to raise funds, to identify what they want to do research on and at the same time to ensure that they are part of the broader organisation, that they contribute to the broader organisation and that they get what they need from the broader organisation. So, I don’t know whether you’re familiar with the term ‘herding cats?’”

He considers the situation that his employees are required to spend more time to raise their own funds. Therefore, he tried to strike a balance in the department between the staff responsibility to the department and their own time to generate their own funds. Those are his political ethics. Also, he tried to support those who receive their own salary from other donors and make them feel as though they still belong to the institution. Even though this is considered as ethical practice to the others, it must be remembered that the consideration he displays to the others is what the institution asks of middle managers. Organisations have built-in ‘moral technologies’ (Foucault, 1979) which is an attempt from the institution to control the employer and make them act in a certain way (Chan & Garrick, 2002). Nevertheless, when the middle manager chose to go an extra mile in his duties, he displayed ethics to the others.

From his efforts to assist staff, I infer that his ethical practices towards the other are very high. Despite the fact that it may be considered as part of his job, he made extra effort to help the others because he takes it upon himself to ensure that the environment in which the staff work is comfortable, that they feel included and belong to the institution. This kind of situation may

have been challenging for him as he is not only responsible to run this department but he is also responsible for how the staff find their own income. This is why he said he feels as if he is 'herding cats'.

“In terms of goal setting, we try to work out with people where they are in their current career and we try to create a supporting environment. Whether we are successful in that, I do not know. Some people as I say, flourish, other people, struggle. I think in this kind of environment where employment is insecure, where funding is insecure, some people find it very difficult and very harsh and people feel themselves to be quite isolated. Whether we do enough to counteract that, I don't know.”

Further evidence of the existence of ethics towards others is that he made one of his goals that of helping others and trying to create a suitable work environment for them. The environment and the reality around him shaped his ethics towards feeling responsible for his staff. That sense of responsibility led him to encourage the staff to complete their higher education such as PhD or Master's degrees by allowing them to take leave to complete their studies. Just the sense and feeling that his staff feels isolated indicates his high sense of responsibility towards the others. The policies pursued by the middle manager are ethics to the others although they hinder his academic research; he strives to help others around him.

“I think having the role as middle manager here, means that my own research career suffers. So I don't get much time to research and I don't get much time to publish. That's one of the unfortunate consequences of being in middle management. One neglects one's research and one's own research career. I haven't, and particularly in the context of being externally funded, for the first ten years that I worked here. I was on external funding as well, so it means that in the 22 years that I've worked here at the university, I've never had a sabbatical, which is something that a normal academic would be able to do.”

A frequent complaint from many middle managers about the multiple demands required of them to implement the system is that these multiple tasks force them to neglect their academic research. Therefore, renovations and changes to his academic identity are required to cope with the demands of being an HOD. He chose among these demands to respond to others, despite his own research career being neglected. His ethical practices towards the other are clear, he always tries to support the staff around him, encourage them to finish their studies, gave his colleague a year of leave to complete his PhD, displaying ethical behaviour to the other. Even when I started the interviewing process for this research, he was the first HOD to respond and the first volunteer to become my first participant. This emphasises his great level of ethics to others.

“One of my colleagues is taking a year of unpaid leave next year to finish his PhD, instead of being on the treadmill of doing consultancy work. We identify that the fact that he’s not getting to do his PhD is a big problem, and we encourage them to say, “look, you don’t have a salary coming from UWC, but we can organise a scholarship for you and take a year off and do your PhD and let’s try to find ways in which we can make sure you get that qualification”. So in terms of goal setting, we try to work out with people where they are in their current careers and we try to create a supporting environment. Whether we are successful in that, I do not know.”

In terms of the approach selected, he is always ready to assist the others. And the phrase that he used several times “whether we are successful or not” highlights that he is a compassionate and sensitive person. These are his politics to lead in this department, although he prefers to do academic work (which relates to the ethics of the self), his commitment to the others in the daily routine does not afford him a choice. He found himself in a situation which forced him to take care of the others.

“That door is usually open. So I would hope that people feel they would be able to come and talk to me, about any problems. Basically, my approach is to try to do whatever I can, to solve any problem. One of the things that we are always trying to understand and

have a sense of is about the root problems that are causing the difficulties that people have.”

To solve any problem that occurs in the department, he tries to find the root of the problem. That is a proof of his ethical practices to others and it also reveals that he is not a shallow person, but he is someone who has profundity. By keeping his door open for everybody to discuss their problems and to find solutions, it further shows deep understanding of his role and his internal ethical practices for the others. From his approach I would consider him as a person with ethics towards the others. As I said previously, it is part of middle manager’s jobs to run a department and find solutions to problems that occur on a daily basis but when it goes beyond that, when the manager makes extra effort, I consider that as ethical practices towards others.

“So, very often, I have to put aside my own work and just spend the day dealing with the urgencies of the moment and then I have to deal with my own paperwork and writing, etc. at the end of the day. It’s always important to distinguish between what’s urgent and what is important and it’s always important for me to figure out when it is my role to solve a problem or when I would be undermining one of my middle managers.”

He chooses to help others above himself even it will take his time therefore I would say that his ethical practices tend towards concern for others.

5.6 Illustrative Case 5: HOD (O)

HOD (O) has been in this department for two years. He is an assistant chair in his academic department and is managing human beings in his department as well. When asked how he views his role in the department, how he manages his staff and if he has any difficulties in running his department, his answer was:

“Well the way I see it, it is not very difficult because most of the rules we interpret are written in the rules and regulations. So most of the time it is a matter of interpretation.

Once you are able to point to the students and individuals you are dealing with to look this is what the university rules say, most of the time it is easy to make the point, because it's not coming from you directly, it's something that's written in black and white and for me it's easy to deal with. If the demands are reasonable, it is consistent, if it's not supported by the rules we have in black and white, then it's not difficult for me to say no."

Through the interview I have inferred that he is a fundamentalist middle manager, who has no hesitation in following the rules and regulations as set up by the top management. However, the reason for this is that he tends to concentrate on the academic research part of his work. When it comes to office work or administration, in order to save more time for his academic research, he is going along with the top management, by enforcing the rules devised by the top management, without any regard if these rules suit the others or not. He needs to save time to conduct his own research, publishing books and other academic work from which he benefits. In other words, his ethical politics inclined towards the ethics of the self.

"Office work is a secondary thing. I think my main engagement, employment to comment is to teach and to supervise and to do research, so office work is a secondary activity if I can put it that way."

This statement emphasises that his biggest interest is academic research. Furthermore, he is engaging with office work because he has to do so. This is not unusual due to the fact that middle managers come from an academic background, which is one of the important factors for their appointments as middle managers in the university. It is very common for managers to have a desire to focus on the academic research side, but at the same time they are required to take care of the office work aspects, such as the administration, registration, looking after their students and also solving the department's problems. In other word shifting from his academic background to being an active manager is needed in order to cope with the demands of his HOD role.

In other words, there are multiple demands that simultaneously confront middle managers; they have to choose to respond to these demands whether to the others or to themselves. Ethics is determined based on which demand the middle manager first responds to, the demand that he would like to spend more time on.

In my research I aim to determine how the personal ethics and politics of a middle manager influences him to choose the demand (or request) he would like to focus on first. In this case, for HOD (O) we note that the middle manager's tendencies are towards the ethics of the self, in the sense that his priority is to focus on the work that strengthens his academic record. This does not mean that he does not care about others, but his policy towards his work is centred on himself.

“I think dealing with top management is not very difficult because the policies are clearly defined and you are supposed to implement to the ground. Sometimes the difficulties are when the policies need to be interpreted to the student who happens to be at the other end. And that’s sometimes where the difficulty is.”

One of the duties of the middle manager is to be a link between top management and employees at the bottom. Every one of the HODs performs their duty according to their ethics. However, with HOD (O) whose politics are centred on ethics to the self, he finds himself struggling to convey information to fellow stakeholders. This struggle in the delivery of information to the other stakeholders has an explanation, namely that the middle manager delivers the information and guidance coming from top management, without taking into account whether these instructions may harm students or staff or may hinder the department. Moreover, that policy may not be accepted by students and staff and therefore the manager finds it difficult to deliver policies from the top management.

