



**The influence of organizational culture and leadership in promoting innovative behaviour
in technical and vocational education and training colleges**

By

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30 March 2026

DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of organisational culture and leadership in promoting innovative behaviour within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. In a world characterised by constant technological advancements and an ever-evolving economic environment, innovation emerges as the linchpin of progress and competitive edge. This is particularly true in the realm of education, where institutions are required to adapt to the needs of an increasingly complex and dynamic workforce (Terblanche, 2017). The research employed a qualitative approach, drawing data from two institutions-Elangeni TVET College and Mthashana TVET College-through interviews and questionnaires.

Findings reveal that leadership styles and the prevailing organisational culture significantly impact the promotion of innovative behaviour among academic and administrative staff. Transformational and servant leadership styles were found to be particularly effective in encouraging a culture of collaboration, experimentation, and knowledge sharing. The study concludes by recommending strategies for leadership development and cultural transformation within TVET colleges to enhance institutional innovation.

Keywords: *Organisational culture, Leadership, Innovation, TVET colleges, South Africa*

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

In a world characterised by constant technological advancements and an ever-evolving economic environment, innovation emerges as the linchpin of progress and competitive edge. This is particularly true in the realm of education, where institutions are required to adapt to the needs of an increasingly complex and dynamic workforce (Terblanche, 2017). Among such institutions, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges represent a critical element. These colleges provide students with the practical skills and vocational expertise necessary to thrive in various industries, making a significant contribution to national economic stability and growth.

However, the ability of TVET colleges to remain relevant and impactful depends significantly on their internal capacity to foster innovation. This capacity is heavily shaped by the prevailing organisational culture and leadership practices. Organisational culture determines the shared values, norms, and behaviours that influence how staff and students interact, solve problems, and embrace change. Simultaneously, leadership provides strategic direction, motivation, and support, which are essential for nurturing a climate where creativity and experimentation are encouraged (Schein, 2018; Cameron & Quinn, 2021).

In the South African context, where TVET colleges face multifaceted challenges including limited resources, shifting policy demands, and rapidly changing technological landscapes, the promotion of innovative behaviour is not optional—it is imperative. Leadership that is visionary, participative, and transformative has the potential to unlock innovative capacity at all levels of the institution. Moreover, when embedded within a culture that values learning, collaboration, and flexibility, such leadership can foster sustainable institutional innovation.

To investigate the influence of leadership styles and organisational culture on innovation within South African TVET colleges, this study adopts a qualitative research approach grounded in the interpretivist paradigm. The research seeks to explore the lived experiences and perspectives of educators and administrators through structured open-ended questionnaires. Purposive sampling was used to select information-rich participants from two TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. The

collected data were analysed using thematic analysis to identify key patterns and themes related to leadership and innovation. This methodological approach enables an in-depth, context-sensitive understanding of how leadership practices shape innovative behaviour within the TVET sector.

1.2 Background Of The Study

An integral part of educational environments is educational leadership. Effective leaders ensure an efficient institution by upholding leadership actions-oriented behaviour, which increases management efficiency in educational contexts (Rajbhandari,2017). Similar to this, strong educational leaders are crucial to the institutional efficiency of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. A second example of ineffective management is the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET), which acknowledged the poor quality of TVET college leadership (Ngwato, 2020).

Researchers have found that poor leadership within TVET colleges leads to various challenges (Mabale, 2012; Ngwato, 2020; Nthako, 2020; Van Wyk, 2009). This highlights the critical need to transform leadership roles in education and prioritise the application of effective management practices suited to the specific context, timing, and personnel involved. Additional factors contributing to leadership inefficacy include insufficient teaching and learning resources, substandard infrastructure, lack of staff motivation, high turnover rates, and overcrowded classrooms (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018; Mabale, 2012; Van Wyk, 2009). According to Van Wyk (2009), the underperformance of TVET colleges stems largely from inadequate management. In the educational context, effectiveness refers to the strategies and practices that successfully achieve set learning goals. The significance of TVET colleges in South Africa cannot be overstated. By offering vocational training tailored to industry needs, these colleges fill a vital gap in the education-to-employment transition, equipping learners with the skills sought after by employers (Makole, Ntshangase & Msosa, 2023). The curriculum in these institutions is uniquely designed to balance theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, ensuring students are well-prepared for the practical demands of the working world. Consequently, TVET colleges act as a key catalyst for economic development, directly influencing the quality and expertise of the national workforces (Chelimo, Guyo & Moronge, 2020).

Despite the important role they play, TVET colleges face challenges in maintaining a consistent level of innovation across their operations. One factor that has been identified as potentially contributing to these disparities is the varying leadership styles present within different institutions (Chelimo, Guyo & Moronge, 2020). Leaders greatly influence the strategic direction and cultural milieu of the colleges, shaping the environment in which innovation is either cultivated or stifled. Furthermore, the organisational culture within these colleges encompassing shared values, beliefs, and practices plays a critical role in determining whether new ideas are encouraged and implemented.

Research has demonstrated that certain leadership styles, such as transformational and servant leadership, are often associated with higher levels of innovation and employee engagement (Ribeiro, Yücel & Gomes, 2018; Ndlovu, Ngirande, Setati, S.T. & Zhuwao, S., 2018). Leaders who inspire, support and empower their staff can foster a culture that is open to change and continuous improvement, essential ingredients for innovation. Conversely, leadership styles that are overly bureaucratic or authoritarian can hamper creativity and hinder the adoption of new ideas. This variance in innovation across TVET colleges poses a series of questions with regard to how leadership and culture interact and influence each other within these educational contexts (Osman & Kamis, 2019).

In addressing this discrepancy, it becomes necessary to explore how different leadership models affect organisational culture and, consequently, innovative behaviour. Understanding the successful elements and potential pitfalls of various leadership and cultural frameworks can inform the development of more effective strategies for nurturing innovation. Such strategies are crucial in ensuring that TVET colleges can respond adeptly to the changing landscapes of industry and education, thereby securing their role in shaping a skilled and adaptable workforce for the future.

Various principles, including motivation and involvement, goal-oriented, belief-based interactions, and the evolution of followers' demands as they work toward achieving organisational objectives (Ndaba, 2023). Other tenets of this idea include assisting followers in reaching a more universal objective and developing their moral and skill sets. In this sense, the study uses the theory as a framework to investigate how the values, objectives, and beliefs impact the TVET colleges' leadership and management processes (Ndaba, 2023).

Enormous scientific and technological developments, higher education institutions are facing rapid structural, social, technological changes. Because they are considered as an important center of talent development and knowledge production and sharing for countries (Wu & Liu, 2021). To fulfill their educational, social and economic needs, higher education institutions need to respond to changing education needs, to adopt the more flexible modes of organisational culture. Organisational culture is a promotive environment which influences values, assumptions and beliefs. In an innovative culture, people can easily develop new ideas and exhibit collaboration (Wu & Liu, 2021).

Organisational culture can be a facilitator or a barrier for educational innovations. In terms of serving as a facilitator, a culture of innovation broadly includes creating, accepting and implementing the new ideas (Amabile, 1988; Kanter, 1983). Similarly, Katz and Kahn (1978) found that the structure of an organisation facilitates innovation through the flow of information, the coordination and integration of activities within an organization. Additional characteristic for the innovation process was suggested by Arad et al. (1997). They proposed that flat hierarchy, autonomy, empowerment, and work teams facilitate innovation. They also identified the importance of leadership on innovation. Especially creating supportive culture, motivating employees, providing direction and vision are seen as important aspects for innovation (Yukl, 1989). Still other researchers have focused on the positive relationships between innovation and social characteristics of the universities such as organisational goals achievement, selection and reward system, growth and risk taking.

1.3 Problem Statement

Even though department directors and other government leaders, including the department director general and other directorate managers, issue directives to leaders and line managers stationed at TVET college campuses and head offices, they are still accountable for creating strategies and operational plans within the college for the betterment of the organisation and its students. All current bodies must cooperate for this to be successful. The college council, the principal, the student representative council (SRC), and other college structures like the Academic Board are mostly responsible for the administration, management, and leadership of the college.

Effective innovation within educational institutions is increasingly being recognised as pivotal for the adaptation and renewal of curriculums, teaching methods, and ultimately for fostering a skilled and prepared workforce. This is particularly critical for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa, which are expected to be at the vanguard of providing industry-ready skills in a rapidly transforming global economy (Makole, Ntshangase & Msosa, 2023). Within this context, the interplay between organisational culture and leadership style is key to driving innovative behaviour across all levels of the institution from management to the classroom (Chelimo, Guyo & Moronge, 2020). However, there is a discernible gap in the research focusing specifically on the nuances of this relationship in the South African TVET sector (Osman & Kamis, 2019).

In light of these considerations, the research seeks to address these significant gaps in empirical knowledge pertaining to the South African TVET context. By uncovering how leadership and organisational culture interact to influence innovation, the study aims to contribute vital insights into developing effective strategies and interventions for organisational development and educational excellence, thereby ensuring that TVET colleges in South Africa can fulfill their role in producing a competent and innovative workforce.

1.4 Main aim

The aim of this study is to determine the extent to which organisational culture and leadership practices influence the promotion of innovative behaviour in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To examine the relationship between the leadership style, organisational culture and its impact on promoting innovative behavior in TVET colleges
2. To identify opportunities for leadership development programmes that foster a culture of innovation and empower leaders to promote innovative behavior within TVET colleges.
3. To explore the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership styles and their impact on fostering an innovative culture within TVET colleges in the South African context.
4. To identify strategies for fostering and sustaining innovation.

1.6 Research Questions

The following research questions are put forward to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between leadership styles, organisational culture and the promotion of innovative behavior in South African TVET colleges?
2. What opportunities exist for leadership development programmes that foster a culture of innovation, and empower leaders to promote innovative behaviour in TVET colleges?
3. What is the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership styles, and their impact on fostering an innovative culture within TVET colleges in the South African context ?
4. What strategies can be adopted to enhance innovation in TVET colleges?

1.7 Significance of the study

The proposed research is significant as it explores the intersection of leadership, organisational culture, and innovation within TVET colleges in South Africa. The study contributes to understanding how these elements interact within educational institutions and may offer insights relevant to educational practice, leadership development, and the promotion of innovation in vocational education contexts.

By examining how leadership and organisational culture influence innovation in TVET colleges, the study is likely to provide insights that are useful for institutional leaders seeking to strengthen innovation practices. The findings could inform the development or refinement of leadership training and professional development initiatives aimed at enhancing leaders' capacity to support innovative practices within educational settings (Mofokeng, 2022). Rather than prescribing solutions, the study seeks to contribute contextually grounded perspectives that can assist current and aspiring leaders in fostering supportive institutional environments.

Furthermore, the study has the potential in contributing to the ongoing discussions regarding the cultivation of institutional cultures that encourage innovation. Understanding the organisational conditions that support or hinder innovative practices can assist institutions in reflecting on their internal processes and change strategies. While organisational transformation is complex and context-dependent, the findings may offer practical insights into how leadership and culture interact in shaping innovation within TVET colleges (Yisihak & Cai, 2021).

The findings can also provide evidence-based insights that could inform institutional-level policy discussions related to innovation and leadership practices. Although the study is context-specific, its conclusions may contribute to broader conversations about curriculum development, academic practices, and institutional support systems that encourage creative thinking and adaptability among staff and students (Chelimo, Guyo & Moronge, 2020).

From a broader perspective, strengthening innovation within TVET colleges has implications for workforce development and skills enhancement in South Africa. While this study does not claim to directly influence national economic outcomes, improved understanding of innovation drivers within vocational institutions may contribute, indirectly, to discussions about enhancing graduate preparedness and institutional responsiveness to labour market demands (Ngibe & Lekhanya, 2019; Osman & Kamis, 2019)

In conclusion, the significance of this study lies in its contribution to understanding the relationship between leadership, organisational culture, and innovation within selected TVET colleges. By offering contextually grounded insights, the research adds to the existing body of knowledge on educational leadership and innovation in vocational education. Its value resides primarily at the institutional and scholarly levels, where it may support reflective practice, informed decision-making, and further research in this field.

1.8 Chapter Summary

This chapter introduces the centrality of innovation in the TVET sector and outlines the research's critical areas: the interplay of leadership, organisational culture, and innovative behavior. It delineates the problem statement, framing the need for empirical investigation and setting forth the key research questions that will guide this study. The chapter concludes with an outline of the potential significance the study holds for TVET colleges in South Africa and for the broader educational landscape

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW:

2.1 Introduction

Leadership within the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector has emerged as a decisive factor in driving institutional transformation, promoting innovation, and responding effectively to evolving socio-economic demands. In the context of South African TVET colleges, where historical inequalities, resource disparities, and diverse learner needs intersect, leadership plays a pivotal role in reshaping educational landscapes and ensuring sustainable development. Chapter Two is structured to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on leadership, organisational culture, and innovation within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The chapter begins with an introduction to leadership in the TVET sector and proceeds to examine key leadership styles and their influence on innovation, including transformational, transactional, and servant leadership. It then explores the role of organisational culture in promoting innovation, including cultural typologies and their impact on institutional performance. Knowledge sharing, professional learning communities, and strategic leadership as drivers of innovation are discussed, followed by leadership development initiatives and programmes in the South African TVET context. Finally, the chapter considers the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership, highlighting contextual factors that shape leadership practices within South African TVET colleges. This structured approach allows the reader to understand how leadership and organisational culture interact to foster innovation in the TVET sector.

2.2 Leadership Styles and Their Influence on Innovation.

In the dynamic landscape of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, leadership plays a pivotal role in fostering innovation. Leadership styles is defined as the behaviours and strategies leaders employ to guide, motivate, and manage teams (Osman & Kamis, 2019). The approaches employed in higher learning institutions significantly influence the capacity to innovate (Owusu-Agyeman, 2019). Transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles, among others, have been studied for their impact on promoting innovative behaviours within educational settings. Understanding how these leadership styles affect innovation is crucial for TVET colleges aiming to adapt to technological advancements and evolving workforce

demands. Recent studies have highlighted the importance of aligning leadership approaches with organisational goals to create an environment conducive to innovation (Amurao, 2023; Owusu-Agyeman, 2019).

2.2.1 Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership, characterised by the ability to inspire and motivate followers to exceed expectations, has been linked to increased innovation in educational institutions. Leaders exhibiting this style foster an environment where creativity and new ideas are encouraged. In Malaysian vocational colleges, transformational leadership positively influenced educational innovation by promoting professional learning communities (PLCs), which serve as platforms for collaborative learning and sharing of best practices (Mydin et al., 2025). Similarly, in Kenyan youth polytechnics, transformational leadership components such as idealised influence and intellectual stimulation were found to enhance the quality of vocational training, thereby promoting innovation (Mugo & Kiboss, 2023). These findings underscore the role of transformational leaders in cultivating a culture that supports continuous improvement and innovation.

