A Study on the Impact of Employee Involvement Towards Psychological Contract Fulfilment in a Public TVET College

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – Psychological contracts are of paramount importance in organisations as they determine if the objectives of the organisation will be met successfully. They determine if the culture within the organisation will be conducive for the attainment of the predetermined goals. This study scrutinised the significance of making employees feel involved in every decision and action taken that involved their jobs, if it had any effect in the fulfilment of those psychological contracts.

Aim – The main objective of the study is to investigate the influence employee involvement has on the fulfilment of the psychological contracts within the public TVET college.

Design/methodology/approach – An online questionnaire was administered to a sample of 113 Mnambithi TVET college employees at Ladysmith campus, as well as the central administration office.

Findings - The sample was chosen using a stratified sampling method. 92 questionnaires were returned with responses. For the analyses and interpretation descriptive analysis, mean standard deviation and corelation have been used. In computing the results to test the relationship between involvement and psychological contract fulfilment, a correlation coefficient was used as a measure.

Limitation of the study – The limitations of this research project were that it was only conducted in one college in KZN and due to logistical hindrances, only one campus and a central administration office were used in selecting the sample. As a critical point of discussion, the effect employee involvement has on psychological contracts fulfilment could be tested throughout all colleges in the province or even in the country.

Future Research– Further research on the following can be suggested as further limitations of this research output.If employee involvement has a causal effect on psychological contract fulfilment. The degree of involvement in different ranks in the institution (for example, between managers and subordinates). How psychological contracts fulfilment affects turnover rate in the TVET sector.

Originality/value – The results of the data analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the two constructs.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Higher education and training in South Africa has undergone considerable development and has encountered extensive challenges in the process, with TVET colleges as one of the key role players in the sector. TVET colleges refer to Technical, Vocational Education and Training institutions. Public TVET colleges are found from the previously known as technical colleges, which were thereafter known as FET (Further Education and Training) colleges, hence they are now properly referred to as TVET colleges. They are established based on the CET act no.16 of 2006 as amended in 2008. TVET colleges are under the jurisdiction of DHET (Department of higher education and training) which oversees the public colleges, universities and universities of technology as well as the SETAs (Sector education and training authorities). TVET colleges are regarded as institutions of higher education in South Africa. Currently there are 50 public TVET institutions in South Africa with 253 registered campuses nationwide (Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, 2018). These institutions play a significant role in the development of the African continent and are viewed by many governments as a strategy for skills development and eradication of poverty (Onderi, Ajowi & Malala 2014:40). TVET colleges offer skills training and development of artisans (in fields of plumbing, electrical, boiler-making, welding, construction and mechanical), which is the goal of the South African government as per the National Skills Accord. They also offer soft skills training (at NQF level 2 to NQF 6) such as hospitality and tourism, management, accounting and public and general administration. The skills taught are offered from pre-matric certificate levels, matric equivalents, up to national diploma level which is equivalent to a university of technology diploma. These programme types appear in the ministerial approved programme register and are funded by State in terms of the National Norms and Standards for Funding TVET Colleges. The 2018 statistics show a total of 673 490 enrolled students at these public institutions nationwide (Statistics on Post-School Education and Training in South Africa, 2018). Public TVET colleges play an orientation role to the world of work and the curricula offered promotes employable skills, which can be the driving force in industrial and economic growth (Onderi et al. 2014:40). A number of colleges have formed partnerships with the industries to outline and carry through the mandate of the national government. For these national and global objectives to be realised, the human resources, backed by its management and leadership, has a pivotal role to play.

2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

To aid in the exploration of psychological contract, generational affiliation and employee involvement, a subset of literature has been selected based on its relevance to the following questions:
- What is the level of employee involvement in strategic processes and decision making at Mnambithi TVET college?
- To what extent does involvement have an effect on psychological contract fulfilment within Mnambithi TVET college?
- How does employee involvement matter?

To answer these questions, a review of relevant peer reviewed journal articles, government reports, and articles from popular press were completed. This review focuses on major advances and connections made within them.

2.1 PSYCHOLOGICAL CONTRACT FULFILMENT

At the inception of the employment relationship, both the employer and employee develop certain expectations of one another. One party looks at the other as bringing something of value to the table for the benefit of each other. In other words, a contract is formed between the employer and the employee. Naidoo, Abarantyne and Rugimbana (2019) define this sort of contract as an unwritten

and informal contract. Psychological contracts are defined as employees' perceptions of the implicit and explicit obligations and expected rewards that two parties (employee and employer) make to each other. They outline what employees are being promised and what they are expected to contribute as their obligation towards the organisation (Alcover, Rico, Turnley & Bolino 2017). It is more of a give and take relationship made in good faith. Chaubey, Thapliyal and Bisht (2015) established that employer obligations consist of training, fairness, recognition of employees' needs, consultation, humanity, recognition, justice, fair pay, benefits and job security, amongst others. On the other hand, the employees' obligations consist of working agreed-upon hours, doing a good job (creativity and innovation), honesty, loyalty (engagement), respect of organisation and property, self-presentation and flexibility (productivity). Thus, psychological contracts serve as a guide to the behaviour and attitudes of the parties involved.

