



Cape Peninsula
University of Technology

**EMPLOYEE EMPOWERMENT OF FRONTLINE ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF AT
A UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY, WESTERN CAPE PROVINCE, SOUTH
AFRICA**

by

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degree**

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I, Tania Arlene George, declare that the contents of this dissertation represent my own unaided work, and that the dissertation has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Signed

Date

ABSTRACT

When one refers to tertiary education in general or specific institutions, its academic functions and features are paramount. Often, there is little dialogue around those who constitute most of the workforce, the administrative staff, and more specifically, the frontline administrators. Given that frontline administrators are ‘customer-facing’ and that their behaviour could significantly influence perceptions of the organisation, these staff members are often portrayed as ones who do not have any authority at work but merely serve a support role. Ensuring that these staff members are ‘taken care of’ is an operational way of guaranteeing that the customers (staff and stakeholders) have a pleasant experience that could positively affect the bottom line.

The working lives, feelings of efficiency, job satisfaction and overall empowerment of frontline administrative staff, especially in tertiary education, have not been well documented in scholarly literature. This research project attempts to identify areas where universities of technology could take cognisance of the power that frontline administrative staff hold and also to ascertain how to improve their overall work experience.

Frontline administrative staff members have the important occupation of assisting academics in academic departments to focus on teaching and research, as well as to free these academics from what are often called “tedious administrative tasks”.

This research study was undertaken to determine which factors and conditions within the working environment influenced employee empowerment of frontline administrators at a university of technology (UoT), and whether biographical information had a further influence on the perceived levels of empowerment within their respective work environments. It was established through this research that the identified variables did affect frontline administrative employees’ feelings of empowerment and in most cases the biographical variables of the respondents played a contributory role in the level of empowerment experienced.

The research methodology was a quantitative approach, where a structured questionnaire was employed through SurveyMonkey®. This was used to gather data from 326 full-time frontline administrative staff (between peromnes levels 9 and 13) at a university of technology in Cape Town, Western Cape, South Africa. Of these, 110 responses (including non-responses) were received.

The research study established that the following variables, job satisfaction, staff retention, and rewards and recognition, as well as working conditions (decision making and a learning organisation) influenced the levels of empowerment of frontline administrative employees of the UoT, where in most cases, the biographical variables of the respondents (i.e. age, years' work experience, gender, educational qualifications, etc.) played a statistically significant role.

Further to this, it was clear that frontline administrative employees needed time (in the form of consultative meetings) with their line managers to discuss work-related problems from which any areas of improvement could also be determined and charted.

It is recommended the frontline administrators be more involved in decision making that directly affects both their person and work environment. Furthermore, there should be more consultative meetings between frontline administrators and their line managers, where career and personal development is discussed. The latter should be seen as an investment in human capital, as this would ultimately have a positive influence on staff retention and job satisfaction. The issues of the lack of management assistance, promotion and rewards, and recognition for frontline administrative staff, were prominent in having a negative impact on their performance in the work environment. These issues could allow for further research.

The findings of this study could add to the limited research relating to employee empowerment of frontline administrators, particularly within the higher education setting.

Key terms: employee empowerment, frontline administrator, tertiary education, decision making, learning organisation, job satisfaction, staff retention, rewards and recognition

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DEDICATION

To

Eli Sebastian George

&

Noah Mayson George

The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you
B.B. King

Learning is a treasure that accompanies its owner everywhere
Chinese Proverb

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GLOSSARY

- Administrator** A noun derived from the verb 'administer', which means to attend to the organisation or implementation of (*Oxford South African Concise Dictionary*, 2002:14).
- Condition** Circumstances affecting the functioning or existence of something (*Oxford South African Concise Dictionary*, 2002:240).
- Decision making** Includes attention-directing or intelligence processes that determine the occasions of decision, processes for discovering and designing possible courses of action, and processes for evaluating alternatives and choosing among them (Simon, 1965:36).
- Employee empowerment** A set of dimensions that characterise an environment's interaction with persons in it to encourage their taking initiative to improve process and to take action (Herrenkohl et al., 1999:375).
- Factor** Circumstance, fact or influence that contributes to a result (*Oxford South African Concise Dictionary*, 2002:413).
- Frontline staff** Relating to, or suitable for public service and business employees who are in direct contact with the public (*Collins English Dictionary*, 2009).
- Job satisfaction** The pleasurable emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job as achieving or facilitating the achievement of one's job values (Locke, 1969:316).
- Learning organisation** Facilitates participative and innovative development with and between people and institutions commercially, technologically and socially (Rowley (2000:9) citing Lessem (1991).

Recognition	Formal acknowledgement (<i>Oxford South African Concise Dictionary</i> , 2002:976).
Respondent	Within the context of this study, a person who provides data for analysis by responding to a survey questionnaire (Babbie, 2004:243).
Reward	Something given in recognition of service, effort or achievement (<i>Oxford South African Concise Dictionary</i> , 2002:1001).
Staff retention	The degree to which the current employees of a business remain with the company over a given period of time (<i>Business Dictionary</i> , 2010).

CHAPTER 1

1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction

The base of any organisation is its staff and their knowledge, skills and motivation (Yazdani et al., 2011:268). People are the most important asset any organisation can possess, and in many cases they are the most underutilised.

In order for organisations to flourish in today's competitive field, the human resource factor (staff members) needs to be used to its fullest capacity. All employees are expected to be efficient, but in the same sense, these very employees want to feel a sense of belonging, and have meaningful work as well as opportunities for advancement (Yazdani et al., 2011:267).

Organisations, irrespective of their nature, should recognise the value that the human factor could positively add to or negatively subtract from their bottom line, as it is claimed that a disempowered workforce is an unproductive one.

Every organisation sets out to meet challenges and make continual work improvements; organisations therefore seek the support, involvement and commitment of their employees (Scott & Jaffe, 1991:9). In a competitive environment in which organisations must be faster, leaner, provide better service quality, be more efficient and more profitable, an empowered and proactive service worker is thought to be essential (Melhem, 2004:72). Given the rapid change of the global economy, organisations are now forced to become accustomed to and learn from these changes by way of their employees. It is claimed that employee empowerment is to the advantage of all organisations. Empowered employees respond more quickly to customer service requests, act to rectify complaints and are more engaged in service encounters (Lashley, 1999:169).

Empowerment provides employees with the power to serve customers better and at the same time influence organisational performance (Boshoff & Allen, 2000:67).

Frontline staff, in any organisation and industrial sector, is most affected by the introduction of empowerment. This allows employees to provide efficient, personal and more responsive service to the customers as they will be in a position to make decisions and take actions as needed, without approval from management. By allowing employees to 'own' problems presented to them, they are encouraged to offer their perceived solutions to such problems. This could possibly result in a more positive working environment as well as greater job satisfaction because of their ability to determine how their jobs are performed.

It is said that empowerment in service organisations reveals different forms of empowerment applied in practice and it is evident that these different approaches are based on altered perceptions of business problems, motives for introducing empowerment and perceived benefits to be gained from empowerment (Lashley, 1999:169).

Many argue that employee empowerment should be supported and nurtured by some prerequisites like incentives, skills and knowledge, communication, and flow of information within an organisation. This culture contributes to employee empowerment and assists in realising employee effectiveness and job satisfaction. Various researchers have noted that there is a need for systematic and empirical efforts to investigate the role of empowerment among employees.

In higher education, administrative and other clerical support staff comprise most of the workforce and are definitely the ones on the front line. They are the first point of contact for prospective and current students, industry, parents and any other stakeholders. Their willingness to assist and their attitudes can contribute to people's perceptions of the campus ambience (Bauer, 2000:87).

1.2 Problem statement

The focus of the study is to determine the relationship between the demographics (age, gender, marital status, home language, qualifications and years of work) of the frontline administrator and how such demographics affect the levels of empowerment relating to the identified factors and conditions.

The study will determine which of the stipulated factors and / or conditions affect the levels of empowerment of these workers with emphasis on:

- examining the elements which affect employee empowerment among frontline administrative staff;
- considering the circumstances around conditions of employment in the said work environment which could allow for positive employee empowerment of the frontline administrative staff; and
- establishing how the demographics of each respondent has an influence on their perceived levels of empowerment.

It is important to define factors and conditions as well as administrators (front line) in higher education with reference to this study. The conditions affecting employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff are elements of the job, some of which staff members can do for themselves for job improvement. In defining the factors, it should be questioned, “What around me are enablers to allow for efficiency and effectiveness?” Frontline administrators are the first point of contact for persons entering the university community.

1.3 Purpose statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the independent variables (age, gender, years’ work, the faculty/unit or department employed in, qualifications) and the dependent variables (the conditions, i.e., decision making and learning organisation and the factors, i.e., job satisfaction, staff retention and rewards and recognition).

The grounds for executing this study are to establish whether the identified factors and conditions are influenced by demographics, department or unit employed in, level of education, or years of service.

1.4 Objectives of the research

To achieve the purpose of the research, the following objectives were formulated. The research seeks to do the following:

- Identify which conditions influence employee empowerment among frontline administrative staff at a university of technology, based on age, gender, marital status, home language, qualifications, and years’ work.

- Determine which factors affect employee empowerment among frontline administrative staff at a university of technology (UoT), based on age, gender, marital status, home language, qualifications, and years' work.
- Determine whether a relationship between the identified factors and conditions is evident.

1.5 Research question

Given the stated research objectives, the following research question was posed:

Are the identified factors and conditions, which influence employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a UoT, influenced by the demographics of the respondents?

1.6 Significance of the research

Numerous studies concerning employee empowerment have been conducted in various business sectors, in particular hospitality, healthcare, government, and manufacturing companies. Few studies were found that examined the administrative function in relation to employee empowerment, in particular that of the education sector in developing countries such as South Africa.

Given the numerous hierarchical levels in this sector, in particular within tertiary education institutions, it would be interesting to determine the levels of empowerment perceived by frontline staff, based on their demographical information, since they, in essence are the ones who deal directly with clients. These members of an organisation should be able to exercise a degree of discretion when faced with client queries or problems. This in turn would lead to quicker responses and would eliminate wasted time in referring clients to managers or other parties who may or may not be able to assist. All too often, employees on the front line are left with routine tasks, and not given the opportunity to 'think on the spot'.

The study aims to highlight the daily issues faced by administrative staff members and also to possibly develop steps to eliminate these problems.

The outcome of the study:

- could propose suggestions on how the potential of frontline administrators could be maximised;
- expand existing literature; and
- identify areas for future research.

1.7 Limitations of the study

The study is limited to a particular sector, tertiary education, and more specifically a UoT in the Western Cape, South Africa, and focuses on permanent frontline administrative staff employed at the UoT. The survey was conducted at the Cape Town, Bellville, Granger Bay, Mowbray, Wellington, Tygerberg, Groote Schuur, and Worcester campuses.

1.8 Research assumptions

In order to achieve the research purpose and objectives of the research study, the following assumptions were made:

- Identified staff would all complete the electronic survey as they had access to the Internet.
- Responses would be relatively honest.
- More than 50% responses would be received.
- Staff in various departments would have different degrees of empowerment.
- Staff might fear that the survey or the study could be linked to the organisation. This, in their minds, could have a negative effect on them as individuals, which could hinder the results of the survey as they might not answer all the questions or might not do so honestly.

1.9 Research design and methodology

The following headings provide the reader with an outline of the research design and methodology. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.9.1 Research design

The survey procedure and questionnaire technique were employed to gather quantitative data from the frontline administrative staff that agreed to participate in the study.

1.9.2 Sample size

A sample size of 326 full-time frontline administrative staff was randomly selected from the full-time employed staff profile of 1004 employees of the UoT. A stratified random sampling technique could be executed as information concerning relevant characteristics of the population's composition was available at the time of the study, that is, most frontline administrative staff employed were on peromnes levels 9 to 13 and all had valid electronic mail (email) addresses.

1.9.3 Instrument employed

Because all possible respondents have access to the Internet and an email address, the data was collected through a structured questionnaire using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey®. This data collection technique and software were selected because they are user friendly and convenient for the respondents to access.

Two methods of using the questionnaire were pre-tested in a pilot study involving five frontline administrative staff at the UoT not permanently employed. These participants were requested to complete an electronic and hardcopy (paper based) version of the questionnaire. This was done to ascertain which method appealed to respondents and which one would take up less of the respondents' time.

The findings of this pilot study were not included in the results of this study as it was done, simply to establish which method the respondent was not comfortable with (in terms of look and feel) and also to determine which method was less time consuming.

To collect responses, an email was sent to potential respondents, containing the covering letter that explained the aim of the research, as well as a hyperlink, which once clicked on, would automatically take the respondent to the instrument.

Once the respondents had completed the survey, the results were generated in real time. The status of responses received was tracked at any given time during the open period of data collection. Responses received did not display names or email addresses of respondents, but allowed for identification of department or units, as this was one of the questions asked in the demographics section of the instrument.

1.9.4 Data analysis and findings

SurveyMonkey® was used as the data collection instrument and allowed for the appropriate analysis and compilation of the necessary descriptive statistics.

Further statistical analysis (Pearson's correlation), using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) 21 was used to test relationships between variables. This was done by a qualified statistician (Appendix A).

The analysis was to allow that the data could be interpreted into findings and recommendations relating to this study. This is discussed in greater detail in Chapter 3.

1.10 Ethical considerations

To obtain permission to use the staff of the UoT as participants in this study, written consent from the Human Resources Department of the UoT was obtained.

Ethics approval for the study was also sought from the Research Ethics Committee of the faculty in which the researcher was registered for the degree (Appendix B).

Participants were ensured, stated in the covering letter, that their responses to the questionnaires were confidential and would be used for the sole purpose of the study.

1.11 Organisation of the remainder of the study

This dissertation is structured into five chapters.

Chapter 2 provides an analysis of the literature consulted on the factors (decision-making and learning organisation) and conditions (staff retention, rewards and recognition, and job satisfaction) that could possibly influence the empowerment of frontline administrative staff. This chapter also describes who the frontline administrators of higher education institutions are and also the nature of their importance.

Chapter 3 discusses the methodology employed for this research study where a narrative of the methodology, the intended plan of the study, instrument employed, and sample size and population are described. Data analysis methods and the data collection procedure and technique are also described in this chapter.

Chapter 4 provides an analysis of the data collected, where the results of the questionnaire are assessed in detail and the results of the study are presented.

Lastly, Chapter 5 concludes this dissertation. A summary and conclusion are provided and recommendations for further research are proposed.

CHAPTER 2

2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The function of administration in an organisation

As important as the role and function of any other entity in an organisation, administration is the unit in charge of the methodical gathering, dispensation and sharing of information to those within an organisation who make the decisions, permitting them to execute their everyday jobs, as well as to those who have a stake or interest in this. The administrative function is one of the most basic functions that exist within an organisation. Some have even termed it as the information function as it relates to the widest sense of the word (Ferreira et al., 2003:5).

In any given organisation, the administrative function does not generate direct income; its sole function is to provide a support service. This function offers support to many individuals (internal and external) as well as providing other organisational services. In the academic environment, support typically ranges from secretarial assistance to administrative heads, that is, deans and heads of departments. Assistance is also provided to directorates and units such as student counselling, applications and registrations, faculty offices, co-operative education, financial aid, human resources, finance, alumni, and public relations, amongst others. Service workers, and particularly those in the front line, are probably the most important employees of the organisation as they are the ones having the first, and many times possibly the only, contact with the client (Barbee & Bott, 1991:28).

Contrary to the discussion above, Katzenbach and Santamaria (1999:107) describe frontline employees as ones who are unskilled and underpaid and whose work can be relentlessly unexciting and restricted. They also assert frontline employees often are not emotionally connected with their employers. However, they do agree that these employees have the potential to contribute greatly to an organisation and to have a colossal effect on the customer experience.

In linking the above scenario of frontline workers with employee empowerment of such workers, the main aim is to motivate these employees and also to create an engaging, high-performance atmosphere through involving them in decision making. Therefore, the

following questions arise: what employee empowerment, specifically in relation to frontline staff, is, and what characterises the factors and conditions leading to the feeling of empowerment.

Administrators comprise the front line of the company and are therefore critical to the company's effectiveness (Bowen & Lawler, 1995:73), as they work hard in 'demanding' areas, but their efforts, abilities, and competence frequently go unrecognised (Johnsrud, et al., 2000:39). This lack of acknowledgment could be the result of poor supervision from their direct line managers.

2.2 Employee empowerment

Empowerment has been dubbed the most popular and most frequently used buzzword in most modern organisations, but few have succeeded in defining it (Honold, 1997:202). Many researchers note employee empowerment occurs when management and employers pursue goals of both personal and professional growth for their employees.

Over time, the term 'employee empowerment' has assumed various meanings. Lashley, (1996:29, 34) states that authors frequently use terms like 'employee involvement', 'employee participation', 'employee empowerment' and even 'employee commitment' interchangeably. However, most have failed to isolate similarities and distinctions. He further asserts that although there have been efforts to define employee empowerment, such definitions are frequently contradictory

Lashley (1995:29) described empowering actions and has related them closely to employee empowerment. The relations between these terms are explained in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Lashley's summary of the meaning of empowering actions and their relation to employee empowerment (adapted from Lashley, 1995:29)

<i>Empowerment through participation</i>	When some of the decision making is entrusted to the employees. The employees, in turn, contribute by recognising and satisfying customer needs.
<i>Empowerment through involvement</i>	Through employee involvement, management stands to gain from the experiences, ideas and suggestions made by employees who are involved by offering feedback, sharing information and making suggestions.
<i>Empowerment through commitment</i>	Encourages employees to be accountable for their personal performance and its enhancement.
<i>Empowerment through delayering</i>	Whereby companies are becoming flatter and closer to the client, that is, where management tiers are reduced, thus enabling employees to respond more quickly to client needs and environmental changes.

In view of each definition, it is clear that empowerment has a different meaning for various managers and employees as it would largely depend on their order of business, that is, what is expected of them and what their daily tasks are.

According to Greasely (2005:354), empowerment as a concept engages the workforce by offering greater degrees of flexibility and allowing them more freedom to make decisions about their work. It can also be described as the “process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organizational members” to allow staff to complete given tasks (Conger & Kanungo, 1988:474).

However, Lashley (1996:335) feels given the description above, that empowerment is essentially different in that it distinguishes employee feelings of efficiency and significance as central to improved contributions to the organisation.

Kuokkanen and Leino-Kilpi (2000) argue increased productivity and effectiveness is a definite result of empowerment in organisations and empowered staff members are those who feel capable of doing things well, and even perfectly, in the right environment. They also view “empowerment as a process of personal growth and development in which key factors are the individuals’ characteristics such as beliefs, views, values, perceptions and relationships with the environment” (Kuokkanen & Leino-Kilpi, 2000:238-239).

D'Annunzio-Green and Macandrew (1999:260) focus more on the output related to the concept of empowerment as they view empowerment as something that extends it to the task at hand, without necessarily changing it or influencing the end result.

Termed "a practice for unlocking potential in individuals in the organization", Brown and Harvey (2006:241) consider employee empowerment as the entrustment of power and decision making to staff at the lower levels of the organisation and as the dissemination of the organisation's shared vision, appealing to all employees and allowing them to build a sense of satisfaction, self-respect and responsibility.

The difficulty in defining employee empowerment is that the concept differs in different types of organisations. Therefore, organisations that wish to empower their employees should create and define the concept specific to their organisation, and should address the needs and culture of each unique body (Honold, 1997:202).

It is evident from the literature that the most research into empowerment has been from a management perspective. Few studies and articles have examined empowerment from an employee's perspective, especially from the perspective of frontline staff.

In view of all the literature and research on employee empowerment, there are plenty of definitions, but there is considerable disparity about what empowerment actually comprises, how to put it into practice, and how it works (Bowen & Lawler, 1995:73). It is also apparent that empowerment in organisations remains sparse (Chiles & Zorn, 1995:1).

Employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff is imperative, as this will allow for greater client satisfaction in the sense that problems could be addressed instantaneously, when and where they occur. Given the value of frontline staff, research into the factors and conditions affecting the empowerment of these workers is also necessary.

While earlier studies of empowerment have focused largely on describing the concept in theory and how it impacts on management and the organisation, this study is aimed at frontline administrative staff. More specifically, the study examines frontline administrative staff at the lower levels in a tertiary education environment.