In addition, conveying the policies of the higher management without any consideration to others, whether they agree with this policy or not, may be interpreted as an attempt to save him from dealing with conflicts and distractions in order to practice the work that he intends to perform. I considered that his ethics towards the self is his primary ethical aspiration. Teaching, publishing books and articles, is what he regards as a priority.

“At work we as a section, want to have the success rate as very good, so that, if not all, at least most of the students who attend, the third years, honours, masters, PhD are able to finish their programmes on time. This is something we really want to work toward.”

Sometimes the ethics to the self and the ethics to the others are very similar or even intertwine and interconnect with each other. For example, here the HOD, through the above statement, gives a good example of having an ethical concern for others. He is interested in a good success

rate for students as he tries to put his plan into action to achieve this goal, which he stated is a collective goal, sought by the whole section.

The stated politics by the manager is clear evidence that he possesses the ethics to others, but at the time these politics also carry some ethics towards the self. When the department obtains a high rate of success, this seems good for the student only, but in reality, there are benefits for the middle manager as well. He will receive positive recognition inside and outside of the department. This does not mean that the middle manager has no ethics to the others but both aspects are intertwined and the personal benefit that the middle manager may receive may happen unintentionally.

“My personal goal is to make a difference. I have been in this section for only two years. Things were not well organised, so personally what is going to make me happy at the end of the day is my position, my term, period of time as head of department and managing to make some important improvements in the way things should work, which is the motivation for me.”

One of the most important reasons for success in the work is the existence of motivation or desire for this work, without this motivation, continuation in the work environment becomes difficult because of the lack of goals sought by the person to accomplish it. Setting goals in the long-term makes the person who works on these goals to persevere in an attempt to achieve his goals. I would call these plans ethical politics to gain ethical goals.

The motivation I am talking about is strongly linked to the ethical goals of the middle manager and these ethical goals are responsible for drawing up policies, being developed to achieve goals. In other words, these policies are designed to work out plans to reach the ethical goals of HOD (O).

In the ethical goals of the middle manager stated here ...to make me happy at the end of the day..., happiness implies to reach his ethical goals that are developing the section that works and creates better organisational capacity within the department. These ethical goals, however, appear to be ethics to the others, but cannot be said to be ethics to the others only. This is because the benefit is for two parties: the others, which is the department, the rest of the staff and the second party, which is the middle manager who benefits through a good reputation from work of the organised department.

“I like academic work, I tell my friends even if I were to get a job in a government department and they give me twice what I earn, I would not take it. I enjoy being an academic, doing research and teaching, probably less when it comes to managing the department, but I enjoy the academic work. So if I wake up in the morning and have to come to work, I am excited about it.”

As I have discussed earlier HOD (O) is an academic person from the ground and was assigned to work in this section. On this basis, it is therefore not surprising that his first concern is his academic work and it is therefore natural to have ethics of self-direction. However, there is the question of conflict in terms of priorities. In other words, how does he organise his working hours? His answer to this question is as follows:

“Look I am not perfect, but I try to devote time for each of the duties I am supposed to do. I always prioritise some things that are urgent and critical; those are what I will put up front. Then some things which are important but not necessarily urgent, I will hold back, so I use prioritisation to manage these activities I am engaging in.”

Priority dictates that he has to deal with important urgent matters first, regardless of the amount of things that happen suddenly. It is natural that there are tendencies to follow his academic work, because his ethical goal is to the self but he tries to create a balance between the various activities that he has to perform. That various activities he has to do may result in certain inconsistencies. When asked about this conflict and if he has a problem with these kinds of tasks, he says:

“It's difficult to pick what I hate because it's not the only thing I do. If I need to divide my total time and the portion that is assigned to managing the department, it's not the greater part, because I am doing teaching, I am doing research, I'm doing supervision, I am doing other stuff, the research, the management rules. There are many things I do, so it's not worrying me a lot; it takes a lot of time because of reports and people coming to you. The other breaks your thought patterns and you are not able to have space of more of the other things, but otherwise I wouldn't say I hate any particular thing of it.”

He complains of the various amounts of work duties and overlapping of tasks. I have heard this complaint from almost all the middle managers. There were complaints of various tasks they need to deal with at the same time. His ethical policies are to pay attention to academic work and if there is other office work, he arranges them according to their importance. Therefore, he

complains that the office work may interrupt his academic ideas; he needs more time and space with his academic work because his ethical goal is to the self.

In conclusion HOD (O) seems to have deeply influenced by the moral discourse that research is the most important in the university. Organisations have built in ‘moral technologies’ (Foucault, 1979). He is adopting that structure in his own way to run his department. Therefore, he takes care of the other, according to the top management’s discourse. In other words, he tried to take care to the others but the majority of his actions are performed according to ‘moral technologies’.

5.7 Illustrative Case 6: HOD (S)

He started acting in this position in 2015 and comes from Stellenbosch University. He said the following:

“My role entails making sure everything works properly, that the department is working properly, from coming out with a vision which is in line with the university’s IPO and ensuring that in each and every process during the year we are working towards that vision. The majority of those goals are making sure that teaching is done properly, because first and foremost teaching should be in place, because this is a university. Ensuring that we also encourage our staff members to do research because the university is moving towards becoming a research institution. So we encourage each other to do journal articles and to also present conference papers. For those who are battling to complete their PhDs we encourage them to finish their PhDs, and where possible to assist getting funding for them to get teaching reliefs that they are given enough time to finish to their PhDs.”

The role he was talking about is the role that the middle manager is expected to play. According to many of the middle managers with whom I have conducted interviews, everything that is supposed to be done within department, has to be escalated to the HOD. This requires the middle manager to change his academic identity to meet the requirements of the work by incorporating management thinking and practices. He has to pay close attention to everything.

The paradox among the middle managers is that some of them are playing this role with passion that comes from ethics towards the others and some others deliver this role according to moral technology, that the top management requires it.

Therefore, he explains how he is helping his staff in doing the research they need. He is paying attention to other staff members who find it difficult to complete their PhDs (ethical concern for others) and he also tries to assist them to generate their own funding. He demonstrates a genuine interest in others. These policies of the university guide and focus a great deal of moral concern for students and other stakeholders. It is sometimes the ethics to the others does not happen just because the HOD aspires to that goal, but because the general university policies are geared towards that standard.

“Let me first go back to the journals. You find that most people are not good when it comes to writing for publishing. We also try and assist others with a research platform, where after every 2 weeks we have a staff member presenting what they are busy with, and we give our own ideas on how to improve. In some cases, we have special requests from the staff members saying they want a programme that will assist them with data analysis. We find someone who, among ourselves is comfortable in doing that. And then we ask the person to present to the department and the same goes for the qualitative research we had last year. And so on and so on. Then, like I said, with each step of the way, we also keep track of research output to see how far we are. And also speaking about our research output, we encourage our extraordinary staff members to write and publish with us.”

As a middle manager, he has an interest in staff and students in the department. This interest he has shown, may vary from manager to another according to his ethical identity and also according to the direction of his ethics, whether towards the others or towards the self. The politics relating to the ‘middle manager’ are the ones that determine their ethics. In this example, HOD (S) stated that there is a problem of writing for publication. There are also employees who struggle with data analysis. The middle manager intervenes to find a solution

for them and he appoints a person from within the department to assist them. He also tries to encourage them to publish books and addresses the problems they face during writing, which indicates the existence of morality for others.

“One of those things I am struggling with is the policies and procedures, so if there are problems, depending on the nature of the problems, you have to look at what the guidelines say, if we have problems of this nature. So I have to go now with what the university says, because the moment you go against the rules in the book, then you are on the wrong side. So you don't want to be on the wrong side, you want to ensure that you are always on the right side. And there are issues e.g. when you have a problem with the student and you may feel you are right, the student also feels that they are right and you are not agreeing. In a case like this one, you have to look for a senior member of staff and mediate it, sort it out and maybe they can give you an honest opinion on what should happen. Because we are not always right, sometimes we are wrong and I agree and then we have to then follow what the rules say.”

