




The Impact of Autonomy and Decision-Making on the Morale and Motivation of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Lecturers in the Eastern Cape, South Africa

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ABSTRACT

The study focused on the impact of autonomy and decision making on the morale and motivation of TVET college lecturers in the Eastern Cape Province of South Africa. The study also exposed the autonomy and decision-making factors affecting the lecturers and it gave possible ways to minimise the negative impact on the teaching and learning programmes of the colleges. The research sample comprised of 40 female and male participants whose ages ranged from 25 to 60 years and were drawn from two randomly selected colleges. The study followed a mixed methods approach where both questionnaire and interview instruments were used to collect data giving rise to both qualitative and quantitative data respectively. The findings uncovered that autonomy and decision making among lecturers is negatively affecting lecturers' morale and motivation. Factors that are making autonomy and decision-making problematic include participation prohibition, leadership restrictions and reduced self-reliance at work.

KEYWORDS

Autonomy; Decision-making; Morale; Motivation; Lecturer.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The investigation was conducted in two colleges in the Eastern Cape, and it was instigated by our perusal of numerous literature that signalled the prevalence of high levels of morale deficit among lecturers in the province, country, and wider global community (Buthelezi, 2018; Erichsen & Reynolds, 2020; Matoti, 2010; Omodan & Tsotetsi, 2019; Usadolo et al., 2020; Wolhuter et al., 2012). Furthermore, our conviction is that extensive research on the topic will broaden the knowledge base and help to inform TVET managers on how to motivate their key employees, the lecturers who work on the coal face of the higher teaching and learning institutions. The ulterior motive is to elevate the morale and motivation standards experienced in these pertinent academic colleges.

At the outset, we define the two independent variables that are the subject of our investigation: autonomy and decision-making. Autonomy refers to the experience of acting with a sense of volition and having free will in pursuing activities as one of the fundamental ideas of social development theory (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Humans are psychologically wired with a basic need for autonomy (Cerasoli et al., 2016). Employees perform their duties to a high standard and develop an intrinsic motivation for doing so when allowed to do so with more autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2000). In fact, according to Liu et al. (2011), one of the current models of autonomous motivation that should rule in forward-thinking educational institutions is intrinsic motivation. The desire for autonomy is sparked by both control or dispositional autonomy and contextual support for it, which serves as an impetus for increased intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2008).

Employees use the process of decision-making to select the best course of action from a variety of competing alternatives, taking full responsibility for any benefits that result from those decisions and maintaining accountability for any unfavourable outcomes (Keeney, 2004). Every organisation should include employees in operational and strategic decision-making processes because they are a source of ideas and knowledge (Mohajan, 2019). Employee decision-making not only gives them the ability to contribute to the success of the company, but it also saves the company time and money by increasing productivity and reducing the need for outside consulting or outsourcing. Teamwork, overall company morale, and motivation are all easily increased by managers who involve their staff in decision-making (Mohajan, 2019).

Problem Statement

Staff retention is crucial for the education system due to high levels of staff attrition experienced in the sector caused by several factors such as unmanageable workload, lack of autonomy and decision making and poor working relationships which lead to low job satisfaction (Samuel & Chipunza, 2013). Staff attrition is occurring at a time when the demand for TVET education is astronomical due to the no-fee policy and rising youth population among other factors. The paper explored the impact of autonomy and decision-making on the morale and motivation of lecturers in the TVET sector with a bid to improve lecturer autonomy and their participation in decision-making. Lecturer participation in decision-making is fundamental in the enhancement

of lecturer morale and motivation which in turn aggrandise their staying or tenure in the sector (Dube & Ngulube, 2013).

THEORETICAL DEVELOPMENT

The research was conceived within the framework of Fredrick Herzberg's two-factor theory, which investigates in detail the influence of employee autonomy and decision-making on workers' levels of motivation and morale. According to Herzberg's two-factor theory, as explained in Dartey-Baah and Amoako's (2011) research, eliminating the factors that lead to job dissatisfaction may bring peace, but it will not bring about motivation.

Herzberg contends that the presence of extrinsic hygiene factors is necessary to generate an atmosphere that is amenable to the participation of motivators. Some examples of these hygiene factors include the physical environment of the workplace, the organisational policies, the interpersonal relationships, the job security, and the compensation (Herzberg, 2017). In addition, Herzberg (2017) suggests that if an employer wants to motivate his employees, they should emphasise the intrinsic motivators that are associated with the work itself. These include aspects like autonomy and decision-making, manageable workloads, and other outcomes that arise from the work itself (Chineme, 2014; Jeter, 2014; Ramlall, 2012).