2.3 Creating an empowering environment

Challenging to organisations worldwide is that their employees need to be empowered to take initiative and be accountable at every level or function. Organisations are designed to draw on the initiative and capability of their staff to complete tasks and realise goals (Brown & Harvey, 2006:241). In this respect, Alpander (1991:13) states empowerment starts when managers deliberately attempt to add to employees' feelings of self-efficacy by eliminating conditions leading to a feeling of powerlessness and also by providing self-efficacy information.

Dobbs (1993:55-56) claims that if a single empowered employee takes action in his or her position as needed, it could be to the advantage of an organisation, but the proper conditions must be in place for empowerment to flourish, as empowerment can only exist in organisations where innovation does not go unnoticed or is not quashed, and where employees are expected to perform their daily jobs the way they always do. Empowerment can also be present when employees on the lower levels, at the front line, believe that they may take the initiative, even if it means going beyond their usual duties and whether the result is favourable to the organisation or not (Appelbaum et al., 1999:234).

Employees should be at liberty to develop effective service skills, be encouraged to be resourceful and should be empowered to make choices which translate into real service to decision makers (Bramson,1991:67). This, however, does not automatically indicate that employees should be given free reign; they should merely be given substantial responsibility as they are nearest to the problem to be solved (Barbee & Bott, 1991:28).

Nancy Foy affirms that an empowering organisation is one that wants to tap into its staff's knowledge and experience. Based on this, as a wise investment, this type of organisation should develop its staff (Foy, 1994:3). Empowered workers know how to relate their skills and experiences to their jobs and they apply good judgement, together with a strong sense of responsibility (Gatchalian, 1997:430). In an empowered organisation, individuals are aware of the vital roles they play in service delivery and they have the clout and flexibility to guarantee service delivery of a high standard (Cook & Macaulay, 1997:54).

Empowerment is when employees gain the authority to make their voices heard, when they are able to have a say in plans and decisions affecting them, and when they are

able to use their expertise at work to improve their performance, which ultimately result in improving the performance of their specific tasks for the organisation (Foy, 1994:5).

Probable character influences on empowerment may be categorised into two key groupings, namely demographic variables, which include age, education, and levels of corporate skill and employment experience, and psychological factors that are personal characteristics that each individual has, taking into account the need for a certain 'profile type' (Dimitriades, 2001:25). However, empowerment is not a panacea and it is not without negative effects, as research suggests that empowerment prevails when organisations put into practice operations that distribute power, information, knowledge and rewards throughout the company.

Empowered individuals are ones who continue learning both formally and informally (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:201) in their personal and professional lives, as these employees are the ones who have an advantage in the workplace as they know how to learn.

Clutterbuck et al. (1994:18) suggest that empowerment is not about delegation and responsibility and most certainly is not a cost-cutting exercise. Instead, it is needed to make organisations more "responsive to the market place"; "allow employees across the organization to work together with minimal supervision, by communicating horizontally rather than vertically up and down the hierarchy"; and "to tap into all the resources that will help maintain and improve organizational competitiveness" (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:20).

2.4 Who are the frontline administrators in higher education?

There seems to be some confusion among authors about administrators as a term defining a group of staff. Authors refer to administrators as the senior management of universities: vice-chancellors, deputy vice-chancellors and deans, and those who head operating units such as finance, human resources, research, etc. For the purpose of this study, frontline administrators will be defined as the ones who work in universities and provide support services to the organisation for its primary tasks (Conway, 2000:201). These staff members are not employed as academics. Their primary function is to cater to the needs of the academic staff as well as to the more senior 'administrators' mentioned above. They provide a service to those who have a vested interest in the smooth running of operations as well as to the clients, who are essentially the students.

This study reflects on frontline administrators because their standing is fundamentally different from that of the first group.

Frontline administrators, or administrators in an academic environment, are the staff members who are categorised as either academic or non-academic administrative support staff, with the emphasis being on their support role. They are the ones who have first contact with staff, students, industry, and stakeholders, to name a few, and are prevalent in all units of the institution.

Frontline administrators act as advisors, analysts, counsellors, specialists, technicians and officers on whom faculty members, students and parents have come to rely and trust (Rosser, 2000:7). Their responsibility and purpose is to maintain the goals and mission of the university and who, on the whole, reflect the institution's spirit and strength (Rosser, 2004:318).

However, Gumport and Pusser (1995:496) note that there are no standardised descriptions in higher education research of what constitutes administration or administrative functions.

Barker and Shatfin (1995:237) regard administrative, secretarial and clerical staff (in institutions where the emphasis is on academic qualifications) as workers who are not supposed to have any status, power or authority. They are only there to support academics and students. On the other hand, Szekeres defines administrative staff as those people in universities who have a role that is predominantly administrative in nature. In simpler terms, their focus is about supporting the work of the academic staff. In addition to the latter, they are required to deal with students on non-academic matters or work in an administrative capacity in finance, human resources, student administration, public relations, and the library (Szekeres, 2004:7).

With reference to the last three sources, no mention was made of the decisions that these staff members have to deal with during their daily work. They are often portrayed as a neglected part of the higher education workforce, yet they are key to the work of their employing institutions (Szekeres, 2004:8).

Frontline administrative staff members have an extensive understanding of their functions and are frequently given the needed information for decisions, but are seldom involved in the actual decision-making process imperative to that function (Johnsrud et al., 2000:39)

For companies to survive and maintain their competitive edge, they need to empower their frontline employees to exceed the expectations of customers (Cone, 1989:97), as employees on the front line are the ones who best know what customers want. They build lasting relationships with customers and they have the opportunity to exceed the needs of the customers. The solution to service problems should be put into the hands of those on the front line (Bramson, 1991:65).

Initially, the empowerment of frontline staff could mean sacrificing some or other traditional procedure and thus allowing the employee to think 'outside the box' (Cone, 1989:98). As true as it may sound, many may question whether this is the right thing to do to empower employees and also to satisfy the customers.

2.4.1 What is the nature of their importance?

As the first point of contact, frontline staff and administrators can radically influence the nature, conduct and fashion of the entire institution (Rosser, 2000:7) as they are the personnel whom students primarily face when entering the university system. They, as administrators, noticeably add to the structure of the academic organisation by helping and supporting the principal functions of teaching, research and service (Rosser, 2000:8).

These staff members are fundamental to the institution's character and strength. The way these staff members carry out their tasks can determine the quality of relationships with fellow staff members, students and the public they have contact with (Rosser, 2000:7).

Frontline administrators in a university environment have the duty to execute and impose policies determined by senior administrators (vice-chancellors, chief directors, etc.) despite the fact that they rarely contribute to the entire process (Rosser, 2000:8). These frontline administrators are the very ones who have to clarify and support these policies (which they had no role in devising) when students, staff or members of the public question them. It is safe to say that their involvement in governance is minimal (Rosser, 2000:9).

In a study conducted by Gornitzka and Larsen, they established that subjects (administrative staff at a university) who were interviewed for their study felt that their occupations and positions were thought very little of within the academic society. These subjects, however, were fully conscious that the university would not be able to function successfully without their administrative expertise in a higher education milieu, with the result that frontline administrators are generally not in a favourable position as their functions and roles are continuously negotiated and redefined (Gornitzka & Larsen, 2004:465, 469).

A study conducted at Curtin University of Technology by Tim Pitman revealed that administrative staff felt more valued by students than by academics. Furthermore, the study suggested that even though administrative staff believed they played a vital role in the teaching and learning process of the university, they felt that the people whom they serviced had a relatively low opinion of the importance of their service (Pitman, 2000:173).

2.5 Empowering the front line

Although the broad topic of employee empowerment has been widely researched, the literature lacks any comprehensive discussion of issues pertinent to implementing empowerment or the conditions required for such an approach to flourish (Wilkinson, 1998:40).

Richard Carver, the managing director of the Coverdale Organization, describes empowerment as

... encouraging and allowing individuals to take personal responsibility for improving the way they do their jobs and contributing to the organization's goals. It requires the creation of a culture which both encourages people at all levels to feel they can make a difference, and helps them to acquire the confidence and skills to do so (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:12).

Research conducted by Randolph and Sashkin, reveals that empowerment is about identifying and liberating the power that people in organizations already have in their wealth of useful knowledge, experience and internal motivation (Melhem, 2004:74) while others argue that empowerment is just about shifting decision making from managers to employees on the lower levels within the organisation.

In her book titled, *Empowering People*, Smith (1996:10) illustrates that empowerment encompasses the following:

- To persuade employees to engage more actively in their duties.
- To allow staff to be accountable for improving the way things are completed.
- To permit staff to make more decisions without having to refer to someone more senior.

Ron Zemke and Dick Schaaf (1989:68) agree that empowerment is the golden thread running through many of America's service business that excel. For them, empowerment denotes "turning the frontline loose" and by doing so, employees are persuaded to use initiative and creativity and are also rewarded. However, in South Africa there seems to be an urgent need for organisations to develop high-performance cultures that foster positive work environments. In an article titled "Empowering your employees", Linda Ronnie, a senior lecturer at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, points out that employee empowerment is an area of importance as managers should construct an environment that allows employees to apply their innovative abilities, without reproach or interference that creates distrust. She also notes that organizations need to employ the right people and then trust them to do the work to the best of their abilities (Ronnie, 2009).

Bowen and Lawler (1992:32) state that there are four organisational ingredients to be shared with the front line when trying to discuss the concept of empowerment:

- Information about the organisation's performance.
- Rewards based on the organisation's performance.
- Knowledge that enables employees to understand and contribute to organisational performance,
- Power to make decisions that influence organisational direction and performance.

2.6 Conditions affecting employee empowerment

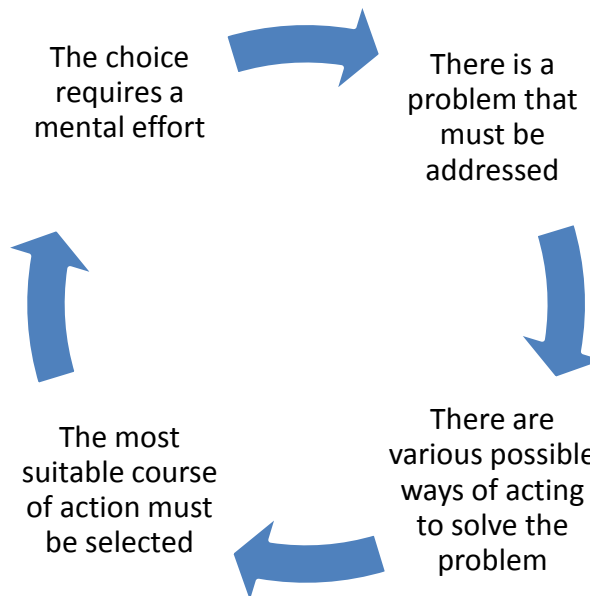
The empowerment of individuals in organisations is generally an effort associated with an increase in flexibility, adaptability, customer responsiveness and usefulness.

Management should not undermine the strength that empowerment can add to their workforce. Conditions in organisations that will allow for this should include an emphasis on preparation and training as well as encouragement for ongoing development.

2.6.1 Decision making

Crucial to any function in the organisation, decision making also serves as one of the most important tasks of administration. A poorly conceived decision could ultimately affect profits and losses of the organisation. Based on this, staff on the front line should be certain that the information at hand on which their decisions will be based, is current, precise, trustworthy, applicable, complete and apparent (Ferreira et al., 2003:412).

Decision making means choosing the best fitting option to resolve a problem, based on the following features:



**Figure 2.1: Decision choices to resolve a problem
(Ferreira et al., 2003:413)**

Nykodym et al. (1994:45) term employee empowerment as participative decision making. According to them, this is neither a fresh nor a straightforward management concept. They identify four areas of 'participation' for employees, whether in one or in all areas. These are illustrated in the diagram below:

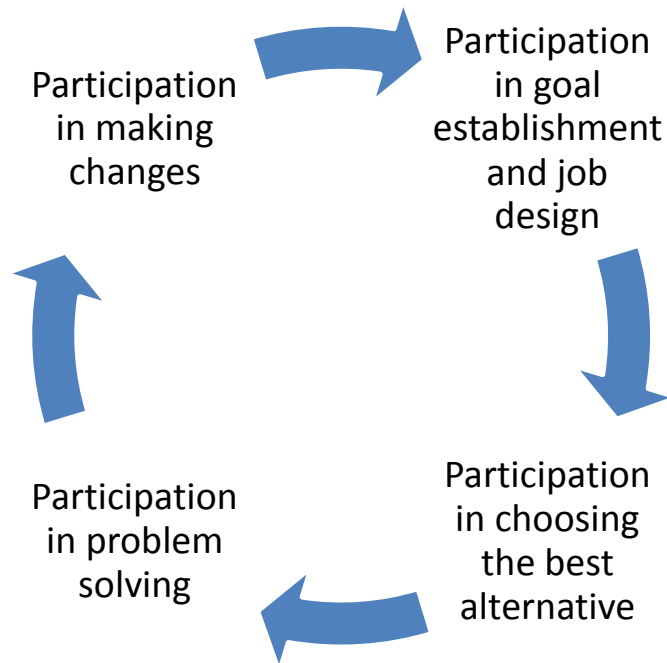


Figure 2.2: Four areas of participation in which employees may take part in decision making and problem solving (Nykodym et al., 1994:45)

Kelley (1993:104) claims that employees are empowered when they have better chances to apply judgement when delivering services. He adds that by empowering employees, they will have better chances to exercise discretion, which will impact customer satisfaction as well as service quality.

In essence, empowerment involves transferring decision-making authority and responsibility from managers to employees (Bradley & Sparks, 2000:992). In his article, Kelley (1993:116) describes that many authors view empowerment as a tactic intended to allow frontline staff to exercise greater levels of judgement and independence. Plainly said, the latter means that decision making is shifted to lower levels in the organisation, thus allowing resources to be released that may otherwise have been underutilised. Kelley (1993:105) describes three types of discretion: routine, creative and deviant discretion.

**Table 2.2 Three types of discretion exercised by employees in decision making.
(Adapted from Kelley, 1993:105)**

	Type	Description
1.	Routine Discretion	Alternatives are selected from a list of possible actions.
2.	Creative Discretion	Employees develop different ways of performing the tasks.
3.	Deviant Discretion	Employees act beyond their specified jobs or outside of their job descriptions, going beyond their own authority.

Sigler (1999:3) acknowledges that management should permit employees more independence in their daily jobs. These employees should also be given more significant tasks, which ultimately will allow them to be involved in decision making in their area of proficiency.

Employees should be empowered to add to their roles within an organisation (Gandz, 1990:74). When dealing with organisations, customers want to deal with staff members that have the knowledge and skills to do the jobs they have been appointed to do. It is said that these customers would like to have contact with staff who are capable of making decisions when and where the problems occur. These staff members should become the decision makers (Darling, 1996:26). Gandz (1990:74) agrees with Darling's concept of vesting the power to make decisions and take action in those who are closest to the problem, and further adds that empowered staff will respond more quickly.

2.6.2 Learning organisations

Serrat postulates that it is important to understand that learning is the key to success and organisations that aspire to thrive, should realise that employee empowerment is an instrument that can assist in bringing about a learning organisation. This can only be done through the learning of individuals, as organisations per se, cannot learn – people do. Organisations of this nature appreciate the function of learning in the improvement of

organisational success and require people who are intellectually inquisitive about their work (Serrat, 2009:1-2).

Confessore (1997:5) describes a learning organisation as one that affords individuals the opportunity to work together and increases their knowledge and skills during times of quick change in highly competitive environments. Peter Senge, however, defines a learning organisation as one “where people continually expand their capacity to create results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspirations are set free and where people are continually learning how to learn together”. It is Senge who popularised the concept of learning organisations in his first book, *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*. Here he described five factors that he refers to as disciplines that are significant to organisational learning. These are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models, building a shared vision, and team learning.

Teare and Dealtry (1998:49) summarise Senge’s framework for learning as follows:

- Systems thinking – understanding organisational thinking and behaviour in its entirety instead of in divided parts.
- Personal mastery – being prepared to constantly learn and in turn share this with organisational work.
- Shared vision – linked to conviction, commitment and clarity of intention that generates a need for learning and the collective will to learn.
- Mental models – aiding managers to defy their own theories and outlook of the current reality.
- Team learning – to foster an environment where work groups engage in dialogue.

In relation to empowerment of frontline administrative staff, two applicable factors come to the fore: personal mastery and shared vision.

Personal mastery includes education, training and development. It also encompasses how employees bring acquired knowledge to their organisations and use their creativity to keep themselves and the organisations responsive to the changing business world (Lawrence, 1998). From this it is clear that organisations are only able to learn through

their employees (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:27) who already possess an extreme wealth of useful knowledge and experience (Melhem, 2004:74).

A shared vision between all employers is said to be important to the success of a learning organisation as it provides the focal point and energy for learning (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:27). Institutions of higher learning are expected to provide opportunities for advancement, economically or socially, by producing highly skilled manpower that should be able to participate in a highly competitive global economy. Here, learning is related to the training and development of its staff (Motshekga-Sebolai, 2003:ii).

Generally, a learning organisation is described as one that “seeks to create its own future; that assumes learning is an ongoing and creative process for its members; and that develops, adapts and transforms itself in response to the needs and aspirations of people, both inside and outside itself” (Lawrence, 1998). Clutterbuck et al. further suggest that empowerment is an integral part of a learning organisation (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:27). They add that empowered employees frequently assume roles not within their job description and they can only manage to do so if the organisation in which they work allows them to develop constantly and provides access to learning tools (Clutterbuck et al., 1994:27). Coleman (1996:29) adds that empowerment works at its peak when organisational learning is accentuated, incorporating the sharing of information and self-control according to performance feedback.

With the rise of continual economic changes, universities are faced with having to continually respond to various changes such as the rise in student numbers as well as the diversity of the student population (Meade, 1995:113). To be able to build a stronger culture of quality improvement and efficient service delivery, universities should introduce procedures that will facilitate the rate at which higher education institutions will learn and grow (Meade, 1995:113) essentially creating an inclusive environment that will foster this growth. Because of the increase in student enrolments at higher education institutions, these institutions are now faced with the task of having to achieve much more in comparison with previous years with fewer resources (financial and human). While having to accomplish this, higher education institutions are confronted with having to enlighten the general public on what they are doing and how well this can be achieved. Here, key questions to be asked are:

- How can an institution guarantee that it continually develops or improves?
- Can 'learning organization', as a concept, aid higher education institutions to strive for and achieve excellence? (Meade, 1995:111)

How would one then begin to define or describe a learning organisation and what does it mean for an organisation to learn (Meade, 1995:113)? Simon (1991:125) suggests that an organisation learns by incorporating people who bring new knowledge or simply through individual members who learn. This could mean that the organisation or institution will not only benefit from staff who are formally taught, but also by learning through open communication, shared problem solving and the willingness of staff to understand the process in which they function daily.

Phil Meade (1995:119) contends that universities are successful in producing and obtaining new knowledge, but they are less successful in conveying the information throughout the university and in applying it to modify their own activities. Many may question whether it is because management is not composed of trained managers?

Critical areas for universities are that staff should be trained, with emphasis on soft skills.

After conducting a study in the textile industry in rural KwaZulu-Natal, Tromp (2009:52) found that training within an organisation should be continuous, as staff members will definitely make mistakes in their daily jobs. These mistakes should be seen as opportunities to learn, no matter how big or small they are, and ultimately result in improved service to the organisation. This incorporates both formal and informal learning as part of organisational learning.

It is important to specify where in the organisation particular knowledge is stored or who has learned it. Human learning in the context of organisations is greatly influenced by the organisation, has consequences for the organisation and produces phenomena at the organisational level that surpass the learning processes of isolated individuals (Simon, 1991:125-156).

2.7 Factors affecting employee empowerment

Bauer (2000:89) discusses four key factors contributing to employee fulfilment: rewards and recognition, issues of work–life balance, opportunities for growth through training and development, and perception of the work environment.

The following factors were identified that could affect the feeling of being an empowered worker, linked closely with those identified by Bauer: staff retention, rewards and recognition, and job satisfaction.

2.7.1 Job satisfaction

Employee satisfaction is crucial for all divisions of the workforce, particularly those on the front line (Bauer, 2000:87) and can be defined as “a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one’s job or job experiences” (Rust et al., 1996:62). Even though the topic has been studied often, most organisations still find it onerous to measure and improve the attitudes of employees relating to work. Therefore, in addition to using compensation as a mechanism to retain employees, individuals may also feel valued if they feel a sense of job satisfaction. This can be achieved when managers ensure that employees are given autonomy in their job functions and when they allow employees to participate in decision making pertaining to daily tasks. Rust et al. (1996:63) claim that if employee satisfaction is increased, in terms of the jobs, employee turnover is reduced and in essence, organisations with satisfied employees will ultimately have satisfied customers. Rust et al. (1996:63) further note that organisations with satisfied employees in turn have satisfied customers.