HOD (S) explains his ethical politics and questions, in the event of any misunderstanding or conflict with his staff or students, the way in which to resolve the problem. Firstly, he tries to refer to the existing instructions at the university because it is the policies of the university which are supposed to resolve problems occurring within the university and he does not try to operate outside of these policies, as far as possible. He explains where his ethics are coming from. It comes from the top management discourse that Foucault refers to, being moral technology (1979). He normally tries to find a clear solution that satisfies everyone. If there is no such solution the middle manager's ethical practices will have to request a third party to mediate the matter and find a solution that satisfies all parties. This is ethics towards others.

Here in this case I find a difference in terms of the other middle managers interviewed in how this HOD deals with the problems in his daily work. Sometimes he escalates the problem to the top management to consider the regulations and to dissect the problem. Sometimes he finds

a solution in a sociable way. Therefore, I argue that he is balancing his ethical aspirations with the normative managerial discourse.

“We also developed the way we judge, which includes our professional behaviour, in fact I had one-on-one meetings with every member of staff last year, to see what we are doing right and what we do not do right and the kind of behaviour you want to see. All of us are introduced. So we came out with rules of conduct of some kind that we share, and we constantly remind each other of what is agreed and we will remind you to abide by the Code of Conduct. But overall, I think my relationship with my colleagues is fine, but here and there you find that you have to call in the staff and you ask them, there are instances where you have to reschedule some of your time.”

One of the important things within the organisation is the way in which the middle manager and his assistants deal with each other, which is important because it gives an indication of the sense of their ethics. Setting up a meeting with his staff and colleagues to discuss the best way to run the department, shows high regard for acting ethically toward others. Even though managing the department is one of his core priorities and requirements of top management, the way in which he carried this out and the consideration shown to the others is evidence of his ethical consideration for others.

“At the moment I am also teaching research methods at master’s level, so during the class, the lectures, we actually encourage them to complete their proposals. And we made the completion of the proposals one of the outcomes for them to finish Research Methodology. In other words, the research proposal is their exam. So to some this is to encourage them to try to finish their theses. So basically in terms of vision, in terms of summary, we are looking at the teaching, we are looking at the research output, we are also looking at the masters output. And being a specialised field, we also look at the completion of the internships but the completion of the internships is dependent on the Masters.”

In terms of interest to the others, when he talks about his students and how to teach them, he talks about it in a kind of interest and it is not seen merely as work. He cares about their success

and encourages them to finish their proposals on time. The interest in others in this way is evidence of the ethics to the others. The middle manager could only teach students without any encouragement and without showing attention to them, but his ethical policies demand more time and effort with the students. Even if there is benefit to the middle manager in the students' success rate, these politics are considered as ethical to others.

“Ok I must say, I don't know if it's my department, I am not sure, something about the culture I think. Because if I compare the culture of this department and where I was at the Department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch and the culture at the School of Economic Sciences at Wits, you find that it is different, people somehow want to be monitored to see if they are coming to work and to encourage developers on the table. Because I have been in two institutions, what I have learned is that you don't have to be in the office to be a good academic. You must know without anyone telling you, you ensure that you are there for your lectures, you are there for consultations, no one must come after you, you must ensure that you write your papers and publish, no one must be making progress on you to say what you are busy with.”

The middle manager speaks here about the internal ethics of employees, about the basis of his self-control and that employees differ from one institution to another. Some of them are committed to work without the need to monitor behaviour in work and some of them need to be monitored to ascertain the extent of other's commitment to work. The ethics within the employee is the basis for directing his behaviour. It demonstrates HOD (S)'s political ethics through him controlling those who are negligent.

HOD (S) is a manager who has a great experience, is willing to help and take care of the others such as helping them in writing research, encouraging them to present conference papers. Furthermore, he is doing these tasks professionally, but he is doing it according to both ethics to the others and moral technology, that the top management requires. His ethical goals towards the others are not that high, but because he is highly experienced, he does so with efficiency.

5.8 Illustrative Case 7: HOD (MK)

HOD (MK) has been in her position for two years and it is noted that she is very confident within herself, believing in what she is doing.

“One of the challenges facing middle managers in academic institutions, you lead a team of experts and that is very different from other institutions like corporates where other people are not as qualified as you are. In academic institutions, I can be the head of department with people who under me being professors, being experts, that is very different from the corporate environment. So that you find more robust debate on decisions here compared with corporate. In a corporate environment, I've got the experience, I've got the qualification and that's it, it's much easier than an academic organisation. In academic institutions, you can't just state your decision and it's done. Your staff, employees will challenge you, they will ask you to justify your decisions.”

The middle manager's position may vary depending on the institution in which the HOD works. Each institution has its own requirements and circumstances. The nature of the work in the academic institution differs from corporate institutions. The middle manager talked about the challenges being faced in the academic institution such as staff under her authority with more experience and qualifications. This presents a natural dilemma that requires the middle manager to build a culture of cohesion. The role played by the middle manager here, which is to lead a group of highly qualified staff, is different from the academic role he was expecting to play. Playing this role requires a change in his academic identity and forces him to incorporate a managerial orientation to his academic identity.

“When I leave this role that I am in, I will enable some people with a skill set, with confidence, with work experience to be able to lead as managers, so planning for succession. I have enabled the students. I have given them access to things that I have not had access to as a student. This is my goal so for me, later I want to look back to these children. These academics have been developed because I was there, the contribution you left.”

Her view about her job emphasises that she has a high sense of ethics to the others. She wants her contribution to remain after she leaves her job, by influencing others, developing them and caring for them to become effective managers in the department. These politics are followed by ethical policies emanating from the self which are the ethical politics of the others. This is evident when she said she has enabled the students with access to things she did not have as a

student. Here she is trying to create a better generation than the one she was part of and I do not see any reason to do so except her ethics to the others. But as I said earlier, having an ethical concern towards others as well to the self may be interlinked. This is clear when she said she wants students to be influential in their work and successful because of her contributions.

“Personally, in my life, I always find myself in a leadership role, so I always want to make sure I leave a legacy where somebody will say that person brought positive things to this department. To be honest I just want to be happy in the roles I am in. I want to come from home and work and really enjoy the work I am doing. I want my family to be happy and I want my kids to be happy. That is essentially what it boils down to, that when we strip work aside, everyone just wants to be happy. I try as much as possible that the work environment for my colleagues is an enjoyable one, because this is where we spend most of our time.”

She attempts to create a positive environment for her and for the others, confirming what we said earlier, ethics to the others and to the self may be interlinked. There is evidence of that when she cares about the others, making an effort to create a friendly environment for them. At the same time she is developing a comfortable environment for herself too. Moreover, she is creating a positive environment in the department in which she works as she is sharing the work environment with the others. She displays the ethical side to the others and for herself as well.

“If they don’t like the work environment that they are in, then I am failing, because this is where we spend most of our time. I hate working environments that I don’t look forward to. I want to look forward to going to work and equally with my colleagues, I want them to wake up in the morning and say I can’t wait to go to work to do the job that I need to do.”

One of the goals of HOD (MK) here is to foster passion in the employees and for them to be willing to come to work in this way. Moreover, she regards that as success in her leadership. On the contrary, employees' sense of discomfort at work and unwillingness to go to work is viewed as a failure in leadership, which indicates a high sense of ethics towards others.

“Because that department holds a different view, that one holds a different view, that faculty holds a different view, so I will be working like a mad man. At the end of the day the strategic decisions can only be taken by one person. I always say you live by the sword

and you die by the sword. If this is the decision I have taken and this is an executive manager, I may like it in my department, somebody else might not like it, but you have to take that decision. And we all know this is the decision, this is the position and we respect it whether we like it or not. That is what that person has taken. I will give my view but that is my view about working in academic institutions, that I can write an email now to the rector and say I am not happy about 1, 2, 3.”