Psychological contracts (PCs) can be classified into two categories: (1) Transactional PCs. These are characterised by the materialistic benefits the employees expect from the organisation. They include fair wage, pension, benefits, promotion and job security. (2) Relational PCs, which are the exchange of relationship inducements such as support, personal development, humanity and inclusiveness (Griep, Wingate & Brys 2017).

Attitude is said to be closely related to psychological contracts, engagement and commitment of employees. A three-dimensional model has been discussed in how employees' attitude can be formed. An affective dimension of attitude is all about one's feelings, which can either be positive or negative towards the organisation or a task at hand as well as the emotional relationship with the organisation. The behavioural dimension is described as the actions that employees take against or in favour of the decision or organisation. This will include intention to act in response to or against the authority and complaining and influencing others against or in favour of the decision or organisation. A cognitive dimension is the employees' personal thoughts about the decision or action, whether the decision was necessary or not or is it beneficial or not to them or the organisation (van der Heuvel, Schalk, Freese & Timmerman 2016). Other antecedents of attitude mentioned included individuals' motivational needs, internal context of the organisation, supportiveness and trustworthiness of managers, employees' commitment, organisational culture and atmosphere are all viewed as important contributors and play a significant role to the performance of the employees and the fulfilment of the pre-established contracts (van der Heuvel et al. 2016).

Psychological contract fulfilment is the understanding or belief the parties have about the possibilities of the fulfilment of the pledges made (Ahmad & Zafar 2018). If the parties to the contract have a history of not fulfilling their pledges (psychological contract breach), the belief and trust of future fulfilments will deteriorate and the parties will lose faith in one another, leading to a reduced sense of belonging, reduced engagement, reduced commitment, high turnover intentions, reduced performance and low organisational citizenship behaviour on the side of the employees (Ahmad & Zafar 2018). Both parties are required to fulfil their share of the contract to safeguard the relationship. Once the employees feel that the organisation is being supportive, inclusive and recognising their efforts, they will be more inspired to reciprocate in a positive manner by putting more effort into the fulfilment of the organisational objectives and strategic plans (Chang, Lin, Chia & Yang 2013). Chou et al. (2005) cited in Chang et al. (2013) emphasise that organisations cannot rely solely on economic incentives to motivate employees but factors of self-esteem, self-actualisation and other psychological levels of satisfaction (e.g. sense of belonging derived from involvement) will enhance the level of the employees fulfilling their part of the contract. To achieve the desired levels of psychological contract fulfilment, employee engagement and organisational citizenship, managers of the organisation need to adopt certain leadership styles, which will be great contributors to the achievement of the psychological contract fulfilment (PCF) objective.

2.2   EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

The success of each organisation is highly dependent on the leaders' ability to formulate and implement viable strategies and sound decision making, which will contribute to the accomplishment of the organisation's vision and mission (Hijji, Alharrasi & Al-isaee 2018). To avoid resistance in the workplace, managers have long been using the technique of employee involvement to formulate and implement changes in organisations. Employee involvement is defined by Glew et al. (1995) cited in Hussain, Lei, Akram, Haider, Hussain and Ali (2018), as seeking to maximise the input of the members in decisions that affect the performance of the organisation and their wellbeing. The construct is further defined as creating a work environment whereby employees have a degree of influence on the decisions that sway their jobs (Zafar, Butt & Afzal 2014).

Hussain et al. (2018) further state that for employee involvement to be effective, it involves the elements of "power, information, knowledge, skills and rewards". Power should be shared within the organisation. This can be achieved if those who hold power are willing to share it with their subordinates. This will reduce the power distance, which prevails in non-involving organisations. Employees should be empowered in the authority they possess, especially in matters affecting their jobs and wellbeing. By allowing a certain degree of autonomy, employees feel they have authority over their jobs. A sense of responsibility and accountability needs to be cultivated amongst subordinates to instil empowerment. Organisations do not only rely on managing systems but on sharing information, knowledge and skills as well. Knowledgeable experts in the organisation contribute by sharing beliefs, experiences, skills, competencies and abilities with those in need to know within the organisation (Hussain et al. 2018). This fact implies that employees should be well informed about the strategies and decisions and be offered a fair chance to actively participate so they will be able to share the vision with the newcomers or novices. In that way, visions, objectives and beliefs of leaders will have a ripple effect in the organisation. Employees in the organisation should be regarded as people who know their jobs better than their managers or supervisors. In most organisations, middle managers feel left out in major decisions and strategy processes, which makes it difficult for them to translate and implement them to their subordinates. It has been proven that lack of information and knowledge (which can be gained from subordinates) may lead to detrimental and poor decisions, which will have a very negative effect on the implementation of the organisational strategies and outcomes thereafter (Hijji et al. 2018).