Research has shown that satisfaction moves from the extrinsic to the intrinsic as employees age (Bauer, 2000:89). Graduates just entering the job market are motivated more by tangible things like salaries, while from a certain age, older employees draw satisfaction from employer-paid pension plans, housing allowances, medical aid and flexible working situations that make ageing in the workplace comfortable. Bauer (2000:90) also testifies that employee satisfaction and retention can be improved when managers believe that employees are essential components of the workforce, valued and appreciated. Boshoff and Allen (2000:71) state that empirical research has shown that satisfied workers execute their duties better than those who are not. Hoffman and Ingram (1992:70), however, believe that job satisfaction is imperative for those on the forefront of customer-orientated behaviour.

Because higher education institutions are labour intensive, there has been increased interest in employee satisfaction in higher education (Küskü, 2003:347). It is noted that much of the research conducted on job satisfaction, especially in higher education, is concentrated in the Americas and in Western Europe. Little has been done in other parts of the world, especially in developing or underdeveloped countries.

Frontline administrators comprise the 'face' of the department and ultimately of the university for which they work; however their daily dealings differ from one another. Although these staff members work in the same environment (academia), they do different jobs, thus resulting in their satisfaction levels being different. From this, the question arises whether there are considerable differences in job satisfaction among all frontline administrators?

Locke, whose definition has been most used, defines job satisfaction as " a pleasurable or positive emotional state resulting from the appraisal of one's job or job experiences" (Locke, 1976:1304).

A study conducted by Lewis Solomon and Michael Tierney (1977:412) found that college (university) administrators were very satisfied with most aspects of their jobs, whereas senior administrators (those on higher job grades or levels) were more satisfied than the mid-level ones.

2.7.2 Staff retention

In the changing and competitive world of business today, companies are faced with the daunting challenge of retaining employees. Outstanding employees may choose to leave the organisation because of dissatisfaction, being underpaid or lack of motivation (Sigler, 1999:1). It is said that 'better employees' change jobs because of better opportunities. Therefore it is often experienced that when staff leave an organisation, it takes the organisation by surprise, which ultimately leads to interference in the organisation's operations (Boshoff & Allen, 2000:70). Rust et al. (1996:63) concur that when organisations boost employee satisfaction, employee turnover is reduced.

To remedy high labour turnover, organisations should seek out reasons for leaving and ways in which the organisation can retain the talents of current employees. Losing talented employees is damaging to any organisation, and is even worse if their reasons for leaving could not be remedied. Organisations should also investigate why many staff

members remain at the organisation for extremely long periods. These reasons could also not have a positive effect on the organisation. Sigler (1999:1) adds that efforts to retain employees could present challenges to the organisation as well. These challenges may include staff demanding higher wages, non-compliance with company practices and non-compliance with managers' directions, amongst others. Boshoff and Allen (2000:83) state that it is important for organisations to realise that when staff leave a company, it does not always reflect badly on the organisation, nor should it have a negative effect. They further note that the outcome of the loss of a staff member depends on the competence of that staff member. "When good performers leave, the effect is obviously negative" and "when poor performers leave, it provides managers with the opportunity to find more effective replacements". They further note (2000:71) that if frontline staff become frustrated in their jobs because they are unable to deliver effective services, it will heighten their intentions to leave the organisation.

Limited career advancement and professional development, or the lack thereof, could be considered one of the main reasons for frontline and administrative staff choosing to leave their current place of work. In the tertiary environment, it is easier for academic staff to remain in their positions while progressing through the ranks with increased salary and status (e.g. from junior lecturer to lecturer, then to senior lecturer). Administrators, on the other hand, must change positions to advance (Johnsrud et al., 2000:39). Rosser (2000:9) notes that literature reveals that turnover among midlevel administrators is relatively high, but there is little understanding of how social and workplace matters interrelate to sway certain behaviours and later turnover decisions.

Departments, and ultimately the organisation on the whole, run like well-oiled machines. Should one part of the machine be broken, it is simply removed and replaced with a new or better part. The same goes for the workplace – staff can easily be replaced; however, this can be either detrimental or beneficial.

Organisations that create working environments where staff can perform at their best will attract and retain the best people (Fabre, 2010:6)

Understanding the complexity of these administrators roles is important to higher education organizations as their feelings may sway how well they do their jobs and how long they stay at them (Rosser, 2000:11).

2.7.3 Rewards and recognition

Money is not the main motivating factor for most employees and it can be said that intrinsic factors like achievement, recognition, advancement and overall job satisfaction may be the reasons why employees choose to remain in their current roles. Empowerment is said to promote these factors, while also providing the extrinsic factors employees seek (*Empowering Employees*, 1998).

The concept of empowerment allows employees to take on new responsibilities and roles they normally do not assume. Management and organisations should encourage employees to continue to do so by showing their appreciation for efforts and achievement. According to Smith (1996:104), research has shown that employees are “more willing to extend themselves if management provides recognition”. Recognition may be both formal and informal. Employees may feel valued if supervisors show personal interest, as this makes them feel that they are not just at work to perform a duty and are seen as valued individuals. Acknowledgement as an expression of gratitude may be written or oral from managers to subordinates. This expression of appreciation can be powerful and managers should realise it could empower employees. Bauer (2000:90) adds that as a basic human need, all employees appreciate a form of praise or any type of acknowledgment for carrying out their jobs well, and this does not necessarily encompass additional monetary compensation.

Currently, many organisations have instituted merit award programmes to acknowledge staff for excellent performance. Deserving staff may be featured in a campus newspaper or on the university website (Bauer, 2000:90). These types of rewards or recognition seem to increase employee morale, resulting in a productive workforce and also a heightened feeling of community among employees.

Melhem (2004) has provided suggestions in his research where he empirically explored the relationship between different theories and their relationship to employee empowerment of frontline staff. In his fourth proposition developed, Melhem (2004:80) suggests that “levels of empowerment will be higher for frontline staff who are rewarded and recognised for their ability to satisfy customers”, which would ultimately result in a job well done. Complementary to Melhem, Boshoff and Allen (2000:66) note that in rewarding employees for doing their work well, such employees will maintain a high level of performance in relation to their daily jobs, whether handling customer complaints or delivering quality service. The result of this is that when people are acknowledged for

work well done, they subsequently perform their duties better and do so more enthusiastically. We all have a need to have our value affirmed and recognised. Staff members are grateful for recognition and it has been confirmed that if their efforts are acknowledged within the workplace, staff subsequently perform better. This positivity indicates job success and ultimately leads to feelings of satisfaction, confidence and competence (Bramson, 1991:65).

For administrators, promotion could be the ultimate reward or form of recognition, but for this opportunity, administrators in a tertiary educational institution are forced to change jobs within the university. The essential human need for acknowledgment and recognition is not met within most organisations, especially in respect of frontline administrators. Rosser states that recognition in terms of the aptitude for midlevel (frontline) administrators incorporates dynamics such as leadership, direction, supervision, trust, communication, participation, confidence, and performance feedback. It is a proven fact that if administrative standards and requests regarding recognition are met, generally administrators' morale regarding their work life will be bettered (Rosser, 2000:9).

According to Tromp, individuals should be recognized for work well done and by receiving the necessary acknowledgement, it shows that the organization appreciates excellent work and this will not only benefit the individual, but also the organization (Tromp, 2008:39).

2.8 Conclusion

For organisational success, managers and the organisation should continually adopt mechanisms to keep employees content, motivated and productive, which would ultimately result in successful staff retention.

Authors in the field of study have noted that employees who are empowered will be accountable for customer service and speedy response (Lashley, 1999:173).

Research by Laschinger et al. (2009:302) further suggests that empowerment strategies are intended to improve employees' control over their work, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and organisational commitment. For organisations to be successful, the empowerment process should be supportive of individual learning and self-development. It must be seen as a long-term process and ultimately one that adds value to the performance of the organisation and its customers (Cook, 1994:13).

“Empowerment is not something that management does to employees, but rather a mindset that employees have about their role in the organization” (Quinn & Spreitzer, 1997:41)

The concept of empowerment is very powerful but it may be viewed with a level of cynicism if it is not set within the context of creating a work environment that sets appropriate standards. The literature consulted indicates that people who are empowered in the workplace do assume more responsibility for decisions that affect them as staff as well as for those that impact on the organisation (Quinn & Davies, 1999:425). This is a valuable perception with regard to the essentials of proficient growth and maturity in the administrative environment.

This study offers a new viewpoint compared with the findings of previous studies on the issue of employee empowerment, especially with regard to frontline administrative staff in higher education.

For any business type, the best empowerment approach will depend on the exact circumstances, one of the decisive factors being the eagerness of staff to be empowered (Badenhorst, 2000:9).

It is, however, safe to say that empowerment is complicated and the essence of the idea cannot be captured by a particular concept.

Findings by Johnsrud et al. (2000) affirm when administrators feel they are supported, motivated and recognised, their morale is likely to be higher. If they are not recognised, their morale may be lower and they are more likely to leave.

From the literature consulted, it is evident that there is a clear relationship between employee retention and the factors and conditions identified above.

Universities operate more and more like white-collar business units, and therefore staff at these institutions should function similarly to their private sector counterparts.

In the next chapter, the research procedures are clarified.

Chapter 3 presents the research questions, explains the purpose and limitations of the research, discusses the research methodology and details the data collection process.

CHAPTER 3

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 presents the process of investigation, and sets out the approach used for the study. The researcher describes the way in which information was elicited from respondents as well as the means of dealing with this information.

3.2 Research question

The following research question drives this study:

- Are the identified factors and conditions which influence employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a UoT influenced by demographics?

3.3 Purpose statement

The purpose of the study is to determine how age, gender, years' work, the faculty/unit or department employed in and qualifications influence

- how the frontline administrator makes decisions;
- whether staff are able to learn and grow;
- whether staff are satisfied with their jobs;
- why staff choose to stay at or leave the UoT; and
- how important rewards and recognition are to staff in the identified category.

Previous studies investigated the theoretical aspects of the term 'employee', empowerment, its antecedents and the impact of empowerment on industries like hospitality, banks and healthcare (Nykodym et al., 1994; Bowen & Lawler, 1995; Lashley, 1995, 1996, 1999; Boshoff & Allen, 2000; Melhem, 2004). Only a few authors have investigated how these affect administrative staff, especially frontline staff in the tertiary education sector.

The significance of this study is to examine the sentiments of administrative staff relating to their empowerment with the identified factors and conditions in mind.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between the independent variables (age, gender, years' work, the faculty/unit or department employed in,

qualification) and the dependent variables (the conditions, i.e., decision making and learning organisation and the factors (job satisfaction, staff retention and rewards and recognition).

The rationale for this study is to establish whether the identified factors and conditions are influenced by demographics, department or unit employed in, level of education and years of service.

3.4 Limitations of the study

As briefly set out in Chapter 1, the study was limited to a UoT in South Africa, with the selected sites its various campuses.

The study population consisted of 326 permanent frontline administrative staff employed at the institution at the time the data was collected.

Contract workers were not included in the population as these workers cannot be promoted and they are generally appointed on a short-term basis.

The study was based on frontline administrative employees from one particular sector, namely tertiary education. Based on this limitation, it provided an opportunity for further research to understand employee empowerment in the context of frontline administrative staff.

3.5 Research methodology

A survey procedure was employed and the questionnaire data-collection technique used to collect the necessary information for this study.

3.5.1 Population and Sample

This study used a probability sample. All frontline administrative staff members, as the research population, were identified. This universum excluded all other job titles.

Give the information above, the population, for this study comprised:

Elements = staff

Units = 326 full-time university frontline administrative staff

Extent = between peromnes levels 9 and 13

Time = in the employ at the university of technology at the time of data collection for the study.

To specify the sampling frame for this research study, a list of names and email addresses of all 326 full-time frontline administrative staff employed at the time of the research was compiled. The sampling unit comprised all full-time employed frontline administrative staff on all campuses of the university of technology.

3.5.2 Permission to conduct research

A formal request (email) to use the frontline administrative staff of the UoT as the sample for the study was sent to the Human Resources Manager (Appendix A). Once permission had been received to conduct the study at the UoT, ethical clearance was granted by the Business Faculty Research Ethics Committee of the institution at which the researcher was registered for the dissertation (Appendix B).

3.5.3 Reliability and validity of the research instrument

To guarantee that a worthwhile study was executed, it was essential that the validity and reliability of the instrument were reviewed.

To confirm reliability, it seemed certain that the collected results would be alike under the same settings should someone else administer or complete the instrument at a different time. The questions used to compile the questionnaire were all from previous studies relating to employee empowerment. This verified the reliability and validity of the instrument employed.

3.6 Instrument employed

For the purpose of this study, a structured questionnaire was developed to gather the needed data from the respondents. It was applied to confirm consistency when asking participants questions.

From the inception of the research plan, it was apparent that a questionnaire would have to be employed for data collection, as it would be the most effective tool to gather the requisite data.

It was appropriate that a survey should be used as the research technique as it would be easier to gather information from a large group of people.

The instrument comprised five sections (see below) with 61 questions in total.

Section A	Decision making
Section B	Learning Organisation
Section C	Job Satisfaction
Section D	Staff Retention
Section E	Rewards and Recognition
Section F	Demographics

It was expected that the questions posed in the various sections would give a clear indication of the respondents' attitudes to the different subjects covered.

A five-point scale was used for the majority of the questions, whereby respondents were asked to appropriately choose between options ranging from 'never', 'seldom', 'sometimes', 'often' or 'always'. These, as perceived by the respondents, would typify their feelings of empowerment, based on their demographics. This type of questioning was functional, as it diminished the possibility of uncertainty in response to questions.

Open- and close-ended questions were used whereby respondents were able to give individual answers to questions and also to select answers from a list provided.

3.7 Data collection

With the population identified, it had to be determined, given the number of questions, whether respondents would not find the instrument tedious, resulting in boredom and ultimately in non-completion.

The following steps were followed: the researcher randomly identified respondents that met the criteria to participate in the study, and requested that they complete both an electronic and paper-based questionnaire.

After completing both versions of the questionnaire, they were asked in an informal interview which version they preferred and why.

Having done this, it was easy to identify which one would be easier to complete in respect of the 'look and feel' of the questionnaire, would take less time, and also that would appeal to respondents the most.

Once the questionnaire had been piloted, it was clear that the majority preferred the electronic version, as it was easier to click and proceed to the next question or section. It took less time and it was easier to answer immediately. The randomly identified respondents also noted that if they had received the paper-based questionnaire, it would have been left on their desks to complete at a later stage. This would have resulted in non-completion.

Based upon the information above, it was decided that an electronic questionnaire should be employed.

3.7.1 Data-collection technique

The instrument was administered to frontline administrative staff during a period not deemed an administratively busy time. The first two months of the academic calendar is dedicated to registration of new and returning students. Most staff members that complied with the criteria for inclusion in the study were involved in the registration process. Mid-April was not ideal either, as autumn graduation takes place at that time for one full week. It was assumed that staff in this category would either be assisting at the ceremonies or be attending to receive a qualification. Given this, the month of March was identified as an ideal time to disseminate the research instrument.

As mentioned briefly in Chapter 1, the electronic questionnaire was designed using the online survey tool, SurveyMonkey®. The survey was designed online, whereby all the questions were captured into the electronic bank. The questions could be edited, shuffled or removed at any point before distributing the questionnaires to the respondents. Once the researcher was satisfied with the overall appearance of the instrument, a hyperlink was created in the system that enabled the researcher to distribute the questionnaire to the respondents electronically. This hyperlink was the researcher's key to track responses at any time without her being aware of specific individuals who had completed the questionnaire online. To be able to track response in real time also meant that statistics were automatically generated and updated each time a questionnaire had been completed.

The researcher had the option of creating a compulsory questionnaire, whereby the online survey tool would not allow incomplete questionnaires to be processed or accepted. This option was not taken as it could create the impression that it was

mandatory to complete every question. The researcher sought to gauge the true feelings and perceptions of empowerment based on demographics, and thus the questions warranted honest answers. If respondents felt questions were too hard hitting, they were given the option to ignore that question.

Data collection was conducted in three phases.

During the first phase, an email invitation, in which the covering letter and link to the electronic questionnaire were appended (Appendix C), was distributed to a population of 326 of the UoT's frontline administrative staff members. Within one week of the research window's being open, 271 opened the email, 40 responses were received, five staff members were out of office, one staff member was on maternity leave, and two emails were undeliverable.

The researcher assumed that all the required responses would be obtained after the first distribution. However, because of the lack of responses, it was evident that a reminder email would have to be sent.

During the second phase, a reminder email was sent to the full population of 326 identified staff, of whom 265 opened the email; 25 additional responses were received, seven staff members were out of office, and one staff member was still on maternity leave.

Additional responses slowly arrived; however the response was insufficient for the statistical analysis.

Because of a lack of responses, as the third and final phase, it was decided to have 100 paper-based questionnaires printed. These were hand delivered to departments across the UoT where the researcher, in person, requested assistance from the respondents to complete the questionnaire. The researcher was able to ascertain which departments had not completed questionnaires based on the responses received for Question 60: "In which faculty / unit / department do you work". Even though many had opted to skip this question, this method had to be adopted.

As responses were anonymous, the questionnaire had a self-addressed envelope attached to it with the researcher's details. At no point during the delivery of the questionnaire was any discussion regarding the questionnaire or the study entertained. It

was a mere request for cooperation to complete the questionnaire and to return it to the researcher. If staff indicated they had already completed the online survey, they were acknowledged with thanks. However, these respondents were asked to forward the questionnaire to any other frontline administrative staff in their departments or units. Here, the researcher also integrated a snowball sampling technique. Once the questionnaire had been delivered, the same procedure was followed until all paper-based copies had been distributed.

Of the 100 distributed, 31 hard copies were returned for review. The online survey tool used allowed the researcher to manually add the responses to those already completed online. This was ideal as there would not be any inconsistencies in the statistics as the same programme was used. The online link was closed as soon as all the hard copies had been captured, thereby preventing any other staff from completing the survey online.

It should be noted that in between all the phases, additional online responses were received, which resulted in a total of 110 responses from the 326 distributed.

3.7.2 Data analysis

Once respondents had completed the questionnaire electronically, the descriptive statistics were collated in real time online. The online survey software tool also allowed the statistical data to be exported to Microsoft Excel, where if needed, the data could be manipulated to be graphically displayed.

This data was also transferred to SPSS 21 for the appropriate numerical statistical analysis. The analysis determined whether the independent and dependent variables had a statistically significant relationship.

3.8 Conclusion

The aim of this chapter was to reflect on the steps taken to obtain the requisite data. The chapter explained the main purpose of the study, furnished pertinent questions for obtaining the desired results, and noted limitations to the study.

The population and sample were clearly identified and it was explained why the targeted group was important to the study.

The development of the questionnaire as well as the validity and reliability of the research instruments was explained and confirmed. This confirmation was based on the adoption of research techniques from previous studies on empowerment.

While this chapter introduced the methodological approach, Chapter 4 focuses on the analysis and interpretation of the data collected in greater detail.

CHAPTER 4

4 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapters outlined how the researcher aimed to acquire the needed data for the completion of the study to answer the research question: *Are the identified factors and conditions, which influence employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a UoT, influenced by demographics?*

The focus of this chapter was to scrutinise the received data, which had to be cleaned and ultimately altered and sculpted, with the objective of creating useful information relevant to this study and for future use.

Data coding and cleaning

Given that an online survey tool, SurveyMonkey®, was used for data collection, it was not necessary to manually capture the received questionnaire to convert it to a digital format. SurveyMonkey® automatically converted the data into a digital format and this was ideal as human error was eliminated, which could have occurred if manual capturing had been done. The information on the questionnaires completed in the paper-based version was also captured in SurveyMonkey®.

4.2 Data analysis and interpretation

SurveyMonkey® also produced bar graphs and pie charts to allow for the graphic display of the data if needed.

After the analysis of the descriptive data, the researcher further attempted to determine whether there was any significant statistical correlation between the independent variables and the factors and conditions that could influence the empowerment of frontline administrative staff at the designated UoT. This was done using SPSS 21 software.

All questions were cross-tabulated with each of the independent variables. Furthermore, the researcher also tested whether certain questions from the factors and conditions

identified had any significant influence. The aim of cross-tabulation was to identify the questions and sections that were not statistically significant.