In subsequent analysis, Herzberg (2017) contends that although some individuals are motivated by extrinsic factors, many individuals are motivated by intrinsic factors. This important theory will act as our consistent point of reference as we attempt to make sense of the responses provided by the lecturers to the research questions.

LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the challenges facing the TVET sector is low morale and motivation among the lecturers (Blom, 2016). Consequently, the sector is tasked with raising lecturers' motivation and morale (Singh & Shawa, 2021) so that they can perform their duties well. When educators are independent and intrinsically motivated, this problem is much simpler to solve (Omar et al., 2018). It is acceptable, however, for TVET managers to be required to extrinsically motivate their lecturers by providing direction through some form of regulation, control, and rewards, but intrinsic motivation ultimately reigns (Buthelezi et al., 2024; Chauke, 2023; Ngwato, 2020; Nkambule & Ngubane, 2023).

Andriopoulos (2001) further states that the two main elements that ignite and sustain the intrinsic motivation of specific employees are autonomy and decision-making. In addition, in the theory of self-determinism, Vasconcellos et al. (2020) and Smylie (1994) explain how important autonomy and decision-making are in bringing about morale and motivation among employees. With emphasis, the theory submits that staff who work in an environment that has optimal reliance on autonomy and other forms of intrinsic motivation are more likely to enjoy elevated job satisfaction (Shaw, 2023) with reduced stress levels (Kofford, 2023). Conversely, if leaders rely more on extrinsic forms of motivation, employees may feel untrusted, and

manipulated, and their intrinsic motivation critically drops (Belrhiti et al., 2020). It is more likely that a slump in intrinsic motivation triggers employee disengagement and premature departure from the organisation. In human resources management, it is not a human being who leaves the organisation but a package of precious skills, knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, traits and other human talents and abilities that are earnestly needed by any employer (Bin Saeed et al., 2019).

For all those reasons, self-determination theory unequivocally suggests three interdependent psychological needs that promote intrinsic motivation. These needs are competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Averill & Major, 2020). Competence (Nadeak & Naibaho, 2019) focuses on the lecturer's skills and abilities to perform their job while Omar et al. (2018) assert that autonomy is concerned with self-rule and the opportunities to make one's decisions. On the other hand, relatedness (Maslow, 1998) suggests deeper connections with and adequate support from workmates and supervisors. The theory connotes that there is a positive relationship between autonomy, employee job satisfaction, and staff retention (Worth & Van den Brande, 2020). Admittedly, job satisfaction has been proven to be a significant factor in predicting a lecturer's intentions and decisions to stay on a job, or leave the profession (Khan & Aleem, 2014).

Worth and Van den Brande (2020) assert that the autonomy of lecturers plays a significant role in improving both their morale and their motivation while they are on the job. Lynch et al. (2016) state that a strong correlation exists between autonomy and the percentage of teachers who are committed to remaining in their current position within the next year. In the short term, those who are identified as having the least levels of autonomy are more likely to leave their jobs than those who have the highest levels of autonomy. This finding elevates autonomy and decision-making as key factors of lecturer morale and motivation. Above all, increasing the lecturers' level of autonomy, particularly regarding their professional development goals, has a significant potential to improve both their rate of retention and their level of job satisfaction (Wan & Duffy, 2022).

RESEARCH METHODS APPLIED

Methodology

The study utilised an exploratory empirical descriptive survey method based on the mixed-method research design model.

Participants

The participants' biographical data was gathered to determine the calibre and nature of the sample elements in the provision of representative, honest and credible responses to the questionnaires and interviews (Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019). A heterogeneous sample of 40 lecturers was selected using simple random and multi-stage sampling techniques in which 18 males and 22 females constituted the sample. A sample of lecturers was obtained with 77.5% of them younger than 40 years. In addition, 65% of the lecturers had less than 10 years of TVET

teaching experience. Only 7.5% of the sample possessed a trade-tested industry-based qualification relevant to TVET teaching (Levitt, 2020).