Employee involvement is presented to be synonymous with inclusion by some writers. Whittongton et al. as cited in Friis & Holmgren (2017), define inclusion as a "participation in an organisation's strategic conversation. Transparency refers to the visibility of information about an organisation's strategy potentially during the formulation process". Developing and implementing a strategy can be done through communities of practice, which are the groups of practitioners in the field. In this way, subordinates get an opportunity to be strategy makers, strategy translators and more importantly, strategy implementers. Friis & Holmgren (2017) suggest using techniques such as open space workshops, strategy jamming, strategy crowdsourcing, strategy blogs and wikis or simulations in online games to increase inclusion of employees and making their voice heard.

There are several strategies, which leaders can utilise to involve employees in the strategic processes and decision making. These include consultative participation, employee ownership, representative participation, informal participation, delegative participation, employee board level representation and social media jam (Foudraine 2015). Union representation in organisations, private or public, is highly encouraged by the South African labour laws. The study done by Yarrington, Townsend and Brown (2007) found that in a strategy to improve performance and a learning organisation, genuine union involvement was crucial to achieve the desired goals. He also argued that if the cooperation of unions and managers is at the expense of employees' interests, that partnership is unrealistic and will hardly achieve the envisaged results of encouraging inclusiveness for improved psychological contract fulfilment.

2.3   PARTICIPATIVE DECISION MAKING (PDM)

The relationship between job performance and participation has been of high interest for business researchers. If employees have to improve their creativity and be more committed to their work, they need to feel involved (Alsughayir 2016).

The involvement of employees is hereby seen as a significant tool to performance and favourable attitudes (Noah 2008 cited in Alsughayir 2016). PDM is a level of employers allowing their employees to take part in decisions of the organisation (Alsughayir 2016). It has much to do with shared decision making in the organisation. PDM has both formal and informal decision making patterns. There are several strategies that leaders can utilise to involve employees in PDM. These include consultative participation, employee ownership, representative participation, informal participation, delegative participation, employee board level representation and social media jam (Foudraine 2015)

To achieve the desired levels of psychological contract fulfilment, employee engagement and organisational citizenship, managers of the organisation need to adopt certain leadership styles, which will be great contributors to the achievement of the PCF objective.

The transformational leader is more concerned with the empowerment and the development of the human resources to the accomplishment of the tasks. Transformational leadership is common to what Fang, Chen, Wang and Chen (2019) refer to as inclusive leadership. Bass (1985) cited in Kalsoom et al. (2018) speaks of three ways that leaders can utilise to assist themselves to achieve transformational leadership:

- A transformational leader needs to raise his/her level of consciousness regarding the significance and value of the expected outcomes and the ways on how to reach these expected outcomes.

- Transformational leaders need to sacrifice their self-interests for the benefit of the team or the organisation.

- Transformational leaders need to raise their subordinates' level of the needs according to Maslow's hierarchy. A leader does this by assisting in fulfilling each need of the hierarchy until the employees achieve the highest level of self-actualisation. The leader needs to achieve this by aligning the followers' self-interests in their own development with the interests of the group, organization, or society (Kalsoom et al. 2018).

According to Kalsoom et al. (2018), a transformational leader is also characterised by four elements: charisma or idealized influence, inspiration, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration.

2.4   INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Inclusion is a critical aspect to be discussed when one elaborates on involvement. Inclusive behaviour within an organisation requires vigorous leadership as it forms part of the organisational culture. Traditional and authoritative leaderships styles have no room in the modern economy of new generation employees who have certain modern working values and beliefs of inclusion. Inclusive leadership is defined as a form of transformational leadership that is people-oriented, treats subordinates equally and has a high degree of respect and puts more emphasis on employee interaction. The characteristics of an inclusive leader are recognition of employees, respect, tolerance, listening, fairness, empowerment and interaction (Fang et al. 2019). Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) cited in Qi, Liu, Wei and Hu (2019) define inclusive leadership as words or deeds by a leader that invite employees' contributions and shows appreciation for those contributions. Inclusive leadership encourages interdependent relationships within the organisation, which promotes beneficial behaviours amongst employees.

2.5   DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP

Another type of leadership style that has become more popular with transformational leaders, is distributed leadership. Badenhorst et al. (2018) speak of distributed instructional leadership, which

they describe as a type of leadership that distributes a larger portion of power to lecturers as subordinates in the learning institution. This will allow these educators to have a positive influence on the effectiveness of the curriculum and the students' performance. They can do this by being directly involved in decisions, which affect their day-to-day duties in institutions. Employee involvement and the flexibility of leaders encourages subordinates to feel more included, empowered, recognised and thus, will be more engaged and reciprocate positively to the pre-set psychological contracts.