In the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, transformational leadership has been identified as a key driver of institutional performance. A study by Samodien et al. (2024) found that transformational leadership significantly influences institutional performance in South African higher education institutions, including TVET colleges. The study highlights the importance of leadership training programmes that develop transformational leadership behaviours to enhance institutional performance. This is particularly relevant in the South African context, where TVET colleges play a crucial role in addressing skills shortages and promoting economic development. By adopting transformational leadership practices, TVET college leaders can foster a culture of innovation that supports the development of industry-relevant skills and competencies.

Implementation of transformational leadership in South African TVET colleges is not without challenges. Clifton et al. (2024) note that strategic leadership is essential for transforming organisational culture in TVET institutions in Sarawak, Malaysia, and similar challenges may be

present in South Africa. These challenges include resistance to change, limited resources, and the need for capacity building among leaders and staff. In addition, to overcome these challenges, it is important to provide ongoing professional development opportunities for TVET college leaders and to create supportive environments that encourage innovation and collaboration (Cliffon et al., 2024). Thereby, addressing these challenges, South African TVET colleges can harness the potential of transformational leadership to drive innovation and improve outcomes.

Furthermore, the role of lecturers as transformational leaders is critical in promoting innovation in TVET colleges. Omar et al. (2019) found that lecturers' transformational leadership behaviours, such as inspirational motivation and individualized consideration, significantly influence students' employability in Malaysian TVET institutions. This suggests that lecturers who adopt transformational leadership practices can enhance students' skills and competencies, making them more adaptable to the changing demands of the labour market. In the South African context, empowering lecturers to become transformational leaders can contribute to the development of a more innovative and responsive TVET system. This can be achieved through targeted professional development programmes and the promotion of a culture that values continuous learning and improvement.

Therefore, it is evident that transformational leadership plays a vital role in fostering innovation in TVET colleges. By inspiring and motivating staff and students, transformational leaders can create environments that support creativity, collaboration, and continuous improvement. While challenges exist in implementing transformational leadership practices, particularly in resource-constrained settings, these can be addressed through strategic planning, capacity building, and the promotion of supportive organisational cultures. As South African TVET colleges strive to meet the evolving needs of the labour market, embracing transformational leadership can serve as a catalyst for innovation and institutional excellence.

2.2.2 Transactional Leadership

Transactional leadership, characterised by structured tasks, clear objectives, and reward-based performance, is prevalent in many educational institutions, including South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges (Ntimane, 2025). This leadership style

emphasises maintaining the status quo, ensuring compliance, and achieving specific performance targets through contingent rewards and management-by-exception practices (Samodien et al., 2024). In the context of South African TVET colleges, transactional leadership can provide the necessary structure and discipline required for efficient operations and adherence to regulatory standards. However, its impact on fostering innovation within these institutions is nuanced and warrants a critical examination (Ntimane, 2025).

While transactional leadership ensures efficiency and goal attainment, its effect on innovation is complex. A study by Sari et al. (2022) found that excessive monitoring and a strict focus on performance metrics could hinder creativity and innovative work behavior. Employees under transactional leaders may feel constrained, limiting their willingness to take risks or propose novel ideas. However, the same study also highlighted that transactional leadership positively influences knowledge sharing and work engagement, which are essential components of an innovative culture. Therefore, while transactional leadership may not directly foster innovation, it can create a foundation for innovative behaviours when combined with supportive practices.

In South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges, transactional leadership plays a critical role in maintaining operational stability and ensuring compliance with educational standards. Samodien et al. (2024) emphasize that transactional leadership contributes to institutional performance by upholding daily functions, academic operations, and adherence to performance goals. However, the same study suggests that while transactional leadership is effective for maintaining stability, it is insufficient for fostering the innovative change required to thrive in today's dynamic educational landscape. Therefore, South African TVET colleges must balance transactional leadership with other leadership styles to promote innovation and adaptability (Ntimane, 2025).

International studies provide additional insights into the relationship between transactional leadership and innovation. In Malaysian TVET institutions, Clifton et al. (2024) found that strategic leadership, which encompasses elements of transactional leadership, is essential for transforming organisational culture and fostering innovation. Similarly, in Kenyan vocational institutions, Walala et al. (2014) observed that transactional leadership contributes to the delivery

of quality education by ensuring that institutional processes are efficient and goal-oriented. These findings suggest that while transactional leadership may not directly drive innovation, it creates an environment where innovation can occur when complemented by other leadership approaches.

To enhance innovation within South African TVET colleges, it is crucial to integrate transactional leadership with transformational practices. Transformational leadership, which focuses on inspiring and motivating followers to exceed expectations, can complement the structured approach of transactional leadership. By combining these styles, leaders can maintain operational efficiency while fostering a culture that encourages creativity and innovation (Samodien et al., 2024). This integrative approach allows TVET colleges to navigate the complexities of the educational landscape effectively, balancing the need for stability with the imperative for innovation.

Transactional leadership plays a vital role in ensuring the efficient operation of South African TVET colleges. However, its impact on innovation is limited when applied in isolation. To foster an environment conducive to innovation, it is essential to balance transactional leadership with transformational practices that encourage creativity, risk-taking, and continuous improvement. By adopting a multifaceted leadership approach, South African TVET colleges can enhance their capacity for innovation, ensuring they remain responsive to the evolving demands of the labour market and contribute effectively to national development goals (Ntimane, 2025).

2.2.3 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership, emphasising the leader's role in serving employees and focusing on their development and well-being, has been linked to increased innovation through the creation of supportive and empowering work environments (Musenze et al., 2024). In the Ugandan local government sector, servant leadership positively influenced innovative work behavior by fostering an innovation climate where employees felt valued and motivated to contribute new ideas (Musenze et al., 2024). Additionally, servant leadership was found to enhance team innovation performance by boosting innovation self-efficacy among team members (Li et al., 2024). These studies highlight the potential of servant leadership to drive innovation by prioritizing employee growth and fostering a collaborative culture

A study indicates that the relationship between servant leadership and innovative work behaviour is mediated by factors such as creative self-efficacy and affective commitment. Iqbal et al. (2023) found that servant leadership not only exerts a stronger influence on innovative behaviour than transformational leadership but also explains additional variance in innovative behaviour. The study revealed that servant leadership's impact on innovation is better transmitted through creative self-efficacy, whereas transformational leadership's effect is mediated by affective commitment. Similarly, Putri and Nugroho (2023) demonstrated that servant leadership enhances innovative behavior by increasing employees' affective commitment and creative self-efficacy. These findings underscore the importance of psychological mechanisms in translating servant leadership into innovative outcomes.

Servant leadership practices have been explored in educational settings, particularly in rural schools. Shula (2023) investigated the relationship between principals' servant leadership practices and teacher motivation in selected rural schools. The study found that principals who exhibited servant leadership practices, such as listening to teachers' needs, providing support and guidance, promoting teamwork and collaboration, and showing appreciation and recognition, had motivated teachers. While this study focused on primary and secondary education, the principles of servant leadership are transferable to TVET colleges, where fostering a supportive environment is crucial for innovation.

Implementing servant leadership in Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges may face challenges, including existing hierarchical structures, resource constraints, and resistance to change. The traditional top-down management approach prevalent in many institutions may hinder the adoption of servant leadership practices that require a shift towards employee empowerment and shared decision-making. Additionally, limited resources and high workloads may impede leaders' ability to focus on employee development and well-being. Addressing these challenges necessitates institutional commitment to leadership development and cultural transformation.

Promoting servant leadership in South African TVET colleges, leadership development programmes should incorporate training on servant leadership principles and practices. Smit and Bester (2022) highlighted the importance of leadership and managerial skills development in

TVET institutions, emphasising the need for programmes that foster critical thinking, self-efficacy, and collaborative leadership. By integrating servant leadership into these programmes, TVET colleges can cultivate leaders who prioritize employee growth, create supportive environments, and drive innovation. Servant leadership holds significant potential for promoting innovative work behavior in South African TVET colleges. By focusing on employee development, well-being, and empowerment, servant leaders can create environments conducive to creativity and innovation. While challenges exist in implementing this leadership style, integrating servant leadership principles into leadership development programmes and institutional practices can facilitate cultural transformation and enhance innovation in TVET institutions.

2.3 Comparative Analysis of Leadership Styles in Fostering Innovation

Comparing transformational, transactional, and servant leadership styles may reveal distinct pathways through which leadership potentially influences innovation in TVET colleges. Transformational leadership appears to inspire and intellectually stimulate employees, which could foster a vision-driven environment conducive to creative thinking and innovation. By encouraging employees to challenge existing practices and explore new ideas, transformational leaders may help cultivate a culture of continuous improvement. However, the effectiveness of this approach may depend on organisational readiness, resource availability, and the extent to which employees are receptive to change.

Transactional leadership, by contrast, seems to focus primarily on task completion, efficiency, and adherence to established procedures. While this style may provide the stability and structure necessary for consistent institutional operations, it could inadvertently constrain innovative behaviour if applied too rigidly. Nonetheless, in contexts where accountability, clear expectations, and procedural compliance are critical, transactional leadership may support innovation indirectly by ensuring that foundational processes are reliable and resources are effectively managed.

Servant leadership appears to emphasise employee development, well-being, and collaborative engagement, potentially creating a climate of trust and openness that supports experimentation and creative problem-solving. By prioritising the needs of staff and encouraging participatory decision-making, servant leaders may foster conditions in which innovation is more likely to emerge. Considering the complex challenges faced by TVET colleges, it is plausible that a blended or

adaptive leadership approach, incorporating elements of transformational, transactional, and servant leadership, could be most effective. Such a combination may balance visionary inspiration, operational stability, and empathetic support, thereby promoting a sustainable culture of innovation while maintaining organisational effectiveness.

2.4 Organisational Culture in Educational Institutions/TVET

2.4.1 Defining Organisational Culture and Its Role in Innovation

Organisational culture encompasses the shared values, beliefs, and practices that shape the behaviour of individuals within an institution (Ntimane, 2025). In educational settings, particularly within TVET institutions, a culture that encourages openness, risk-taking, and continuous learning is pivotal for fostering innovation. Internationally, studies have highlighted the significance of organisational culture in promoting innovation. For instance, Bhuiyan et al. (2021) emphasise that in Politeknik Brunei, a culture that supports blended learning and technological adaptability has been instrumental in managing innovation in technical education. Similarly, research by Mngomezulu (2023) in South Africa underscores the importance of cultivating an innovation-oriented culture within TVET colleges to build capabilities aligned with the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR).

A positive organisational culture creates an innovation climate where creativity is nurtured, and new ideas are valued. This climate is essential for implementing innovative teaching methods and administrative practices. In the South African context, Makole et al. (2023) found that infusing Ubuntu principles emphasising humanness and teamwork into management practices can enhance organisational culture and management efficiency in TVET colleges. Furthermore, Bester (2023) notes that inclusive leadership and strategic visioning are pathways to well-being in TVET colleges, suggesting that a supportive culture contributes to staff and student wellness, which in turn fosters innovation.

However, challenges persist in cultivating such a culture. Makole et al. (2023) identify issues such as management inefficiency and instability, which undermine the role of public TVET colleges in South Africa. Additionally, Kana and Letaba (2024) highlight that a rigid top-down approach from the Ministry of Higher Education limits the role of TVET lecturers in curriculum development, thereby stifling innovation. These findings suggest that while the importance of organisational

culture in promoting innovation is recognised, systemic and structural barriers can impede its development.

To address these challenges, strategic leadership is essential in transforming organisational culture to support innovation. Terblanche and Bitzer (2018) propose a framework for leading curriculum change in South African TVET colleges, emphasising the need for competent curriculum leadership and leadership development. Moreover, integrating traditional African values with modern management practices, as suggested by Makole et al. (2023), can create a unique organisational culture that supports innovation while respecting local contexts. By fostering an environment that values collaboration, continuous learning, and adaptability, TVET institutions can enhance their capacity for innovation.

2.4.2 Cultural Typologies and Their Influence on Innovation

Organisational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping the innovation capacity of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institutions. Internationally, studies have highlighted that cultures emphasising collaboration, adaptability, and inclusivity foster environments conducive to innovation. For instance, Wickramasinghe and Wickramasinghe (2024) identified supportive organisational cultures as critical success factors in implementing Industry 4.0 competencies within TVET programmes across the Indo-Pacific region. In the South African context, the integration of Ubuntu principles—emphasising humaneness and communal relationships—into organisational culture has been shown to enhance management efficiency and institutional performance in TVET colleges (Makole et al., 2023). Understanding these cultural frameworks is essential for developing strategies that promote sustainable innovation.

Clan culture, characterised by a family-like environment emphasising collaboration, mentorship, and a sense of belonging, has been associated with enhanced innovation in educational institutions. Internationally, Chege et al. (2023) found that clan culture significantly influenced university performance in Kenya, with a positive correlation to research output and student satisfaction. This culture fosters knowledge sharing and collective problem-solving, essential components for innovation. Similarly, Wickramasinghe and Wickramasinghe (2024) highlighted that a supportive organisational culture, akin to clan culture, is a critical success factor in implementing Industry 4.0 competencies in TVET programmes across the Indo-Pacific region.

Msosa et al. (2022) emphasised the importance of integrating Ubuntu principles emphasising humaneness and communal relationships into the organisational culture of TVET colleges. They argue that fostering a culture of teamwork and shared ownership can improve management efficiency and institutional performance. However, challenges such as hierarchical power differentials and lack of stakeholder engagement have impeded the development of such a culture in South African TVET colleges (Makole et al., 2023). Therefore, while clan culture has the potential to enhance innovation, its implementation requires deliberate efforts to overcome existing structural and cultural barriers.

Adhocracy culture, characterised by flexibility, adaptability, and a willingness to take risks, is conducive to fostering innovation. Internationally, Mchaizi et al. (2023) found that adhocracy culture positively influenced the performance of public universities in Western Kenya by encouraging creativity and proactive idea generation among employees. Wiese et al. (2024) also noted that organisations with a developmental culture, akin to adhocracy, were more likely to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies, highlighting the culture's role in facilitating digital transformation.

In South Africa, the rigid top-down approach in curriculum development within TVET colleges has been identified as a barrier to innovation (Kana & Letaba, 2024). This approach limits the autonomy of lecturers and stifles creativity. To foster an adhocracy culture, there is a need to decentralise decision-making processes and empower educators to experiment with new teaching methods and curricula. Such cultural shifts require not only policy changes but also a transformation in leadership styles to support and encourage innovation at all institutional levels. Market culture focuses on competitiveness, goal achievement, and productivity. While this culture can drive performance, it may also hinder innovation if it leads to excessive focus on short-term results. Wiese et al. (2024) observed that organisations with a rational culture, similar to market culture, were more likely to adopt automation technologies but less inclined towards broader innovative practices.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector, the emphasis on meeting performance targets and compliance requirements has been linked to a market-oriented culture. Makole et al. (2023) argue that this focus can undermine the development of a collaborative and innovative organisational culture. To balance competitiveness with innovation, TVET colleges need to adopt a more holistic approach that values creativity and long-term development alongside performance

metrics. This may involve redefining success indicators to include measures of innovation and adaptability.