Further to testing the independent variables with the questions contained in the questionnaire, the researcher also cross-tabulated a few questions from Sections A–E combined and sought to gauge whether a correlation was evident and whether any combinations would be statistically significant.

It should be noted that responses to Question 60 (in which faculty / unit / department do you work?) is not a true reflection of where the majority of the staff were employed, but of those that responded to the questionnaire.

4.2.1 Demographics of the respondents



Figure 4.1: Combined respondent demographics

The descriptive statistics are represented in the stacked bar graph in Figure 4.1 above.

The majority of the respondents were female (79.8%) while 46.2% of the respondents were aged from 30–39. The age of the respondents who participated in the study and who were employed as frontline administrative staff were aged between 30 and 50 years.

Two-thirds of the respondents had improved their qualifications since leaving school: the majority (36.9 and 23.3%) had a national diploma or a baccalaureus degree / honours. Some of the frontline administrators are also in possession of a master's degree.

More than half of the respondents were English speakers (54.8%) and were married (55.8%).

Of the respondents, 53.9% have spent more than ten years in their current occupations at the UoT, with less than a quarter (22.5%) having less than five years' experience.

Question 60 requested that respondents indicate in which faculty, department, or unit they were stationed. There were 98 responses, while 12 omitted to answer the question. Of the 98 responses received, 15 (15.3%) were from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and 17 (17.3%) were from the UoT Library.

Figure 4.1 and the responses received, for the purpose of this study, show that the typical frontline administrator at the University of Technology is:

- married
- female
- aged between 30 and 39
- speaks English
- has a bachelor's degree
- and has been in the employ of the UoT for more than 10 years

It should be noted that the marital status of the identified sample had no significant statistical influence on any of the questions. There was no correlation between the marital status of the respondents and any of the identified factors and conditions. It is therefore safe to assume that the marital status of the frontline administrative staff at the UoT had no impact or influence on the degree of empowerment felt by these staff.

4.2.2 Condition 1: Section A: Decision Making

The aim of this set of questions was to establish whether frontline administrative staff were actively involved in the decision-making processes which directly affected their daily jobs and those of the department. The most important aspect of these questions was whether these staff members were provided with enough information to make sound decisions and whether assistance from management was obtained when these staff had problems to solve. Key to this, in relation to the concept of empowerment of these frontline administrators, is the question of whether information was available for them to execute any decisions and whether they could do so without the assistance of management, as well as the relationship with the independent variables.

As appropriate to the role of frontline administrators, it is apparent that problem solving takes up a large portion of their daily work. In view of this, these workers should be involved in determining what the aim of the task at hand is, they should be able to set a plan for accomplishing the task, be able to choose the best option and should be able to make the changes needed. In addition, support and communication from management are also necessary. The staff closest to problem or task at hand will feel empowered, as they are able to consolidate their roles within the organisation (as clearly shown in Tables 4.1–4.3).

Table 4.1: On a daily basis, I am provided with enough information to make good decisions

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	4	3.6
	Seldom	11	10.0
	Sometimes	36	32.7
	Often	38	34.5
	Always	16	14.5
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

A total of 105 respondents answered the question. Staff indicated that 'sometimes' (32.7%) and 'often' (34.5%), they had enough information at hand to make good decisions.

Almost half (49%, i.e., a combination of ‘often’ and ‘always’) of the respondents answered positively, which is a clear indication that staff were given adequate amounts of information to allow for good decision making.

Of the respondents, 32.7% indicated that they would ‘sometimes’, on a daily basis, be provided with enough information to make good decisions. Of the 105 responses, 3.6% similarly suggested that they were never provided with enough information to make good decisions. Therefore staff members are furnished with enough information to make sound decisions.

Further statistical analysis ($p = 0.0000$) indicated that there was a statistically significant relationship between the home language of the respondents and whether they felt they were provided with enough information to make good decisions.

Table 4.2: On a daily basis I am provided with enough information to make good decisions

Home Language	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Afrikaans	3	0	3.2	1	32.2	10	54.8	17	9.7	3	100.0	31
English	3.7	2	13.2	7	37.7	20	30.2	16	15.1	8	100.0	53
African	3.7	2	6.6	1	40	6	20	3	20	3	100.0	15
Total	4	4	9.1	9	36.4	36	36.4	36	14.1	14	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 105 owing to non-responses

In terms of the home language spoken by the respondents, the correlation revealed that of the 105 respondents, 31 spoke Afrikaans, 53 spoke English and 15 spoke an African language.

Table 4.2 shows that African native language speakers contended that they ‘sometimes’ (40%) were provided with enough information to make good decisions, while the Afrikaans native language speakers said ‘often’ (54.8%). English-speaking respondents said ‘sometimes’ (37.7%), while a further 13.2% responded ‘seldom’.

In view of the results detailed above, staff members are able to understand what is conveyed to them in a language that they understand – their home language. This

suggests that the home language of the respondents is spoken at their place of work, thus making it easier for staff to communicate. It is assumed that line managers are able to communicate with frontline staff in a language they can understand and this, in the view of the researcher, impacts the quality of work produced by frontline staff members, as the communication lines are open. Ideas can be exchanged in a language intelligible to both line manager and frontline administrators, and this exchange of ideas, based on the provision of enough information, enables staff to make good decisions. It is concluded that the home language / native language of the respondents has an effect on the level of decisions made by frontline administrators.

Table 4.3: *I have access to information that could enable me to make good decisions*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	7	6.4
	Seldom	17	15.5
	Sometimes	27	24.5
	Often	37	33.6
	Always	17	15.5
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

Staff were questioned whether they had access to information that could enable them to make good decisions. Of the respondents, 24.5% suggested that they 'sometimes' had access, whereas 33.6% indicated 'often'.

Similarly, on comparing the results of Table 4.1 and 4.3, the following is apparent:

- Staff members are provided with information to make decisions.
- Staff members have access to information enabling them to make good decisions.

It is assumed that there is a free flow of information, that is, staff members are given the information needed to make decisions and should this not be given to them directly, they know where to obtain the information to enable them to make good decisions.

Table 4.4: *In my job, I am involved in decisions that affect me*

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	7	6.4
	Seldom	22	20.0
	Sometimes	27	24.5
	Often	27	24.5
	Always	21	19.1
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Even though staff are given the appropriate information and may have access to information that allows for good decision making, it is questioned whether staff are involved in decisions that directly affect them in the workplace.

Of the respondents, 6.4% said they were never involved in decisions that affected them, compared with 19.1% that responded 'always'.

With reference to the results displayed in Table 4.4, it is clear that there is no common practice across the UoT where staff can decide for themselves about themselves in relation to their jobs.

Responses to this question were uniformly positive across the response scale, as just more than a quarter (6.4% 'never' and 20% 'seldom') responded negatively. In combining responses from 'often' and 'always', less than half (43.6%) of the respondents felt that they were involved in decisions that affect them. It is also important to note that the independent variables did not have an influence on whether the frontline administrator was involved in making decisions that affected them in their jobs.

The results displayed in Table 4.5 reflect whether the frontline administrators were allowed to suggest ways to make their daily tasks easier and also to improve the operations of their office environments.

Table 4.5: *I am given an opportunity to propose improvements to make my daily tasks and those of the department, better*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	11	10.0
	Seldom	18	16.4
	Sometimes	31	28.2
	Often	27	24.5
	Always	19	17.3
	Total	106	96.4
Missing	0	4	3.6
Total		110	100.0

On grouping the results displayed above into three points, 26.4% (a combination of ‘never’ and ‘seldom’) responded negatively and 41.8% (a combination of ‘often’ and ‘always’) responded positively. This validates that staff can recommend improvements to make their daily tasks easier.

In contrast to the above, responses depicted in Table 4.5 clearly dispute the results suggested in Table 4.6 below. Based on what is depicted in the tables, staff are allowed to suggest ways to make their and their departments daily tasks better; however, their opinions are not solicited before changes are made to the way they execute their jobs.

Table 4.6: *My opinion is asked before changes are made to the way I perform my job*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	25	22.7
	Seldom	21	19.1
	Sometimes	20	18.2
	Often	19	17.3
	Always	20	18.2
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

In respect of Table 4.6, the majority of the sample (41.8%) responded negatively to the question, as revealed when the responses from ‘never’ and ‘seldom’ were combined, that their opinions were not asked before changes were made to their jobs, whereas 35.5% (a combination of ‘often’ and ‘always’) responded positively. Less than one-third (18.2%) of the respondents noted that they were sometimes involved in discussions about changes to the way their jobs were executed. It is therefore concluded that the majority of respondents believe that their opinions are not asked, and this is possibly because many staff members carry out instructions mechanically without questioning reasons. It could be argued that frontline administrators just service staff; therefore their personal interests or inputs should be deferred in relation to their jobs.

Table 4.7: *I am free to take initiative at work*

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	5	4.5
	Seldom	14	12.7
	Sometimes	29	26.4
	Often	26	23.6
	Always	31	28.2
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.7 reflects the results when frontline administrators were asked whether they had the freedom to exercise initiative at work. Here a majority of 78.2% (26.4% ‘sometimes’, 23.6% ‘often’ and 28.2% ‘always’) noted that they were always free to do so.

Table 4.8: *I am free to take initiative at work*

Age	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
20–39	5.5	3	18.2	10	25.5	14	20	11	30.1	17	100.0	55
40–49	0	0	9.1	3	33.3	11	24.5	8	33.3	11	100.0	33
50–69	18.2	2	0	0	18.2	2	45.5	5	18.2	2	100.0	11
Total	5.1	5	13.2	13	27.8	27	24.3	24	30.3	30	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 105 owing to non-responses

Further analysis suggested that there was a significant statistical relationship ($p = 0.0000$) between being able to take initiative at work and the age of the respondents. Table 4.8 suggests that staff could be resourceful in their place of work by taking initiative, where the age group of the respondents played a role as well.

The younger respondents (20–39) were more inclined to say ‘seldom’ (18.2%), while the older staff members (50–69) were more inclined to say ‘often’ (45.5%). The middle-aged respondents demonstrated a dichotomy. It could be argued that younger staff members lack the ability to take initiative because of less work experience and maturity than those who said ‘often’ (older staff). The middle-aged group (who opted for ‘sometimes’ and ‘always’) may be able to take initiative because of their education (as the demographics indicated that this group had obtained post-school qualifications) and work experience, based on their familiarity with technology. Staff aged 40–49 feel free to take initiative in their work environment because of their years’ experience, whether this experience is work related or simply based on general life experience.

The demographics concur that this age group falls within the majority of the respondents who had taken the survey. The demographics also show that more than half of the respondents have more than 10 years’ experience at the UoT.

Table 4.9: Management tries to solve my work related problems

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	22	20.0
	Seldom	26	23.6
	Sometimes	31	28.2
	Often	14	12.7
	Always	11	10.0
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

With reference to Table 4.9 above, the majority of respondents indicated that in terms of management’s assistance with solving work-related problems, frontline administrative

staff had to solve such problems themselves. Of the 104 who responded to the question, 19 were male respondents and 79 female.

Of the female respondents, 31.7% strongly indicated that management would 'sometimes' assist, whereas 42.1% of the 19 male respondents indicated 'seldom'.

Table 4.10: Management tries to solve my work-related problems

Gender	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Male	10.5	2	42.1	8	15.8	3	5.3	1	26.3	5	100.0	19
Female	24.1	19	21.5	17	31.7	25	15.2	12	7.6	6	100.0	79
Total	21.4	21	25.5	25	28.6	28	13.5	13	11.2	11	100.1	98*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

Gender played a statistically significant influence on the perception that management tries to solve frontline staff's work-related problems. Female frontline staff tended to respond 'sometimes' (31.7%), while nearly a quarter of the male frontline staff tended to respond 'never' (42.1%). This result is important to note since it strongly suggests the difference between femininity and masculinity.

Table 4.11: Management tries to solve my work-related problems

Faculty/Unit/ Dept	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Central Admin	28.6	5	21.4	6	35.7	10	3.6	1	10.7	3	100.0	25
Faculties	25.6	10	25.6	10	33.3	13	12.8	5	2.6	1	100.0	39
Student Services	20	6	26.7	8	13.3	4	16.7	5	23.3	7	100.0	30
Total	21.6	21	24.7	24	27.8	27	11.4	11	11.4	11	100.0	97*

*Total does not add up to 105 owing to non-responses

As displayed above, in Table 4.11, the faculty / unit / department in which the respondent was stationed also had a statistically significant relationship with whether management helped to solve the problems of the frontline employees.

Of the 104 who answered the question, the majority of those who indicated that management did not help, were stationed in the faculties and also in departments within central administration.

Therefore, should staff encounter any problems relating to their work, they are able to approach their line managers, but at faculty level and central administration (where services are provided to students and staff) managers are less willing to assist in addressing problems.

In comparing Tables 4.9 and 4.12 where the questions addressed problem solving, the following results emerged:

- The majority (43.6%) responded negatively (a combination of ‘never’ and ‘seldom’), stating that there was no assistance from management in solving the employees’ work- related problems (Table 4.9).
- The majority of 50.9% (‘often’ 33.6% and ‘always’ 17.3%) suggested that they had to solve all their work-related problems themselves (Table 4.12).

Table 4.12: I have to solve all my own work-related problems myself

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	3	2.7
	Seldom	12	10.9
	Sometimes	35	31.8
	Often	37	33.6
	Always	19	17.3
	Total	106	96.4
Missing	0	4	3.6
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.13 I have to solve all my own work-related problems

Faculty /Unit /Dept	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Central Admin	4	1	8	2	40	10	40	10	8	2	100.0	25
Faculties	2.6	1	7.7	3	30.8	12	33.3	13	25.6	10	100.0	39
Student Services	3	1	15.1	5	33.3	11	30.3	10	18.2	5	100.0	32
Total	2.8	3	11.3	12	33.0	35	34.9	37	17.9	19	100.0	106

The graphic representations above (Table 4.9 and 4.12) seem to indicate that even though management attempted to solve employees' work-related problems (Table 4.9), employees ultimately believed that they did so themselves. This suggests that management may not always have the information (Table 4.3) or resources to do so, and employees, who indicated that they had access to information, are equipped well enough to handle work-related problems.

Chi-square tests indicated a statistically significant correlation between the gender of respondents and management's attempts to solve the work-related problems of employees (Table 4.10). Of the 19 male respondents to the question whether management tries to solve employees' work-related problems, 2.1% responded negatively, stating that management rarely tried to solve their work-related problems; of the 79 female respondents, 31.7% stated that sometimes they received assistance from management. Given the male / female responses, most of the female respondents answered this question negatively.

Here it is assumed that men hold the majority of management roles. It is apparent that women in administrative roles are less likely to make decisions about their own work, which gives the impression that men in supervisory roles give instructions and women in frontline roles follow these.

In this instance, the research suggests that women are not sufficiently empowered to make their own decisions about their work and in their jobs, even though they have access to the information. It further appears that men and women in this community are treated differently. The statistics could, however, signify that most of the sample

population comprised women and a substantially smaller number of respondents were men.

Further to this, Chi-square testing ($p = 0.0230$) also suggested that there was a significant relationship between the faculty/department/unit in which the respondent was employed and whether management tried to solve the work-related problems of employees.

It is assumed that should staff here encounter any problems relating to their work or a work situation, they were able to approach their supervisors for advice or for their opinions. As the question clearly probes, it is clear that given the responses, management in the said faculty/department/unit does not assist with problem solving.

This, however, does not indicate whether staff have any input into the problem-solving process (see Table 4.6) Therefore, it cannot be assumed that this leaves staff feeling empowered.

The question in Table 4.13 queried whether staff in the said category had to solve their own problems relating to the jobs without the input of management; where responses in Table 4.10, show more than half responded negatively to the question, indicating that they often had to do so.

The chi-square test ($p = 0.024$) indicated that there was a relationship between the faculty/department/unit in which the respondent was employed and whether frontline staff had to solve their own problems.

Here, again, the majority of the respondents were from faculties and departments that offered services to students (see Table 4.13).

The assumption based on the statistical analysis is that both staff and management attempt to solve work-related problems. It is also assumed that this is based on the situation or problem. It was found that staff members are allowed to be involved in the decision-making process. It clearly depends on whether they are able to 'make the call' or not. It is apparent that, should staff not be able to assist appropriately, and also given the levels or hierarchy, they would enlist the help for their supervisors. This could be deemed as an empowered environment but one where boundaries are clearly set.

It is thus fair to conclude, given the responses recorded for this section that:

- staff contribute to decision making;
- there is a free flow of information;
- the home language, age, gender and the faculty, unit or department in which the frontline administrator is based has an influence on the staff members' ability to make decisions.

4.2.3 Condition 2: Section B: Learning Organisation

Staff in the education sector should continually be willing to enhance their understanding of and proficiency in their jobs. Training and a culture of learning are vital and should be strongly encouraged, especially if these institutions acknowledge that learning will create a stronger and competitive workforce.

For this section of questions, an attempt was made to establish whether frontline administrative staff members at the UoT were stimulated to learn, whether a culture of learning was apparent, and whether personal growth was encouraged.

It may be assumed that the respondents in the age group from 20–69 have been in the employ of the UoT for a number of years as the demographics indicated that staff in this age bracket had many years of employment (10+) at the UoT. Given this lengthy experience, they are knowledgeable about what their employer has to offer in respect of a learning organisation.

In attempting to establish whether the work environment of frontline staff fostered a culture of learning, respondents were positive, indicating that it often and always does, as indicated in Table 4.14.

Table 4.14: My work environment fosters a culture of learning

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	7	6.4
	Seldom	13	11.8
	Sometimes	21	19.1
	Often	34	30.9
	Always	29	26.4
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.15: My work environment fosters a culture of learning

Age	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
20–39	7.3	4	14.5	8	21.8	12	30.9	17	26.3	14	100.0	55
40–49	2.9	1	2.9	4	17.6	6	38.2	13	29.4	10	100.0	34
50–69	18.2	2	0	0	18.2	2	27.3	3	36.4	4	100.0	11
Total	6.7	7	12.5	13	20.2	21	32.7	34	27.9	29	100.0	104

Further analysis suggested that the age of the respondent had a bearing on whether the work environment fostered a culture of learning.

Of the 104 responses to the question, 43% were aged between 20 and 39, 27.8% between 40 and 49, and 8.6% between 50 and 69.

Of the 104, 19 responded negatively to the question; however, in comparison with the positive responses, the number was relatively low. Of those who responded negatively, 17 were aged between 20 and 49 and two were aged between 50 and 69.

When frontline administrative staff members were questioned if they were encouraged to improve their knowledge, become skilled at their jobs or grow within their current environments, almost half of the responses were positive, that they were 'often' and 'always' encouraged in this regard.

Table 4.16: *I am encouraged to improve, learn, or grow within my work environment*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	13	11.8
	Seldom	23	20.9
	Sometimes	20	18.2
	Often	21	19.1
	Always	28	25.5
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

Based on the results in Table 4.16, it is evident that the UoT recognises that learning is essential for the growth and empowerment of its employees, as almost all of the responses were positive, stating that they were often and always encouraged. In the combined negative responses ('never' 11.8% and 'seldom' 20.9%), one-third (32.7%) of respondents disagreed.

Given this disagreement, it should be questioned why staff felt this way and also where they are stationed (i.e. faculty/unit/department) to understand this perceived negativity. It is vital to establish what measures are in place to facilitate the development of staff and also who is responsible for this development. Can staff approach their line managers if they feel the need for development and are only managers allowed to suggest who are able to develop themselves and who not?

Given these findings, it was important to establish what measures are in place to facilitate staff development. Key to this is to establish who is responsible for this development, the staff member or the line manager. It should also be questioned who should ensure that growth and learning are continual and whether supervisors really are concerned about the professional advancement of their frontline administrative staff.

In the results tabled below, an attempt was made to establish if staff were consulted and held responsible for their daily responsibilities in the last three months leading up to the study.

Table 4.17: In the last three months I have attended meetings where my accountability for my daily responsibilities has been discussed

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Yes	39	35.5
	No	65	59.1
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Based on Table 4.17, the results show that the majority (59.1%) of the respondents had not attended sessions where they were held accountable for their daily responsibilities. Therefore there had been no performance management sessions.