Within campuses there are numerous dialogs that influence the welfares and purposes of researchers within a university which in turn might affect their work environment. Consequently, this makes it difficult to familiarize numerous actions within universities. Furthermore, although this issue is very confusing to them, the HOD (MK) discusses the numerous demands that accumulate at the middle management level, which basically forms part of the university work requirements. In this instance ethics are generated by inaction, especially when you decide on which request you need to first-react to. Such an action is referred to as ‘ethics politics’ which makes you to establish yourself as an ethical partisanship (McMurray, Pullen& Rhodes, 2011).

HOD (MK) took a decision on how she wants to respond to the demands that she faces; she responds according to her ethics to the self. In addition, if there is anyone who disagrees with the decision that she has made, she gives them an opportunity to complain by writing to her or to the top management. That is considered as ethics to others but I can also say she was affected by ‘moral technologies’ too.

“I think the good thing about academic institutions is that they have a platform to relay your frustrations. Like I was telling you earlier, academic environments are not like corporate environments. Last year the rector called in managers and middle managers and asked them what are your views on current times, are we handling this process well of Fees Must Fall? What do you suggest we can do? People went (snaps fingers twice). So the good thing about being in academic institutions is the doors to air your views are open. Now whether they take them or they don’t, that is another topic on its own.”

Another example of the existence of Collegiality and Managerialism in the way in which management in the higher education sector of SA is conducted, is where the top management meets with the staff and asks for their opinions in decision-making and their views on how to face occasional problems are considered. At the same time the final decision is still in the hands

of the top management. The method of management in higher education in SA, or at least in this university, depends on the combination of the two methods of management in Collegiality and Managerialism and I think that this creates a good environment for middle managers to enact their ethics (Schmidt, McNulty, Howard-Baptiste, Harvey & 2017). The HOD also pointed to something important, namely, the difference between the middle managers in higher education and the middle managers in the corporate environment, each of which has challenges and different requirements. This sheds light on middle managers' ethics to the self which may be affected by the environment in which they operate.

“I have told my college when I started this job you may be happy, you may not be happy with it, but I don't accept if someone has something he did not like and kept it in. If you have something you don't agree with, you must come to my office and tell me. And if I did wrong I will tell you I did wrong, I really apologise for that, but if you did wrong I will tell you, you did wrong and please fix it and that's it, we move away from it. I tried to be as vocal as possible to ensure that I hear another person's side of the story, because I believe if you avoid it and sweep it under the carpet, both of you will never know what the issue was and you can't solve something you both don't understand or know.”

In terms of how the HOD deals with her staff, she showed us an example of her own ethics and then explained how she deals with the issues that occur at the department. This reflects her ethical identity towards the others. When a problem or misunderstanding occurs with an employee, the HOD initiates a constructive dialogue and interprets the views to ensure that there is no misunderstanding. As I have said, this HOD's practices indicate that her ethical concern for others is high.

The HOD (MK) has great ethics to the others, she wants to help, develop and create a comfortable environment for all staff around her. She was influenced by a 'moral technologies' discourse, in her own way, to run the department. She indeed has ethics to the others, but also the discourse within the department has impacted on her.

5.9 Illustrative Case 8: HOD (R)

The HOD (R) he has been a director of a school within the EMS faculty for four years and prior to this he worked at the University of Johannesburg. Therefore, he has the relevant experience. He said:

“My job would entail setting a strategic vision for the school in line with the university, institutional, operational and faculty's operational plan, to set our strategic vision in alignment with that. We also have documents that align with the rest of the faculty of the university. Also, in addition to those operational plans and carrying out those operational plans, my job is also to procure funding, executing our plans on new programmes, looking at our existing programmes, where we can streamline networking with industry and also there is another role such as the academic role which is teaching and learning, ensuring your academic function is attended to and the other function is research. And what I like in my job is that I like putting together the projects and I like working with people and getting projects off the ground. I see my role as someone who conceives projects with people and I'm involved in executing those projects.”

The HOD (R) regards his role in the department as having much responsibility, such as developing long-term financing plans in order to obtain the necessary funding for the department. He also sees his duties as supervising these plans as well as overseeing the new department's programmes in order to work on developing them. In addition to his academic role, he is a middle manager affected by the discourse within the higher education system. In other words, he is doing his job effectively according to the university discourse, 'moral technology', but at the same time he mentioned that he prefers working on such areas as financial projects and he is very successful in undertaking these projects.

What we regard as his ethical practices is that he assigns projects to others who have the experience and desire to work in those areas. This demonstrates a self-awareness and awareness of others. As he said "I like working with people". This implies that he has an ethical orientation towards others, encouraging them and supporting them. We must not forget that ethics may be mixed between himself and the others, because when he works on finance projects, the benefit reverts to himself and the others who have worked with him. In other words, his ethics are towards the others, but at the same time he is working on himself too.

“So if you look at my projects when I become the director the areas I identified as core are Entrepreneurship and Finance or Financial Planning. Entrepreneurship is important because if you look at a South African context, we need to create more jobs. We need to create a more balanced distribution of wealth. We need to look at the financial literacy, especially of people from designated areas, create opportunities for those people to come into the system and to gain qualifications in areas such as financial planning for them to

go out there and to work for those big corporates and to work in our communities. I believe in empowering our people, so when you talk about project(s) I open it up for everybody and give people the opportunity to be part of the projects.”

When the HOD (R) told us about the projects he is working on, I inferred, through the manner in which he spoke, that his interest goes beyond the mere implementation of his duties, because he spoke with an absolute interest. While he explains his project, he showed ethics to the others, he pays attention to the financial literacy of his staff as well as creating more job opportunities within his department. He has very ambitious goals for his department; through financing these projects, he is able to develop these projects. Thus, we may conclude that his ethics indicate ethics towards others. However, it must keep in mind that at the same time these actions can also be considered ethical aspirations for self-development.

There are two beneficiaries of the projects that HOD (R) is currently working on, namely, the others and himself. It can be beneficial to the HOD (R) in the form of a good reputation, or perhaps as financial gain. Therefore, we may conclude that the ethical goals of the HOD (R) may be viewed as a mixture of ethics to others and one self.

“In this environment when you start out, in order to become a director, you need to come close to your thoughts with the thoughts of others. It is almost like political election. In those elections in America you’ve got to be popular and then people vote you in, once you’re in it’s a different story, you can’t be nice to the people. You must deliver on the work. So it’s like a political contest, you will say come on people you’ve got to support me and when you’re in, you have reacted to reality.”

He talks here about the difference between the policies that he is supposed to work with and the reality around him within the work environment. As we know, one of the definitions for the function of the middle manager is to be a link between the administration at the top and management at the bottom, meaning that it deals with two parties within the institution. Also, he must manage staff around him and furthermore, there are student matters in the department and this in itself is a great challenge.

Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien (2012, 1044) using a discursive approach to leadership, suggest that followers should also be seen as “actors” who “engage, react and negotiate” with leaders. In terms of the comments of HOD (P) it appears that his followers influence him to act according

to their desires. Off course they don't control him, but they exert pressure on him. Consequently, we see that followers exert pressure on the leader, meaning that the followers exert ethico-political pressure on leaders.

At first, the HOD (R) draws his own politics according to his ethical aims. These politics may change later in the work for many reasons, such as, the dominant public discourse in the educational institution, which can interfere with the policies of the middle manager, the difficulty of dealing with staff and students and the difficulty of imposing laws that come from the top management administration of the university. All these factors can affect middle manager's ethics. HOD (R) was impacted by those factors. Therefore, he may change in his politics, according to the situation with which he is dealing. This also affects his academic identity. He is no longer only be interested in the academic aspect of his work, but he has to enter into more administrative details and this requires a shift in his identity as an academic.

“When dealing with people, especially academics, you are always going to have problems with certain people. Dealing with people and also dealing with students, you are working in an environment where you're working with highly educated people. They think they are laws unto themselves. Academics think we know everything so you can't tell us anything. We have clever people and to manage them can be very difficult. Every one of them thinks you are the director and we are better than you, because we are educated and smarter, it's like herding cats. And my approach to handle such a situation is that first of all I give people chances. This is the issue at hand, let us take the arrogance out of the equation and see how best we can deal with our issue. I am of the view that if we made a mistake our rules are unclear, give the person the benefit of the doubt and we move on.”