Data collection Procedure

The study was conducted in the Eastern Cape Province, South Africa drawing its respondents from two randomly selected colleges pseudo named College A and College B. Two campuses were randomly selected from each college, one rural and one urban. The campuses were pseudonamed AR, AU, BR, and BU where the first letter stood for College A or College B and the second letter stood for rural campus (R) or urban campus (U). Ultimately, two rural and two urban campuses were investigated. A total of forty lecturers were purposively selected for the study and gender fair representation was considered. This meant that 10 lecturers were selected from each campus to complete the questionnaires and only 4 were selected for the interview sessions.

Instruments

The data collection process was triangulated by using both questionnaires and interviews. Questionnaires gave rise to quantitative data and interviews yielded qualitative data. The two data forms corroborated each other to give reliable and valid findings (Bernhard, 2019; King et al., 2019). The questionnaire was designed by the authors, and it had six sections with section one collecting biographical data and the remaining sections collecting data to test the constructs that indicate the presence or absence of morale and motivation due to workplace autonomy and decision-making. Combined, 6 constructs were applied, and these were adequate to collect the relevant data required on autonomy and decision-making.

Data analysis

Data were analysed by using cumulative frequency tables and regression analyses charts for the quantitative data. In addition, interpretive narrations and quotes were applied to the qualitative and subjective opinions of the respondents who were interviewed.

FINDINGS

Fascinating findings were made in this study and the ensuing section explains these intriguing findings.

Findings on Autonomy and Decision-making Sub-Themes

Six different sub-themes or constructs were investigated to get a better understanding of the lecturers' morale and motivation regarding autonomy and decision-making. These were as follows: involvement in crucial decision-making, leadership roles, understanding of expectations, creativity, participation in committees, and improving self-sufficiency.

After conducting interviews and sending out questionnaires to collect data on each of the six subthemes, the results of the collated quantitative questionnaires were presented in the form of cumulative frequency tables, and the findings from the interviews were used to confirm the findings of the questionnaires.

Involvement in crucial decision-making

The respondents who completed the quantitative questionnaires largely revealed that they were not allowed to make crucial decisions. The results indicated that 28 (5+23) 70% of the lecturers are not permitted to participate in making crucial decisions, only 10 (8+2) 25% disclosed that they are permitted to do so, and two (5%) remained neutral (see Table I below).

Table 1.

Involvement in crucial decision-making

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Disagree	23	57.5	57.5	70.0
	Neutral	2	5.0	5.0	75.0
	Agree	8	20.0	20.0	95.0
	Strongly agree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The quantitative results above were reinforced by the interview findings where seven of the rural lecturers conceded that they did not have a chance to make crucial decisions in the college and only one lecturer in campus BR suggested that they are allowed to participate in making crucial decisions. One dissatisfied lecturer BR008 had this to say when asked if he was allowed to make crucial decisions in the college:

“Sometimes you take your crucial decision, but when it comes to the managers, they come with an attitude. ...also, the students are so politically minded such that they think they can challenge everything, even the code of conduct of the students. I am the manager of that code of conduct in class, so I monitor it and it sometimes becomes difficult to manage”.

The interview results from the rural campuses above were substantiated by seven urban campus lecturers who also pointed out that they were not allowed to make crucial decisions in the college and only one lecturer showed satisfaction in this aspect. One disgruntled lecturer BU019 uttered the following words in dismay:

“No. they always question your decisions even if they are good decisions....”.

Lecturer involvement in decision-making is paramount in bringing about morale and motivation on the campuses. By omitting them in the process, campus and college managers cause the lecturers to disengage from many of the college activities, and they develop a sense of powerlessness and apathy (Gelens et al., 2015).

Taking leadership role

The outcome of the quantitative survey indicated that 22 (5+17) lecturers, representing 55% of the total, responded that they are not permitted to take a leadership role even if they want to

do so, whereas only sixteen (13+3) lecturers, representing 40% of the total, said they are permitted to do so, and two lecturers, representing 5%, were unsure about the matter (see Table 2 below).

Table 2.

You can take a leadership role if you want

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	5	12.5	12.5	12.5
	Disagree	17	42.5	42.5	55.0
	Neutral	2	5.0	5.0	60.0
	Agree	13	32.5	32.5	92.5
	Strongly agree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Similarly, the interview results in rural campuses showed that four of the rural campus lecturers believe they are not allowed to take leadership roles if they want to do so while the other four felt they have an opportunity to do so. The results were also replicated in urban campuses. One disgruntled lecturer had this to say: “...the leaders feel threatened to allow us to lead as we may do it better than them”. Lecturer morale and motivation are significantly increased if they are given a chance to apply their leadership potential in the organisation (McCaffery, 2018). The TVET managers need to realise that the lecturers have great capacity to lead due to their high levels of training and the diversity of their training subjects and backgrounds.