Table 4.18: In the last three months I have attended meetings where my accountability for my daily responsibilities has been discussed

Years' Work	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5	57.1	16	75	12	100.0	28
6-10	33.3	7	66.6	14	100.0	21
11-15	23.8	5	76.2	16	100.0	21
16+	31	9	68.9	20	100.0	29
Total	37.4	37	62.6	62	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

Further analysis noted a correlation ($p = 0.030$) between the years' work experience at the UoT and whether the staff had meetings to discuss their accountability for their duties.

Of the 59.1% (almost two-thirds) of respondents who indicated that they had not had consultative meetings relating to their responsibilities within the workplace in the last three months prior to the study, there was a fair spread across the number of years' work experience at the UoT. A majority had 6+ years' service, whereas 75% of the negative responses were from employees who had five years or less of experience.

It is apparent that staff members are not guided appropriately and may not know what is expected of them in terms of their responsibilities, based on the fact that the majority of the identified sample had indicated that they did not have consultative sessions with their line managers in this regard. In view of their years of experience, it should be questioned whether the culture of the work environment may have changed or whether it could be concluded that these types of sessions should not be held because of the length of employees' years of experience? It was assumed, based on the negative responses, that staff with more than six years' experience at the UoT may be discouraged and less motivated to take action in their respective environments because of the lack of consultative meetings. These meetings are key to the open flow of information but it seems that staff in this category are not able to learn as they progress, given that they are unsure of what is expected of them and also of the degree of responsibility they can assume (i.e. not guided by consultative meetings (Table 4.17 and 4.18)).

Their jobs may possibly be considered monotonous, as their daily tasks have been repetitive for as long as they have been employed. It is presumed that this monotony has a negative effect on staff's empowerment. They cannot be empowered, as it is clear that they are not advised on what to do or on the scope of their responsibilities; therefore they are unable to learn in their respective jobs.

It can also be argued that, given the years' experience and service to the UoT, the respondents should be familiar with the environment, knowledgeable about their jobs and understand, based on this experience, what is expected of them. In the mind of the researcher, this still affects the degree of empowerment, as these staff members are not guided in terms of their accountability and responsibility. It thus suggests that the environments of the respondents within the UoT are not empowering.

Respondents were also asked whether in the three months leading to the study they had been consulted on their professional development while employed at the UoT. Of the 104 respondents, 74.5% responded negatively, as depicted in Table 4.19 below.

Table 4.19: *In the last three months I have attended meetings where my professional development has been discussed*

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	22	20.0
	No	82	74.5
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Again, based on the negative responses, it shows that no consultation had taken place where line managers and frontline employees could discuss how employees could develop professionally. It is deliberated that by allowing staff to develop professionally, they will be equipped to perform better in the workplace and in turn could pass this knowledge on to colleagues, resulting in a learning environment. It should also have an impact on the personal attitudes of employees, which could ultimately result in job satisfaction.

The results presented in Tables 4.17–4.19 suggest that no consultative meetings had taken place with line managers and employees. In response to their being asked whether their work environments allowed for opportunities to work on skills that prepared them to achieve future goals set by themselves and their line managers, the results in the tables below confirmed that again there was no positive practice.

Table 4.20: *My work environment gives me the opportunity to work on skills that prepare me to achieve future goals set by my direct supervisor and me*

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	19	17.3
	Seldom	29	26.4
	Sometimes	24	21.8
	Often	18	16.4
	Always	14	12.7
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.21: My work environment gives me the opportunity to work on skills that prepare me to achieve future goals set by me and my direct supervisor

Faculty / Unit / Dept	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Central Admin	23	6	38.5	10	3.8	1	19.2	5	15.4	4	100.0	26
Faculties	15.4	6	25.6	10	33.3	13	15.4	6	10.2	4	100.0	39
Student Services	21.9	7	18.7	6	21.9	7	48	6	18.7	6	100.0	32
Total	19.6	19	26.8	26	21.6	21	17.5	17	14.4	14	100.0	97*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

Fewer than half of the respondents (43.7%), a combination of 'never' (17.3%) and 'seldom' (26.4%), suggested that their work environments did not allow for opportunities to work on skills that prepared them to achieve future goals, while 50.9%, a combination of 'sometimes' (21.8%), 'often' (16.4%) and 'always' (12.7%) responded positively.

Results obtained here, and those displayed in Table 4.17 and 4.19, suggest that even though no consultation takes place with staff, the work environment in which the respondents found themselves still allowed for skills development which should benefit the department as well as the morale of employees.

With reference to Table 4.21, further statistical analysis shows that the faculty / unit / department in which the employee was based had a statistically significant relationship with the question posed ($p = 0.030$).

It was noted that the majority of the respondents, 38.5% from the central administration offices and 25.6% from the faculties, claimed they were 'seldom' given an opportunity to work on skills that prepared them to achieve future goals and 33.3% from the faculties noted that they were 'sometimes' allowed to do so. The results reflected in Tables 4.17 to 4.19, may be a consequence of differences in management styles; the nature of the work staff members do on a daily basis, according to line managers, may not require extra skills; or staff are not assertive enough to set goals to improve their skills.

The questions that probed the availability, relevance, frequency, and quality of training activities at the UoT revealed the following results:

Staff members were largely positive that on-the-job training was available (26.7%):

- 35.6% felt that training provided by the UoT is, at times, relevant to their daily tasks.
- 48.6% (a combination of 'never' and 'seldom') were not satisfied with the frequency of the available training programme.
- 28.6% noted they were 'sometimes' and 25.7% 'seldom' satisfied with the quality of the training programmes.

Further statistical analysis suggested the following:

- The number of years' work experience at the UoT had a statistically significant relationship ($p=0.330$), with the respondents satisfied with the frequency of the training programmes available (see Table 4.23).
- Gender had a statistically significant relationship with whether the training provided by the institution was relevant and applicable to the daily tasks of the respondents (Table 4.24).

It was also suggested that gender had a statistically significant relation with whether the training provided by the institution was relevant and applicable to the daily tasks of the respondents, with 35.6% indicating that the training programmes on offer were relevant to their daily tasks. Of these, 42.5% were women and 5% men. The men, however (35%), found the training programmes were often relevant.

These results could suggest that women have higher expectations of wanting to improve themselves and their qualifications and therefore it is clear that the women of this community have a greater need for empowerment.

Table 4.22: I am satisfied with the frequency of the training programmes available

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	22	20.0
	Seldom	29	26.4
	Sometimes	26	23.6
	Often	15	13.6
	Always	13	11.8
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.23: I am satisfied with the frequency of training programmes available

Years' Work	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–5	21.4	6	21.4	6	0.5	7	14.2	4	17.8	5	100.0	28
6–10	4.7	1	33.3	7	30	8	24.8	5	0	0	100.0	21
11–15	30	8	33.3	7	9.2	2	9.2	2	9.2	2	100.0	21
16+	18.7	6	18.7	6	25	8	12.5	4	18.7	6	100.0	32
Total	21	21	26	26	25	25	15	15	13	13	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 105 owing to non-responses

In terms of the UoT as a learning organisation, the majority (26.4% as per Table 4.22) of the sample indicated that they were 'seldom' satisfied with the frequency of the training programmes available to them.

Chi-square testing showed a correlation ($p = 0.033$) between being satisfied with the frequency of training programmes and the years' work experience of respondents.

Table 4.23 shows that those with 0–15 years' work experience were 'seldom' satisfied with the training programmes. In linking this to the demographics (where most of the respondents had more than 10 years' work experience and had a baccalaureus degree), given their academic qualifications, this could imply that training programmes offered by the UoT are not suitable for staff in the category and may also not make a difference the performance of their daily jobs.

This indicated that staff members in the employ of the UoT for some time are those most unhappy about the regularity of training programmes. This could suggest that they are aware of the practices in past years, but these could have changed for many reasons.

This also suggests that staff members are eager to learn and do new things, which suggests that staff, especially those with a longer service record, are empowered and are willing to take the action needed to improve.

Table 4.24: Training provided by the institution is relevant and applicable to my daily tasks

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	10	9.1
	Seldom	21	19.1
	Sometimes	37	33.6
	Often	22	20.0
	Always	14	12.7
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.25: Training provided by the institution is relevant and applicable to my daily tasks

Gender	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Male	25	5	20	4	5	1	30	7	15	3	100.0	20
Female	5	4	21	17	42.5	34	17.5	14	14	11	100.0	80
Total	9	9	21	21	35	35	21	21	14	14	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

With reference to Table 4.25, female respondents indicated that training provided was sometime relevant and applicable to their daily tasks. This could be based on the differences in the needs of men and women. Further to this, as stated previously, women could have a greater need to improve themselves and their qualifications, and thus it is clear that the women of this community have a greater need for empowerment.

Table 4.26: I am satisfied with the quality of training programmes available

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	17	15.5
	Seldom	27	24.5
	Sometimes	30	27.3
	Often	22	20.0
	Always	9	8.2
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

When questioned whether they were satisfied with the quality of the training programmes, responses, as noted above, were neither negative nor positive. There was a correlation in responses received, as 27.3% indicated that they were 'sometimes' happy, 24.5% indicated that they were 'seldom' satisfied, and 20% indicated they were 'often' satisfied.

Staff members were then questioned if they felt their supervisors were concerned about their professional development and whether these supervisors encouraged frontline staff to suggest ways to improve their quality of work.

Table 4.27: My supervisor is concerned about my professional development

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	41	37.3
	No	62	56.4
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

In confirmation of the results in Table 4.27, in response to questions on whether supervisors were concerned about the professional development of frontline staff, it was revealed that 56.4% of the staff members were of the opinion that their direct supervisors were not. Further to this (as depicted in Tables 4.28 and 4.29 below), there was a statistically significant relationship between years' work experience as well as the faculty

/ unit / department where the respondent was stationed and supervisors' concerns about the professional development of frontline staff.

Table 4.28: My supervisor is concerned about my professional development

Years' Work	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–5	64.3	18	35.7	10	100.0	28
6–10	20	4	80	16	100.0	20
11–15	38.1	8	61.9	13	100.0	21
16+	34.5	10	65.5	19	100.0	29
Total	40.9	40	59.1	58	100.0	98

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

Table 4.29: My supervisor is concerned about my professional development

Faculty/ Unit/ Dept	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Central Admin	32	8	68	17	100.0	25
Faculties	28.9	11	71	27	100.0	38
Student Services	56.2	18	43.7	14	100.0	32
Total	38.9	37	61	58	100.0	95*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

Tables 4.27 to 4.29 confirm the following:

- More than half (56.4%) of the respondents indicated that their supervisors were not concerned about their professional development.
- Where the majority of those who negatively responded had more than six (6) years' work experience at the UoT ($p = 0.048$).
- Of these negative responses, 71% were based in the faculties ($p = 0.048$).

Given the tabular representation (Tables 4.27 to 4.29), it is clear from the spread of responses that there is no common practice regarding the professional development of frontline employees and the roles supervisors play in this development. However, it is important to note that of those who responded positively, 64.3% had five (5) or fewer years' work experience at the UoT. This suggests that there may have been a change in the policy regarding training and development; line managers of these respondents may

not have been aware of the practices of past years (suggesting they may be new to the UoT as well); or possibly the competence of staff employed for five (years) or less versus that of more experienced staff is not on the same level.

With reference to Table 4.30 below, more than half of the respondents were positive that their line managers asked them to suggest ways in which they could improve their quality of work (57.2%), by combining responses from ‘sometimes’, ‘often’ and ‘always’.

Table 4.30: My supervisor encourages me to suggest ways to improve my quality of work

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	26	23.6
	Seldom	16	14.5
	Sometimes	22	20.0
	Often	16	14.5
	Always	25	22.7
	Total	105	95.5
Missing	0	5	4.5
Total		110	100.0

As depicted in Table 4.31 below, further statistical analysis suggests a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.020$) with whether staff can suggest improvements to their quality of work and the home language of the respondent.

Table 4.31: My supervisor encourages me to suggest ways to improve my quality of work

Home Language	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Afrikaans	25.8	8	16.1	5	25.8	8	3.2	1	29	9	100.0	31
English	25.9	14	16.6	9	12.9	7	24	13	20.3	11	100.0	54
African	12.5	2	6.2	1	43.7	7	12.5	2	25	4	100.0	16
Total	23.8	24	14.8	15	21.8	22	15.8	16	23.8	24	100.0	101*

*Total does not add up to 105 owing to non-responses

The majority of those who responded were English speakers ($n = 54$); most participants indicated they were ‘never’ (25.9%) or ‘often’ (24%) encouraged to improve the quality of

their work. Of the Afrikaans speakers, both positive and negative sides were tipped, suggesting they were 'always' (29%) and 'never' (25.8%) encouraged. Of the African native speakers, 43.7% indicated that they were sometimes encouraged to suggest improvements to the quality. In relation to the demographics of the respondents, the typical frontline administrator at the UoT was English speaking.

Given that staff had not attended performance management sessions and that their professional development was not encouraged, staff felt that their work environment hardly ever presented an opportunity to achieve the goals set out by their supervisors. In short, if no meetings are held, it is clear that no goal setting can take place.

In addition, if the latter is lacking, it manifests that management cannot support ways to improve the quality of work.

To justify the last two statements, the results confirm this, as 27.9% felt they were seldom given the opportunity to work on skills to prepare them for goals set by the supervisor, while 24.8% noted that they had never been encouraged to improve their quality of work.

The last results could be two-fold, suggesting that this is not done because the supervisor may be satisfied and may not feel the quality of work needs improvement.

Staff may not feel empowered at the hands of their supervisors, but results have shown that staff empower and enrich themselves with whatever knowledge they can to ensure that their jobs are executed with efficiency.

The responses to this section of questions prove that the demographics, except for the qualifications of the respondents, had an effect on whether the UoT was deemed a learning organisation.

4.2.4 Factor 1: Section C: Job Satisfaction

On a daily basis, staff members need a certain level of motivation to perform well. If their work environment is not conducive to this, they will not be empowered.

One assumes that age and gender could reflect a difference in the way this section was answered. New graduates may have different levels of satisfaction compared with those of more older and experienced employees. The roles they perform and the departments

in which they work may also play a crucial role in their levels of job satisfaction, which ultimately will lead to increased levels of employee empowerment.

Table 4.32: *I feel useful and productive in my office environment*

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	6	5.5
	Seldom	13	11.8
	Sometimes	27	24.5
	Often	32	29.1
	Always	26	23.6
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

As presented in Table 4.32, more than 50% (a combination of ‘often’ (29.4%) and ‘always’ (23.6%)) responded positively to the question. This indicated that the majority of the frontline staff felt helpful and productive in their office settings. This suggests to the researcher that their help is also possibly enlisted when needed and that their days are busy.

Table 4.33: *I feel valued for my work and for my contributions to the department / institution*

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	10	9.1
	Seldom	19	17.3
	Sometimes	33	30.0
	Often	18	16.4
	Always	24	21.8
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Even though staff felt useful and productive (Table 4.32), 31.7% (Table 4.33) only occasionally felt a sense of appreciation for their efforts and assistance in their work settings.

Further statistical testing indicated (Table 4.34) a significant relationship ($p = 0.033$) between the age of the respondent and their feelings of being valued for their work.

Table 4.34: I feel valued for my work and for my contributions to the department / institution

Age	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
20–39	8.7	5	22.8	13	29.8	17	19.2	11	19.2	11	100.0	57
40–49	8.8	3	17.6	6	26.5	9	17.6	6	29.4	10	100.0	34
50–69	18.1	2	0	0	45.5	5	9.1	1	27.3	3	100.0	11
Total	9.8	10	18.6	19	20.6	21	17.6	18	23.5	24	100.0	102*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

Of those who noted they sometimes felt valued for their work and contributions, there was a fair spread in ages 20–69. This was a fair representation of the age of the frontline administrators.

The results above once again indicate there is no common practice across the UoT and departments and units merely operate to get the job done. Added to this, it is assumed that some line managers may forget about the human element that drives processes within departments and may just focus on processes being followed through.

It may also be assumed that these staff members are more comfortable in their jobs and environments and may have been in the employ of the UoT for a while. All this could lead to staff members' understanding that adding value could better reflect on them as staff and on their departments, and that they could be entrusted with more responsible tasks.

With reference to Table 4.35 below, 74.5% (a combination of 'sometimes', 23.6%; 'often', 23.6%; and 'always', 27.3%) positively indicated that their line managers valued their suggestions and requests. The results again indicate a difference in what is expected of frontline employees within the UoT environment. It can be argued that the higher the job grade of the frontline administrative employee, the more is expected of him or her, thus increasing the value of the job. The latter could result in higher levels of job satisfaction that ultimately influence workers' perceptions of employee empowerment.

Table 4.35: *In the last three months I have attended meetings where my professional development has been discussed*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	10	9.1
	Seldom	12	10.9
	Sometimes	26	23.6
	Often	26	23.6
	Always	30	27.3
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

In comparing the responses in Table 4.35 with those in Table 4.5, the results concur that employees can make suggestions to improve how they operate daily and that their supervisors value their suggestions. However, owing to the negative responses in respect of consultative discussions about professional development, accountability and responsibility (Tables 4.17 to 4.19), it is assumed that the line managers only focus on the task at hand (i.e. to get the job done) and the value of these suggestions and requests does not have any positive impact on the employees.

Table 4.36: *Management shares information with people at all levels within the intuition*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	21	19.1
	Seldom	33	30.0
	Sometimes	32	29.1
	Often	14	12.7
	Always	4	3.6
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

In Table 4.36 above, more than half of the respondents indicated ‘never’, ‘seldom’ and ‘sometimes’, claiming that management did not share information with people at all levels at the UoT.

As depicted below (Table 4.37), further testing indicated that the qualifications of the respondents and their need to have information on what was happening at the UoT, is statistically significant ($p=0.011$). Of the 104 respondents, 20.2% indicated that information was ‘never’ shared with them, 31.7% noted ‘seldom’ and 30.8% ‘sometimes’. The breakdown of the respondents’ qualifications indicates the options ‘never’, ‘seldom’ and ‘sometimes’. Qualifications range from ‘some schooling’ to ‘degree+’, with most (20 responses for ‘seldom’ and 16 responses for ‘sometimes’) had a degree+. It is assumed that, based on the latter, given their qualifications, these employees feel that it is important for management to share information. This shared information could possibly enable these employees to perform their jobs better.

It is clear that it is important to know at which faculty, unit, or department the respondents’ work who have a need for shared information, as well as their work experience. Further statistical testing did not suggest any correlation with the latter.

Table 4.37: Management shares information with people at all levels within the institution

Qualification	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Some school	35.7	5	28.6	4	21.4	3	0	0	14.2	2	100.0	14
Post-school	31.2	5	31.2	5	25	4	6.2	1	6.2	1	100.0	16
Diploma	17.4	4	13	3	35	8	35	8	0	0	100.0	23
Degree +	12.7	6	42.6	20	34	16	8.5	4	2.2	1	100.0	47
Total	20	20	32	32	31	31	13	13	4	4	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

When comparing Tables 4.36 and 4.38, it is clear that line managers may know what their staff members are doing in terms of their daily jobs, but these same staff members have no idea of what is happening in the wider university community.

It is important to note that employees are not well informed about what is happening in the wider community and therefore cannot be satisfied if forced to operate in a silo. This

suggests that no empowerment is evident as one cannot be informed and empowered if no information is provided.

The results in Table 4.38 below indicate whether frontline administrative employees have the resources needed to do their jobs well. Of the respondents, 40% stated that they occasionally had the resources to function adequately, while 30% (a combination of ‘sometimes’, 20%; and ‘always’, 10%) responded positively.

Table 4.38: People at my level have the resources needed to do the job right

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	10	9.1
	Seldom	17	15.5
	Sometimes	44	40.0
	Often	22	20.0
	Always	11	10.0
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Further statistical testing suggested a statistically significant relationship between having the resources to do the job well and the qualifications of the respondent (Table 4.39). Of those who stated they occasionally had the resources, 53.1% had a degree+. Those who opted for ‘often’ had a diploma (43.5%) and those who selected ‘always’ had some post-school qualification (25%). This result suggests that those who have equipped themselves with theoretical knowledge (obtained through further study) are those who know what they need to perform their duties efficiently. It is also clear that because of schooling, various employees are aware that they need different resources to allow them to execute their jobs well, with a concomitant degree of satisfaction.