2.6   EMPOWERING LEADERSHIP

Empowering leadership has been an interesting research topic in employment relations. An element of sharing power within the organisation can be seen by some as giving more unnecessary power to those not deserving and can be seen by some as leadership development of those without power. Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) cited in Minseo and Terry (2018) define empowering leadership as 'the act by managers of motivating employees intrinsically by sharing power they possess and in so doing they also provide support for the employees' personal development. Empowering leadership can be seen as unique way for leaders to influence and empower employees.

The core of empowering employees is to allow them to lead themselves. This is a kind of downward power transfer, which encourages upward decision making. Empowering leadership encourages participative decision-making and it is closely related to transformational leadership.

3   STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The challenges facing the TVET sector in South Africa require serious strategic interventions. The Technical Task Team, which was assigned to conduct a study on TVET colleges, recognised that there are challenges facing the TVET college sector (HRD 2016). Amongst these challenges is the management and leadership of these public institutions, which in many cases is in disrepute resulting in a very low staff morale, disengagement of staff and a high turnover rate of middle managers and academic staff. The level of employee involvement in decision making and strategic processes is of paramount importance. Staff members in colleges complain about the alienation of junior staff and some managers in decisions that affect their daily work performances (HRD 2016). The FET colleges act of 2006 states that staff should be represented in governance structures as well as in some committees within the college. For example, the academic board should comprise mainly of the academic staff, which are lecturers from various faculties. College councils should consist of three representatives of staff (DHET 2015:1). In recent years, union representation has been introduced and intensified within TVET colleges. With these provisions in place, the staff members still feel that their voice is not heard at senior management levels, which poses a huge problem in terms of staff morale, engagement and the fulfilment of the psychological contracts. The fulfilment of psychological contracts in a work place can be seen through the employer treating the staff members in an expected way as well as employees happily fulfilling their obligations towards the organisation. This study aims to investigate if employee involvement does exist at Mnambithi college. If it does exist, to what extent does involvement contribute to the fulfilment of the existing psychological contracts or promises made by employees and employer.   Hence the researcher has selected the title for this study as:

"A study on the impact of employee involvement towards psychological contract fulfilment in a public TVET college"

3.1   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are:
1. To explore the level of employee involvement in strategic processes and decision making at Mnambithi TVET college.
2. To investigate the extent of the effect employee involvement has on psychological contract fulfilment within Mnambithi TVET college.

3. To determine strategies that can be employed to increase effective involvement through different leadership approaches.

4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study took the form of a descriptive design and a quantitative approach. A descriptive design, aims to describe the relationship between two variables and to prove the interaction between the two through empirical evidence (Yellapu 2018).

4.1 (1) SAMPLING

Population: The population of Mnambithi College comes from the three campuses (i.e. Ezakheni, Ladysmith and Estcourt campuses) where the lecturers, senior lecturers, support staff and campus managers are based. The population also extends to the central administration office where the assistant directors, middle managers and other support staff are located. This covered the entire population of the college. The staff make-up of Mnambithi college comprises of 161 non-managerial academic staff, 11 academic supervisory staff, 30 non-managerial support staff and 10 managerial support staff, which makes a total of 212 staff members and four senior managers.

Selection of Sample: This research paper employed a probability sampling method as the results of the study were generalised across the population of the college. The total size of the sample is 113 individuals. A stratified random sampling was suitable as the campus and central administration office have a certain number of representatives. In this study, there were two strata representing the entire college with a certain sample size representing each as under:

Table 1. Sample

Campus/Site	No. of middle-line managers	Sample quantity	No. of non-managerial staff	Sample quantity
Ladysmith campus	3	3	78	70
Central office	10	10	32	30

4.2 (2) DATA COLLECTION AND MEASURING INSTRUMENT

The present study is mainly based on primary data collected through questionnaire. An online questionnaire, using Google forms, with close-ended questions was designed. Due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, the electronic form was the most suitable tool. The questionnaire was structured using a five-point Likert scale (5=Strongly disagree, 4=Disagree, 3=Not sure, 2=Agree, 1=Strongly agree). Questions were based on Van Dierendonck and Nuijten (2011) who conducted a survey on servant leadership, as well as on Carmeli, Reiter-Palmon and Ziv (2010) from their study titled: Inclusive leadership and employee involvement. Additional questions were personally designed by the researcher. The questionnaire had 4 sections to be answered by respondednts: Section A = Biographical information; Section B = Level of involvement and development; Section C = Employees' obligations; Section D = Current leadership styles at the college.

As required by the Department of higher education and training for the surveys to be authorised, the permission to conduct this research project was applied for and approved by the college principal also known as the vice chancellor.