In this case, when there is a problem or misunderstanding with employees or colleagues or with students, which is common in such an environment, what is the best way to correct these differences? That depends primarily on the policies that the middle manager has adopted and also the ethical identity of the manager. When such situations occur, he tries to let the staff in the department, who have those problems, solve it by themselves. As he said, they are intelligent people and he has respect for them. Therefore, he gives them an opportunity to work it out. If the problem is not resolved, he then needs to engage with it. Instead of imposing his own ethics on them, he allowed them to use their own politics to address it, his ethical approach towards others.

“People sometimes at work say that I say yes too much but in an environment like this: “WHAT IS MY JOB?” My job is to empower our academics and our students to get ahead. You cannot be saying ‘no’ but obviously within boundaries you should be saying ‘yes’. Somebody wants to go to a conference and there is money and they're going to produce a paper, GO! Somebody wants to study further and get another qualification, GO! Where the problem comes in, is where people don't do what they are supposed to do, where they lack in what they are supposed to be doing.”

Obviously, there was resistance from the department to his work techniques, but his insistence on doing what he sees as best for the others is further proof of his ethics to the others. He encourages colleagues and staff to move forward in their academic and practical careers by inspiring them, permitting them to attend scientific conferences and to complete their academic studies. He says that a priority of the HOD's work is to take care of the staff and department. He also says that one of the roles that middle managers have to play is that of developing the department and the staff as well and this in turn reflects on the efficiency of the section, so he is encouraging employees to develop themselves.

Even though his politics are against many people around him, he continues to do what he thinks is best for the department and that implies that he works regarding his ethics and he takes action, regardless of the discourse within the department's environment. As we mentioned earlier in chapter four through the data analysis I would identify codes and then convert these into themes (patterns) which will be categorised into significant units, in the form of groups, in order to get an answer for research question. Concluding from the above analysis I will summarise the middle managers daily work practices.

5.10 General Work Practices

In this section in order to answer my first research question using the analysis from the previous section: “What are the ethical practices of middle managers in a previously disadvantaged university in South Africa?” and to get an answer I asked all the HODs this question: “What do middle managers do at work”? I gathered some of their verbatim responses in the table 1 below.

Table 1: Academic Middle Managers daily work practices

Teaching	Admin	Research	Supervision
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I like the teaching. HOD (P)	We are responsible for teaching, research, administration, finances, everything. HOD (P)	I would say I enjoy research. HOD (P)	We are responsible for teaching, research, administration, finances, everything. HOD (P)
I teach undergraduates. HOD (M)	I will contact all my staff via email. HOD (M)	I love to do research. HOD (M)	Supervision which I am doing. HOD (M)
I lecture. HOD (T)	Above that I have responsibilities for running the school. HOD (T)	I also publish, co editing a book at the moment. HOD (T)	I have PhD students, masters' students. HOD (T)
I teach HOD (O)	Office work is a secondary activity. HOD (O)	I do research. HOD (O)	and I supervise. HOD (O)
I am also teaching HOD (S)	If things are coming from the top management that means agenda is attached. HOD (S)	I am doing research met HODs at master's level. HOD (S)	Also growing our post graduate students. HOD (S)
I do teach HOD (MK)	Most of the time I am busy with my office work. HOD (MK)	I do research. HOD (MK)	I do supervise. HOD (MK)
	I am responsible for administration work. HOD (R)		I have PhD students. HOD (R)

I found that the respondents perform the following tasks: (1) Teaching and giving lectures; (2) Supervision of postgraduate studies; (3) Administration work, such as marking student papers, managing staff and solving students' problems; and (4) Research and publishing papers and

books. Among these tasks I have found a plethora of complaints about the large number of additional tasks they have to do, which in turn affects their academic performance. As can be seen in table 1, HOD (O) mentioned that he does all of the four activities although he mentioned that office work or administration is secondary for him. This is true for all the other HODs they have responsibility for all those tasks.

5.11 Major Themes: Academic Middle Managers

In this section I discuss the major themes that I discovered. I found two themes that came out strongly during the analysis: One of those themes is that middle managers use their ethical goals and aspirations to act in a manner that allows them to enact their ethical identities. The second theme is that middle managers have to undergo a transfer in their identity from being an academic middle manager to engaging in tasks required of a typical business manager in order to deal with administrative work which takes middle managers away from their academic work. In table 2, I list some of the data that I extracted that confirmed this.

Table 2: Themes identified

Transforming their identity	Work practices guided by their ethical goals
<p>HOD (P) Well, if you look at the job definition of the HOD, it's basically everything being done at university is delegated to the HOD, so we are responsible for teaching, research, administration, finances, everything.</p>	<p>HOD (P) It is really about planning and making lists, I do not know what else to say, working, working hard, it's not rocket science, you have to work it out yourself so for me you have to work out your strengths and weaknesses.</p>
<p>HOD (M) If the structure that comes from the top says that X, Y, Z must be done, I will escalate this</p>	<p>HOD (M) at the moment I am doing my job because I know the demands of the job and I am willing</p>

<p>down normally. So I will contact all my staff via email and say what we have do and this our due date. Also, I will talk about them in our department meeting and then I will try to facilitate and see if there are any problems, to please let me know before the time and I will see if I can help.</p>	<p>to sacrifice my nights, sacrifice my free time because first and foremost, I am an academic and I don't want to be negligent.</p> <p>I have started an NPO programme (Non-Profitable Organisation) where I raise funds for our needy students</p>
<p>HOD (T)</p> <p>Well, there is a certain paradox. You select people for senior positions based on their academic qualifications and then you give them administrative and managerial work. And South Africa is still very confused on this point of view.</p> <p>So you are expecting deans for example to come with a PhD when they select a dean. Now what are your qualifications? They want an academic leader, but I can tell you, from 10 and half years as a dean, you do very little academic work.</p> <p>So most academics will say there is tension between their academic work which you are being judged on and the expectations you have in your managerial administrative work.</p>	<p>HOD (T)</p> <p>I think I am enough of a professional to say I don't bring what my personal feelings are into my relationship with anybody within work environment.</p> <p>I had been interested in creating a funds to this school , all the chairs and furniture here comes the European Union, I was part of a consortium of universities that got funding from it,</p> <p>I got a cheque of one \$1 million from the American millionaire George Soros.</p>

<p>HOD (A)</p> <p>I think having the role as middle manager here, means that my own research career suffers</p>	<p>HOD (A)</p> <p>It means that in the 22 years that I've worked here at the university, I've never had a sabbatical, which is something that a normal academic would be able to do."</p>
<p>HOD (O)</p> <p>My role entails making sure everything in this department works properly.</p>	<p>HOD (O)</p> <p>You must know without anyone telling you, you ensure that you are there for your lectures, you are there for consultations, no one must come after you, you must ensure that you write your papers and publish, no one must be making progress on you to say what you are busy with.</p>
<p>HOD (MK)</p> <p>One of the challenges facing middle managers in academic institutions, you lead a team of experts and that is very different from other institutions like corporates</p>	<p>HOD (MK)</p> <p>When I leave this role that I am in, I will enable some people with a skill set, with confidence, with work experience to be able to lead as managers</p>
<p>HOD (R)</p> <p>In this environment when you start out, in order to become a director, you need to come close to your thoughts with the thoughts of others, it's almost like political election</p>	<p>HOD (R)</p> <p>My job is to empower our academics and our students to get ahead.</p>

5.11.1 Theme 1

As for this theme which relates to “pressure to transform their identity” most of the middle managers complained of the pressure that they were feeling to transform their academic identities and take on administrative identities. They face increasing pressure due within the continually changing demands. The modern middle manager in a HEI environment is expected

to adapt and to cope with such demands. In a HEI environment the situation has been accentuated by greater budgetary constraints. This implies that middle managers must have a reasonably good understanding of managing resources effectively and efficiently. Other challenges include the managers' ability to handle aspects such as employment equity, training and emerging academic issues. In this regard middle managers are being pressurised to adopt contemporary managerial ways of coping with the increase with such contextual challenges. HOD (T)'s statement was clear when he refers to a paradox. He argues that the middle manager acquired this position based on the basis of his academic experience and track record. When he accepted the job he was surprised that he was expected to handle an ever increasing amount of administrative work which prevented him from carrying out his academic responsibilities effectively.