Table 4.39: People at my level have the resources needed to do the job right

Qualification	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Some school	21.4	3	21.4	3	21.4	3	14.4	2	21.4	3	100.0	14
Post-school	6.2	1	12.6	2	50	8	6.2	1	25	4	100.0	16
Diploma	8.7	2	17.4	4	30.4	7	43.5	10	0	0	100.0	23
Degree +	6.4	3	15	7	53.1	25	19.1	9	6.4	3	100.0	47
Total	9	9	16	16	43	43	22	22	10	10	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

Even though respondents noted that they felt their jobs offered steady employment, the results in Table 4.40 clearly reveal that respondents were not satisfied with promotion or growth opportunities at the UoT, as 74% responded negatively to this question.

Reasons for these responses included the following:

- Administrative staff members are not given any opportunities to advance.
- Even though staff members have bettered their qualifications, external appointments are the prime targets for vacancies to be filled.
- The ratio of senior staff (academic and senior administrators) to frontline administrative staff is vast.
- Training (in-house) is not directed at the specific requirements of the jobs which frontline administrators have to do.
- Years of service do not provide a way to move up the ranks.
- There is no career mapping or succession planning.

Table 4.40: I am satisfied with the promotional growth opportunities within the institution

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	27	24.5
	No	77	70.0
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.41: I am satisfied with the promotional growth opportunities within the institution

Qualification	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Some school	35.7	5	64.2	9	100.0	14
Post-school	37.5	6	62.5	10	100.0	16
Diploma	39.1	9	60.8	14	100.0	23
Degree +	12.7	6	87.2	41	100.0	47
Total	26	26	74	74	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 104 owing to non-responses

There was a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.043$) with frontline administrators' satisfaction with the promotional growth opportunities at the UoT and their qualifications. Of those who responded negatively, the majority of the staff had a degree or higher.

Table 4.42: My work environment motivates me

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	19	17.3
	Seldom	28	25.5
	Sometimes	32	29.1
	Often	12	10.9
	Always	13	11.8
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

Responses illustrated in Table 4.42 show that the work environments of frontline employees were not stimulating, as 42.8% (a combination of 'never', 17.3%, and 'seldom', 25.5%) responded negatively. Less than one-quarter (22.7%) provided a positive response. Given the results above, it is apparent that the majority of frontline administrators have similar negative feelings about their work environments.

No statistically significant relation between years' work, age and qualification is apparent.

It should be questioned why these staff members are not motivated in their environments and investigated how this can be remedied.

It is assumed that the lack of motivation could be linked to a lack of consultation between line manager and employee as well as a lack of information shared by management. Suggestions are only valued for the completion of the task at hand and not for personal or professional development. Based on the latter, it is assumed that if staff are not motivated in their work environment, they will not be satisfied with their jobs.

Table 4.43: *I feel enthusiastic about my work*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	4	3.6
	Seldom	19	17.3
	Sometimes	34	30.9
	Often	25	22.7
	Always	22	20.0
	Total	104	94.5
Missing	0	6	5.5
Total		110	100.0

The results depicted in Table 4.43 above are an outcome of when the frontline administrators were asked whether they felt enthusiastic about their work. A majority of 42.7% (a combination of 'often', 22.7%; and 'always', 20%) of the frontline employees responded positively. This confirms that even though staff are not motivated in their place of work, they are still excited and positive about their jobs.

Responses depicted in Table 4.44 show that just less than half (46.4%) of the frontline employees always did more than what was expected of them.

Table 4.44: *I always do more than what is expected of me at work*

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Seldom	1	.9
	Sometimes	12	10.9
	Often	39	35.5
	Always	51	46.4
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

It is important to note that respondents would not have indicated that they do less than what is expected of them, but the responses received should be investigated.

As no statistically significant relationship was noted in the correlation, it would be interesting to determine age, years' work experience, qualifications, and faculty / unit / department pertaining to the results depicted in Table 4.44.

It is clear, based on the responses, that even though staff members do more than what is expected of them, the level of enthusiasm felt, as indicated above, seems to be positive.

Of the correlations done, it is noted that both the age and qualifications of frontline administrators had an impact on certain aspects of satisfaction with their jobs; however qualifications predominated.

4.2.5 Factor 2: Section D: Staff Retention

Staff retention is important to operating businesses. Staff may choose to leave their place of work for a number of reasons, and so too may they choose to remain.

The importance of this section of questions was to establish why staff are determined to leave the employ of the UoT or why they choose to stay, and whether the UoT, willingly or unwillingly plays a role in the retention of staff. Important to all of this is what measures the UoT has put in place to retain its staff.

Respondents were asked whether they had thought of leaving the departments in which they worked or leaving the UoT as a whole. Of the respondents, 36.4% (Table 4.45) and 30% (Table 4.47) felt like this at times.

Chi-square testing suggested a statistically significant relationship between wanting to leave the department and years' work experience (Table 4.46). Of those who sometimes thought of leaving the department, 53.5% had 0 to 5 years' work experience and 54.5% had 11 to 15 years.

Table 4.45: I contemplate leaving the department

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	13	11.8
	Seldom	15	13.6
	Sometimes	40	36.4
	Often	22	20.0
	Always	13	11.8
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.46: I contemplate leaving the department

Years' Work	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–5	14.3	4	14.3	4	53.5	15	10.7	3	7.1	2	100.0	28
6–10	9.5	2	33.3	7	23.8	5	23.8	5	9.5	2	100.0	21
11–15	0	0	0	0	54.5	12	22.7	5	22.7	5	100.0	22
16+	24.1	7	13.7	4	27.5	8	24.1	7	10.3	3	100.0	29
Total	13	13	15	15	40	40	20	20	12	12	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

When probed as to their reasons for wanting to leave the institution, staff noted they considered leaving because of a lack of growth and promotion opportunities for staff in their category, as well as the working conditions, which resulted their being unhappy (not satisfied).

Table 4.47: I contemplate leaving the institution

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	15	13.6
	Seldom	20	18.2
	Sometimes	33	30.0
	Often	24	21.8
	Always	9	8.2
	Total	101	91.8
Missing	0	9	8.2
Total		110	100.0

A majority indicated that they chose to remain in the employ of the department because of the working relationships formed with their colleagues as well as the knowledge they have gained or still stand to gain as an employee of the UoT.

Fourteen (14) of the 79 (11%) who responded to the question noted that they chose to remain at the department as a matter of convenience. Responses ranged from staff feeling they had no alternative; they remained because it was beneficial for their children; and because of their years of service (which could be linked to age) they were not suitable candidates for employment outside of the UoT.

Table 4.48: What makes you want to leave the department? Open-ended response

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	No growth	34	30.9
	Working conditions	30	27.3
	Management	8	7.3
	Lack of recognition	4	3.6
	Job dissatisfaction	1	.9
	Nothing / I am happy	2	1.8
	Total	79	71.8
Missing	0	31	28.2
Total		110	100.0

When asked why staff in the identified category thought about leaving the department (Table 4.48), most staff indicated that they wanted to leave because of no growth opportunities (30.9%) and because of the working conditions (27.3%).

Further testing suggested that reasons for wanting to leave the department have a statistically significant relationship ($p=0.002$) with the faculty / unit / department (Table 4.51) where respondents are based as well with as their ages (Table 4.51) ($p=0.046$).

Of those who claimed there were no growth opportunities (Table 4.51), 63.3% of the respondents were based at faculties. Of those who selected 'working conditions', the majority hailed from offices that provided services to students as well as from respondents stationed in faculties.

Table 4.49: What makes you want to leave the department? Open-ended response

Faculty / Unit / Dept	No Growth		Working Conditions		Management		Lack of Recognition		Job Dissatisfaction		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Central Admin	44.4	8	27.7	5	22.2	4	5.5	1	0	0	100.0	18
Faculties	63.3	19	33.3	10	0	0	3.3	1	0	0	100.0	30
Student Services	21.7	5	47.8	11	17.3	4	8.7	2	4.4	1	100.0	23
Total	45.7	32	37.1	26	11.4	8	5.7	4	1.4	1	100.0	70*

*Total does not add up to 79 owing to non-responses

In terms of the correlation between the question posed and the age of the respondents (Table 4.52), of those who stated that they wished to leave because of the lack of growth opportunities, 51.1% were aged between 20 and 39. Of those who wanted to leave because of the working conditions, 37.7% were the same age.

Table 4.50: What makes you want to leave the department? Open-ended response

Age	No Growth		Working Conditions		Management		Lack of Recognition		Job Dissatisfaction		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
20–39	51.1	23	37.7	17	8.8	4	0	0	2.2	1	100.0	45
40–49	38.5	10	38.5	10	3.8	1	11.5	3	7.6	2	100.0	26
50–69	14.2	1	2836	2	42.6	3	14.2	1	0	0	100.0	7
Total	43.6	34	37.2	29	10.6	8	5.1	4	3.8	3	100.0	78*

*Total does not add up to 79 owing to non-responses

When asked why they chose to stay at the UoT, 34.3% of the respondents noted they chose to stay in the department because of the people, which suggests that staff form meaningful bonds with their colleagues. Of the participants, 25.7% said they chose to stay because of meaningful work, which indicates that employees feel they can make a difference in their jobs and workspaces.

When questioned why they chose to remain at the UoT (see Figure 4.1 below), the greater majority revealed that they chose to stay because of employee benefits afforded them. Staff in the identified sample viewed medical aid, a housing allowance, pension scheme, and leave and study benefits as important retention reasons. This indicated that the UoT is competitive in being able to retain its staff; however the reasons may be off the mark. Staff should ultimately be retained for their capabilities and expertise; however based on the results, that is not the case.

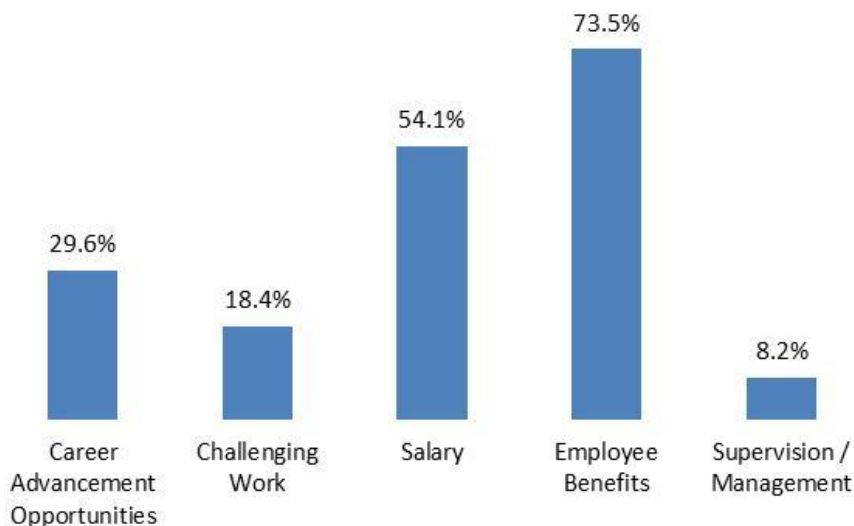


Figure 4.2: I have chosen to remain employed at the institution because of ...

When questioned about issues relating to promotion at the UoT, reflected in Table 4.53, 66.4% said they had not received a promotion since being employed at the UoT. Chi-square testing suggested that the gender of respondents had a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.024$) with the responses in Table 4.53.

Table 4.51: Have you received a promotion in the time you have been working at the institution?

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	30	27.3
	No	73	66.4
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

Of the 66.4%, as depicted below in Table 4.54, 62 of the respondents were women and 10 men.

Table 4.52: Have you received a promotion in the time you have been working at the institution?

Gender	Yes		No		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Male	50	10	50	10	100.0	
Female	24.4	20	75.6	62	100.0	
Total		30	70.6	72	100.0	102*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

Further, 70% (Table 4.55) responded negatively, indicating that it was not the practice at the UoT to give promotion to administrative staff, nor had they received promotion since their initial employment.

The results in Table 4.53 show a statistically significant relationship (Table 4.56) ($p = 0.010$) with the educational qualifications of the respondents. Of those who selected 'no', 89% of the respondents had a degree+, 69.6% a diploma, and 44% a post-school qualification.

Table 4.53: Are promotion opportunities available for staff in your category?

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	25	22.7
	No	77	70.0
	Total	102	92.7
Missing	0	8	7.3
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.54: Have you received a promotion in the time you have been working at the institution?

Qualification	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
Some School	28.6	4	71.4	10	100.0	14
Post School	56	9	44	7	100.0	16
Diploma	30.4	7	69.6	16	100.0	23
Degree+	11	5	89	41	100.0	46
Total	25.3	25	74.7	74	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 102 owing to non-responses

It is suggested that staff are definitely sufficiently empowered to improve their qualifications (Figure 4.3), which ultimately means they have taken the initiative to better themselves. However, it is clear that a culture of empowering staff, especially frontline administrative staff, and relating this empowerment to recognition of their qualifications and thus allowing them an opportunity for better remuneration (without having to apply for internal vacancies elsewhere in the institution), is not the norm.

Based on this, it seems that even though the respondents are employed at a higher education institution, the educational qualifications of the identified group do not influence their promotion. Nonetheless, these staff still choose to remain in the employ of the UoT and also empower themselves by taking full advantage of the study benefits offered to them.

Staff claimed that in their time employed at the UoT they had not received promotion; given the results above, it is clear that promotion is not easily attainable in this category. The practice, however, is very different for academic staff.

Table 4.55: Have you been given your job description orally or in writing?

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Orally	33	30.0
	In writing	38	34.5
	Both	20	18.2
	Total	91	82.7
Missing	0	19	17.3
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.56: Have you been given your job description orally or in writing?

Age	Orally		In writing		Both		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
20–39	38.5	20	36.5	19	25	13	100.0	52
40–49	33.3	10	53.3	16	13.4	4	100.0	30
50–69	37.5	3	37.5	3	25	2	100.0	8
Total	36.6	33	42.2	38	21.1	19	100.0	90*

*Total does not add up to 91 owing to non-responses

Table 4.57 shows it is not common practice for staff to have job descriptions. These results concur with the results in Tables 4.17, 4.18 and 4.44. In the latter, just less than half of the respondents indicated that they did more than what was expected of them (Table 4.44). They did not have any consultative meetings with their line managers to discuss their accountability for their daily responsibilities (Table 4.17) or for their professional development (Table 4.18). It is assumed that the issues highlighted in the latter accompany the lack of job descriptions.

It is further assumed that if staff members do not know what is expected of them, it could be concluded that these staff members would not be satisfied in their jobs. Of the majority who were in possession of their job descriptions (in writing), most were aged between 20 and 39, which could suggest that these staff members are recently employed.

Table 4.57: Are your reasons for staying employed at the institution different from the reasons you had for joining?

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	41	37.3
	No	62	56.4
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.58: Are your reasons for staying employed at the institution different from the reasons you had for joining?

Years' Work	Yes		No		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
0–5	28.6	8	71.4	20	100.0	28
6–10	33.3	7	66.7	14	100.0	21
11–15	68.2	15	31.8	7	100.0	22
16+	34.5	10	65.5	19	100.0	29
Total	40	40	60	60	100.0	100*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

Table 4.59 suggests that the majority of staff members' reasons for staying at the UoT had not changed since their initial employment. Chi-square testing suggests a statistically significant relationship ($p=0.005$) between the number of years employees have been at the UoT (Table 4.60) and if their reasons for staying differ from their reasons for joining the UoT.

Of those who said 'no', 71.4% have been employed for 5 years or less, and 65.5% have been employed for 16 + years. The majority ($n= 21$) have been working at the UoT for a period of 6–15 years.

In respect of age demographics, in comparison with the years' work experience of the typical UoT frontline administrator (who has more than 10 years' work experience at the UoT), it is apparent that those who answered the question were aged between 30 and 39 years. Given this information, the researcher assumes that the need to progress in their jobs is more important, as these types of workers have families with growing needs to be

maintained. Apart from this, it may also be important to have a stable job with benefits to care for their families and this may be why many of the staff members in this category take a conscious decision to remain employed at the UoT.

It can also be assumed that given their years of service, these staff members could be middle aged (yet far from retirement) and have found stability in their jobs.

Age could be a factor for not wanting to leave, given the current employment situation in South Africa. It is also difficult for older people to find well-paying permanent jobs. (It would be easier if older staff members had the relevant qualifications.)

Also, these staff members may have school-leaving dependents that want to acquire a tertiary educational qualification. If the staff member remains in the employ of the institution, his or her dependents are able to study at the UoT at reduced rates.

Table 4.59: In your opinion, what benefits are the most important to employees at this institution? Open-ended response

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Stability	3	2.7
	Working conditions	1	.9
	Benefits	76	69.1
	Training	6	5.5
	People	2	1.8
	Total	88	80.0
Missing	0	22	20.0
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.60: In your opinion, what benefits are the most important to employees at this institution? Open-ended response

Home Language	Stability		Working Conditions		Benefits		Training		People		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Afrikaans	3.8	1	0	0	88.5	23	3.8	1	3.8	1	100.0	26
English	4.2	2	0	0	89.6	43	6.3	3	0	0	100.0	48
African	0	0	8.3	1	75	9	16.7	2	0	0	100.0	12
Total	3.4	3	1.1	1	87.2	75	6.9	6	1.2	1	100.0	86*

*Total does not add up to 88 owing to non-responses

Employee benefits ranked number 1 on the identified list (as noted in Table 4.61), with the other options listed being training, people at the institution, working conditions, and the stability that their jobs provided.

Chi-square testing indicates that the relationship between home language and reasons for staff choosing to stay at the UoT is statistically significant ($p = 0.000$). Here it is suggested that staff, irrespective of their mother tongue or home language, choose to stay in the employ of the UoT because of the employee benefits offered.

It is also assumed that information, notifications, and communiqués regarding employee benefits are communicated in a language staff can understand, even if it is not the primary language spoken at home.

Staff turnover at the UoT appears to be quite high as 68% indicated that they were aware of staff having left the employ of the UoT in the six months prior to the inception of the study. It is assumed that staff members left for better opportunities. It may be speculated that many staff members in this category were employed on long-term contracts and chose to leave because of unpleasant working conditions.

In respect of the empowerment of frontline administrative staff, these members of the academic society are clearly not sufficiently empowered to move through the hierarchical ranks. Staff members are clearly discouraged about not being able to do so, yet they seem to choose to remain working at the UoT for its competitive employee benefits. It seems that frontline administrators have become complacent in their current positions.

It is therefore safe to assume that staff are retained, but not as a result of actions by the UOT, but staff themselves. Even though they are well qualified and could leave the employ of the UoT, they remain for other reasons.

It is, however, important to note that the UoT frontline administrators are not retaining their jobs in view of better job prospects, but are staying because of employment benefits.

It has been confirmed that years' work experience, age, gender, home language, qualifications and faculty/unit/department of frontline administrators have an influence on staff retention as a factor affecting employee empowerment.

4.2.6 Factor 3: Section E: Rewards and Recognition

Different things matter to different people, in a social setting as well as in business. Some employees may feel that money and benefits are important to them, while others may feel that gratitude and esteem count for more.

Being rewarded and recognised allows employees to be more productive as their morale will soar, leaving them wanting to develop themselves to perform better in their work environments.

Tables 4.63 to 4.75 reflect the responses of frontline administrators relating to rewards and recognition as factors affecting employee empowerment.

Table 4.61: I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive for job performance

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	23	20.9
	Seldom	27	24.5
	Sometimes	27	24.5
	Often	15	13.6
	Always	9	8.2
	Total	101	91.8
Missing	0	9	8.2
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.62: I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive for job performance

Qualification	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Some school	42.9	6	35.7	5	0	0	0	0	21.4	3	100.0	14
Post-school	6.3	1	31.2	5	37.5	6	12.5	2	12.5	2	100.0	16
Diploma	22.7	5	22.7	5	18.1	4	32	7	4.5	1	100.0	22
Degree +	21.3	10	25.5	12	36.2	17	10.6	5	6.4	3	100.0	47
Total	22.2	22	27.2	27	27.2	270	14.1	14	9	9.1	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 101 owing to non-responses

Table 4.63 displays how satisfied frontline administrators are with the amount of recognition they receive for their job performance. Moderate to negative responses were received for this question. Those who answered showed that they were not very satisfied with the amount of recognition received for their jobs. Given the close relation to the responses received, it could be assumed that the recognition given in most instances could be a kind word, with nothing attached to advancement or remuneration.

Further statistical analysis suggests that the level of education (Table 4.64) and the level of satisfaction for the amount of recognition received for a job well done are statistically significant ($p = 0.033$).

Of the negative responses (for 'never', 'seldom' and 'sometimes'), most of the responses were obtained from frontline employees who have a degree+, with 21.3% selecting 'never', 25.5% 'seldom' and 36.2% 'sometimes'.