4.2.1 RELIABILITY

Reliability ensures the accurateness of the findings. If the study could be conducted again on a different sample of the same population, the results should be similar. To ensure reliability of the output, the researcher conducted a pilot study to find out if the instrument used was reliable. A pilot

was conducted on three middle managers and five non-managers. The research instrument was understood the same way by the pilot respondents and the researcher. That proved that the instrument served its purpose and was reliable.

4.2.2 ECOLOGICAL VALIDITY

Ecological validity is concerned with conducting a social sciences research based on what happens in people's everyday life (their feelings, attitudes, beliefs, daily experiences, etc.) (Bryman & Bell 2014). It is no use conducting a social sciences research based on laboratory findings. The instrument used as a survey tool should ask respondents about what concerns them and what happens in their everyday life in the workplace; thus, the research will be ecologically valid since it relates to people's daily experiences. In this research, the questionnaire was designed in a way that it asked employees of the college about their everyday life experiences when it comes to involvement, the type of leaders they have and their fulfilment of their obligations. The use of primary data from the subjectivist view assisted the researcher in achieving this type of validity.

The authors are confident that the study conducted is still valid as the data was collected in October 2021. The data collection period lasted for two months until the end of November. Data analysis commenced beginning of December until Middle of February 2022.

4.3   ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

Data analysed in this chapter were extracted from the questionnaire that was administered in the Ladysmith campus of Mnambithi TVET college as well as the central administration office. A total of 113 sample size was chosen using the stratified sampling method. Out of the 113 sample members, 92 questionnaires were returned, which makes it a total of 81 percent returned answered questionnaires.

4.3.1 (A) DEMOGRAPHICS ANALYSIS

Table 2.   Gender Frequencies

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Male	40	43.5
Female	52	56.5
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Source: Own illustration

Out of a total sample of 92 only 40 respondents are male with 43.5% and 52 are female members with 56.5%. So, Female members are more than male members by 13%.

Table 3.   Qualification frequencies:

Particular	Frequency	Percent
School report	5	5.4
Grade 12 / Matric	4	4.3
Certificate	1	1.1
Diploma	31	33.7
Bachelor degree	29	31.5
Honours degree	21	22.8
Master degree	1	1.1
Total	**92**	**100.0**

Source: Own illustration

The qualifications profile in the college varied from a school report to a master's degree level. Administrative staff mostly showed a high percentage holding diplomas, with the lecturing staff mostly holding degrees and honours levels. For school report certificate N=1 (1.1%), diploma N=31 (33.7%), bachelor degree N=29 (31.5%), honours degree N=21 (22.8%), masters' degree N=1 (1.1%).

Table 4.   Age

Age	Frequency	Percent
26-30	5	5.4
31-35	22	23.9
36-40	29	31.5
41-45	17	18.5
46-50	7	7.6
51-55	8	8.7
56-60	4	4.3
Total	92	100.0

Source: Own illustration

The data in Figure 4.6 reveals that the age distribution of the respondents was between the ages of 26 to 60. It is depicted that a huge percentage of staff is between ages of 31 to 45. The frequencies were for 26-30 years N=5 (5.4%), 31-35 years N=22 (23.9%), 36-40 years N=29 (31.5%), 41-45 years N=17 (18.5%), 46-50 years N=7 (7.6%), 51-55 years N=8 (8.7%), 56-60 years N= 4 (4.3%).

Table 5.   Employer

Particular	Frequency	Percent
DHET Employee	76	82.6
College Council Employee	16	17.4
Total	92	100.0

Source: Own illustration

As the staff make up consists of two employers in one college, namely the Department of Higher Education (DHET) and the college Council, it was evident that more than three quarters of the staff is employed by the DHET and less than a quarter is still employed by college council. The distribution levels are N=76 (82.6%) for DHET employees and N=16 (17.4%) for college council employed staff.

Table 6.   Position frequencies

Particular	Frequency	Percent
Assistant Director/ Unit Manager	5	5.4
Education Specialist	1	1.1
Lecturer	52	56.5
Administrative Assistant	23	25.0
General Assistant/ Groundsman	10	10.9
Technician	1	1.1
Total	92	100.0

Source: Own illustration

The above table shows that a higher number of lecturing staff respondents, which is N=52 (56.5%), followed by administrative staff, N=23 (25%), general assistants and groundsmen N=10

(10.9%), assistant directors and unit managers N=5 (5.4%) education specialists, which are also known as senior lecturers, N=1 (1.1%) and technician N=1 (1.1%).

Table 7.   Number of years of employment frequencies

Particular	Frequency	Percent
0-5	23	25.0
6-10	36	39.1
11-15	30	32.6
16-20	2	2.2
21-25	1	1.1
Total	92	100.0

Source: Own illustration

The above table shows that a high number of staff members have been recently employed. 6-10 years make up N=36 (39.1%), 11-15 years N=30 (32.6%), 0-5 years N=23 (25%), 16-20 years N=2 (2.2%) and 21-25 years N=1 (1.1). This shows that 64.1 percent has been employed in the past 10 years due to the growth and DHET restructuring that took place in the TVET sector. Only 35.9 percent of respondents can be regarded as staff members that have been employed by the college for a long period.