Next I am going to illustrate an example that I adopted Lichtman's (2013) on data analysis suggesting the 3Cs (coding, categorising and concepts); a process moving from raw data to themes. For example, in this data chunk I identified the following codes:

An example taken from HOD (M)'s interview transcript:

The way I understand HOD is to sort of manage the department, overseeing the normal running of the department obviously working, supporting, motivating the staff and having a vision for where you want the department to be. We have workshops to discuss the plans for the department to see how the department grows and develops. That's the way I understand my role as HOD.

This statement I identified the following codes: "managing other employees" and "leadership" which I took from the words "motivating the staff". Then I categorized this with similar codes like "multiple tasks", "multiple stakeholders", "conflicting demands". I then formulated the following concept, identity transformation.

Another example taken from HOD (T)'s interview transcript:

So you are expecting deans for example to come with a PhD when they select a dean. Now what are your qualifications? They want an academic leader, but I can tell you, from 10 and half years as a dean, you do very little academic work.

This statement I identified the following codes: "different demands" and "leadership" which I took from the words "motivating the staff". I then categorized this with similar codes like

"multiple tasks", "multiple stakeholders", and "conflicting demands". I then formulated the following concept, identity transformation.

Another example taken from HOD (MK)'s interview transcript:

One of the challenges facing middle managers in academic institutions, you lead a team of experts and that is very different from other institutions like corporates where other people are not as qualified as you are

In addition, in this statement I identified the following codes: "different demands" and "leadership" which I took from the words "motivating the staff". I then categorized this with similar codes like "multiple tasks", "multiple stakeholders", and "conflicting demands". I then subsequently formulated the following concept, identity transformation.

5.11.2 Theme 2

Regarding the second theme "work practices guided by ethical goals" in table 1 it can be seen that HOD (R) speaks about developing students and academics. These are his chosen ethical goals amongst the many goals that are demanded of him. These responsibilities are also key aspects demanded from all other middle manager as well as from contemporary middle managers in a HEI environment. For most of the middle managers, many of their effective actions at work and meeting key milestones were not guided by any formal aspect contained in the job description. On the contrary, this behaviour is guided by their ethical goals and aspirations and was not solely based on the regulations of the university administration.

An example taken from HOD (M)'s interview transcript:

I have started an NPO programme (Non-Profitable Organisation) where I raise funds. I go and speak to funders, possible funders to help our needy students, so for me that is the way forward, get enough funds and sponsors so that we can grow, so that we can have more staff, so that we can enable everyone to do the best of their ability.

When I read this phrase I coded it as "internal ethical aspirations" and then classified it with other symbols such as "values" and then I formulated concepts such as "ethical goals".

Another example taken from HOD (A):

As management, what we try to do is, firstly, to create a strong core that can sustain and support people's work that is enabling and to find ways of reducing the isolation within which people work

In addition, this phrase I coded it as "internal ethical aspirations" and then classified it with other symbols such as "values". I subsequently formulated concepts such as "ethical goals".

5.12 Summary and Conclusion

This chapter discusses how middle managers construct and negotiate their ethical practices and their identities and how they struggle to redefine their identities over time within their workspaces. In this chapter I presented data obtained through in-depth interviews from all eight middle managers and analysed it in detail. Thereafter I answered the question what do middle managers do. I found that the answer to this question is that they did the following activities: teaching, research, supervising and administration. I also found two themes that repeated itself within the data describing what middle managers do: firstly that what they did in their day-to-day activities stemmed from their ethical goals and aspirations. Secondly, that there was pressure on them to engage in transformation that middle managers were experiencing in that they had to transform their identities and incorporate aspects of Managerialism into their identities.

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CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

In this chapter the main findings with regard to the research questions are summarised and general conclusions, based on the findings of the study, as presented in this thesis, are described. Furthermore, the strengths and limitations of this thesis are considered and a suggestion for further research into higher education is presented. This chapter concludes with recommendations for top management and university governance officials as well as for the middle managers in higher education institutions.

6.2 Findings with regard to the research questions

- What are the ethical practices of middle managers in a previously disadvantaged university in South Africa?

For this question I found that the ethical practices of the middle managers vary from person to person. Ethical practices are evident when faced with the challenges at work, for example, the challenges that I found, which the middle managers complained about, and they are represented in the multiple demands that differ from their academic specialization, and inhibits them from their academic role as well. When middle managers confronted with these multiple requirements, the middle managers dealt with these according to their ethical practices. Some of them made some of these demands a full priority as it was important for them, especially if that demand were related to students or colleagues. While some middle managers treated certain demands as a secondary matter. Hence the importance of ethical practices as they contribute to the increase in productivity within the educational institution.

Sub questions:

- What do middle managers do at work?

Middle managers summed up their work as consisting of teaching, research, administration, finances, supervision and publishing. But these daily activities are influenced by the ethical goals of the middle manager. Their ethical goals led them to focus on specific work instead of other parts of their other work. For example, there are managers who are interested in the academic side and give priority to this over the other work activities. Others have a focus on helping their students, employees and co-workers. There are middle managers who have a

special project working on it to find funding for students who do not have the ability to pay the cost of study despite this project was at the expense of their own academic tasks.

- How do middle managers' ethical choices affect their work practices?

When there is a conflict and overlap between the different requirements in the work, here comes the role of moral choices to support some demands without others. Some of them support the demands that come at the core of the academic specialization. Some of them meet the demands of students and staff at the expense of their academic specialization.

- How did middle managers reshape their identity according to different work demands?

Among the challenges identified in this study, there is a challenge regarding the scope of work as the middle managers had to deal with multiple requirements in their daily work, these requirements are not their specialty or they have not been trained on how to deal with these requirements. Therefore they have to find out how to deal with these requirements; they had to work on changing their identity from an academic to a “manager” and treated these demands professionally. On the other hand, there are middle managers who only practice these demands with minimum requirements.

6.2.1 Themes

These are the two main themes that have been found in my study:

Transforming their identity	Work practices guided by their ethical goals
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6.2.1.1 Transforming their identity

This theme was based on the repetition that I found in the interviews I had with eight middle managers who expressed the fact that, the tasks assigned to them were beyond the fact that they were academics and they had to work as managers in the administrative sector. This shift in the nature of work imposed by the reality of the new roles for middle managers, posed some

difficulties for some middle manager. At the same time we found other managers who accepted and adapted to the new situation. Nevertheless, they said that this type of work negatively affected on their academic work.

6.2.1.2 Work practices guided by their ethical goals

Another theme that I found in the results that I found is that the ethical goals adopted by the middle manager affected their daily work and this is shown when he has interrelated work from an academic point of view as an academic director and other work related to students, employees or colleagues. Judging from his ethical aims, he prioritizes dealing with what is required of him. That is why I find that their ethical goals positively affected their daily work practices.

To restate the above, ethics played a role in the choices that middle managers made regarding their day work practices within a demanding work context. My study draws on previous findings (see Huy, 2011; Son, 2017) suggesting that middle managers are required to become problem solvers and in this way shapes their ethical practices. Such ethical practices in some instances focuses on managing the emotional states of their employees (see Clegg & McAuley, 2005) in relation to performance. In this regard my study finds that some HODs were enjoying management and others disliked it and practiced it as a secondary task. This meant that the differences in their goals and aspirations resulted in them focusing on different work practices.

Secondly, middle managers were under constant pressure to transform their identities from being only academics to becoming academic-managers. From a Foucauldian perspective, middle managers were caught between these two discourses and found themselves having to transform their identities. In terms of the second theme, academic identities has been impacted by trend towards non-linear academic careers, especially after 1994, as an increasing number of individuals face a wider range of professional and organizational roles and need to take on a wider range of multiple and flexible identities. Therefore, many academics may force to adopt what Clegg (2008) terms as “hybrid” identities in response to the changing structural environment conditions within universities. Thus their identities are based on generic, cross-discipline and through university experiences, rather than identities based on traditional concepts of discipline specific academic work (Clegg, 2008:340; Floyd, 2012).