Hierarchical culture emphasises structured procedures, control, and stability. While this culture can ensure consistency and efficiency, it may also stifle creativity and responsiveness to change. Wiese et al. (2024) found that organisations with a hierarchical culture were less likely to adopt Industry 4.0 technologies, indicating a resistance to innovation. In South African TVET colleges, the legacy of hierarchical management structures has been identified as a barrier to innovation. Msosa et al. (2022) noted that the bureaucratic posture of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) imposes rigid operational plans on colleges, limiting their ability to implement innovative approaches. To foster innovation, there is a need to transition towards more flexible and participatory management structures that empower staff and encourage experimentation.

Each cultural typology—clan, adhocracy, market, and hierarchical—offers distinct advantages and challenges concerning innovation. A blended approach that integrates the collaborative nature of clan culture, the flexibility of adhocracy, the performance orientation of market culture, and the stability of hierarchical culture may provide a balanced framework for fostering sustainable innovation in TVET institutions. Wiese et al. (2024) suggest that understanding the interplay between different cultural dimensions can help organisations navigate digital transformation effectively.

In the South African context, integrating Ubuntu principles into organisational culture can enhance collaboration and shared ownership (Msosa et al., 2022). This, combined with efforts to decentralise decision-making and encourage experimentation, can create an environment conducive to innovation. However, achieving this integration requires deliberate efforts to address existing structural and cultural barriers, including rigid management structures and performance-driven mindsets. By adopting a holistic and context-sensitive approach to organisational culture, South African TVET colleges can enhance their capacity for innovation and responsiveness to societal needs.

2.5 Knowledge Sharing and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs)

Knowledge sharing is a fundamental component of organisational culture that significantly influences innovation within educational institutions. International studies have demonstrated that a culture promoting trust, open communication, and collaboration enhances the dissemination of knowledge among staff, leading to improved problem-solving and innovative practices (Msosa et al., 2022). For instance, research in Zimbabwean higher education institutions highlighted that knowledge sharing contributes to institutional innovation by improving performance through the exchange of ideas and experiences (Mazorodze, 2022). Similarly, studies in Kenya's public research institutions found that knowledge sharing practices positively impact organisational performance, emphasising the importance of creating a culture that encourages knowledge exchange (Muleke et al., 2023).

TVET colleges face challenges in fostering a knowledge-sharing culture due to hierarchical structures and limited collaborative opportunities. However, initiatives aimed at promoting knowledge sharing have shown promise. For example, workshops conducted by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO trained TVET instructors to use digital communication tools and online learning platforms, facilitating the sharing of experiences and best practices among educators (Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, 2024). These efforts underscore the potential of knowledge sharing in enhancing innovation within TVET institutions, provided that organisational cultures support and encourage such practices.

Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) are structured groups of educators who collaborate to enhance teaching practices and student outcomes. Internationally, PLCs have been recognised as effective mechanisms for fostering a culture of continuous improvement and innovation. In Tanzanian secondary schools, PLCs have the potential to promote competency-based teaching by providing teachers with opportunities to learn from one another and enhance classroom practices (Mwakabenga & Paine, 2023). Similarly, in Kenya, the Teacher Professional Development Program (TPD) has incorporated PLCs to facilitate collaborative learning among teachers, aiming to improve instructional quality and student achievement (Kariuki et al., 2023).

Implementing PLCs within TVET colleges has been met with varying degrees of success. A study by Wacango Kimani (2024) found that while PLCs provided a platform for teachers to share experiences and discuss inclusive teaching strategies, challenges such as time constraints and lack

of institutional support hindered their effectiveness. To maximise the impact of PLCs, it is essential for TVET institutions to provide adequate resources, allocate time for collaborative activities, and foster a supportive environment that values continuous professional development.

Despite the recognised benefits, establishing effective knowledge-sharing practices within TVET institutions presents several challenges. In many cases, organisational cultures characterised by competition, lack of trust, and inadequate communication structures impede the free flow of information. Research in higher education institutions of developing countries, including Zimbabwe, identified factors such as hierarchical management, insufficient incentives, and limited technological infrastructure as barriers to knowledge sharing (Mazorodze, 2022). These challenges are also prevalent in South African TVET colleges, where traditional management structures and resource constraints hinder the development of a robust knowledge-sharing culture.

Addressing these challenges requires a multifaceted approach that includes leadership commitment, investment in technology, and the creation of policies that promote collaboration and knowledge exchange. For instance, initiatives aimed at integrating emerging technologies into pedagogy have been shown to enhance the ability of TVET instructors to share knowledge and collaborate effectively (Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, 2024). Such efforts highlight the importance of aligning organisational culture with the goal of fostering innovation through knowledge sharing.

PLCs play a crucial role in the professional development of educators, which in turn affects student outcomes. Internationally, studies have demonstrated that PLCs contribute to improved teaching practices by providing teachers with opportunities to engage in collaborative learning, reflect on their practices, and implement new strategies. In Ghana, PLCs have empowered teachers by fostering a collaborative environment where they can share knowledge and learn from each other, leading to enhanced classroom practices (Ghana Society for Education and Technology, 2023).

To enhance knowledge sharing and the effectiveness of PLCs within TVET institutions, several strategies can be employed. Internationally, organisations have adopted practices such as establishing communities of practice, providing incentives for knowledge sharing, and utilizing

digital platforms to facilitate collaboration (Fraser, 2024). In the context of South African TVET colleges, adapting these strategies to the local context is essential. For example, creating communities of practice that focus on specific vocational areas can encourage specialised knowledge sharing and collaboration among educators (Mwakabenga & Paine, 2023).

Additionally, providing professional development opportunities that focus on collaborative skills and the use of technology can empower educators to engage more effectively in PLCs. The workshop conducted by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (2024) serves as an example of how targeted training can equip TVET instructors with the skills needed to embrace emerging technologies and collaborate with peers. Implementing similar initiatives in South Africa can foster a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within TVET institutions.

Also, the integration of digital technologies into TVET institutions has emerged as a pivotal strategy for enhancing knowledge sharing and the effectiveness of PLCs. Internationally, digital platforms have been utilized to facilitate collaboration among educators, enabling the sharing of resources, best practices, and pedagogical strategies. In South Africa, the University of Johannesburg's Pro-TELDE project exemplifies this approach by equipping TVET lecturers with digital teaching skills and competencies, thereby fostering a culture of continuous learning and innovation. Additionally, the Department of Higher Education and Training has established 16 Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) hubs across TVET colleges, serving as innovation centers where students and educators engage with cutting-edge technologies. These initiatives underscore the potential of digital transformation in creating dynamic, collaborative learning environments that transcend traditional classroom boundaries.

However, the successful implementation of digital tools in PLCs requires addressing challenges such as digital literacy gaps among educators and the need for robust technological infrastructure. Studies have highlighted that while digital platforms can enhance collaboration, their effectiveness is contingent upon educators' proficiency in utilizing these tools and the availability of reliable internet connectivity. Therefore, comprehensive training programmes and investments in infrastructure are essential to maximize the benefits of digital transformation in knowledge sharing and PLCs.

The establishment of Communities of Practice (CoPs) has been recognised as an effective strategy for promoting collaborative learning and knowledge sharing among educators. Internationally, CoPs have facilitated the development of shared professional identities and collective problem-solving capabilities among teachers. In the South African context, research indicates that CoPs can enhance teacher development by providing platforms for educators to share experiences, reflect on practices, and co-construct knowledge. For instance, the Gauteng Education Development Trust emphasises the importance of school-based facilitators in sustaining PLCs and CoPs, highlighting the need for leadership, negotiation, and facilitation skills to guide collaborative learning.

Moreover, the success of CoPs in TVET institutions is influenced by factors such as institutional support, alignment with organisational goals, and the cultivation of trust among members. Studies suggest that when CoPs are integrated into the broader institutional framework and supported by leadership, they are more likely to thrive and contribute to meaningful professional development. Therefore, fostering a culture that values collaboration, provides necessary resources, and encourages reflective practice is crucial for the sustainability and effectiveness of CoPs in enhancing knowledge sharing within TVET colleges.

2.6 Strategic Leadership and Organisational Culture Transformation

Globally, strategic leadership is recognised as a pivotal force in transforming organisational cultures within TVET institutions. In Malaysia, a study by Clifton, Awang, and Mansor (2024) revealed a strong positive correlation between strategic leadership and the development of learning-oriented cultures in vocational colleges. Leaders who foster adaptability and continuous improvement were instrumental in aligning institutions with evolving industry needs. Similarly, in the Indo-Pacific region, the implementation of Industry 4.0 competencies in TVET programmes highlighted the necessity of strategic leadership to navigate technological advancements and cultivate innovative cultures (ILO, 2020; TVET Academy, 2021). These international examples underscore the critical role of strategic leaders in steering organisational culture towards innovation and responsiveness in the face of global economic shifts.

Strategic leadership involves setting a vision, aligning organisational structures, and motivating stakeholders towards shared goals. In the context of TVET, leaders who model innovative behaviours and support staff initiatives can drive cultural change. Research indicates that such leadership practices are essential for fostering environments conducive to innovation and

adaptability (Cliffton et al., 2024). Moreover, the integration of strategic visioning into leadership practices has been linked to enhanced well-being among staff and students, further reinforcing the importance of strategic leadership in shaping positive organisational cultures (Bester, 2023). These findings highlight the multifaceted impact of strategic leadership on both organisational culture and stakeholder well-being within TVET institutions.

Technical and Vocational Education and Training colleges face unique challenges in implementing strategic leadership to transform organisational cultures. Historical legacies, resource constraints, and structural complexities have hindered the development of cohesive leadership practices (Badenhorst & Radile, 2018). Additionally, studies have identified a lack of strategic thinking and inconsistent implementation of well-being policies as barriers to effective leadership (Bester, 2023). These challenges necessitate targeted leadership development programmes and structural reforms to empower leaders in driving cultural transformation within South African TVET colleges.

2.7 Leadership Development Initiatives in South African TVET Sector

To address leadership challenges, South Africa has initiated programmes aimed at developing strategic leadership competencies among TVET college leaders. The Postgraduate Diploma in TVET at the University of Pretoria, for instance, employs an enquiry-based blended-learning approach to enhance leadership and managerial skills (Smit & Bester, 2022). Participants reported improvements in critical thinking, self-efficacy, and the ability to replicate learning experiences within their institutions. Such initiatives are crucial for equipping leaders with the tools necessary to foster innovative and adaptive organisational cultures in the TVET sector.

The KwaMpumuza Skills Development Centre in Pietermaritzburg, KwaZulu-Natal, exemplifies how strategic leadership can drive cultural transformation in TVET institutions. Spearheaded by Inkosi Khethokuhle Samuel Zondi, the project garnered substantial support from the Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA) and the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA), with an investment exceeding R105 million (SAnews, 2022). The centre aims to provide vocational training and employment opportunities in rural communities, offering courses in agro-processing, construction trades, and retail services

(SAnews, 2022). This initiative demonstrates how visionary leadership can mobilize resources and align organisational culture with community development goals.

The establishment of the centre is a testament to the collaborative efforts between traditional leadership and governmental bodies. Minister of Higher Education, Science and Innovation, Dr. Blade Nzimande, highlighted the project's alignment with the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), emphasising its role in producing 30,000 artisans annually by 2030 (SAnews, 2022). The centre's strategic location in a rural area addresses the accessibility challenges faced by many South Africans, thereby fostering an inclusive culture of continuous learning and innovation within the TVET sector.

The Workplace-Based Experience (WBE) Programme, initiated by the Swiss-South African Cooperation Initiative (SSACI), showcases the impact of strategic leadership in integrating industry collaboration into TVET curricula. Implemented across 50 public TVET colleges in South Africa, the programme facilitates short-term industry placements for students, enhancing the relevance and responsiveness of vocational education (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017). By 2015, the programme had evolved to include assessments of student performance in the workplace, contributing to their final grades and fostering a culture of practical, industry-aligned learning (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017).

The WBE Programme's success is attributed to the strategic leadership that prioritized industry collaboration and practical training. Lecturers also participated in industry placements, enabling them to integrate real-world experiences into their teaching, thereby bridging the gap between theory and practice (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2017). This approach not only enhanced the employability of graduates but also cultivated a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within TVET institutions.

2.8 Leadership Development Programmes in TVET Colleges.

Globally, leadership development in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has been recognised as pivotal for institutional transformation and responsiveness to labour market demands. The UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme, initiated in 2016, has trained over 700 TVET leaders from more than 95 countries, emphasising strategic knowledge, thematic

understanding, and leadership skills essential for driving change in the sector (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018). The programme focuses on three key dimensions: strategic knowledge ("vision for change"), thematic knowledge ("knowledge for change"), and leadership and management skills ("skills for change") (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2018). These dimensions are designed to equip leaders with the necessary tools to navigate the complexities of modern vocational education and adapt to rapidly changing labour markets. Such international initiatives underscore the global consensus on the pivotal role of leadership in enhancing the quality and relevance of TVET.

Within the African context, regional strategies have been developed to bolster leadership in TVET. The African Union's Plan of Action for the African Decade for Technical, Professional, Entrepreneurial Training and Youth Employment emphasises the need to strengthen governance, leadership, and management capacities at all levels (African Union, 2018). This plan advocates for the development of leadership frameworks that are responsive to the unique challenges faced by African TVET institutions. Additionally, the Africa Continental TVET Strategy 2025-34 focuses on sustainable development, social justice, and employability, aiming to foster a vocational education system that prioritizes skills development and job creation (African Union, 2024). These regional efforts underscore the commitment to cultivating leadership that can drive the transformation of TVET systems in Africa.

In South Africa, leadership development within TVET colleges has been a focal point for enhancing institutional effectiveness. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) has recognised the need for strong leadership to address challenges such as curriculum relevance and industry alignment (DHET, 2023). Programmes like the Postgraduate Diploma in TVET at the University of Pretoria aim to equip current and aspiring leaders with the skills necessary for strategic management and innovation in vocational education (GIZ, 2022). These initiatives are designed to develop leaders who can navigate the complexities of the South African TVET landscape and drive meaningful change within their institutions. Such efforts are crucial for aligning TVET programmes with national development goals and labour market needs.