4.3.2 (B) DESCRIPTIVE ANALYSIS (MEAN)

Descriptive statistics are very instrumental in describing the features of data collected in a study. They are used to provide a simple summary about the sample and the measurements (Yellapu 2018).
The SD up to SA in the mean tables indicate the following: SD = Strongly disagree; D = Disagree; NS = Not sure; A = Agree; SA = Strongly agree

Table 8.   Means of Section B (Employee Involvement)

Descriptive statistics							
	Valid N	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
S.1 I am given power to perform my tasks independently	91	(10) 11.%	(24) 26.4%	(8) 8.8%	(36) 39.6%	(13) 14.3%	3.18	1.283
S.2 I have enough power to influence decisions in my college	91	(30) 33%	(28) 30.8%	(15) 16.5%	(14) 15.4%	(4) 4.4%	2.27	1.196
S.3 I receive constructive feedback to improve my job performance	91	(11) 12.1%	(29) 31.9%	(29) 31.9%	(18) 19.8%	(4) 4.4%	2.72	1.052
S.4 I am encouraged to come up with new ways of doing my job	91	(7) 7.7%	(22) 24.2%	(21) 23.1%	(29) 31.9%	(12) 13.2%	3.17	1.173
S.5 I am made aware of most strategic plans of the college	91	(48) 52.7%	(21) 23.1%	(10) 11%	(11) 12.1%	(1) 1.1%	1.86	1.095
S.6 My union is being recognised and respected by management	91	(8) 8.8%	(8) 8.8%	(31) 34.1%	(34) 37.4%	(10) 11%	3.33	1.070
S.7 I am satisfied with the level of involvement in decisions affecting my job	91	(28) 30.8%	(41) 45.1%	(14) 15.4%	(7) 7.7%	(1) 1.1%	2.03	.936
S.8 My department is well represented in college committees	91	(23) 25.3%	(20) 22%	(12) 13.2%	(31) 34.1%	(5) 5.5%	2.71	1.322

S.9 There is a clearly defined path for promotion and career development in my department	91	(34) 37.4%	(32) 35.2%	(12) 13.2%	(12) 13.2%	(1) 1.1%	2.04	1.068
S.10 The mentoring pro-grammes I receive assist me to be effective in my job	91	(15) 16.5%	(42) 46.2%	(21) 23.1%	(12) 13.2%	(1) 1.1%	2.35	.954
Valid N (listwise) And overall mean	**91**						**2.56**	
Missing	1							
Total	92							

Source: Own illustration

A mean of 2.56 was measured in the descriptive statistics for the employee involvement. This average leans more towards the disagree side of the Likert scale. This implies that more employees do not feel involved. A further analysis of each question will give a clearer view of the employee's perceptions as under:

-   S.1: Responses to question 1 show a mean of 3.18 and a SD of 1.283. This shows that there are more respondents who feel that they are afforded power to work independently. A total of 53.9 percent agreed and a mere 37.4 percent disagreed with 8.8 percent uncertain.

-   S.2: 33 percent strongly disagreed and 30.8% disagree (making a total of 63.8%) that they have power to influence decisions taken at the college. A very low level of involvement in decision making can be extrapolated here as only 19.8 percent are on the agreeing side of the scale. A low mean of 2.27 shows the low levels of employee involvement in decisions made.

-   S.3: A bigger percentage learning towards disagreement is witnessed here as 44 percent disagreed whereas a mere 24.2 percent agreed. The concern lies with the 31.9 percent, which are not sure if they do receive constructive feedback. The question arises if these uncertain employees have any clue of what constructive feedback should entail.

-   S.4: A higher mean of 3.17 emphasises that more employees believe their superiors encourage them to be creative in doing their jobs. 31.9 percent and 13.2 percent (totalling 45.1%) are on the positive side of the scale.

-   S.5: A staggering 75.8 percent believe they are not made aware of the strategic plans of the college where as 13.2 percent are positive that they are made aware. The lowest mean of 1.86 is seen. This is where most emphasis should be put by management of the college.

-   S.6: When it comes to the recognition of organised labour, which is unions, the college seems to be doing not so well as a percentage of 48.4 percent seems to believe that their union is recognised and 17.6 percent disagrees. The issue lies with the bigger percentage of respondents who are not sure (34.1%). As the college has more than one unions that are legally recognised. This could raise questions if it could be some unions might be recognised more than the others.

-   S.7: Respondents seem to be dissatisfied with the level of involvement in decisions directly affecting their jobs. 75.9 percent seem to be on the disagreeing side whereas 8.8 percent are positive. This question is the highest scoring on the disagreeing side and the lowest scoring in the agreeing side of the scale in Section B, followed by question 13, which is of a similar nature of involvement in decisions. Both questions concur with one another in this regard.