Understanding what is expected at work

The quantitative results showed that a majority 34 (26+8) 85% of lecturers were of the view that they understood what is expected of them at work. Only four (2+2) 10% did not agree with this view meaning that they do not understand what is expected of them, and two (5%) of the lecturers were neutral about it (see Table 3 below).

In answering whether they understand what is expected of them by the college, seven of the eight interviewed lecturers from the two rural campuses acknowledged that they do understand what is expected of them, and only one lecturer responded otherwise. Urban campus lecturers who were interviewed produced an identical result to that of the rural lecturers. One happy rural campus lecturer affirmed the result by uttering the following words: “How can I fail to do the work that I trained to do for several years at university?”. In short, the interviewed lecturers demonstrated that they have no problems conceptualising the demands of their jobs, which makes this aspect not a worrying issue in terms of their morale and motivation.

Table 3.

Understand what is expected of you

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	10.0
Neutral	2	5.0	5.0	15.0
Agree	26	65.0	65.0	80.0
Strongly agree	8	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.

Look for ways to do your job better (innovation)

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Strongly Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	2.5
Disagree	1	2.5	2.5	5.0
Neutral	3	7.5	7.5	12.5
Agree	26	65.0	65.0	77.5
Strongly agree	9	22.5	22.5	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Looking for ways to do their jobs better (Innovation)

The quantitative data affirmed that lecturers look for ways to do their jobs better, when 35 (26+9) 87.5% of the lecturers agreed, and only two (1+1) 5% disagreed, while only three (7.5%) remained neutral (see Table 4 below).

Every single lecturer who was interviewed at both the rural and the urban campuses affirmed unequivocally that they are constantly searching for new and improved methods to carry out their duties. One lecturer was quoted saying: *"...it is my duty to be innovative as a professional person"*.

The findings demonstrate that lecturers are resourceful as trained people, and if they are given sufficient space, they can come up with innovative ways of doing their jobs, which generates high levels of morale and motivation among them (Victor & Babatunde, 2014).

Participating in decision-making committees

The quantitative result on this sub-theme indicated that 25 (12+13) 62.5% lecturers do not participate in decision-making committees, while only ten (7+3) 25% said they do so, and five (12.5%) lecturers were neutral about it (see Table 5).

Table 5.

Asked to participate in decision-making committees

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	12	30.0	30.0	30.0
	Disagree	13	32.5	32.5	62.5
	Neutral	5	12.5	12.5	75.0
	Agree	7	17.5	17.5	92.5
	Strongly agree	3	7.5	7.5	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

In the interview results, the overall impression was that five out of eight lecturers from both rural campuses agreed that they do not participate in decision-making committees. Three lecturers suggested otherwise. The result was similar among urban lecturers where six out of eight lecturers said that they are not given a chance to participate in decision-making committees, and only two lecturers suggested otherwise. Lecturer BU005 made the following utterances when asked if he participates in decision-making: *'No. it's only those in management who are involved'*.

According to Bush (2003), participatory leadership is predicated on the idea that the process of making decisions ought to be a group effort. This encourages democratic principles, which in turn contribute to an increase in morale and motivation among the members of the organisation. According to Mencl et al. (2016), if the functions and roles of leadership are shared among the entire staff, the burden of leadership will be significantly reduced. This will, in a sense, guarantee that employees will buy into the decisions that are made by the institution. Employees will naturally feel motivated to fully support these decisions.

Encouragement to be self-reliant

The quantitative results demonstrated that a substantial number of nineteen (2+17) 47.5% lecturers disagreed that they are encouraged to be self-reliant, while thirteen (11+2) 32.5% indicated that they are encouraged, and only eight (20%) lecturers maintained an impartial stance (see Table 6).

Table 6.

You are encouraged to be self-sufficient

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Strongly Disagree	2	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Disagree	17	42.5	42.5	47.5
	Neutral	8	20.0	20.0	67.5
	Agree	11	27.5	27.5	95.0
	Strongly agree	2	5.0	5.0	100.0
	Total	40	100.0	100.0	

The results above were confirmed by the interview findings where six of the eight rural campus lecturers responded that they are not encouraged to be self-reliant while the other two indicated otherwise. The urban campus lecturers also supported the view when five of the eight lecturers said that they are not encouraged to be self-reliant. Only three had different views on the matter. One lecturer who felt they were not encouraged to be self-reliant uttered the following words in the interview:

“No. They want me to follow instructions, and to wait to be told like children do”.