Despite these efforts, several challenges hinder the effective implementation of leadership development programmes in South African TVET colleges. Resource constraints, including limited funding and infrastructure, pose significant barriers to the widespread adoption of such

programmes (DHET, 2023). Additionally, there is often a lack of clarity regarding the competencies required for effective leadership in the TVET context, leading to inconsistencies in program content and delivery (GIZ, 2022). These challenges necessitate a more coordinated approach to leadership development, ensuring that programmes are adequately resourced and aligned with the specific needs of TVET institutions. Addressing these issues is essential for the sustainability and effectiveness of leadership initiatives in the sector.

Industry partnerships play a crucial role in enhancing leadership development in TVET colleges. Collaborations between educational institutions and industry stakeholders can provide leaders with insights into current labour market demands and emerging trends (World Bank Group, 2019). Such partnerships can also facilitate the development of curricula that are responsive to industry needs, thereby improving the employability of graduates (World Bank Group, 2019). Moreover, engaging with industry partners can offer opportunities for leaders to participate in joint initiatives, such as work-based learning programmes and research projects, further strengthening the link between TVET institutions and the labour market. These collaborations are instrumental in ensuring that leadership development programmes are grounded in practical, real-world contexts.

Looking ahead, the future of leadership development in South African TVET colleges will depend on several key factors. There is a need for the continuous evaluation and refinement of leadership programmes to ensure their relevance and effectiveness (DHET, 2023). Additionally, embracing digital technologies can enhance the accessibility and scalability of leadership development initiatives, allowing for broader participation across the country (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2019). Furthermore, fostering a culture of continuous professional development and lifelong learning among TVET leaders will be essential for sustaining institutional growth and adaptability in an ever-evolving educational landscape. By addressing these areas, South African TVET colleges can develop robust leadership structures capable of driving meaningful change.

2.9 Societal and Cultural Norms on Leadership in South African TVET Colleges

Leadership within South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is profoundly shaped by societal and cultural norms, which influence leadership styles, decision-making processes, and institutional effectiveness. International frameworks, such as UNESCO's Strategy for TVET 2022–2029, emphasize the development of skills for inclusive and

sustainable economies, advocating for leadership that is adaptive and forward-thinking (UNESCO, 2022). This global perspective underscores the need for TVET leaders to be equipped with strategic knowledge and management skills to navigate the complexities of modern vocational education. However, the applicability of these international models in the South African context requires careful consideration of local societal and cultural dynamics (UNESCO, 2022).

African perspectives on TVET leadership highlight the importance of contextualizing leadership practices within the continent's unique socio-economic realities. The African Union's Continental Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) aims to strengthen governance, leadership, and management capacities at all levels, recognising that effective leadership is crucial for the success of TVET systems across the continent (African Union, 2018). This regional approach advocates for leadership that is not only effective in administration but also culturally sensitive and socially inclusive. In South Africa, this translates to leadership that acknowledges and addresses the country's historical inequalities and diverse cultural landscape (African Union, 2018).

Locally, South African TVET colleges operate within a complex socio-cultural environment shaped by the country's apartheid history and ongoing efforts toward transformation. Leadership in these institutions must navigate challenges related to organisational culture, institutional coherence, and stakeholder engagement. Studies have shown that many TVET colleges struggle with establishing a cohesive organisational culture, often due to the amalgamation of institutions with differing practices and values (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2023). This lack of a unified culture can hinder effective leadership and the implementation of strategic initiatives (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2023).

Gender dynamics also play a significant role in shaping leadership within South African TVET colleges. Despite legislative efforts to promote gender equality, women remain underrepresented in senior leadership positions within the sector (African Deans of Education Forum, 2025). Societal norms and cultural perceptions about gender roles contribute to this disparity, often limiting opportunities for women to ascend to leadership roles. Addressing these challenges requires deliberate strategies to promote gender inclusivity and empower women within the TVET leadership pipeline (African Deans of Education Forum, 2025).

Furthermore, the integration of indigenous knowledge systems and cultural values into leadership practices is essential for the relevance and effectiveness of TVET institutions. Leadership that respects and incorporates local cultural contexts can enhance community engagement and the responsiveness of TVET programmes to local needs. This approach aligns with the broader goal of decolonizing education and ensuring that TVET institutions serve as catalysts for socio-economic development within their communities (UNESCO, 2024). By embracing indigenous knowledge systems, TVET leaders can foster a more inclusive and culturally responsive educational environment (UNESCO, 2024).

Therefore, leadership in South African TVET colleges is profoundly influenced by a confluence of international frameworks, regional strategies, and local societal and cultural norms. Effective leadership in this context requires a nuanced understanding of these influences and a commitment to inclusive, culturally responsive practices. By embracing this complexity, TVET leaders can drive meaningful transformation and contribute to the broader goals of social equity and economic development in South Africa (UNESCO, 2022).

2.10 Theoretical Framework

2.10.1 Systems Theory

Systems Theory, a grand theory in organizational behaviour, provides a useful lens through which to understand the dynamics of leadership, organisational culture, and innovation within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. At its core, Systems Theory views an organization as a complex, interrelated system composed of multiple subsystems, including leadership, staff, processes, and culture, that interact dynamically to achieve overall goals (Kast & Rosenzweig, 1972). The theory posits that an organization cannot be fully understood by examining its individual parts in isolation; instead, the behaviour and performance of the institution emerge from the interactions among its interconnected subsystems. Organizations receive inputs, such as resources, knowledge, and human capital, which are transformed through processes, including teaching, administration, and decision-making, to produce outputs such as student learning outcomes, institutional performance, and innovation. Continuous feedback from both internal and external environments enables adaptation, while openness to environmental changes ensures responsiveness to societal, economic, and technological shifts (Allen, 2025).

Systems Theory assumes that organizations operate as holistic entities, where changes in one subsystem reverberate across others, that adaptation is essential for survival, and that multiple pathways can lead to the achievement of organizational goals.

The application of Systems Theory to leadership styles provides a conceptual foundation for understanding how transformational, transactional, and servant leadership may influence innovation within TVET colleges (Martinez & Leija, 2023). Transformational leadership, which inspires and intellectually stimulates staff, enhances the adaptive capacity of the human subsystem, encouraging creativity and continuous improvement across the institution. Transactional leadership, by contrast, ensures structural stability and adherence to processes, thereby supporting the operational subsystem necessary for consistent performance. Servant leadership strengthens the human subsystem by prioritising staff development, well-being, and collaborative engagement, which feeds back into the system by fostering trust and openness essential for innovative behavior (Makumbe, 2023). From a systems perspective, changes in leadership practices are not isolated; they interact with organisational culture, knowledge sharing practices, and staff motivation, demonstrating the dynamic interdependence of these subsystems in promoting innovation.

Organisational culture can be understood through the lens of Systems Theory as a systemic framework of shared values, beliefs, and norms that guide behaviour across all subsystems. Cultures characterised by collaboration, flexibility, and inclusivity, such as clan and adhocracy cultures, interact positively with leadership and knowledge-sharing mechanisms to create environments conducive to innovation (Cliffon et al., 2024). Conversely, hierarchical and market-oriented cultures, while providing structure and efficiency, may constrain creative practices and limit the flow of innovative ideas. Systems Theory highlights that culture interacts dynamically with leadership and operational processes, producing feedback loops that either enable or hinder the development of innovative capacities. In this way, the interrelatedness of culture, leadership, and processes becomes central to understanding how TVET colleges can cultivate sustainable innovation (Makumbe, 2023).

Knowledge sharing and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) further illustrate the systemic nature of innovation in educational institutions. These structures serve as feedback and communication mechanisms that connect subsystems, including lecturers, administrators, and

students, facilitating the flow of information, best practices, and collaborative problem-solving (Msosa et al., 2022). Through these interactions, systems within the institution are reinforced and continuously adapted, leading to improved teaching practices, institutional learning, and the emergence of innovation. Systems Theory underscores that innovation is rarely the product of individual actions alone; rather, it emerges from the dynamic interaction of multiple subsystems that collectively create conditions for creativity and continuous improvement (Msosa et al., 2022).

Strategic leadership and organisational transformation within TVET colleges can also be conceptualised through Systems Theory. Leaders act as coordinators, aligning subsystems such as culture, processes, staff capabilities, and external stakeholder expectations to achieve institutional goals (Makole et al., 2023). Transforming organisational culture to support innovation requires understanding the interdependence of these subsystems and implementing changes that consider their interactions. For example, aligning leadership practices with supportive cultural norms and enabling knowledge-sharing mechanisms ensures that innovation initiatives are effectively integrated across the institution (Makole et al., 2023). By applying a systems perspective, it becomes possible to appreciate the complexity of institutional change and the necessity of adaptive, coordinated leadership in fostering an environment conducive to innovation.

In summary, Systems Theory provides a robust conceptual framework that links the various elements discussed in Chapter Two, including leadership styles, organisational culture, knowledge sharing, and strategic leadership, to the overarching goal of innovation in TVET colleges. The theory's emphasis on holism, interdependence, adaptation, and feedback offers a lens through which the dynamic relationships among these elements can be understood. By integrating Systems Theory into the analysis, Chapter Two not only describes the characteristics and challenges of leadership and culture in TVET institutions but also explains the mechanisms through which these factors interact to influence innovative outcomes. This theoretical grounding strengthens the chapter by providing a coherent conceptual basis upon which the empirical and testable models can be developed.

CHAPTER 3

Theoretical and Conceptual Framework

Understanding the interplay between organisational culture, leadership, and innovation is pivotal for enhancing the effectiveness of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Organisational Culture Theory, particularly Schein's model, emphasises the significance of shared values and beliefs in shaping institutional behavior (Makole, Ntshangase, & Msosa, 2023). In the context of TVET institutions, fostering a clan culture that promotes collaboration and adaptability can lead to improved performance (Makole et al., 2023). Leadership theories, especially Transformational Leadership Theory, highlight the role of visionary leaders in inspiring innovation and driving change within organisations (Gachunga et al., 2020). Such leadership is crucial in TVET settings to navigate the dynamic educational landscape and meet evolving industry demands. Innovation theories, like Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations, provide insights into how new ideas and technologies spread within institutions (Moloja, 2024). Applying this theory helps TVET colleges adopt and integrate innovative practices effectively. The selection of these frameworks is justified by their relevance in addressing the unique challenges faced by TVET colleges, such as aligning educational outcomes with labour market needs and fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The conceptual framework derived from these theories will guide the analysis of how organisational culture and leadership styles influence the adoption of innovative practices in TVET institutions.

3.1 Relevant theories

3.1.1 Organisational Culture Theory

Organisational Culture Theory, as proposed by Edgar Schein, posits that the shared values, beliefs, and assumptions within an organization significantly influence its functioning and performance. Schein identifies three levels of organisational culture: artifacts (visible structures and processes), espoused values (strategies, goals, and philosophies), and basic underlying assumptions (unconscious beliefs and perceptions) (Schein, 2010). These elements collectively shape how members of an organisation interact, make decisions, and approach challenges. In the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, understanding and cultivating

a positive organisational culture is crucial for fostering an environment conducive to innovation and responsiveness to industry needs.

In TVET institutions, the organisational culture profoundly impacts the adoption and implementation of innovative practices. A culture that values collaboration, open communication, and continuous improvement can facilitate the integration of new teaching methodologies, technologies, and industry-relevant curricula. Makole, Ntshangase, and Msosa (2023) highlight that in South African public TVET colleges, fostering a culture of teamwork and trust between lecturers and management is essential for effective curriculum transformation and innovation. They argue that without a supportive organisational culture, efforts to modernize and adapt to the Fourth Industrial Revolution may be hindered. Similarly, Wickramasinghe and Wickramasinghe (2024) identify a supportive culture as a critical success factor for implementing Industry 4.0 competencies in TVET programmes across the Indo-Pacific region. Their study underscores that a culture that embraces change and encourages staff development is vital for the successful integration of advanced technological skills into TVET curricula.

The alignment between organisational culture and innovation is well-documented in the literature. A culture that promotes flexibility, risk-taking, and learning from failure can accelerate the adoption of innovative practices. In the context of TVET colleges, such a culture enables educators and administrators to experiment with new teaching tools, collaborate with industry partners, and continuously update training programmes to meet evolving market demands. Makole et al. (2023) emphasize that integrating the African philosophy of Ubuntu, which values community, mutual respect, and collective responsibility, into the organisational culture of TVET colleges can enhance collaboration and innovation. They suggest that embedding Ubuntu principles into management practices can dismantle silos and foster a more cohesive and innovative educational environment. Furthermore, Kagumba and Wausi (2018) demonstrate that in Kenyan ICT SMEs, an organisational culture characterised by adhocracy—emphasising flexibility and innovation—positively influences the adoption of ICT innovations. Their findings suggest that similar cultural attributes in TVET institutions could facilitate the integration of digital technologies and innovative teaching methods.

Despite the recognised importance of organisational culture in fostering innovation, TVET colleges often face challenges in cultivating a culture that supports change. These challenges

include resistance to change, hierarchical structures, and limited resources. Makole et al. (2023) report that in Gauteng province, South Africa, there is a lack of open communication and trust between lecturers and management, which impedes the development of a collaborative culture necessary for innovation. Similarly, Dlamini (2015) notes that poor leadership and management skills within TVET colleges contribute to ineffective organisational cultures that hinder performance and adaptability. Addressing these issues requires intentional efforts to reshape the organisational culture through leadership development, stakeholder engagement, and the promotion of values that align with innovation and responsiveness to industry needs.

3.1.2 Leadership Theories

Transformational Leadership Theory, developed by James MacGregor Burns and further refined by Bernard Bass, emphasises the role of leaders in inspiring and motivating followers to exceed expectations by transforming their attitudes and beliefs (Bass & Avolio, 1997). This leadership style is characterised by four components: idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. In the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, transformational leadership is pivotal in fostering an environment conducive to innovation. By encouraging creativity and challenging the status quo, transformational leaders can drive the adoption of new teaching methodologies and technologies, thereby enhancing the quality of vocational education (Mugo & Kiboss, 2023).

Empirical studies have demonstrated the positive impact of transformational leadership on innovation within TVET institutions. For instance, a study conducted in Malaysian vocational colleges found that transformational leadership significantly influences educational innovation by fostering professional learning communities (Mydin et al., 2025). These communities serve as platforms for collaborative learning and sharing of best practices, which are essential for continuous improvement and innovation. Similarly, research in Kenyan youth polytechnics revealed that transformational leadership enhances the quality of vocational training by promoting intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration among staff members (Mugo & Kiboss, 2023). These findings underscore the importance of transformational leadership in creating a culture that supports innovation and adaptability in TVET settings.