-   S.8: 47.3 percent still feel their departments are not well represented in college committees. A smaller percentage of 39.6 percent feel they are well represented with 13.2 percent still not sure who is in the committees and who is not.

-   S.9: There is a high percentage of those respondents who are not clear about promotional paths and career development strategy of the college. 72.6 percent of respondents claim that they believe there is no clear-cut promotional strategy. The huge gap can be seen on the 37.4 percent strongly disagreeing and 1.1 percent strongly agreeing.

- S.10: The 23.1 percent of unsure respondents raised eyebrows again of the flow of information at the college. 62.7 percent are more on the disagreeing side that mentoring programmes assist them in doing better in their jobs whereas 14.3 percent seem to agree to the statement.
- Statements 1, 4 and 6 did well in the scores of employee involvement by the college. Staff members expressed their dissatisfaction about the levels of involvement in the rest of the responses.

Table 9.   Means of Section B (employee obligations)

Descriptive statistics								
	Valid N	SD	D	NS	A	SA	Mean	Std. Deviation
S.11. I can leave this college anytime an opportunity arises for me to leave	91	(2) 2.2%	(26) 28.6%	(13) 14.3%	(28) 30.8%	(22) 24.2%	3.45	1.208
S.12. I enjoy working with the people in my department or team	91	(5) 5.5%	(26) 28.6%	(13) 14.3%	(35) 38.5%	(12) 13.2%	3.24	1.171
S.13. I am good at meeting deadlines and early submissions	91	(6) 6.6%	(44) 48.4%	(5) 5.5%	(27) 29.7%	(9) 9.9%	2.88	1.200
S.14. I always come up with innovative ideas for my department	91	(18) 19.8%	(32) 35.2%	(9) 9.9%	(26) 28.6%	(6) 6.6%	2.67	1.259
S.15. I take good care of the college's property with all my ability	91	(2) 2.2%	(24) 26.4%	(16) 17.6%	(29) 31.9%	(20) 22%	3.43	1.170
S.16. My level of commitment to the college is very high	91	(9) 9.9%	(41) 45.1%	(5) 5.5%	(24) 26.4%	(12) 13.2%	2.87	1.277
S.17. I am proud to tell others that I work for this college	91	(14) 15.4%	(21) 23.1%	(21) 23.1%	(26) 28.6%	(9) 9.9%	2.97	1.253
S.18. I always volunteer to do tasks outside my job description	91	(32) 35.2%	(28) 30.8%	(4) 4.4%	(21) 23.1%	(6) 6.6%	2.37	1.348
S.19. I respect and abide with all the rules and policies of the college in my own will	91	(8) 8.8%	(35) 38.5%	(8) 8.8%	(26) 28.6%	(14) 15.4%	3.03	1.279
S.20. I always turn up for work on time and leave on time	91	(7) 7.7%	(36) 39.6%	(10) 11%	(28) 30.8%	(10) 11%	2.99	1.209
Valid N (listwise) And overall mean	91						2.99	
Missing	1							
Total	92							

Source: Own illustration

The findings in Section B of the questionnaire reveal that there are somehow lower levels of commitment to the obligations employees believe they have toward the college. This lower level of commitment coincides with the lower level of involvement of the employees in the college. This data reveals that the lower the involvement the lower the commitment. Individual response analysis will uncover the weak and strong points of engagement.
- In statement S.11: Here we can see a high intention to leave the college by the employees as a total of 55 percent show that they would leave the college anytime an opportunity presents itself. A

low total of 30.8 percent do not have intentions to leave the institution. A high turnover intention rate gives us an insight on the state of happiness and commitment to the organisation. A mean of 3.45 was recorded in these responses. This is the highest mean towards the agreeing side in Section C of the questionnaire.

- S.12: It is clear that employees in the college still find joy in one another as companions. A mean of 3.24 towards the agreeing side was recorded. An average of 51.7 percent recorded that they enjoy working with their counterparts, whereas an average of 34.1 percent showed that they do not enjoy working with their peers.

- S.13: A higher average score of 55 percent indicated that they are not good at meeting deadlines and early submissions. Only 39.6 percent are confident that they are good at meeting deadlines.

- S.14: Innovation is a sign of commitment to the organisation. 35.2 percent indicated that they come up with innovative ideas for their department whereas 55 percent showed no innovative drive.

- S.15: A higher average of 53.9 percent admitted that they take good care of the college's property. Only 28.6 percent indicated that they disagree to this this question. A mean of 3.43 was observed towards the positive side of the scale.

- S.16: Levels of commitment to the organisation signify psychological contract fulfilment or fulfilment of the obligations towards the organisation. 55 percent indicated that they disagree that their level of commitment is high and 39.6 percent showed high levels of commitment to the college.