It is important to recognise that lecturers are highly motivated individuals who are self-determined because they are knowledgeable people. Accordingly, to improve their morale and motivation, it is recommended that they be encouraged to be self-reliant in the performance of their work (Ghate, 2016). Employees who can fend for themselves become more independent, feel more empowered, and have less dependence on their managers. When employees are more self-reliant, there is a greater chance that they will demonstrate innovative thinking. All that managers need to do is to provide tools and resources that can enhance self-sufficiency.

DISCUSSION

The study provided empirical evidence on autonomy and decision-linked factors that hurt lecturer morale and motivation of TVET lecturers in South Africa to contribute to the improvement of lecturer satisfaction. The findings of two of the most well-known and influential extant theories of motivation, namely Maslow's and Herzberg's (Grigorov's 2020; Mamedov et al., 2019), served as the basis for the entire research endeavour. Recent research established that many lecturers are not satisfied with most of the sub-themes that were investigated regarding autonomy and decision-making.

Concerns were raised regarding the following subthemes: a lack of participation in decision-making; lecturers not being permitted to participate in decision-making committees; a lack of self-reliance; and not being permitted to participate in leadership and lack of innovative space. In the ensuing sections, the listed factors are discussed.

Autonomy and decision-making

TVET lecturers experience feelings of alienation and powerlessness, according to research conducted by Al Shobaki et al. (2018). This is because lecturers in TVET programmes do not have adequate control over their work and do not take part in the decision-making process. This leaves TVET lecturers with a feeling of helplessness. The negative effects of non-participation in decision-making could be mitigated by establishing semi-autonomous groups for each department on the campuses of TVET colleges (Rojewski, 2009). These different groups would be responsible for setting their objectives and determining how they would like to accomplish those objectives.

Given the semi-autonomy of these groups, the managers would have to give up some of their power to the lecturers (Hanson, 1997), and the lecturers will be made to feel trusted and capable of meeting the organisation's objectives (Al Shobaki et al., 2018). This is supported by Al-Jammal et al. (2015), who state that when managers delegate some of their duties and responsibilities to their subordinates, they gain the trust and respect of those subordinates, who in turn will voluntarily give allegiance to the authority of the managers. In other words, when managers delegate some of their duties and responsibilities, they earn the respect and trust of their subordinates.

This is an argument in support of the concept that managers ought to delegate some of the responsibilities and duties that fall under their control. Since they are the key implementers of all policies crafted by the Department of Higher Education for the TVET sector, the lecturers should also be given fair representation in high-profile decision-making committees of the college and DHET (Posselt et al., 2020). In addition, lecturers contribute to the process of determining the practicability of each decision that is made because of their unrestricted interaction with the environment in which teaching and learning take place (Mugira, 2022).

Lecturers failing to know what is expected of them

It is perplexing to think that some of the lecturers do not have a good understanding of what their superiors anticipate from them in their work. As part of performance management (Prasad, 2020), it is expected that both the supervisor and the supervisee will work together to set targets and come to an agreement on the goals and objectives of the supervisee.

Rodgers and Hunter (1992) point to the necessity of ensuring a fair and credible assessment of the supervisee's performance scores or standards. According to the management by objectives principle, the formal joint setting of performance targets by the supervisor and supervisee is crucial for smoothing out the later stages of the performance management process (Prasad, 2020). Management by objectives advocates that the formal joint setting of performance targets is crucial.

Since they work in an environment that requires adherence to policy, lecturers in TVET should have clear guidance on what they should do and how they should do the work. Nadeem et al. (2020) contend that managers are obligated to provide their lecturers with regular updates on all the expectations of the employer and any other relevant stakeholders.

The study findings indicate that management generally performs well regarding this subtheme. The researchers, on the other hand, concluded that management should make more of an effort to bring everyone on board to guarantee the highest possible level of productivity. The ability of employees to make decisions independently and be less dependent on their managers is improved when clear expectations regarding what must be done by employees are communicated.