Despite its benefits, implementing transformational leadership in TVET colleges is not without challenges. Leaders often face obstacles such as resistance to change, limited resources, and inadequate training in leadership skills. A study focusing on TVET institutions in West Oromia identified lack of leadership skills and knowledge, absence of commitment to challenge existing processes, and insufficient external support as major barriers to practicing transformational leadership effectively (Jimma University, 2021). Addressing these challenges requires targeted leadership development programmes and institutional support to empower leaders with the necessary competencies to drive innovation.

3.1.3 Innovation Theory

Everett Rogers' Diffusion of Innovations Theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how new ideas and technologies spread within a social system over time. The theory identifies five key elements influencing the adoption process: the innovation itself, communication channels, time, the social system, and the adopters. Adopters are categorized into innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards, each with distinct characteristics affecting their willingness to embrace innovation (Rogers, 2003). In the context of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges, this theory is instrumental in analysing how educational innovations, such as new teaching methodologies or technologies, are adopted and diffused among educators and institutions.

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory has been applied to understand the adoption of cloud computing in South African TVET colleges. Moloja (2024) utilized this framework to explore how cloud-based technologies can enhance teaching and learning by providing flexible, scalable, and cost-effective solutions. The study identified factors influencing adoption, including the perceived advantages of cloud computing, compatibility with existing systems, and the complexity of implementation. By applying Rogers' stages of adoption—knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation—the research highlighted the importance of strategic planning and support in facilitating the diffusion of cloud technologies within TVET institutions.

Innovation Leadership Theory integrates various leadership styles to foster an environment that encourages creativity and the implementation of new ideas. This theory posits that leaders must

balance the generation of novel ideas with the practical aspects of implementing them within an organization. In the context of TVET colleges, innovation leadership involves guiding institutions through the complexities of adopting new technologies and pedagogical approaches to meet the evolving demands of the labour market (Osman & Kamis, 2019). By cultivating a culture that values experimentation and continuous improvement, innovation leaders can enhance the responsiveness and relevance of vocational education programmes.

The application of innovation leadership in TVET institutions has shown promising results. For example, in Malaysian TVET colleges, leaders who exhibited innovation leadership behaviours were instrumental in creating sustainable organisational climates that support continuous learning and adaptation (Kamis, 2023). These leaders emphasised the importance of effective communication, teamwork, and stakeholder engagement in driving innovation. Furthermore, by encouraging risk-taking and supporting staff in experimenting with new teaching methods, innovation leaders facilitated the integration of cutting-edge technologies and practices into the curriculum, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of vocational training.

Combining transformational and innovation leadership approaches can yield synergistic benefits for TVET colleges. Transformational leaders inspire and motivate staff to embrace change, while innovation leaders provide the strategic direction and support necessary to implement new ideas effectively. This synergy creates a dynamic organisational culture that not only encourages creativity but also ensures the practical application of innovative solutions. By fostering such an environment, TVET institutions can enhance their capacity to adapt to changing industry needs and equip students with the skills required in the modern workforce (Mydin et al., 2025; Kamis, 2023).

Several factors affect the adoption of innovations in TVET colleges. The perceived attributes of the innovation, such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability, play a significant role in the decision-making process (Rogers, 2003). For instance, if educators perceive a new teaching method as advantageous and compatible with their existing practices, they are more likely to adopt it. Additionally, the social system within the institution, including leadership support and peer influence, can either facilitate or hinder the diffusion

process. Moloja (2024) emphasised the role of institutional culture and the need for continuous professional development to support educators in adopting innovative practices.

Despite the potential benefits, several challenges impede the diffusion of innovations in TVET colleges. These include limited resources, resistance to change, lack of training, and inadequate infrastructure. Moloja (2024) identified financial constraints and limited access to technology as significant barriers to adopting cloud computing in South African TVET institutions. Furthermore, the absence of a supportive organisational culture and insufficient leadership commitment can slow down the diffusion process. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach that includes policy support, investment in infrastructure, and capacity building for educators.

To enhance the diffusion of innovations in TVET colleges, several strategies can be employed. These include engaging opinion leaders to influence peers, providing incentives for adoption, offering training and support, and fostering a culture of innovation. Implementing pilot programmes can also allow educators to experience the benefits of new practices before full-scale adoption. Moloja (2024) suggested that aligning innovations with institutional goals and involving stakeholders in the decision-making process can increase buy-in and facilitate smoother implementation. Additionally, continuous monitoring and evaluation can help identify areas for improvement and sustain the innovation over time.

3.2 Justification for selected frameworks in the context of TVET colleges

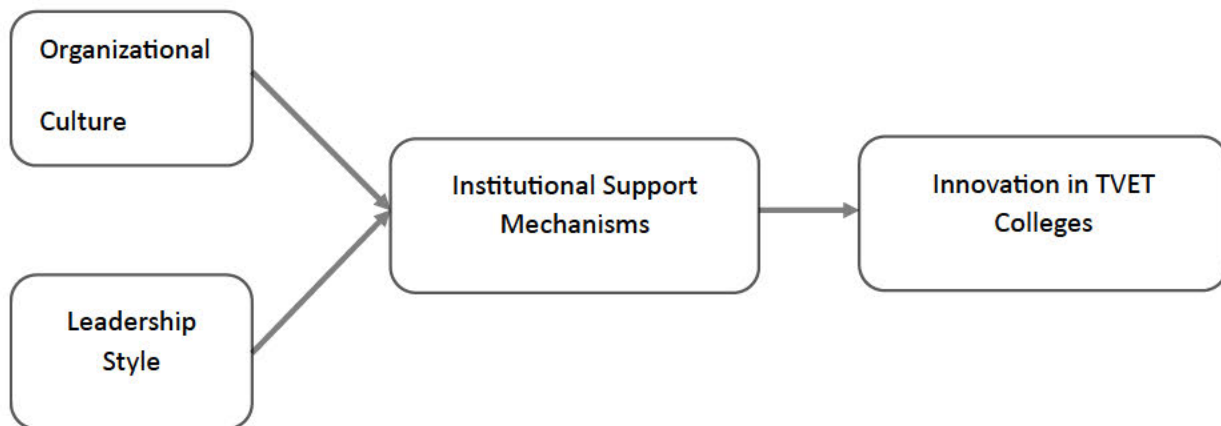
The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Rogers, has gained renewed relevance in the evolving landscape of South African TVET colleges, particularly as these institutions seek to modernize and align with the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. The theory provides a systematic model for understanding how new ideas, technologies, or practices spread within a social system over time, guided by innovation characteristics such as relative advantage, compatibility, complexity, trialability, and observability (Tshabalala & Ncube, 2021). In the context of TVET institutions, the adoption of digital learning tools, sustainable industry partnerships, and curriculum reform must align with these principles to achieve widespread integration. According to Malinga and Du Toit-Brits (2020), innovations in TVET settings often encounter bottlenecks during the persuasion and decision stages due to bureaucratic inertia, lack

of stakeholder buy-in, and insufficient training among staff. Furthermore, Sebake and Moeti (2019) emphasise that the role of leadership and the institutional climate cannot be overstated, as strong leadership facilitates faster adoption through resource allocation, vision setting, and creating a culture that embraces change.

Implementation of innovation in South African TVET colleges using the Diffusion of Innovations framework also brings into focus the importance of early adopters and change agents in the institutional hierarchy. Malinga and Du Toit-Brits (2020) identify that faculty members and middle managers who understand both the pedagogical and technological dimensions of innovation often serve as essential bridges between policy and practice. These early adopters play a pivotal role in moving innovation from pilot phases to mainstream adoption, particularly when supported by strategic leadership and transparent communication channels (Sebake & Moeti, 2019). Yet, as Tshabalala and Ncube (2021) highlight, innovations can fail to take root if they are introduced without adequate training and do not align with the needs and values of the primary users—both educators and students. Therefore, diffusion is not merely a technical process but a deeply social one, requiring alignment between innovation attributes, institutional culture, and user readiness. When thoughtfully applied, the Diffusion of Innovations Theory offers both a diagnostic and prescriptive tool for embedding sustainable innovation across the TVET sector in South Africa.

3.3 Conceptual framework

FIGURE: 1.1



Source: (Author, 2025)

The conceptual framework illustrates the influence of organisational culture and leadership style on innovation in TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) colleges, mediated through institutional support mechanisms. Organisational culture refers to the shared values, beliefs, and practices within a college that shape its working environment, while leadership style pertains to how leaders guide, motivate, and manage staff. These two independent variables contribute to the development and effectiveness of institutional support mechanisms, such as funding, training, infrastructure, and policy frameworks, which in turn directly affect the capacity for innovation in TVET colleges. This implies that a supportive culture and effective leadership foster mechanisms that enable innovation and progressive practices within these institutions.

CHAPTER 4

Research Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed to investigate the influence of leadership styles on fostering innovation within South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. The study adopts a qualitative research approach, which emphasises understanding human experiences and social phenomena through the collection and analysis of non-numerical data (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). This approach is particularly suited to exploring complex, context-dependent issues like leadership and innovation, as it allows for in-depth insights into participants' perspectives and experiences.

4.2 Research Paradigm and Philosophical Orientation

This study is grounded in the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasises understanding the subjective meanings and experiences of individuals within their social contexts. Interpretivism posits that reality is socially constructed and that knowledge is best gained through exploring the perspectives and interpretations of participants. This paradigm is particularly suited for qualitative research that seeks to delve into complex social phenomena, such as the influence of leadership styles on innovation within educational institutions. By adopting an interpretivist stance, the research acknowledges the importance of context and the co-construction of meaning between the researcher and participants (Pathak & Thapaliya, 2022).

Ontologically, interpretivism assumes that multiple realities exist, shaped by individual experiences and social interactions. Epistemologically, it holds that knowledge is subjective and constructed through dialogue and engagement with participants. This approach aligns with the study's objective to explore the nuanced ways in which leadership styles impact innovation in South African TVET colleges. By engaging directly with educators and administrators through open-ended questionnaires, the research captures diverse perspectives, providing a rich understanding of the phenomena under investigation (Paudel, 2024).

Axiologically, the interpretivist paradigm recognizes that research is value-laden, and the researcher's beliefs and experiences inevitably influence the study. Rather than striving for

objectivity, interpretivist research embraces reflexivity, where researchers critically examine their own role and impact on the research process. This reflexive approach enhances the credibility and authenticity of the findings, ensuring that the interpretations genuinely reflect the participants' viewpoints. By situating the research within the interpretivist paradigm, the study provides a comprehensive and context-sensitive exploration of leadership and innovation in TVET colleges (Panya & Nyarwath, 2022).

4.3 Research Design

The research design is the blueprint for conducting a study, outlining the procedures for collecting, analysing, and interpreting data to address the research questions effectively (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In this study, a qualitative research design was adopted to explore the influence of leadership styles on fostering innovation within South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Qualitative research is particularly suited for investigating complex social phenomena, as it allows for an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences, perceptions, and the meanings they ascribe to specific situations (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This approach aligns with the study's objective to capture the nuanced ways in which leadership practices impact innovation in the educational context.

To collect rich, detailed data, the study employed structured questionnaires comprising open-ended questions. This method enabled participants to express their thoughts and experiences in their own words, providing insights into their perceptions of leadership and innovation within their institutions. The use of open-ended questions is a common practice in qualitative research, as it facilitates the exploration of participants' perspectives without imposing predetermined response options (Kallio et al., 2021). The data collected were then subjected to thematic analysis, a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns within qualitative data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). This analytical approach allowed for the emergence of themes that reflect the participants' experiences and perceptions, thereby providing a comprehensive understanding of the research problem.

The qualitative research design also guided the ethical considerations of the study. Recognising the value-laden nature of qualitative research, the researcher maintained reflexivity throughout the

research process, being aware of personal biases and their potential impact on data interpretation (Panya & Nyarwath, 2022). Ethical protocols, including informed consent, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw, were strictly adhered to, ensuring the integrity of the research and the authenticity of the findings. By situating the study within a qualitative research design, the research provided a context-sensitive exploration of leadership and innovation in South African TVET colleges.

4.4 Study Site

The research was conducted at two Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in KwaZulu-Natal: Elangeni TVET College and Mthashana TVET College. These institutions were selected based on their accessibility and their role in promoting vocational education in semi-rural and rural communities, where innovation is crucial to enhancing educational outcomes and addressing local development challenges.

4.5 Sampling Method/ Strategy

A sampling strategy is a systematic plan for selecting individuals from a population to participate in a study, ensuring that the data collected effectively addresses the research questions (Saunders et al., 2023). In qualitative research, purposive sampling is a widely used non-probability sampling technique where participants are deliberately chosen based on specific characteristics or knowledge relevant to the study's objectives. This method allows researchers to gain in-depth insights from individuals who have direct experience with the phenomenon under investigation (Nyimbili & Nyimbili, 2024). Purposive sampling is particularly effective when the goal is to explore complex issues in specific contexts, as it focuses on information-rich cases that can provide detailed understanding (Saunders et al., 2023).

This study adopted a qualitative interpretivist approach, aiming to understand how organisational culture and leadership influence innovative behaviour in TVET colleges from the perspectives of those directly involved. Aligned with this paradigm, purposive (judgemental) sampling was employed to select participants capable of providing rich, contextually grounded insights.

Study Population

The population comprised administrative and academic staff in public TVET colleges in South Africa, specifically those engaged in leadership, decision-making, teaching, or innovation-related activities. This focus ensured that participants had direct exposure to institutional practices relevant to innovation and leadership dynamics.

Participants were included if they:

1. Were currently employed in a TVET college.
2. Had at least three years' experience in leadership, managerial, or teaching roles.
3. Were directly involved in decision-making, innovation initiatives, or teaching innovations.

Participants were excluded if they:

1. Had **less** than three years' experience, limiting their exposure to institutional culture.
2. Occupied support or non-academic roles without leadership or innovation responsibilities.
3. Were temporary or contract staff whose engagement with institutional processes was limited.

These criteria ensured inclusion of information-rich cases, capable of providing meaningful insight aligned with interpretivist principles.

A final sample of 250 participants was determined based on methodological guidance and thematic saturation, which occurred when no new insights emerged. Participants were purposively divided into:

- Administrators (n = 150): Principals, deputy principals, heads of departments, and campus managers involved in strategic leadership and innovation decision-making.
- Educators (n = 100): Lecturers actively engaged in teaching, curriculum development, or pedagogical innovation.

This balanced allocation allowed for comparative analysis between strategic and operational perspectives, enhancing depth and credibility.

Although purposive sampling does not aim for statistical generalisation, the final sample is contextually representative of innovation and leadership experiences in TVET colleges. The structured application of inclusion/exclusion criteria, combined with saturation-based sample determination, ensured methodological rigour. This approach aligns with the interpretivist paradigm by prioritising meaningful, experience-based insights over numerical representativeness, thereby strengthening the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

4.6 Data Collection

Data collection is a fundamental component of the research process, involving the systematic gathering of information to address specific research questions or hypotheses (Saunders et al., 2023). In qualitative research, data collection focuses on obtaining rich, detailed insights into participants' experiences, perceptions, and social contexts. Common methods include interviews, focus groups, observations, and open-ended questionnaires, which allow participants to express their thoughts in their own words. The choice of data collection method is guided by the research objectives, the nature of the phenomenon under study, and practical considerations such as accessibility and ethical concerns (Busetto & Gumbinger, 2020).