My findings confirm the proposition by Floyd (2012) and Davis (2013) who suggest that academic middle managers have hybrid identities. Thus, some of the HODs were working according to the ethics of the self which pushed them towards academic research. On the other hand, there are academics who seem to enjoy being in this management role, they moved away from teaching and research and focused on management. However, most of the HODs adopted 'hybrid identities'. Their ethical practices reflected ethical goals and aspirations that focussed on the self as well as concern for others. There seemed to be a constant tug between these two poles.

Drawing on Foucault, Ibarra-Colado et al. (2006) argue for understanding what they call the “governmental conjecture between self, others and organizations”. The intricate interaction of the self with the power exerted by other individuals and institutions makes the formation of a self who can act ‘responsibly’ a matter of complexity. In my findings, the HODs are constantly working on themselves in the context of the competing discourses that they are subjected to such as teaching and learning, research and Managerialism. In this way middle managers are required to support their fellow academic staff members; they have a responsibility to lead and guide them within the traditional learning context of HEIs. However, they have little training and mentorship in leadership. This in turn further highlights the complex and the urgency of the need to develop leadership that takes into consideration the middle manager context.

Also there is another paradoxical issue, in what the middle manager expects himself to do as an academic leader who is supposed to concentrate on his research, supervising students, publishing books and articles and the competing demands that take him away from these demands, such as marking students results, engaging with daily management problems and creating funds for the institution. In dealing with these multiple demands within the university, middle managers are unable to achieve them all; therefore, they depend on their ethical compartment to respond to it. Thus, some of them ignore certain tasks and some address the bare minimum demands of the ‘other’ in order to have more time for their research. The ethical orientation and temperament of middle managers is thus a key aspect of who and what tasks they respond to. It is a complex and messy environment and middle managers have varied ways of responding to the multiple demands placed on them.

6.2.2 Theoretical Implications

In terms of my review of the literature I discovered some of the following theoretical insights:

The available discussion on who the middle manager 'is' or how they are 'becoming' (Thomas & Linstead, 2002) is contradictory. Middle managers are known as influential strategic players (Currie & Procter, 2005; Mantere, 2008; Wooldridge, Schmidt & Floyd, 2008). The term 'middle manager' or 'middle management' has broad definitions. It may extend to managers below top management but above lower management. A middle manager is someone who receives orders from top management but leads and delegates tasks to co-workers. Samson's (2018) definition is more appropriate for this study which is a middle manager is one who performs an intermediary role between top-level management and first-level supervision and being responsible for the operational work of others. In other words, middle managers roles comprise both management and supervisory responsibilities (Branson et al, 2016). This position that middle management occupies is the point of divergence in operational level and strategic level (Harding et al., 2014). Son (2017) views middle management as those who breathe new change and refined competitive and sustainable co-worker engagement strategies at work, thus resulting in a management revolution. Middle managers have the power to inspire and uplift their co-workers. (Thornton et al., 2018) However, this position also requires individuals who can operate with the basic fundamentals of self-leadership. There is a little room to discuss the copious amount of academic literature which argues back and forth regarding identity theories.

Middle management in this faculty has varying features and aspects. The findings from this study support a perspective in the literature that the definition of a middle manager is becoming increasingly contradictory (see Thomas & Linstead, 2002; Currie & Procter, 2005). The extent of budgetary constraints in contemporary times has resulted in middle managers becoming more influential and strategic. The findings from this study are in line with the aforementioned research (see Currie & Procter, 2005; Mantere, 2008; Wooldridge, Schmidt & Floyd, 2008). The literature indicates that the definition extends the definition of middle managers to someone who receives orders from top management, however, leads and delegates tasks to co-workers.

The diverse workload for contemporary middle managers seems to be somewhat unique when comparing the definition to practice. It shows how individuals with different ethico-political practices shape themselves and their institution. Another clear point has been that the careers of these academic middle managers exemplify varying behaviour which is based on their ethical goals. The study found that the middle managers engage in the following work

activities: teaching; research; supervision and administration. I have arrived at the point that middle managers are linked to principal responsibilities which can be further broken down into two sections: people management and academic management related responsibilities. However, these differ considerably, in terms of the context of the academic department: the number of staff, students, research culture, etc.

My findings resonate with the findings of Clegg & McAuley (2005) and Branson, Franken & Penney (2015) who report that the nature of middle managers in HE is diverse and complex. With regards to the responsibilities of people, the following encompasses their activities: training staff, managing staff, providing mentoring and support, providing professional guidance, reviewing staff performance, teaching, registration, student problems, publishing, academic research work and acting as the liaison between academic and administration staff. The multiplicity of these demands, as well as the multiplicity of agencies that deal with the middle managers makes their work complex but remains within the ambit of teaching, research, supervision, and administration.

6.2.3 Practical Implications

As indicated before HEIs are facing increasing pressure. This includes technology, politics and the environment. At the same time HEIs are facing challenges that are becoming more complex which require far more innovative approaches (see Kolsaker, 2014). The increasingly degree of importance placed on administrative aspects such employment equity; preferential procurement and enrolment access pose new challenges to middle managers. Middle managers provide significant input when new employees are recruited into the department. Middle managers require a greater understanding of affirmative policies in SA and more importantly, in HEIs.

Budget cuts and limited funding continue to have an impact on the role that middle managers play in the institution. In this regard the findings in this study suggest that the work identity challenges may be significantly influenced by the level of resources. This would in turn be contingent on the historical context of the institution as well as management efficiency. HEI management structures tend to mirror the management mantra of the public sector that includes many hierarchical layers, costly administrative burdens (Chaharbaghi, 2007) and bureaucratic systems. Some of the challenges university middle managers face is declining state funding,

changing student demographics, new technological developments and increased market pressures (Göransson, Maharajh & Schmoch, 2009; Weinberg & Graham-Smith, 2012). There is growing evidence that higher education is gradually adopting the managerial mantra of the private sector (Kolsaker, 2008, Kolsaker, 2014) in order to become more efficient and more competitive.

The higher education environment has been impacted by the changing and competing governance and management discourses as well as policies and regulations such as New Public Management (NPM) (Broucker, De Wit, & Leisyte, 2015). The findings from this study suggest that ethical standards may influence middle management work practice.

There have been many shifts including the entry of managerial discourses (Davis, Janse Van Rensburg, & Venter, 2016). Therefore, the major discourse that affected the HEIs in transforming HEIs is NPM, neo-liberalism and Managerialism (McKenna, 2010). Not only has higher education in general been influenced by government, management and market imperatives but the internal management of higher education has also been affected (see Whitchurch, 2005). The limited extent of resources managing departments as an example implies that middle managers need to be far more responsive. Against this background middle managers are required to become more intrapreneurial, adaptive and commercially responsive, however, challenges remain (Meek et al., 2010)

6.4 Limitations

Considerations concerning the sample were that the participants in the study were all located within one faculty at the University. This means that, strictly speaking, only conclusions can be drawn about academics of the faculty. Furthermore the university in which this study was conducted may be ranked in the top 1 000 universities in the world and it is also ranked within the top ten universities in SA (BusinessTech, 2017). It is a university that was designated in the apartheid era for non-whites and is thus a previously disadvantaged university.

All of these factors need to be considered when reaching a broad conclusion regarding the ethical practices, as well as the functions of university middle management, for precisely the same line of questions, may yield diverse responses in different faculties and universities.

Therefore, further research is required in the study of the practices and functions of middle management.

6.5 Propositions gained from this study

The following propositions can be extracted from the data analysed:

- Academic middle managers work practices are positively influenced by their ethical goals;
- Academic middle managers work practices are a function of their ethical goals;
- Academic middle managers work identities are changing from being purely about academic matters to include administration; and
- Academic middle managers work identities challenges depend on their specific university context.