Lecturers not permitted to participate in decision-making committees

The findings on this subtheme indicate that management's performance is extremely inadequate overall. A cause for concern is the fact that two-thirds of the lecturers do not often take part in the decision-making committees. Policies hardly involve lecturers' voices (Matabane et al., 2022). The participation of lecturers in committees that make decisions is of utmost importance because it will encourage them to devote all their efforts to the accomplishment of organisational goals which they had a hand in formulating (Williams, 2012). This can be acceptable rhetoric, particularly when it comes to lecturers. If the lecturers are a part of the committee that makes the decisions, then they can take full responsibility for ensuring that all the goals are fully implemented and fulfilled.

Lecturers have consistently raised objections to the notion that the only thing expected of them is to carry out the policies decided upon by policymakers, regardless of whether those policies are biased or incorrect. However, the lecturers' voices are not heard until the implementation phase (Mgijima, 2014), even though they are the front-line foot soldiers who are held responsible if the goals are not achieved.

Lack of self-sufficiency

Many lecturers indicated that they lack self-sufficiency or self-sustenance due to factors which include a lack of training and support from the management. The lecturing environment is dominated by a lack of both material and human resources which becomes a predisposition for the lecturers' teaching demise (Lockett, 2019). The lecturers are set to fail as they will not be self-reliant in problem-solving issues affecting their day-to-day work. They heavily rely on their heads of departments and senior managers which makes them feel disempowered. To empower lecturers, TVET colleges should provide adequate learning and teaching resources to make the lecturers independent and autonomous in their teaching chores.

Not being allowed to participate in leadership

By the nature of their job, lecturers are leaders to their students, community, and parents (King & Cattlin, 2017). Therefore, they should be allowed to lead the whole teaching and learning environment.

As leaders, they should be allowed to participate in the design of policies that are linked to their teaching and learning errands, and they should be allowed to advise senior managers on the appropriate changes to make as far as the curriculum is concerned. The lecturers should also be allowed to get promoted to leadership positions as early as possible in their careers (Namutebi, 2019). Most lecturers spent many years as post-level lecturers who did not participate in formal and informal leadership roles. This stagnation disgruntles the lecturers to the point of forcing them to seek greener pastures in related and unrelated fields.

Practical Implications of The Study

Our findings gave fascinating implications on lecturer retention practices through autonomy and decision-making strategies. The study unravelled significant information that goes a long way in encouraging high morale and motivation among the TVET lecturers. The study findings showed that there is a significant problem of low morale and motivation among the lecturers due to a lack of autonomy and decision-making. This revelation implies that the DHET and the respective colleges need to urgently address the issue to enhance the quality of teaching and learning in these institutions (Austin & Gamson, 1983). In addition to this, the study shed light on the problem of lecturer turnover, which is a problem in the industry that needs to be addressed. According to Whitaker et al. (2013), the administrators of TVET should work to enhance lecturer autonomy and decision-making as a more practical antidote to the morale and motivation deficit among the lecturers.

Limitations And Direction for Future Research

The amount of time that was available for data collection was limited, so the scope of the study was limited as well. This may have caused the researcher to miss some data. In addition, the number of lecturers who responded to the study was restricted because there was only so much time and resources available. In the future, research should think about expanding the scope of the study to include the collection of data over longer periods. Furthermore, upcoming researchers need to keep in mind the necessity of using a larger sample size. This is because increasing the sample size will make it possible for the researcher to obtain more extensive data from the research process.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study painted a concerning picture regarding the morale and motivation of lecturers due to a lack of autonomy and decision-making power, amongst other factors. As a result of these findings, the researchers made the following recommendations. To begin with, the management of the college ought to make it easier for faculty members to participate in boardroom discussions, as doing so is essential before the formulation of significant long-term plans. Owing to this, lecturers will be given the opportunity to have their interests protected at a strategic level within the college and the department, respectively. The cat-and-mouse game, in which strategic and operational decisions are made without them being present, cultivates mistrust among lecturers and management as lecturers develop an impression that they are

being sidelined. Furthermore, lecturers ought to be provided with an adequate amount of the resources that are required to practice their profession. This will ensure that they are not forced to rely on borrowing or working with insufficient resources, both of which compromise their ability to make decisions independently and force them to rely on other people for provisioning.

The findings of the study also indicate that lecturers should be offered ongoing training on subjects that contribute to their continued professional development. Consequently, they will be able to carry out their duties independently with only a minimal amount of direction from their superiors. As they become more proficient in their work and as they gain experience in their field, lecturers increase their chances of becoming autonomous and legitimately credible decision-makers as they gain more experience in their field. This kind of working space is a catalyst for satisfactory employee morale and motivation.

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