In this study, data were collected using structured questionnaires comprising open-ended questions, distributed to staff members of two KwaZulu Natal Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. This method enabled participants to articulate their experiences and perceptions regarding leadership styles and innovation within their institutions. Open-ended questionnaires are particularly effective in qualitative research as they allow for the exploration of complex issues without constraining responses to predefined categories (Kallio et al., 2021). The use of this approach facilitated the collection of nuanced data, capturing the diversity of perspectives among educators and administrators.

4.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis is a critical phase in qualitative research, involving the systematic examination and interpretation of collected data to identify patterns, themes, and insights that address the research questions. In qualitative studies, this process is often inductive, allowing themes to emerge organically from the data without preconceived categories. Thematic analysis is one of the most

widely used methods for analyzing qualitative data, offering a structured yet flexible approach to identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns or themes within a dataset. It provides a detailed and nuanced understanding of participants' experiences and perceptions, making it particularly suitable for exploring complex social phenomena (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

In this study, thematic analysis was employed to analyse qualitative data collected through open-ended questionnaires administered to staff members of South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. This method was selected because it is well suited to exploring how participants construct meaning around leadership and innovation within their organisational contexts. The analytical process followed the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke (2021), ensuring a systematic and transparent examination of the data. The process began with data familiarisation, during which the researcher repeatedly read participants' responses to gain an in-depth understanding of the content and context of the data, while noting preliminary ideas related to leadership practices and innovative behaviour.

Following familiarisation, initial codes were generated by systematically identifying significant features across the dataset that were relevant to the research questions. These codes were applied consistently across responses and reflected both explicit statements and underlying meanings expressed by participants. The coded data were then examined to identify patterns and relationships, leading to the development of potential themes. These themes represented broader, meaningful patterns related to how leadership styles shape organisational culture, staff engagement, and innovation practices within TVET colleges. During this phase, themes were reviewed and refined to ensure internal coherence within themes and clear distinctions between them, thereby strengthening analytical rigor.

Once the themes were refined, they were clearly defined and named to capture their essence and relevance to the study objectives. This phase involved linking themes back to the research questions and existing literature to ensure theoretical alignment and interpretive depth. A detailed narrative account of each theme was then produced, supported by illustrative participant excerpts to enhance transparency and credibility. This approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the nuanced ways in which different leadership styles influence innovation, capturing the complexity of participants' lived experiences within institutional settings.

Thematic analysis was particularly appropriate for this study due to its flexibility and capacity to accommodate an interpretivist qualitative approach. It allowed the researcher to move beyond surface-level description and interpret how participants make sense of leadership and innovation within their organisational environments. However, the method also requires careful attention to analytical rigor, reflexivity, and transparency to ensure the trustworthiness of findings. To address this, the researcher maintained reflexive awareness throughout the analytical process, systematically documented analytical decisions, and adhered strictly to the established phases of thematic analysis. By following this structured and reflexive approach, the study produced credible, meaningful, and contextually grounded interpretations of leadership and innovation in South African TVET colleges (Braun & Clarke, 2021).

4.8 Validity and Reliability in Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability are adapted to assess the rigor and trustworthiness of the study, acknowledging the subjective nature of qualitative data. Validity refers to the accuracy and truthfulness of the findings in representing participants' perspectives and experiences. Reliability pertains to the consistency and dependability of the research process, ensuring that the findings are not unduly influenced by the researcher's biases or errors. Given the interpretive nature of qualitative research, traditional quantitative measures of validity and reliability are often replaced with alternative criteria such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Noble & Smith, 2025).

In this study, several strategies were employed to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. Credibility was established through prolonged engagement with participants, allowing for a deep understanding of their experiences and perspectives. Member checks were conducted by sharing the findings with participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations. Transferability was supported by providing thick descriptions of the research context and participants, enabling others to assess the applicability of the findings to similar settings. Dependability was ensured through an audit trail, documenting the research process and decisions made throughout the study. Confirmability was achieved by maintaining reflexivity, where the researcher reflected on their potential biases and their impact on the research process (Noble & Smith, 2025).

By implementing these strategies, the study aimed to uphold the integrity and rigor of qualitative research. These approaches align with contemporary discussions on ensuring validity and reliability in qualitative studies, emphasising the importance of transparency, reflexivity, and participant involvement in the research process (McGill, 2025). Such measures contribute to the credibility and trustworthiness of qualitative research findings, ensuring that they accurately represent the phenomena under investigation.

4.9 Data Quality Control

Data quality control refers to the strategies and procedures employed to ensure that the data collected during a research study is accurate, reliable, and valid. It involves measures that prevent errors in data collection, handling, analysis, and reporting. Quality control in research enhances the credibility of the findings and ensures consistency, completeness, and trustworthiness of the information (Kumar, 2019; Creswell & Poth, 2018).

In qualitative research, data quality control often includes techniques such as:

- **Member checking:** returning transcripts or findings to participants to confirm accuracy.
- **Triangulation:** using multiple data sources or methods to cross-verify information.
- **Audit trails:** documenting the research process for transparency.
- **Peer debriefing:** engaging colleagues to challenge and refine interpretations.
- **Thick description:** providing detailed context to allow for transferability.

The research applied data quality control through triangulation, purposive sampling, and systematic thematic analysis. These measures ensured that the data collected was credible, relevant, and suitable for addressing the research objectives.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are paramount in qualitative research, ensuring the protection and respect of participants throughout the study process. Key ethical principles include informed consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw without consequence. These principles safeguard participants' autonomy and well-being, fostering trust and integrity in the

research process (Laryeafio & Ogbewe, 2023). In this study, ethical clearance for this research was granted by the Ethics Committee of the University of KwaZulu-Natal, along with a gatekeeper's letter issued by the Office of the Registrar at the same institution., and participants were fully informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights. Informed consent was obtained in writing, and participants were assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses. Additionally, participants were given the option to withdraw from the study at any stage without any negative repercussions, ensuring their voluntary participation (Pietilä et al., 2020).

4.11 Study Limitations

Despite rigorous ethical protocols, qualitative research is inherently subject to certain limitations. One such limitation is researcher bias, where the researcher's perspectives and interpretations may influence data collection and analysis, potentially affecting the study's findings. To mitigate this, researchers engage in reflexivity, critically examining their biases and how these may impact the research process (McGill, 2025). Another limitation is the potential lack of generalizability of the findings due to the non-random sampling methods often employed in qualitative research. The purposive sampling technique used in this study, while providing in-depth insights from a specific group, may not represent the broader population of TVET colleges (Saunders et al., 2023). Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data through open-ended questionnaires can introduce response biases, as participants may present socially desirable answers or withhold information (Kallio et al., 2021).

Furthermore, the dynamic and context-specific nature of qualitative research means that findings are often situated within particular settings and may not be easily transferable to other contexts. This study's focus on South African TVET colleges provides valuable insights into the influence of leadership styles on fostering innovation within this specific context. However, caution should be exercised when applying these findings to different educational settings or countries, as cultural, institutional, and systemic differences may lead to divergent outcomes (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Despite these limitations, the study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on leadership and innovation in vocational education, offering a foundation for future research and practical applications in similar contexts.

4.12 Chapter Summary

This chapter details the research methodology adopted to explore how leadership styles influence innovation in South African TVET colleges. Using a qualitative approach within the interpretivist paradigm, the study emphasised understanding participants' perspectives through open-ended questionnaires administered to staff at Elangeni and Mthashana TVET Colleges. Purposive sampling was used to select knowledgeable participants, and data were analysed thematically to identify emerging patterns. Rigour was ensured through strategies like triangulation, reflexivity, member checking, and thick descriptions. Ethical protocols were strictly followed, and although the study acknowledged limitations such as potential bias and limited generalisability, it provided credible, context-rich insights into leadership and innovation in vocational education.

CHAPTER 5

Data Analysis and Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents and interprets the data collected during the study, focusing on how organisational culture and leadership influence innovative behaviour within two selected TVET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal. Quantitative and qualitative findings are analysed to identify patterns, relationships, and emerging themes that address the study's research objectives. The chapter begins with a descriptive analysis of the demographic characteristics of the respondents and then progresses to explore perceptions of innovation, leadership practices, and cultural enablers or barriers within the institutional context. This analysis provides the empirical foundation for discussing how leadership and culture intersect to shape innovation outcomes in the TVET sector.

5.2 Research Objective

The aim of this study was to assess and understand the influence of organisational culture and leadership in promoting innovative behaviour in Technical and Vocational Educational training Colleges. The data was analysed to address the following specific research objectives:

1. To examine the relationship between the leadership style, organisational culture and its impact on promoting innovative behavior in TVET colleagues
2. To identify opportunities for leadership development programmes that foster a culture of innovation and empower leaders to promote innovative behavior within TVET colleges.
3. To explore the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership styles and their impact on fostering an innovative culture within TVET colleges in the South African context.
4. To examine the relationship between organisational culture, leadership style, and innovative behaviour in TVET colleges and identify strategies for fostering and sustaining innovation.

5.3 Key Research Questions

The study responded to the following research questions:

1. What is the relationship between leadership styles, organisational culture and the promotion of innovative behavior in South African TVET colleges?
2. What opportunities exist for leadership development programmes that foster a culture of innovation, and empower leaders to promote innovative behaviour in TVET colleges?
3. What is the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership styles, and their impact on fostering an innovative culture within TVET colleges in the South African context ?
4. What strategies can be adopted to enhance innovation in TVET colleges?

5.4 Data Analysis

Table 5.1: Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Number of respondents	Percentage
Male	151	60%
Female	100	40%
Prefer not to say	0	0%

The gender distribution indicates a male-dominated workforce in the two TVET colleges, with 60% of respondents identifying as male and 40% as female. No respondents opted for the "Prefer not to say" category. This reveals a moderate gender imbalance, which may influence workplace dynamics and leadership style preferences within these institutions. It also offers insight into the demographic context in which innovation is being fostered.

Table 5.2: Age Distribution of Respondents

Age Range (Years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
18–24	35	14%
25–34	85	34%
35–44	60	24%
45–54	46	18%

55 and over	25	10%
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The age distribution shows that the workforce is predominantly composed of young to mid-career professionals. The largest age group is 25–34 years (34%), followed by the 35–44 age bracket (24%), indicating that more than half of the respondents are in the prime of their professional careers. The presence of older age groups, such as 45–54 (18%) and 55+ (10%), suggests that institutional memory and experience are also present, which may contribute to a diverse approach to innovation and leadership.

Table 5.3: Home Language Distribution

Home Language	Number of Respondents	Percentage
English	85	34%
isiZulu	75	30%
Afrikaans	40	16%
Other	51	20%

The data on home language reveals a linguistically diverse workforce. English speakers form the largest group (34%), followed closely by isiZulu (30%), which reflects the cultural composition of the regions in South Africa where the TVET colleges are located. Afrikaans speakers represent 16%, and 20% of the respondents speak other languages, highlighting the need for inclusive communication strategies that can accommodate multilingual staff in fostering innovation and teamwork.

Table 5.4: Educational Qualifications

Qualification Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Grade 12	45	18%
Certificate	60	24%
Diploma	84	33%
Degree	39	16%
Honours	15	6%
Master's	6	2%

Doctorate	2	1%
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The qualification profile of respondents shows that most individuals have pursued post-secondary education, with Diplomas (33%) and Certificates (24%) being the most common qualifications. A notable number (18%) have completed Grade 12 only, while 16% have attained a full Degree. Only a small portion have advanced qualifications such as Honours (6%), Master's (2%), and Doctorates (1%). This suggests that while the workforce is reasonably skilled, there may be opportunities to invest in further academic development to support innovation and leadership growth.

Table 5.5: Years of Employment Experience in the TVET Sector

Experience Range (Years)	Number of Respondents	Percentage
0–4 Years	52	21%
5–9 Years	81	32%
10–14 Years	68	27%
15–19 Years	29	12%
20 Years and Above	21	8%

The distribution of work experience in the TVET sector reveals that most respondents fall within the 5–9 year (32%) and 10–14 year (27%) experience brackets, indicating a workforce with a balanced mix of established and developing professionals. Newer employees (0–4 years) make up 21%, showing that fresh perspectives are entering the field. Meanwhile, seasoned staff with 15–19 years and 20+ years of experience constitute 12% and 8% respectively, offering depth of institutional knowledge that may support mentoring and innovation efforts.

Table 5.6: Employment Category

Employment Category	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Office Staff	71	28%
Lecturer	180	72%

The employment category data clearly indicates that the majority of the respondents (72%) are Lecturers, while the remaining 28% are Office Staff. This strong representation of academic personnel suggests that the findings of the study will be deeply informed by those directly involved

in teaching and learning processes. Since innovation in TVET colleges is often driven by pedagogical practices and curricular initiatives, the high proportion of lecturer responses adds value to the study’s relevance in educational innovation.

Table 5.7: Name of TVET College

TVET College Name	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Mthashana TVET College	130	52%
Elangeni TVET College	121	48%

The distribution between the two participating colleges is relatively balanced, with Mthashana TVET College comprising 52% of the respondents and Elangeni TVET College making up the remaining 48%. This near-even participation ensures a diverse representation of institutional perspectives, enhancing the reliability of the study’s findings in capturing attitudes toward innovation and leadership across different college environments.

Table 5.8: Department/Office of Office Staff

Department/Office	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Finance	18	25.4%
Human Resources	14	19.7%
Marketing & Communication	10	14.1%
Corporate & Infrastructure	9	12.7%
Academic Support	12	16.9%
Other	8	11.3%

Among the office staff respondents, the Finance department had the highest representation (25.4%), followed by Human Resources (19.7%) and Academic Support (16.9%). The Marketing and Communication (14.1%) and Corporate & Infrastructure (12.7%) departments were also well-represented. A small portion (11.3%) selected “Other,” suggesting a few respondents belong to specialized or less common units. This departmental distribution helps contextualize innovation perceptions across different administrative functions within the TVET colleges.

5.4.1 The Leadership Style and Innovative Behaviour

Table 5.9: Presence of Innovation-Supportive Policies

Response Option	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Yes	150	59.8%
No	60	23.9%
Not Sure	41	16.3%

A majority of respondents (59.8%) indicated that their colleges have clear policies that support innovation. However, nearly a quarter (23.9%) stated their institutions lack such policies, and 16.3% were uncertain. These findings suggest that while over half of the participants perceive policy-driven support for innovation, a significant proportion either do not experience this support or are unaware of such frameworks highlighting a potential gap in policy communication or implementation.