Of those who responded positively, 21.4% had some schooling and 6.4% had a degree+.

Given the responses, it is assumed that there is no common practice whereby line managers formally recognise or acknowledge staff for job performance. It is clear that those who answered the question were not very satisfied with the amount of recognition received.

Contrary to responses reflected in the latter table, Table 4.65 reflects whether staff members were acknowledged in their specific work environments. Here, 38.2% (a combination of 'never' and 'seldom') commented that good work was generally not acknowledged, while 38.2% were more positive, citing 'often' and 'always'. Of the participants, 17.3% responded that they were occasionally acknowledged.

Table 4.63: *Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged*

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Never	18	16.4
	Seldom	24	21.8
	Sometimes	19	17.3
	Often	19	17.3
	Always	23	20.9
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

Given the results depicted in Table 4.65, it is clear that acknowledging good work depends on the line manager, and possibly on where the respondent is based.

Table 4.66 illustrates that the question posed had a statistically significant relationship with the home language of the respondents ($p = 0.022$) and the faculty / unit / department ($p = 0.002$) where the respondents were stationed, depicted in Table 4.67.

Table 4.64: *Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged*

Home Language	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Afrikaans	12.9	4	16.1	5	16.1	5	22.6	7	32.3	10	100.0	31
English	20	11	31	17	21.8	12	14.5	8	12.7	7	100.0	55
African	12.5	2	12.5	2	12.5	2	25	4	37.5	6	100.0	16
Total	16.7	17	23.5	24	19.6	20	18.6	19	22.5	23	100.0	102*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

It was evident that English speakers were in the majority in terms of being acknowledged for a job well done. Those who spoke an African native language had the minimum responses across the scale.

Table 4.65: *Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged*

Faculty / Unit / Dept	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Central Admin	12.5	3	41.7	10	25	6	9.5	2	12.5	3	100.0	24
Faculties	23.1	9	15.4	6	15.4	6	25.6	10	20.5	8	100.0	39
Student Services	18.2	6	15.1	5	15.1	5	18.2	6	33.3	11	100.0	33
Total	18.7	18	21.9	21	17.7	17	18.7	18	22.9	22	100.0	96*

*Total does not add up to 103 owing to non-responses

The results displayed in Table 4.67 suggest that acknowledgement differs across the UoT. In this instance it could relate specifically to the line managers. With reference to this significant statistical relationship with language and where the respondent is based, it is clear that language and communication could either hinder or encourage frontline administrators' performance. Language and culture are important factors for line managers to either positively or negatively empower their employees.

Table 4.66: *I am rewarded for work well done*

		Frequency	Percent
		(<i>N</i>)	(%)
Valid	Never	54	49.1
	Seldom	23	20.9
	Sometimes	12	10.9
	Often	9	8.2
	Always	5	4.5
	Total	103	93.6
Missing	0	7	6.4
Total		110	100.0

With reference to Table 4.68, the majority of respondents indicated that they were not rewarded for a job well done. Given that there were positive responses to the question, the researcher assumes that rewarding employees at the UoT differs from department to department, but on the whole, it can be confirmed that it is not common practice.

Table 4.67: Bursaries are available should I need one

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	78	70.9
	No	22	20.0
	Total	100	90.9
Missing	0	10	9.1
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.68: Bursaries are available should I need one

Home Language	Yes		No		Total	
	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>	%	<i>N</i>
Afrikaans	65.5	19	34.5	10	100.0	29
English	79.6	43	20.4	11	100.0	54
African	100	16	0	0	100.0	16
Total	78.8	78	21.2	21	100.0	99*

*Total does not add up to 100 owing to non-responses

Tables 4.69 and 4.70 depict whether staff are aware of bursaries offered to them, to which 78% responded positively. The home language of the respondent had a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.024$) with whether they were aware of such bursaries. Here the English and Afrikaans speakers dominated the positive responses. It is important, in this instance, to define how rewards and recognition as a factor affecting employee empowerment are influenced by this statistically significant relationship.

Table 4.69: I (or a colleague) have received a reward or merit award in the last twelve months

		Frequency (<i>N</i>)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	11	10.0
	No	89	80.9
	Total	100	90.9
Missing	0	10	9.1
Total		110	100.0

Merit awards are not generously conferred and it is not expected of faculties / department / units to do this. As suggested in Table 4.71 above, 80.9% of staff noted that they had not received a merit award in the year leading up to the study. The remainder of the sample suggested that they had, which indicates that merit awards are conferred, but this is categorically dependent on faculties/department/units, as indicated in Table 4.72 to 4.73 below.

Table 4.70: It is customary for faculties / departments / units to award merits or rewards to staff

		Frequency (N)	Percent (%)
Valid	Yes	28	25.5
	No	71	64.5
	Total	99	90.0
Missing	0	11	10.0
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.71: It is customary for faculties / departments / units to award merits or rewards to staff

Years' Work	Yes		No		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N
0-5	51.8	14	40.2	13	100.0	27
6-10	20	4	80	16	100.0	20
11-15	9	2	91	20	100.0	22
16+	28.6	8	71.4	20	100.0	28
Total	28.9	28	71.1	69	100.0	97*

*Total does not add up to 99 owing to non-responses

Further testing suggested that rewarding staff or conferring merit awards and years' work experience (Table 4.73) of the frontline workers had a statistically significant relationship ($p = 0.031$).

It is apparent that it is not a common practice for staff in this category to receive merit awards as 71.7% respondents indicated this. Staff that had been working at the institution for more than six years indicated this.

This further analysis suggests that staff across all categories concurred, especially the ones with more than ten years' experience.

These staff members may have been employed at the institution for a long time and would be knowledgeable about this practice in their own units and in others at the UoT. They may also be well acquainted with colleagues in other units and the practice of conferring merit awards could possibly have been discussed.

Of the staff, 28.3% did however indicate that conferring merit awards was a common practice. It is also crucial to note that the majority of the 28.3% responses to this question have been employed at the UoT for five years or less.

It is assumed that in previous years this type of award, or any other type of recognition closely related, was not conferred on staff in the identified category, as the results clearly suggest this. It is, however, apparent that lately it has become a more prevalent practice as those who had five or less years' work experience answered positively.

Based on this, it is clear that in the past, staff may not have felt empowered as they were neither recognised nor rewarded for their efforts and quality of work. In the last five years this has changed since staff claimed they were rewarded, which ultimately results in the perception of being empowered.

Table 4.72: I am rewarded for my abilities and for my efficiency

		Frequency	Percent
		(N)	(%)
Valid	Never	67	60.9
	Seldom	16	14.5
	Sometimes	8	7.3
	Often	5	4.5
	Always	3	2.7
	Total	99	90.0
Missing	0	11	10.0
Total		110	100.0

Table 4.73: I am rewarded for my abilities and my efficiency

Years' Work	Never		Seldom		Sometimes		Often		Always		Total	
	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
0–5	65.5	19	6.9	2	20.7	6	0	0	6.9	2	100.0	29
6–10	57.1	12	33.3	7	9.5	2	0	0	0	0	100.0	21
11–15	71.4	15	19	4	0	0	4.8	1	4.8	1	100.0	21
16+	73	19	11.5	3	0	0	15.4	4	0	0	100.0	26
Total	67	65	16.5	16	8.3	8	5.1	3.1	3.1	3	100.0	97*

*Total does not add up to 99 owing to non-responses

A majority, 67.7% (Table 4.74) indicated that they had certainly not been rewarded for their capabilities, let alone for their competence. However, it is apparent that staff are recognised and acknowledged for their length of service, as displayed below (Figure 4.2), where 17.8% suggested that academic excellence is acknowledged. However, it was made clear that this does not allow staff members' job titles or salary grades to be changed or increased (as shown in Table 4.51).

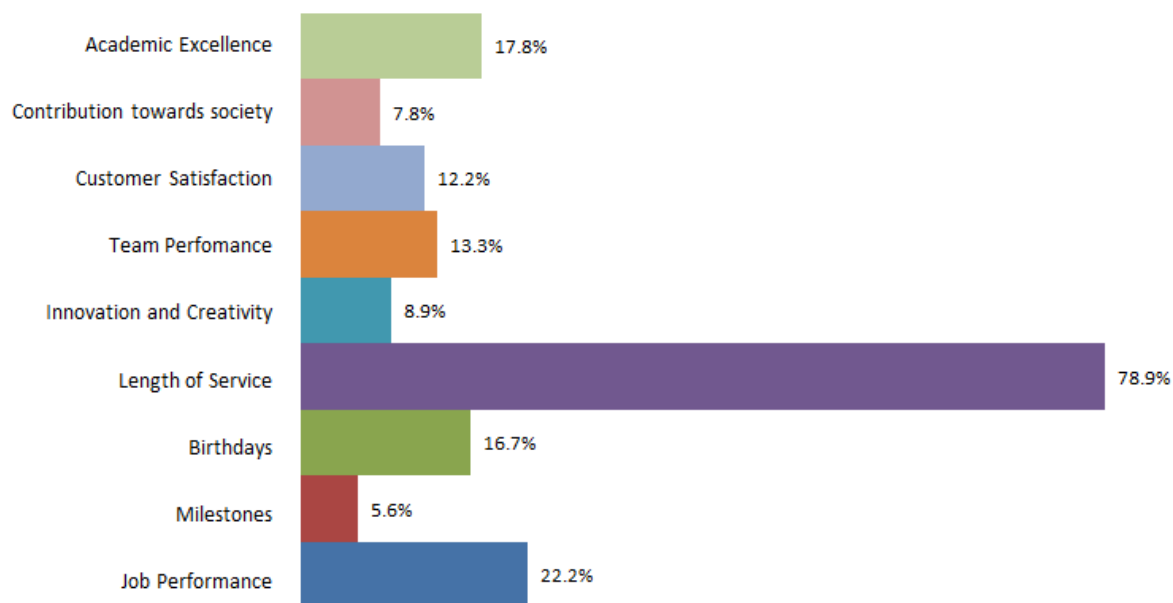


Figure 4.3: Staff in my category at the institution received recognition and acknowledgement for...

4.3 Conclusion

In this chapter, the findings, after data analysis, was discussed and showed that the demographical variables had an effect on the levels of empowerment of the frontline administrators at the UoT.

The next chapter discusses the summary of the main findings of this chapter, recommendations for further studies, and also the recommendations to the University of Technology to create an empowering environment for the frontline administrative staff.

CHAPTER 5

5 SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The intention of the study was to examine how the identified factors and conditions affect the levels of employee empowerment of frontline staff at a UoT. Further to this, it was also important to determine whether any of the biographical variables, that is, age, gender, educational qualifications, years of service, and the unit, faculty or department in which the frontline administrator was based, influenced the extent to which he/she felt empowered.

This was an explorative descriptive study in which the researcher examined the elements that empowered and mattered to staff in the identified category in terms of their being empowered in their work environments at the UoT.

The study included an exploration of the term 'employee empowerment' to delineate the concept in relation to the specific work environment and targeted population. During this phase the administrative function and its importance were highlighted. It was essential to identify the frontline administrators, as well their importance within the UoT setting. This phase also explored and identified the possible biographical factors and working conditions that could affect employee empowerment.

Chapter 3 described the research methodology and data collection techniques applied to yield the necessary information for the purposes of this study. An extensive discussion on the instrument employed, as well as the data collection process, was provided to afford an understanding of the research design and methodology.

Chapter 4 presented an analysis as well as the interpretation of the collected data.

5.1 Summary of main findings

With reference to Chapter 4, the results suggested the following (detailed in 5.1.1 to 5.1.6):

5.1.1 Condition 1: Decision Making

Even though frontline administrative staff members could take the lead in most instances, management still tried to resolve problems. This phenomenon serves as an indicator that management does accept responsibility should a problem arise, but staff who are closer to the origin of the problem can act accordingly, yet cautiously. Although the information to make good decisions is freely available, the study senses that the outcome is dependent on how the information is used. It was also clear that there was no consistency within the UoT community with regard to what decisions staff could make to improve their own work environments, as some respondents indicated that they were involved in decisions that affected them in their daily jobs, while others could recommend improvements to make their daily tasks easier.

The study results concur with those of Kelley (1993), who notes that by empowering employees, they will have a better chance to exercise discretion, and those of Bradley and Sparks (2000) who suggest that by transferring decision-making authority to employees, staff will experience greater empowerment. In marrying the two literature sources to the results, it may be deduced that staff at the UoT are sufficiently empowered to know when there is a problem that needs to be addressed, where to obtain the needed information to aid in the problem-solving process and ultimately make the mental effort to obtain a favourable result themselves.

5.1.2 Condition 2: Learning Organisation

It is important to note that the results of this study indicate that frontline administrative staff members were not empowered, especially in the area of the UoT's being a learning organisation. Even though staff felt that their work environments fostered a culture of learning (the majority who positively felt so were aged between 20 and 39) in which most of the respondents felt encouraged to improve, learn or grow, there were not consultative sessions with line managers where staff could discuss their responsibilities, accountability and most importantly, their professional development. However, the staff did feel that their work environments allowed them to work on skills that could prepare them to achieve future goals. It was evident that the latter did not emanate from the line manager (as there were no consultative meetings), but through the actions of staff members themselves.

It is clear from the results that these staff members have a need to be empowered; this could be achieved if the training programmes are examined or changed to suit the direct needs of staff, specific faculties, units or departments.

Even though supervisors may not be involved in nurturing a culture of learning, the biographical variables suggest that frontline administrative staff are learned. More than one-third of the respondents have a BTech degree. However, the study did not investigate whether these staff members obtained these degrees while employed at the UoT. If this was (most probably) the case, further research could be done to determine what their motivating factors were to embark on furthering their academic qualifications.

In conclusion to this factor relating to employee empowerment, frontline administrative staff felt empowered in their personal capacities, although their work environments did not seem to be those of a learning organisation.

Given the definition of Lawrence (1998), who notes that a learning organisation is one that seeks to create its own future and assumes that learning is an ongoing and creative process for its members, and Clutterbuck et al. (1994), who suggest that key to creating a learning organisation is to empower staff, this study reveals that the UoT fails to do so.

5.1.3 Factor 1: Job Satisfaction

Frontline administrative staff at the UoT felt useful and productive in their respective work environments, and at times felt valued for their work and their contributions where their line managers did value their suggestions and requests. They also indicated that they had access to the necessary resources to do their jobs well. However, some issues were raised: they were not satisfied with promotion and growth opportunities, and their work environments were not stimulating. However, they still felt enthusiastic about their work.

The literature consulted defined job satisfaction as a “pleasurable or positive emotional state” resulting from the appraisal of the job and/or the job experience. Given the results, on the whole, it is apparent that frontline administrative staff members are not entirely satisfied with their current positions, nor are they satisfied with the circumstances of their work environment

5.1.4 Factor 2: Staff Retention

Rust et al. (1996:63) contend that when organisations boost employee satisfaction, staff turnover is reduced, that is, staff would probably be less inclined to leave the organisation. As described in Section 5.1.3, although the frontline administrative staff did not feel a sense of job satisfaction, they tended to remain in the employ of the UoT. The sentiments of Sigler (1999:1) should be noted, that efforts to retain staff could be challenging to the organisation. In the case of the UoT, staff intimated that they had thought of leaving the departments in which they were stationed and/or the UoT. Those who often thought of leaving the department had from 0–15 years' work experience at the UoT. However, it should be mentioned that respondents were not questioned whether they had been in the same position for all that time. The question posed to those who had considered leaving the employ of the UoT, did not have a statistically significant relationship with the any of the biographical variables, though some respondents indicated that they remained at the UoT because of the benefits and working relationships they had formed with colleagues. However, they did want to leave the UoT because of the lack of growth or promotion opportunities for frontline administrators.

It is also clear from this study that most of the frontline administrative staff chose to stay at the UoT because of the salary packages received and/or employee benefits.

The results obtained for this section are echoed by the findings of Boshoff and Allen (2000:83) that staff members become frustrated in their jobs because of a lack of job descriptions, no promotion within the staff category, and a lack of challenging work. In the current study staff have therefore thought about leaving their jobs at the UoT.

5.1.5 Factor 3: Rewards and Recognition

Frontline administrative staff, especially those with high qualifications, indicated that they were not satisfied with the amount of recognition received for their jobs, and felt strongly about this. However, the respondents did suggest that they did receive acknowledgement for a job well done, but were not rewarded for their abilities and for efficiency in the workplace. Although respondents indicated that academic excellence was acknowledged, this study did not determine whether all frontline staff that pursued further studies and graduated, received this acknowledgement. Further research could investigate this, as well as motivating factors for their wishing to pursue further studies. It was suggested that merit awards conferred on staff contributed to their motivation to pursue further studies, but there was no common practice across the UoT.

The results from the study and the literature from Melham (2004), Boshoff and Allen (2000:66), confirm that the extent of empowerment is higher in frontline staff who are recognised for what they do, and if frontline administrative staff were given the necessary recognition, they would experience a more satisfactory working life.

5.1.6 Answers to the Research Question

Table 5.1: Are the identified factors and conditions that could influence employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a UoT influenced by demographics?

Factor and/or Condition	Biographical Variable	Question Posed	Result/ Answer
Decision Making	Home Language	On a daily basis I am provided with enough information to make good decisions.	The majority of the African native language speakers said sometimes.
	Age	I am free to take initiative at work	Ages 40–69 were in the majority.
		I have to solve all my own work- related problems.	The majority of the female respondents suggested that management would sometimes provide assistance.
	Gender	Management tries to solve my work- related problems.	Female respondents were in the majority.
	Faculty / unit / department	Management tries to solve my work- related problems.	The majority of responses from the faculties and central administration felt that management tried to solve their work related problems.
	Faculty / unit / department	I have to solve all my own work- related problems.	Most responses received from the faculties and other departments that offered services to students.
Learning Organisation	Age	My work environment fosters a culture of learning	The majority of the respondents who positively felt so were aged between 20 and 39.
	Years' work experience	In the last three months, I have attended meetings where my accountability for my daily responsibilities has been discussed.	Those who felt this way had more than six years working experience at the UoT, where the majority had more than 16 years' experience.
		I am satisfied with the frequency of training programmes available.	Staff members with 0 to 15 years' work experience were seldom satisfied with the

			frequency of the training programmes available.
		My supervisor is concerned about my professional development.	The majority of the negative responses were from staff who had more than six years' work experience at the UoT
	Faculty/unit/department	My work environment gives me the opportunity to work on skills that prepare me to achieve future goals set by me and my direct supervisor.	Staff that felt this was were stationed in the faculties and central administration.
		My supervisor is concerned about my professional development	The majority of the negative responses were based in the faculties.
	Gender	Training provided by the institution is relevant and applicable to my daily tasks.	Female respondents strongly felt that training was sometimes relevant and applicable to their daily tasks.
	Home language	My supervisor encourages me to suggest ways to improve my quality of work.	The majority of the responses were from English speakers.
Job Satisfaction	Age	I feel valued for my work and for my contributions to the department / institution.	Staff aged from 20 to 69 felt valued for their work and their contributions.
	Qualifications	Management shares information with people at all levels within the institution.	Staff who had obtained a degree or a higher qualification responded negatively to the question posed.
		People at my level have the resources needed to do the job right.	Staff who had obtained a degree or a higher qualification felt that they sometimes had the resources.
		I am satisfied with the promotional growth opportunities within the institution.	Those who were not satisfied with the promotional growth opportunities had obtained a National Diploma or higher qualification.

Staff Retention	Years' Work Experience	I contemplate leaving the department	More than one-third of the respondents had thought of leaving the departments in which were stationed; the majority had fewer than five years' experience at the UoT and also between 11 and 15 years' experience
		Are your reasons for staying employed at the institution different from your reasons for joining?	Of the positive responses, more than one-third of the respondents had ten or fewer years' work experience at the UoT. Of the positive responses, more than one-third had more than 11 years' work experience.
	Faculty / Unit/ Department	What makes you want to leave the department?	The majority of the staff indicated that they thought of leaving because of no growth opportunities and poor working conditions. The majority of the staff were stationed at the faculties, where student services came in second and central administration third.
	Age	What makes you want to leave the department?	The majority of the staff indicated that they thought of leaving because of no growth opportunities and poor working conditions. The majority of the staff were aged between 20 and 39
		Have you been given your job description (orally, in writing or both)?	Staff had received their job descriptions. The majority were aged between 20 and 39.
	Gender	Have you received a promotion during the time you have been working at the institution?	Of the majority negative response to the question, more than two-thirds of the responses were from female staff.