6.6 Recommendations

The results of this study led to the development of some recommendations that may be relevant to any further studies regarding academic middle managers. Although this is a small scale study, readers may choose to take these recommendations and make generalisations that may be applied within their own context. Through our study of the ethical practices related to the self and others, we make the following recommendations that could lead to better results at the level of the middle managers:

6.6.1 Training

Training academic middle managers on the activities that relate specifically to middle management, especially those who came from purely academic backgrounds, who often struggle to accomplish what they are required to do because of the lack of the experience in those particular tasks. Furthermore, motivating them to rely on their ethical goals that emanate from within and providing them with the space and freedom to rely on their own ethical identities, which contribute to the improvement and development of departments, rather than controlling them and giving them orders and regulations to accomplish the work without consideration for their ethics, emanating from within.

6.6.2 Redistribution of workload

The second recommendation is to create more opportunities for academic research. This entails the distribution of tasks to a larger number of employees and in this regard providing time for academic middle managers to publish research articles, engage in postgraduate student supervision and in improving their teaching and learning.

6.6.3 Conferencing

Through conferencing further research could be conducted at other HDIs in South Africa to explore the related phenomena. In this regard new research publications and conference proceedings may add new knowledge.

6.6.4 Intrapreneurship

This is a term that has been derived from entrepreneurship. In this instance the term lends itself to greater flexibility and innovation within a formal organisational context. In the private sector intrapreneurial principles have been highly successful, particularly regarding middle managers. Middle managers can be provided with greater levels of freedom to be able to drive new initiatives. In this way the institution is able to generate new revenue streams.

6.6.5 Innovation circles

Innovation circles have been highly successful in the private sector, particularly within organisations that have displayed high levels of innovation. This approach is more inclusive and allows for greater participation during staff meetings. The attendees may include a far more diverse audience including students and post graduate students.

6.6.6 Organisational development

This entails the appointment of an organisational development specialist to conduct an assessment of the organisational structure. In this process the consultant must relate the strategic organisational goals to the current strategy. The consultant could determine an optimal manner in which academic and administrative workloads are managed.

6.6.7 Best Practice

A wider survey can be conducted in order to determine the best practice standards in HEIs. This approach could allow middle managers to revise existing practices and to ascertain gaps. A survey of this nature can be extended to organisations outside of the HEI environment.

6.7 Limitations of the study

Firstly, the small sample used in this study presents a limitation. The sample was selected from one faculty from which all the data were obtained.

Secondly, the diverse nature of departments and faculties at various institutions may be influenced by knowledge, skills, and structure. This may also contribute to the findings of this study to be generalizable.

Thirdly, another limitation of this study is the cultural challenge. As I am a foreigner it took time for me to understand how South African HEIs function. In addition, the language barrier presented limitations in relation to making meaning of the interview data.

Fourthly, the study is based on a cross-sectional research design. In order to derive greater validity a longitudinal research design is required.

6.8 Conclusion and Summary

This study aimed to investigate and determine who the middle managers were and what their roles were at a previously disadvantaged public university in the Western Cape Province. The objectives were also to describe how they were performing in this particular university and how this formed the basis of their identities. Bearing in mind that the level of resources have declined significantly, personnel replacements are often not forthcoming. This implies that the changing nature of the middle manager's workload is constantly changing. This change implies a change in quantity and in diversity. The level of ethics of middle managers may influence workplace practices. Furthermore, I investigated what they were facing in the work environment, in terms of work requirements, how they set their goals, what their goals were and what their ethical practices were. Through interviews with eight middle managers, I sought answers to these questions.

7. References

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Appendix 1: Information Sheet for Participants

Researcher: Abraheem Qassim Fadhl

Economic and Management Sciences Faculty

A historically disadvantaged South African University

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Master's student in the School of Business and Finance, situated in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences, at a South African university, completing a Master of Management degree. I am pursuing a research project leading to a Masters degree. The University requires that ethics approval be obtained for research involving human participants.

The research project is entitled: ETHICAL PRACTICES OF THE MIDDLE MANAGERS IN A SOUTH AFRICAN UNIVERSTY.

The focus of the project is examining the identities and ethical practices of middle managers who are working in a Higher Education Institution in South Africa. In my research I aim to analyse how these identities are shaped in terms of the managerial discourses with the university. In addition, I hope that through this study I can investigate the extent to which the ethical practices of middle managers arises in response to the ethical demands they place upon themselves as well as to investigate their practices are a response in taking more responsibilities which is in response to the evolving needs and shifts within higher education.

You are invited to participate in this research project. You are invited as a possible participant because you are one of the faculty managers (HODs) who are working at a South African university. Your opinion will help me to understand the managerial identities and practices of faculty managers (HODs) and their relationships with deans, deputy deans and faculty administrators. I would like to seek your cooperation by answering the questions. I hope you will agree that this is a worthwhile area of research and cooperate by agreeing to be interviewed.

If you agree to participate in this interview you and I will be required to sign a consent form that binds me to adhere to what we agreed to, which include upholding your privacy and keeping your information and opinions anonymous, then you will be asked to contribute towards this research by answering some questions which will provide your opinion and information.

The interview will be between you and me. Furthermore, the interviews will be held in the place of your choosing and it will be for an hour per session, the number of sessions will be 3 sessions.

I emphasise strongly here that the information obtained will be used in the strictest and confidential manner. You will not be identified at any stage in this study. Your name and other personal information will be kept confidential if you so wish. Your identity will be confidential and anonymous. No other person besides me and my supervisor Dr. Abdullah Bayat will be able to see this information and views.

If you have any questions or would like to receive further information about the research project, please contact my supervisor at:

Dr. Abdullah Bayat, a South African university, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences

Telephone: +27219593332

F: 27219593219

Or you could contact me directly at:

Abraheem Qassim Fadhl, a university of Western Cape, Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences.

E-mail: a.fadhl76@gmail.com

Telephone: Telephone: +27748801239

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This research has been approved by a historically disadvantaged South African university's Senate Research Committee and Ethics Committee. Yes.

Yours sincerely,

Abraheem Qassim Fadhl



Appendix 2: Participant consent form

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please tick as appropriate):

- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the project and my participation. ()
- I voluntarily agree to participate in the project. ()
- I understand I can withdraw at any time without giving reasons and that I will not be penalised for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn. ()
- The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymisation of data, etc.) to me. ()
- I have been informed that with my consent the interview will be audio-taped and I understand that audio-tapes will be stored at the historically disadvantaged South African university and will be destroyed after 5 years. ()
- The use of the data in research, publications, sharing and archiving has been explained to me, and the interview is for the purpose of research. ()
- I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form. ()
- Select only one of the following:
 - I would like my name used and understand what I have said or written as part of this study will be used in reports, publications and other research outputs so that anything I have contributed to this project can be recognised. ()
 - I do not want my name used in this project. ()
- I, along with the researcher, agree to sign and date this informed consent form. ()

Name of participant:

Signature:



Appendix 3: Interview Questions

Questions:

1. Can you tell me about yourself?
2. What is your name?
3. What is your responsibility at [the university]?
4. And how long have you been in this position?
5. As a middle manager Do your current activities required by the university match your desired at the work?
6. What is your daily motivation to work?
7. Can you tell us, please? How or what's the relationship between you as middle managers and staff around you, staff under you authority? How do you engage with them? What's your relationship with them?
8. How do you deal with the multiple demands that come to you from staff , student and university ? How do you deal with that demand that comes at the same time?
9. What are your goals at your work? Do you have specific steps to achieve your goals?
10. What motivates you to choose these goals?
11. How do you act if your universities/institutions goals are inconsistent with your goals?
12. How do you respond if you don't like the demands from the dean or from the university top management?
13. Fees must full, what is your opinion about it?
14. Are you satisfied with the performance of the university? If you are not what are the problems
15. How do you make decision when you have multiple demands top management? Give me some examples.
16. How do you organize the multiple demands that you have at work at the same time? Explain your decision making in detail please?

17. When you dealing with multiple demands, do you compare these demands with your norms?