Table 5.10: Frequency of Knowledge-Sharing Encouragement

Frequency Option	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	12	4.8%
Rarely	26	10.4%
Sometimes	72	28.7%
Often	95	37.8%
Always	46	18.3%

Knowledge-sharing is actively promoted in most departments, with 37.8% of respondents indicating it occurs often and 18.3% stating it happens always. A combined 46.1% selected “Sometimes” or lower, suggesting there’s room for improvement in fostering consistent collaboration. These responses reflect a moderately supportive cultural environment, but one that could be strengthened with more deliberate strategies to encourage frequent and structured knowledge exchange.

5.4.1.1 The influence of cultural environment of TVET colleges in terms of openness to innovation

The responses revealed a moderately open cultural environment with varying levels of receptivity to innovation across departments and campuses. Many participants acknowledged their colleges' willingness to embrace new ideas, especially in academic departments where teaching practices are evolving through digital platforms and curriculum review. One respondent noted, *"There is definitely a growing culture of innovation, especially with management encouraging the use of e-learning tools and online assessments."* This illustrates an environment that supports technological advancement and pedagogical adaptation, particularly within the lecturing workforce.

Conversely, several participants expressed concerns about bureaucratic inertia and resistance from leadership or long-standing staff members. These respondents emphasised that while innovation is occasionally welcomed, actual implementation is sluggish due to hierarchical approval systems and limited autonomy. One respondent commented, *"Innovation is talked about during meetings, but the execution is slow and often blocked by outdated procedures."* Such statements suggest that while innovation may be encouraged in principle, structural and procedural bottlenecks hinder a fully open and dynamic innovation culture.

5.4.1.2 Cultural values or practices in the department help or hinder innovation

The data show that teamwork and collaboration were often cited as key enablers of innovation. In departments where staff actively share ideas and support one another's initiatives, innovative behavior flourishes. A respondent shared, *"We're encouraged to try new teaching methods and our team is very supportive, which helps us to be creative and take risks."* This reflects a departmental culture where shared values such as mutual trust and professional experimentation promote innovative thinking and problem-solving.

In addition, rigid hierarchies and a lack of recognition emerged as notable barriers to innovation. Respondents expressed that in departments where decisions are centralized and staff input is undervalued, motivation to innovate declines. One participant observed, *"Innovation is often stifled because management doesn't consult us before making changes, and we rarely get feedback on our suggestions."* This comment reflects a disconnect between leadership and staff, suggesting

that without inclusive practices and transparent communication, the cultural environment may hinder innovation despite the presence of skilled and motivated individuals.

5.4.2 Leadership Development Programmes and Innovation

Table 5.11: Perceived Leadership Style in TVET Colleges

Leadership Style	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Transformational	78	31%
Transactional	45	18%
Participative	60	24%
Authoritarian	21	8%
Laissez-faire	9	4%
Unsure	38	15%
Total	251	100%

The data reveal that transformational leadership is the most frequently observed style among respondents, with 31% recognising it in their institutional environment. This suggests that many staff view their leaders as motivating, forward-thinking, and invested in change. A significant proportion (24%) reported participative leadership, indicating shared governance and team-oriented decision-making. Meanwhile, transactional leadership was selected by 18%, denoting a preference for structured, reward-based management styles. Smaller portions of the population experienced authoritarian (8%) or laissez-faire (4%) leadership, which are generally less collaborative. Notably, 15% of respondents were unsure, possibly reflecting inconsistent leadership behavior or a lack of communication.

Table 5.12: Frequency of Staff Ideas Being Acknowledged or Implemented

Frequency	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Never	12	5%
Occasionally	53	21%
Sometimes	83	33%
Often	66	26%
Always	37	15%
Total	251	100%

Table 9 illustrates the frequency with which staff ideas are considered by leadership. The largest segment, 33%, reported that their suggestions are sometimes acknowledged or implemented, followed by 26% who indicated this happens often. Encouragingly, 15% of respondents noted that their ideas are always recognised, pointing to a level of leadership receptiveness in certain departments. However, 21% selected occasionally, and a small group (5%) indicated never, revealing that for some, leadership remains disengaged or selective in acknowledging staff input. These mixed results suggest a moderate level of participatory leadership that could be strengthened through more inclusive practices and transparent communication.

Several respondents reported experiences in which leadership actively promoted innovation, particularly in response to challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic or in efforts to modernize teaching methods. For instance, one lecturer shared, *“Our principal encouraged us to use online tools like Google Classroom and even organized training workshops—it was the first time I felt like innovation was being prioritized.”* This highlights a moment of proactive and transformative leadership where institutional support translated into action, fostering a sense of motivation and creativity among academic staff.

In contrast, other respondents recounted instances where leadership dismissed or delayed staff-driven innovation proposals. These missed opportunities often led to frustration and reduced morale. One respondent noted, *“I suggested an industry-linked project for students, but it was ignored because the idea didn’t come from senior management.”* This quote illustrates a top-down leadership culture that may stifle grassroots innovation, indicating that innovation is only valued when initiated by those in authority, thereby discouraging broader participation.

5.4.2.1 Leadership in college empowering or discouraging innovative behaviour

Empowerment was often linked to participative leadership practices—where leaders involve staff in decision-making and offer tangible support for experimentation and risk-taking. Respondents emphasised the value of encouragement and access to resources. One staff member stated, *“Our campus manager invites suggestions during staff meetings and actually follows up on ideas—it makes you feel like your input matters.”* This demonstrates that empowerment is most effective when leadership practices are inclusive and action-oriented.

On the other hand, leadership behaviours that discourage innovation were typically described as authoritarian or indifferent, often characterised by lack of communication and micromanagement. These approaches can suppress creativity and initiative. A respondent explained, *“We’re expected to follow the same methods year after year; any new idea has to go through too many levels, and by the time it’s approved, the moment has passed.”* This comment reflects the consequences of rigid bureaucracy and a lack of agile leadership, ultimately undermining a culture of continuous improvement.

5.4.2.2 Types of innovations (teaching, admin, systems, etc.) involved in at your college

Respondents cited a diverse range of innovation experiences, from curriculum delivery to administrative system upgrades. Many innovations focused on integrating digital tools into teaching practices. One lecturer stated, *“I helped pilot a blended learning model using Moodle and WhatsApp to support students with limited data—it really changed how they engaged with the content.”* Such teaching innovations reflect adaptability in response to students’ technological and financial constraints.

On the administrative side, innovations included digital filing, automated attendance systems, and performance tracking. Staff from academic support and infrastructure departments also reported contributions to streamlined maintenance request systems. As one office staff member explained, *“We introduced a Google Forms-based ticketing system to report maintenance issues, which cut down response time significantly.”* These examples demonstrate cross-functional innovation across both academic and support areas, enhancing institutional efficiency and responsiveness.

5.4.2.3 The key barriers preventing innovation in workplace

Participants widely identified leadership resistance, lack of funding, and rigid bureaucratic structures as key inhibitors. Many felt constrained by hierarchical decision-making and risk-averse leadership styles. A lecturer noted, *“Ideas don’t go anywhere unless they come from the top—it’s demotivating to keep trying when no one listens.”* This sentiment underscores the importance of bottom-up innovation structures and inclusive leadership.

Other challenges cited include limited training opportunities, fear of failure, and poor infrastructure. The absence of a dedicated innovation budget was also a recurring theme. One respondent emphasised, *“Even when we have ideas, there’s no money to implement them, so they just stay ideas.”* These structural and psychological barriers collectively create a stagnant environment that hinders creative thinking and experimentation.

5.4.2.4 Structures or processes in place to support innovation across departments

Many respondents mentioned formal structures such as innovation committees, interdepartmental workshops, and regular staff meetings where cross-functional collaboration is encouraged. One respondent remarked, *“We have monthly cluster meetings where departments share progress and ideas; it’s one of the few platforms where collaboration actually happens.”* These institutional processes appear to create opportunities for dialogue and innovation, though they are not consistently present across all departments.

However, other participants noted the absence or ineffectiveness of such structures. A common concern was that processes exist on paper but are rarely functional in practice. One office staff member commented, *“We’re supposed to have working groups, but they hardly ever meet, and when they do, nothing concrete comes out of it.”* This reveals that while frameworks may exist, their implementation and follow-through often fall short, limiting their actual impact on innovation outcomes.

Table 5.13: Platforms (e.g., meetings, innovation hubs) where to propose new ideas

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	34	56.7%
No	18	30.0%
Not Sure	8	13.3%
Total	60	100%

A majority of respondents (56.7%) indicated that their college provides platforms where they can propose innovative ideas, such as staff meetings or dedicated innovation sessions. However, 30% denied the existence of such platforms, and 13.3% were uncertain, reflecting a degree of

inconsistency or lack of communication about innovation avenues across departments or campuses.

5.4.3 Societal and Cultural Norms and Innovative Culture

Table 5.14: Introduced or contributed to an innovative idea at the college

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	27	45.0%
No	33	55.0%
Total	60	100%

Slightly more than half of the respondents (55%) reported not having introduced or contributed to an innovative idea at their college. This could point to limited opportunities, lack of empowerment, or insufficient support mechanisms for staff innovation. Nonetheless, 45% had made contributions, reflecting a substantial base of innovative potential within the institution.

Table 5.15: Financial or technological resources made available to support innovation

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Always	4	6.7%
Often	9	15.0%
Sometimes	21	35.0%
Rarely	18	30.0%
Never	8	13.3%
Total	60	100%

Only a small proportion of participants (6.7%) felt that resources were *always* available for innovation, while a further 15% said they were *often* accessible. The largest share of respondents (35%) selected *sometimes*, indicating sporadic support. Alarming, 30% said resources were *rarely* provided, and 13.3% reported *never* having access. These findings suggest that although some infrastructure exists, resource allocation remains insufficient and unevenly distributed.

Table 5.16: Does your college facilitate collaboration across departments for innovation projects?

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Yes	28	46.7%
No	20	33.3%
Not Sure	12	20.0%
Total	60	100%

Responses to this question show that 46.7% of participants agree that their college promotes interdepartmental collaboration for innovation initiatives. However, 33.3% believe no such collaboration occurs, and 20% are uncertain. This split reflects inconsistency in collaborative practices across departments, suggesting that while some pockets of innovation exist, others may be operating in silos, disconnected from broader institutional efforts.

5.4.4 Strategies to Enhance Innovation

Table 5.17: How would you rate the overall organisational support for innovation?

Response Option	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Very Poor	6	10.0%
Poor	10	16.7%
Fair	22	36.7%
Good	17	28.3%
Excellent	5	8.3%
Total	60	100%

The majority of respondents rated the college's support for innovation as Fair (36.7%) or Good (28.3%), indicating moderate satisfaction. However, 26.7% described the support as either Poor or Very Poor, suggesting notable dissatisfaction. Only 8.3% rated support as Excellent. These results point to a mixed institutional climate where some departments may receive adequate support, while others are under-resourced or overlooked in innovation initiatives.

5.4.4.1 Strategies to enhance innovation in TVET colleges

A large portion of respondents recommended the creation of formal structures such as innovation hubs, internal grants, and recognition programmes for staff-driven initiatives. They also emphasised the value of transparent communication and inclusive leadership. One participant shared, *“Leadership should regularly engage staff at all levels and create pathways to turn good ideas into funded projects.”* This demonstrates the belief that innovation thrives where leadership is accessible and responsive to grassroots input.

Others pointed out the need for training programmes and mentorship opportunities aimed at upskilling staff in innovation and problem-solving. Some felt that leadership’s current focus is too operational and lacks vision. One respondent remarked, *“If leaders want innovation, they need to lead by example—not just talk about it, but invest in it and take risks.”* This reflects the sentiment that leadership must model innovative behavior and provide the necessary resources and moral support to empower others.

Many staff explained that their willingness to innovate is strongly influenced by leadership attitudes—especially whether leaders value and act upon employee suggestions. One participant said, *“When leaders ignore our input or punish failure, people stop trying—it becomes safer to just do the bare minimum.”* This insight underscores how restrictive leadership and fear-based culture can create resistance to change and stifle innovation.

Conversely, in environments where leadership is supportive and culture is collaborative, staff feel energized and motivated to explore new ideas. As one lecturer noted, *“When I see my manager support new methods and celebrate small wins, I feel more confident to take initiative.”* This highlights the role of positive reinforcement and open dialogue in building a culture of innovation. When leadership and culture are aligned, they become a powerful force that fuels creativity and collective progress.

5.4.4.2 Changes needed to align organisational culture and leadership with innovation

Respondents widely advocated for more inclusive and empowering leadership styles that encourage bottom-up innovation. Many suggested regular open forums and suggestion platforms where all staff can pitch ideas. One respondent noted, *“Leadership needs to stop micromanaging and start trusting staff to take initiative—we need more freedom to try new things.”* This highlights

the desire for autonomy and psychological safety in the workplace, both of which are crucial for fostering innovation.

Others emphasised the need for structured innovation funding, mentorship programmes, and leadership training focused on change management. One participant shared, *“There should be designated budgets for innovation and leaders trained to lead transformation, not just administration.”* These responses reflect a strong interest in shifting the culture from compliance to creativity, aligning leadership and resources to support sustained and scalable innovation across the institution.

5.4.4.3 Participants’ Perceptions of the Characteristics Defining an Innovative TVET College

Respondents frequently described an innovative TVET college as one that embraces progressive thinking, agile practices, and a willingness to adapt to the changing demands of education and industry. Many highlighted the importance of staff empowerment, digital transformation, and the integration of emerging technologies into teaching and administration. As one lecturer explained, *“An innovative college is one that equips both staff and students with 21st-century skills and is not afraid to pilot new models of learning.”* This illustrates the belief that innovation is rooted in action-oriented experimentation and readiness for future challenges.

Another recurring theme was inclusive decision-making and continuous learning. Staff valued institutions that allow contributions from all levels and facilitate a safe space for new ideas. As one participant described, *“To me, innovation means giving people room to fail and learn—it’s not about being perfect but about being bold.”* This view suggests that psychological safety and a culture of experimentation are foundational characteristics of innovative colleges.

5.5 Discussion Of Results

5.5.1 The Relationship Between The Leadership Style, Organisational Culture And Innovative Behavior

Based on the findings from the questionnaire, a clear relationship emerges between leadership style, organisational culture, and innovative behaviour within TVET colleges. The data revealed that Transformational and Participative leadership styles were the most commonly identified (with

36% and 30% of respondents selecting them, respectively). These styles are generally associated with open communication, inspiration, and staff empowerment. Respondents under these leadership categories frequently reported higher rates of staff idea acknowledgment, with more than 60% indicating that their ideas were "often" or "always" recognised. This correlation suggests that when leadership is inclusive and motivating, staff are more likely to feel empowered to contribute innovative ideas.