	Qualification	Have you received a promotion in the time you have been working at the institution?	Of the majority negative response to the question, most of the respondents had obtained a degree or higher qualification.
	Home Language	In your opinion, what benefits are the most important to employees at this institution?	The English speakers felt that employee benefits were the most important.
Rewards and Recognition	Qualification	I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive for job performance	Of the negative responses, the majority had obtained a degree or higher qualification.
	Home Language	Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged.	The English speakers were in the majority across the response scale.
	Faculty / Unit/ Department	Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged.	Staff stationed in the faculties were in the majority across the response scale.
	Years' work experience	It is customary for faculties / units / departments to give merit awards or other rewards to staff.	Of the negative responses, staff with more than six years' work experience claimed that merit awards or rewards were not customary. Of the positive responses, the majority had five or fewer years' work experience.
		I am rewarded for my abilities and efficiency.	Of the negative responses, there was a fair spread across the scale in terms of years' work experience.

5.2 Recommendations for further studies

The findings of this study led to the following recommendations:

The research recognised how the highlighted factors and conditions affect the extent of employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a UoT in the Western Cape, South Africa. As there had been no similar research conducted at other UoTs on this topic, it is suggested that this study could be replicated at other UoTs (or traditional universities) in the country for comparative analysis of the findings.

Further to this, each of the factors and conditions could be researched separately to determine their specific importance to the identified sample in relation to their perceived weight in the contribution to the respondent's level of empowerment.

It would also be interesting to determine why frontline administrative staff embarked on further studies while in the employ of the UoT, and also what the main motivating factors were.

5.3 Recommendations to the UoT to create an empowering environment for frontline administrators

Apart from the recommendations relating to possible further studies in terms of this topic, the following recommendations are pertinent to the findings.

Frontline administrators should be (more) involved in making changes within their jobs, as this would allow for more informed decisions. More consultation between managers (line and executive) and employees is needed. These consultative meetings would give managers a better idea of the capabilities of staff (based on their years' work experience which equates to institutional knowledge and qualifications) and would also allow managers to 'loosen the reins' in trying to solve work-related problems. Allowing frontline administrative staff more active decision making would give employees a sense of purpose in their jobs, ultimately resulting in higher levels of job satisfaction.

Professional development through training and learning, which should include frontline administrative staff, should be seen as an investment in the human capital of the UoT and should become common practice. Even though rebates are offered to staff to improve their qualifications, the need for on-the-job training is greater, as this will equip staff to deal with challenges in the fast-changing work environment. If staff attended the

internal training programmes offered by UoT, there should be mechanisms in place to determine how the outcome of the training have (i) developed the employee professionally and (ii) what impact they had on the daily operations of the employee. Frontline administrative staff should be encouraged to attend seminars, conferences and workshops related to their areas of work; budgets should be made available for attendance of these as for academic staff. Because of the lack of consultation between line managers and frontline administrators, there is no platform to identify the need for training of frontline administrative employees, or to identify critical areas where change is needed. It is clear that the respondents have invested in themselves to equip themselves for their work environments, but it is strongly proposed that there is a role for managers to play as well.

When staff members are given 'independence' in their job functions, it will give them a greater sense of satisfaction in their jobs. Management at the UoT should focus on this, since it will affect their core business if frontline administrative staff members are unhappy or dissatisfied. To create a sense of involvement, there should be a flow of information (by way of consultation), as this would motivate frontline staff in their respective environments and would prevent staff taking on more tasks than necessary. As frontline administrative employees and administrative staff as a whole are not eligible for promotion, a system should be put in place to allow staff to move up the ranks within administrative levels, without their having to apply for other higher paid positions within the UoT. This practice could also be linked to the level of education (further studies) which the frontline employee has embarked on. This could also be seen as a tool for implementing recognition strategies. The UoT needs to determine who their frontline administrative staff are (in a personal and professional capacity) and how best the UoT can equip and assist them to perform its core business.

As some of the frontline administrative staff have thought about leaving the employ of the UoT for better prospects, further research should be done on what the 'better prospects' are and what the UoT can possibly do to retain staff to create a cohesive working environment. As the biographical information indicated, employees have been at the UoT for relatively long periods, and when they leave, they leave with valuable institutional knowledge. Maintaining the institutional knowledge will aid the UoT as there would be less need to train new staff replacing experienced staff. It could be expected that such an interjection would also have an effect on the quality of service delivery. Management

should examine the working environments of frontline administrative staff and should attempt to put measures in place to empower frontline administrative employees.

It is clear from the study that frontline administrative employees would want to do more within their respective jobs, if they are acknowledged for what they do. Even though it may be argued that their monthly salaries are sufficient reward and recognition, it is strongly argued that an expression of gratitude would also be acknowledged as empowering. As there are no promotion opportunities for frontline administrative employees at the UoT, the practice of conferring merit awards should be put in place to formally recognise excellence for employees in the category. Monetary values could be attached to merit awards, such as 'cash bonuses', retail store vouchers or an increment increase in their salaries, to name a few possible incentives. This practice of recognition will motivate frontline administrative staff to perform better within their respective jobs. The condition of this practice should be that *all* faculties/units/departments should engage in this practice. Recognition should also be given to academic excellence for frontline administrative staff, as this would also motivate staff to learn through further studies.

5.4 Final conclusion

It is important for tertiary institutions to understand that frontline administrative staff are an integral part of the university, and without these staff, the operations of the university would not be effective and efficient. Careful thought should be given to the range of staffing issues raised in this study by the frontline administrators. These issues could not only affect staff in their category, but other staff within the university as well.

The findings of this study propose that the professional wellbeing of frontline administrative employee cannot be achieved by employees alone, but also requires assistance from line managers and executive management. If these employees recognise that their own needs (emotional needs relating to the job and professional needs) have been met, it is expected that these staff in turn, will be more eager to meet the needs of employers.

It seems that line managers do not always realise that they play an important role in the career development of the frontline administrator employee. It is of utmost importance that line managers have a full understanding of the significant value of consultative sessions with employees, especially in the case of frontline administrative staff. These

sessions should be honest and motivating experiences where the frontline administrators are assisted to set and attain realistic development goals. Here, the development of frontline administrators should be key in highlighting the significance of how their jobs affect the departments in which they are stationed, as well as other functions within the UoT. It is also crucial that line managers be trained as mentors, as this will allow them to fulfil their roles as leaders who promote the much needed career development among frontline administrative staff.

In finding the right balance in marrying the needs of frontline administrative employees to those of the UoT to ensure effectiveness of operations and ultimate efficiency, the frontline administrators at the UoT would be proved to be valuable instruments and key drivers of change in response to the demands of an ever-changing work environment.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER REQUESTING PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AT THE UOT

Page 1 of 1

Tania Arlene George - Query - Permission Request to Conduct Research

From: Tania Arlene George
To: Ncediwe Qomoyi
Date: 2011/08/30 01:18 PM
Subject: Query - Permission Request to Conduct Research

Dear Ncediwe

As a full-time staff member, I am currently registered for an MTech: Business Administration (on a part-time basis) and am registered here at the university. I would like to conduct my research at CPUT and on its administrative staff members as my proposed title for the study is

"Investigating the factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of front line (administrative) staff at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology".

As per the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Business, it is a prerequisite that permission be obtained and granted from the University allowing me to use its staff members for the study as well as the use of the University's name in all the documentation leading up to the compilation of my thesis.

I was told that this permission could be granted from your department. Would such permission be obtainable?

Should you not be in a position to grant this permission as the HR Director, would it be possible for you to direct me to the appropriate persons.

Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated.

Kind Regards
Tania George
Chemistry Department
Faculty of Applied Sciences
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Cape Town Campus
PO Box 652, Cape Town 8000
Tel: +27 (0)21 460 3174
Fax: +27 (0)21 460 3854

Tania Arlene George - Re: Fwd: Query - Permission Request to Conduct Research

From: Tania Arlene George
To: Ncediwe Qomoyi
Date: 2011/08/30 02:29 PM
Subject: Re: Fwd: Query - Permission Request to Conduct Research

Thank you for your prompt response Ncediwe.

Really appreciate it.

Regards
Tania

>>> Ncediwe Qomoyi 2011/08/30 02:20 PM >>>
Dear Mr Bhana

I recommend that Ms George be given the permission to conduct the Research.

Please see attached and advise.

Regards
Ncediwe

APPENDIX B: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



P.O. Box 1906 • Bellville 7535 South Africa • Tel: +27 21 6801680 • Email: saliefa@cput.ac.za
Symphony Road Bellville 7535

Office of the Chairperson Research Ethics Committee	Faculty: BUSINESS
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At a meeting of the Research Ethics Committee on 18 September 2012, ethics approval was granted to GEORGE, Tania Arlene (203084896) for research activities Related to the MTech/DTech: MTech: Business Administration at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Title of dissertation/thesis:	Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a University of Technology, Western Cape Province, South Africa Supervisors: Prof DW Schutte, Dr C Steyn
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Comments:

Decision: APPROVED

<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Signed: Chairperson: Research Ethics Committee	18 September 2012 <hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 5px 0;"/> Date
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<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 0 0 5px 0;"/> Signed: Chairperson: Faculty Research Committee	<hr style="border: 0; border-top: 1px solid black; margin: 0 0 5px 0;"/> Date
--	--

Clearance Certificate No | 2012FBREC0073

APPENDIX C: COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

Page 1 of 3

Tania Arlene George - Survey towards Masters Thesis - Please complete

From: Tania Arlene George
To: Tania Arlene George
Date: 2013/05/20 10:31 AM
Subject: Survey towards Masters Thesis - Please complete

THIS IS NOT SPAM!! It is a legitimate study towards my Masters Thesis.

Dear Colleagues

Thank you again to those who have managed to complete the electronic survey. Your assistance is **greatly** appreciated(",).

I have still, unfortunately, not received enough responses to run statistical data, which is an important factor in the write up phase of the research.

If you have **15 minutes** to spare, could I ask that you **please** complete a questionnaire?

To complete the survey, you need to do the following:

- **Copy** and **Paste** this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F3Y2WWC> into the address bar in your browser (i.e. Internet Explorer)
- Press enter, which will take you to the questions of the survey.
- Answer the sections by clicking on the most appropriate answer (in your personal view).
- Click on **NEXT** to move to the following section.
- Once you have completed all the sections, click on **DONE**, and your responses will be received automatically.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

Thank you for your willingness to assist. Your participation is much appreciated.

Best regards
Tania George
021 460 3174

>>> Tania Arlene George 2013/03/25 09:12 AM >>>

THIS IS NOT SPAM!! It is a legitimate study towards my Masters Thesis.

Dear Colleagues

A HUGE thank you to those who had already completed the survey.

Unfortunately, I have not received enough responses to run statistical data.

Could I please urge those who have not yet completed it to please take some time to do so. It will be greatly appreciated.

To complete the survey, you need to do the following:

file:///C:/Users/abrahamst/AppData/Local/Temp/XPgrpwise/51ECF069ctcal01StaffA... 2014/06/11

- **Copy** and **Paste** this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F3Y2WWC> into the address bar in your browser (i.e. Internet Explorer)
- Press enter, which will take you to the questions of the survey.
- Answer the sections by clicking on the most appropriate answer (in your personal view).
- Click on **NEXT** to move to the following section.
- Once you have completed all the sections, click on **DONE**, and your responses will be received automatically.

PLEASE ANSWER ALL THE QUESTIONS.

All you require is 15 - 20 minutes.

Thank you for your willingness to assist. Your participation is much appreciated.

Kind Regards
Tania George
Chemistry Department
Faculty of Applied Sciences
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Cape Town Campus
PO Box 652, Cape Town 8000
Tel: +27 (0)21 460 3174
Fax: +27 (0)21 460 3854

>>> Tania Arlene George 2013/03/11 09:25 AM >>>

THIS IS NOT SPAM!!

It is a legitimate study towards my Masters Thesis.

Dear Participant

You have received this e-mail because you are a valuable member of this institution. I would be grateful if you would kindly take a few minutes to complete my survey questionnaire to allow for data collection towards my Master's thesis titled

"Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of front-line administrative staff at a University of Technology, Western Cape Province, South Africa.

The purpose of the survey is to identify the factors and conditions that affect the level of employee empowerment experienced by administrative staff within the different faculties and units at the institution.

This survey will allow the researcher to determine the attitudes, perceptions and feelings about the various factors and conditions listed. There is no right or wrong answer, as these questions are based purely on your perceptions and feelings.

All responses are completely anonymous and will be treated confidentially. The computer programme used for data collection will discard you identifiable details. The information provided by you will be used for personal research and statistical purposes only.

To complete the survey, you need to do the following:

- **Copy** and **Paste** this link <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/F3Y2WWC> into the address bar in your browser (i.e. Internet Explorer)
- Press enter, which will take you to the questions of the survey.
- Answer the sections by clicking on the most appropriate answer (in your personal view).

file:///C:/Users/abrahamst/AppData/Local/Temp/XPgrpwise/51ECF069ctcal01StaffA... 2014/06/11

- Click on **NEXT** to move to the following section.
- Once you have completed all the sections, click on **DONE**, and your responses will be received automatically.

The survey should take approximately 15 - 20 minutes of your time.

The researcher accepts that by following the link and completing the survey, you are providing consent to participate in this research.

Even though the link is e-mailed to you, **NO RESPONSES WILL BE DELIVERED TO MY EMAIL ADDRESS**, which, again, means that your answers are **CONFIDENTIAL!**

Should you have any questions pertaining to the research, please feel free to contact me via my email address (abrahamst@cput.ac.za) or on 021 460 3171 (between 8:00 and 16:00)

All you require is 15 - 20 minutes.

Thank you for your willingness to assist. Your participation is much appreciated.

Kind Regards
Tania George
Chemistry Department
Faculty of Applied Sciences
Cape Peninsula University of Technology
Cape Town Campus
PO Box 652, Cape Town 8000
Tel: +27 (0)21 460 3174
Fax: +27 (0)21 460 3854

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

Section A - Decision Making

1. On a daily basis, I am provided with enough information to make good decisions.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

2. In my job, I am involved in decisions that affect me.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

3. I am given an opportunity to propose improvements to make my daily tasks, and that of the department, better.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

4. I have access to information that could enable me to make good decisions.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

5. I am free to take initiative at work.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

6. My opinion is asked before changes are made to the way I perform my job.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

7. Management tries to solve my work related problems.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

8. I have to solve all my own work related problems myself.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Section B - Learning Organization

9. My work environment fosters a culture of learning.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

10. I am encouraged to improve, learn or grow within my work environment.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

11. In the last three months, I have attended meetings where my accountability for my daily responsibilities have been discussed.

No Yes

12. In the last three months I have attended meetings where my professional development has been discussed.

No Yes

13. My work environment gives me the opportunity to work on skills that prepare me to achieve future goals set by me and my direct supervisor.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

14. On-the-job training is available.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

15. Training provided by the institution is relevant and applicable to my daily tasks.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

16. I am satisfied with the frequency of the training programmes available.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

17. I am satisfied with the quality of training programmes available.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

18. My supervisor is concerned about my professional development.

No Yes

19. My supervisor encourages me to suggest ways to improve my quality of work.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Section C - Job Satisfaction

20. I feel useful and productive in my office environment.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

21. I feel valued for my work and for my contributions to the department / institution.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

22. My direct supervisor values my suggestions and requests.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

23. Management shares information with people at all levels within the institution.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

24. People at my level have the resources needed to do the job right.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

25. I feel that my job provides steady employment.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

26. I am satisfied with the promotional growth opportunities within the institution.

No Yes

27. If you have selected 'NO' in the previous question, please elaborate why you feel this way.

28. I can talk directly to management if I have a problem.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

29. My work environment motivates me.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

30. I do more than what is expected of me at work.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

31. I am allowed to take my tea breaks.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

32. I am allowed to take my lunch breaks.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

33. I feel enthusiastic about my work.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

Section D - Staff Retention

34. I contemplate leaving the department.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

35. I contemplate leaving the institution.

Never Seldom Sometimes Often Always

36. What makes you want to leave the department?

37. What makes you want to stay within the department?

38. I have chosen to remain employed at the institution because of.....(choose the OPTION(S) best applicable to you).

- Career advancement opportunities
- Challenging work
- Salary
- Employee Benefits
- Supervision / Management

39. Have you received a promotion in the time you have been working at the institution?

No Yes

40. Are promotion opportunities available for staff in your category?

No Yes

41. Have you been given your job description verbally or in writing?

Verbally In Writing Verbally and in writing

42. Are your reasons for staying employed at the institution different from the reasons you had for joining?

No

Yes

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

43. If you selected 'YES' for the previous question, please elaborate.

44. In your opinion, what benefits are the most important to employees at this institution.

45. Has anyone left your faculty / department / unit in the past six months?

- No
 Yes

46. If you selected 'YES' for the previous question, are you aware of their reasons for leaving?

Section E - Rewards and Recognition

47. I am satisfied with the amount of recognition I receive for job performance.

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

48. Where I work, a job well done is always acknowledged.

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

49. I am rewarded for work well done.

Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always
<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

50. Bursaries are available should I need one.

- No
 Yes

51. I (or a colleague) have received a reward or merit in the last twelve months.

- No
 Yes

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

52. It is customary for faculties / departments / units to award merits or rewards to staff.

No

Yes

53. I am rewarded for my abilities and for my efficiency.

Never

Seldom

Sometimes

Often

Always

54. Staff in my category at the institution receive recognition and acknowledgement for.....(more than one option may be selected).

Job Performance

Milestones

Birthdays

Length of Service

Innovation and Creativity

Team Performance

Customer Satisfaction

Contribution towards society

Academic excellence

Other (please specify)

Section F - Demographics

Even though your personal details will not be known to the researcher, some data should be provided for demographics purposes. The information provided by you will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will solely be used for personal research and statistical purposes.

55. Are you male or female?

Male

Female

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

56. Which category below includes your age?

- 17 or younger
- 18-20
- 21-29
- 30-39
- 40-49
- 50-59
- 60+
- 60 or older

57. What is your marital status?

- Married
- Unmarried but living with partner
- Divorced
- Single

58. What language do you mainly speak at home?

- Afrikaans
- English
- IsiNdebele
- IsiXhosa
- IsiZulu
- Sesotho sa Lebeoa
- Sesotho
- Setswana
- SiSwati
- Tshivenda
- Xitsonga

Factors and conditions influencing employee empowerment of frontline

59. What is your educational qualification

- Some high school completed
- Grade 12
- Post School Certificate / Diploma
- National Diploma / National Higher Diploma
- Baccalaureus Degree
- Honours Degree
- Masters Degree
- Other

Other (please specify)

60. In which faculty / unit do you work?

61. How long have you been working at the institution?

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APPENDIX D: LETTER FROM STATISTICIAN



To whom it may concern:

Tania Arlene George (Student Number 203084896) – MTech dissertation

This is to certify that the statistics of the data in this research project required by the student was done by me, using SPSS 21

My function was not to be involved in the interpretation thereof – that should be the student's own work.

C Uys.

Corrie Uys, M.Sc (Statistics)
20 March 2014

APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE / GRAMMAR EDITOR

E S van Aswegen
BA (Bibl), BA (Hons), MA, DLitt, FSAILIS

Language and bibliographic consultant

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ACADEMIC WRITING

Linguistic and technical editing of:

Research proposals
Conference and journal papers
Theses, dissertations, technical reports

Bibliographies
Bibliographic citation
Literature searching

The master's dissertation by **Tania George** has been edited, and the candidate has been advised to make the recommended changes.



ES van Aswegen
26 November 2015

APPENDIX F: PROOF OF ARTICLE SUBMISSION

Tania George

From: Title Operations Coordinator <submissions@sajip.co.za>
Sent: 27 November 2015 11:27 AM
To: Tania George
Subject: SAJIP Submission - 1331: Confirming Receipt

Dear Tania George

Ref. No.: 1331
Title: Employee Empowerment of frontline administrative staff at a University of technology
Journal: SA Journal of Industrial Psychology

We confirm and thank you for submitting your manuscript. Please use the manuscript reference number given above in all future correspondence.

With the online journal management system that we are using, you will be able to track progress of the manuscript through the editorial process by logging into the journal's website:

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<http://www.sajip.co.za/index.php/sajip/author/submission/1331>
Username: georget

Your new submission will undergo a preliminary review by the editor to assess whether the article is within the focus of the journal.

Thank you for considering this journal to publish your work. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kind regards
Title Operations Coordinator
SA Journal of Industrial Psychology

SA Journal of Industrial Psychology
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