- S.17: Regarding the sense of pride and belonging, an average score of 38.5 percent was recorded on both sides of the scale (the agreeing and disagreeing sides). 23 percent showed that they are not sure if they are proud or not.

- S.18: When it comes to going the extra mile by volunteering to do extra tasks, a first-time high leaning towards the disagree side of 66 percent was recorded whereas 29.7 percent agreed that they volunteer to do extra tasks outside their job description. This is a question with the lowest mean of 2.37 in Section C of the questionnaire.

- S.19: An average of 44 percent showed that they do abide with the policies of the college willingly. 47.3 percent recorded that they do not abide with the rules willingly.

- S.20: Regarding respecting working time, 47.3 percent recorded that they do not turn up for work on time and leave on time whereas 41.8 percent stated that they do turn up on time and leave on time.

Statements 12, 15 and 19 scored high means, which is positive towards the fulfilment of obligations by employees of the college. In the remaining responses, staff members showed little engagement.

4.3.3 (C) INFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

Table 10.   Pearson's correlation of involvement and obligations

		AVRG obligations
	Pearson correlation	.603**
AVRG involvement	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001
	N	92

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).
Source: Own illustration

The results of the Pearson's correlation show that the test is statistically significant for the study as the 'p' value is less than 0.01 (p<0.01) in a two-tailed test where N = 92. This shows that the confidence level of the test is more than 99%. The score of r = .603 indicates clearly that there is a positive correlation between employee involvement and the obligations employees have towards the college. Asuero, Sayago and Gonz´alez (2006) state that a score of 0.50 – 0.69 shows a moderate positive correlation between two variables.

5   RECOMMENDATIONS

In the present study, Mnambithi TVET college has shown a mean of 2.56, which is a moderate to low score. For improved production within the college, college management is advised to heed Foudraine's (2015) words, which state that organisations that are highly involved with their employees have a higher improvement rate in performance. The senior managers of Mnambithi college can find the following strategies useful in involving employees:

- Participative decision making
- Consultative participation
- Employee ownership
- Representative participation
- Informal participation
- Employee involvement teams
- Social media jam.

The study has revealed that if the relationships between managers and employees are sour, the organisation is doomed for failure. Interpersonal relations play a huge role in the attainment of the organisational objectives.

Mnambithi college managers should not only manage the paper trail but are expected to develop and empower individuals even on personal traits. Leadership goes beyond developing employees academically but also include matters of self-esteem, a sense of belonging and leadership development amongst subordinates. It is significant for college managers and supervisors to share power with their subordinates (Amundsen and Martinsen 2014, cited in Minseo and Terry 2018). The best fitting management styles for inclusiveness were inclusive leadership, distributed and empowering leadership styles. These leadership styles will assist college managers to promote the culture of employee involvement.

STUDY LIMITATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The limitations of this research project were that it was only conducted in one college in KZN and due to logistical hindrances, only one campus and a central administration office were used in selecting the sample. As a critical point of discussion, the effect employee involvement has on psychological contracts fulfilment could be tested throughout all colleges in the province or even in the country. Further research on the following can be suggested as further limitations of this research output:

- If employee involvement has a causal effect on psychological contract fulfilment
- The degree of involvement in different ranks in the institution (for example, between managers and subordinates)
- How psychological contracts fulfilment affects turnover rate in the TVET sector.

6   CONCLUSION

This study has explored relevant literature pertaining to employee involvement, psychological contract fulfilment as well as recommended leadership styles to improve involvement within a public TVET college. The research was conducted and data analysed from the returned 92 questionnaires. The study was conducted in answering the pre-established research questions:

- What is the level of employee involvement in strategic processes and decision making at Mnambithi TVET college?
- To what extent does involvement have an effect on psychological contract fulfilment within Mnambithi TVET college?
- How does employee involvement matter?

This study revealed below average levels of involvement of employees within Mnambithi TVET college and low levels of psychological contracts fulfilment by employees. As employees feel they are not adequately involved, there will be a reciprocate behaviour of not fulfilling their psychological contracts. This research output showed clearly that there is a relationship between involvement and psychological contract fulfilment. The higher the involvement, the higher will be the fulfilment of the obligation. By exercising good leadership, managers can become more involving towards their subordinates, thus the employees will be encouraged to reciprocate by putting more effort and dedication to their work in which they will be fulfilling their part of the psychological contract.

The results of the data analysis showed that there is a significant relationship between the two constructs. The higher the involvement rate at the college, the higher the fulfilment of the psychological contracts. Foudraine (2015) states that organisations that are highly involving their employees tend to have a higher improvement rate in performance.

A number of leadership styles were discussed in the study, which are suggested to contribute to the involvement of employees. The leadership styles include inclusive leadership, distributed leadership, empowering leadership and transformational leadership. If managers incorporate these leadership styles in the managing the employees, they will be more involving, thus increasing the levels of psychological contract fulfilment.

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