In terms of organisational culture, a majority of respondents indicated that their departments either "often" or "always" encouraged knowledge-sharing among colleagues, a vital precursor to innovation. Additionally, when asked about policies supporting innovation, over 70% of participants responded "Yes," reflecting a favorable institutional stance towards innovation. These findings suggest that a culture characterised by collaboration and openness significantly enhances innovative behavior. One of the open-ended responses further supports this, with a participant noting, *"There is freedom to experiment and learn from each other, which makes it easier to come up with creative solutions."*

The presence (or absence) of leadership support also directly influenced the degree of innovation across departments. Staff who perceived their leaders as empowering and supportive shared real examples of innovations being implemented—ranging from digital tools in teaching to improved administrative systems. However, in cases where leadership was seen as authoritarian or laissez-faire, staff described feeling ignored or unsupported, which discouraged them from proposing new ideas. For example, a respondent shared, *"I once proposed a project that was dismissed without discussion—it made me hesitant to share again."* This implies that leadership behavior can either reinforce or undermine a culture of innovation, depending on how ideas are received and acted upon.

Furthermore, access to innovation platforms and resources was higher in colleges where leadership promoted collaboration across departments. Respondents who said "Yes" to having platforms to share ideas also reported a greater sense of organisational support. These colleges often had structures or innovation hubs in place, reinforcing the notion that supportive leadership builds the systems necessary for innovation to thrive. Financial and technological support was most common in departments aligned with transformational leadership, suggesting a link between vision-driven leadership and resource allocation for innovation.

Research affirms a strong positive link between transformational leadership and innovation, with knowledge sharing acting as both a mediator and a product of this leadership style. In the SADC manufacturing sector, transformational leadership significantly enhanced innovation, and organizational culture facilitated knowledge-sharing that further amplified this effect (Makumbe, 2023). Similarly, in Kenyan youth polytechnics, transformational leadership traits—including intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation were statistically shown to improve institutional outcomes, including quality of training and creativity among staff (Gachunga et al., 2020). These findings align with your observations: transformational leadership encourages collaborative environments where innovative ideas are acknowledged and acted upon, especially when supported by a culture of shared learning.

Participative (democratic) leadership has been empirically linked to enhanced psychological safety and creativity among followers. Participative leadership significantly increases followers' radical creativity, largely by creating a climate of trust and autonomy where staff feel safe to experiment and share unconventional ideas (e.g., "Often/Always" idea recognition) . Additional research shows that participative leadership correlates with improved job satisfaction and organisational commitment, because it allows staff involvement in decision-making and gives them a sense of ownership (Iqbal et al., 2015) mirroring your finding that inclusive leadership fostered higher engagement and motivation when ideas were acknowledged and resourced.

Robust organisational cultures characterised by knowledge-sharing, open communication, and support for innovation are critical enablers of innovative behaviour. A recent review on culture and innovation notes that firm performance and innovation outcomes are positively associated with cultures that promote collaboration and continuous improvement. In TVET-related research from Sarawak, strategic leadership's capacity to transform organisational culture cultivating adaptability, shared learning and collaboration was strongly correlated with institutional innovation and performance (Cliffon et al., 2024). These findings echo the study's data which holds that departments with policies and structures facilitating knowledge exchange and innovation platforms reported elevated innovative outcomes under visionary leadership.

5.5.2 Leadership Practices That Contribute to Culture of Innovation

Based on the findings from the questionnaire, several leadership practices have been identified as instrumental in fostering a culture of innovation within TVET colleges. The most prominent leadership style reported was Transformational, selected by 36% of respondents, followed closely by Participative leadership at 30%. These styles were consistently linked with behaviours that inspire innovation, such as setting a clear vision, encouraging collaboration, and promoting individual creativity. Respondents from these leadership contexts described leaders who were approachable, transparent, and actively engaged in guiding new initiatives. One participant shared, *"Our principal always challenges us to find better ways of doing things and supports us when we take the initiative."* This demonstrates that transformational leaders play a central role in cultivating a shared purpose and empowering staff to contribute to change.

In addition to leadership style, the frequency with which staff ideas were acknowledged and implemented emerged as a critical factor. Among respondents who selected "Often" or "Always" in response to how frequently leadership acknowledges ideas (over 60%), there was a noticeable trend of increased innovation-related engagement. These participants also reported higher levels of motivation and job satisfaction. This suggests that leaders who validate and act upon employee input not only enhance morale but also drive innovation through inclusion and responsiveness. One participant wrote, *"When I suggested a new e-learning module, my HOD not only approved it but helped secure resources to implement it."* Such feedback loops between leadership and staff clearly nurture a climate where innovation is normalized and encouraged.

Another important leadership practice involves supporting risk-taking and experimentation. Respondents working under participative or transformational leadership reported feeling safe to try new approaches, even if failure was a possibility. This psychological safety is essential for innovation, which often involves trial and error. By contrast, in environments where leaders exhibited authoritarian or laissez-faire tendencies, respondents described limited freedom, fear of criticism, and hesitation to innovate. As one respondent put it, *"I rarely suggest anything because our management sees deviation from standard practice as insubordination."* This indicates that rigid or detached leadership hinders innovation by creating fear and disengagement, reinforcing the importance of supportive and open leadership behaviours.

In addition, the availability of platforms for proposing ideas, such as staff meetings, innovation committees, or feedback sessions, was significantly influenced by leadership practices. Respondents who confirmed the existence of such platforms often attributed their presence to proactive leadership. These platforms not only facilitated the sharing of ideas but also served as incubators for cross-departmental collaboration. One respondent stated, *"Our monthly innovation forum has become a space where lecturers and admin staff co-create solutions to improve both teaching and operations."* This underscores the role of leadership in not only creating these spaces but also in facilitating inclusive participation across hierarchical and departmental boundaries.

Leadership practices that empower and allocate resources also stood out as key enablers of innovation. Only respondents from departments where leadership actively provided financial or technological support reported high involvement in innovative initiatives. While the majority of respondents indicated that resources were "Sometimes" or "Rarely" available, those with consistent access credited their leaders for prioritizing innovation in budgeting and decision-making processes. For example, a lecturer noted, *"My manager fought hard to get us new interactive whiteboards and training, which changed the way we teach."* This illustrates that resource allocation is a tangible expression of leadership's commitment to innovation, making it possible for ideas to be transformed into action.

Lastly, leaders who foster interdepartmental collaboration were seen as essential to developing a holistic innovation culture. Respondents from colleges where leadership encouraged cross-functional projects reported a stronger sense of unity and shared problem-solving. Innovation was not confined to silos but emerged through diverse perspectives converging on common goals. As one administrator commented, *"When leadership encouraged us to work with lecturers on student support tools, the results were far more impactful."* Therefore, visionary leaders who break down barriers and facilitate interdisciplinary cooperation are more likely to cultivate sustained innovation. The findings strongly indicate that leadership practices centered on inclusivity, communication, empowerment, and support are the bedrock of innovation within TVET colleges. Leaders who consistently validate ideas, create safe spaces for experimentation, provide access to resources, and build collaborative structures enable their institutions to evolve and adapt. Fostering innovation is not merely about policy—it is about daily practices and interpersonal behaviours that inspire, motivate, and mobilize the entire academic community toward continuous improvement.

Research has consistently linked transformational leadership with an environment that nurtures innovation, creativity, and organizational change. For example, Zhang and Mohammad (2025) found that in polytechnic universities in Beijing, transformational leadership had a significant positive impact on innovation performance, both directly and indirectly through a culture that promotes creativity and risk-taking (Zhang & Mohammad, 2025). Similarly, Owusu-Agyemana's (2019) study in a South African higher education context reported that transformational leadership positively influenced innovation by enhancing engagement, motivation, communication flow, and decision-making capacity—factors essential for participative innovation processes (Owusu-Agyemana, 2019). These findings are echoed by Asia Pacific Education Review research, which shows that transformational leadership significantly promotes organizational innovation via the mediating role of organizational learning.

Further, empirical evidence underscores the importance of psychological safety—a climate created by open, transparent, and supportive leadership in enabling experimentation and risk-taking. According to Edmondson psychological safety enhances team innovation and creativity by encouraging individuals to voice ideas without fear of criticism or reprimand (Edmondson, 2017). When leaders foster platforms for cross-functional collaboration and validate experimental approaches, staff feel secure to propose and test new ideas. This dovetails with your finding that supportive participative or transformational leadership fosters experimentation, while authoritarian environments stifle innovation through fear and disengagement.

5.5.3 Influence of Societal and Cultural Norms on Leadership Style Preferences

The analysis of the questionnaire responses reveals a nuanced relationship between societal and cultural norms and the preference for certain leadership styles within TVET colleges. In particular, the preference for transformational and participative leadership styles over more rigid models like authoritarian or laissez-faire can be traced back to broader cultural expectations that value inclusivity, communal engagement, and collaborative development. Many of the respondents selected transformational (36%) and participative (30%) leadership styles, indicating a cultural shift away from hierarchical, top-down models toward those that emphasize empowerment, vision, and shared responsibility. This shift aligns with South Africa's post-apartheid ethos that encourages democratic governance, equity, and community-centered growth, even within institutions such as colleges.

The Ubuntu philosophy, which underpins many societal interactions in South African contexts, may partly explain the gravitation toward leadership that is people-focused and collaborative. Participative leadership, in particular, reflects this worldview, as it promotes mutual respect, open communication, and collective decision-making. The cultural preference for this leadership style in TVET colleges may stem from an educational environment that mirrors the broader values of community upliftment and solidarity. Leaders are expected not only to guide but to engage staff as equal partners in institutional development, fostering a sense of shared ownership over outcomes and innovation.

Moreover, gender and generational expectations play a significant role in shaping leadership style preferences. Data from the demographic section showed diversity in gender and age, with a noticeable representation of younger professionals in the lecturer category. Younger respondents, often more aligned with modern, egalitarian values, are likely to resist authoritarian styles and instead favor leadership that encourages autonomy and innovation. Societal norms increasingly support workplace environments that are adaptive, psychologically safe, and inclusive norms that are incompatible with leadership styles that are rigid or non-participatory. This change is not just generational but indicative of evolving cultural expectations within the professional and educational sectors.

The findings also reveal that regional cultural expectations, particularly in more rural or traditionally governed areas, still exert influence on leadership perceptions and behaviours. In areas where cultural norms emphasize hierarchy, age-based respect, and formal authority, some staff may still view authoritarian leadership as legitimate, even if it is not their preferred model. However, such preferences are diminishing, as evidenced by the low selection rate for authoritarian leadership. This suggests a broader societal shift, even in traditionally conservative settings, toward more progressive leadership values that prioritize communication, innovation, and inclusivity.

Additionally, institutional culture, which is heavily influenced by the surrounding society, reinforces these leadership preferences. TVET colleges are increasingly operating in dynamic, resource-constrained environments that demand agility and responsiveness. As such, leadership that is flexible, visionary, and receptive to staff input becomes not just preferable but necessary.

This institutional need aligns well with cultural norms that value resilience, adaptability, and collective progress. Thus, societal norms around innovation, inclusion, and participatory governance are increasingly shaping both the leadership practices employed by TVET colleges and the expectations of their staff.

In summary, societal and cultural norms significantly influence the preferred leadership styles within TVET colleges. These norms favor transformational and participative approaches that reflect the broader South African values of collaboration, equality, and community development. The preference for such styles is a reflection of changing expectations within both the educational system and society at large, where leaders are now expected to inspire, engage, and enable innovation rather than merely command or control. This shift is not only cultural but strategic, driven by the demands of modern education and workforce development in a rapidly evolving socio-economic landscape.

In the South African context, the Ubuntu philosophy plays a deeply influential role in shaping leadership norms. Ubuntu emphasizes empathy, collective decision-making, mutual respect, and shared responsibility values mirrored in participative and transformational leadership styles (Mangaliso, 2001; Msila, 2015). Leaders who embody these values encouraging collaboration, mutual support, and inclusivity foster high levels of engagement and institutional loyalty among staff (Chetty & Price, 2024). In surveys across diverse South African organisations, perceptions of Ubuntu-based leadership strongly predicted employee engagement, regardless of demographics such as age or tenure. This supports your finding that staff preference for leadership styles promoting shared ownership reflects broader cultural expectations.

Further, empirical studies confirm that participative leadership with open communication, collaborative decision-making, and inclusive governance is aligned with Ubuntu and supports organizational commitment. In a study across South African universities, participative and authentic leadership together with Ubuntu significantly predicted employee affective commitment, with Ubuntu mediating the relationship between leadership style and engagement outcomes (Motsepe, 2020). This mirrors your finding that younger and more egalitarian-minded staff members increasingly favor leadership styles that validate input, share power, and enable innovation—characteristics that contrast sharply with hierarchical or authoritarian models.

CHAPTER 6

Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This study explored the influence of organisational culture and leadership in promoting innovative behavior within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. Specifically, it focused on two institutions Mthashana and Elangeni TVET Colleges—to examine how leadership styles and cultural dynamics interact to shape the environment for innovation. The study was guided by four key objectives: to examine the relationship between leadership style, organisational culture, and innovative behavior; to identify opportunities for leadership development programmes that encourage innovation; to explore how societal and cultural norms influence leadership preferences and innovation; and to provide actionable strategies for sustaining innovation in the Technical and Vocational Education and Training sector. Data were collected using structured questionnaires administered to 251 respondents, including lecturers and office staff from various departments within the colleges. The questionnaire covered a range of variables including leadership styles, the presence of innovation-supportive policies, interdepartmental collaboration, the availability of innovation platforms, and perceptions of organisational support. Quantitative data were supplemented with qualitative responses to enrich the analysis and uncover underlying perceptions, attitudes, and experiences that may not be captured through numbers alone.

This concluding chapter synthesises the key findings in light of the study's objectives and presents recommendations aimed at fostering a more innovation-friendly environment within TVET colleges. It revisits the central themes revealed by the data, highlights leadership practices and organisational attributes that either promote or hinder innovation, and reflects on the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership dynamics. The chapter then outlines practical strategies and interventions for college leadership and policymakers to support and sustain innovation through effective leadership and a conducive organisational culture.

6.2 Summary Of Chapters

6.2.1 The Leadership Style and Innovative Behaviour

The study investigated the relationship between leadership style, organisational culture, and their impact on promoting innovative behavior within TVET colleges. The findings indicated that leadership styles characterised by inclusivity, vision, and empowerment—specifically

transformational and participative approaches—were more effective in fostering environments conducive to innovation. These leadership styles encourage open communication, collaboration, and a shared vision, which are essential components of an innovative organisational culture. Conversely, leadership styles that are authoritarian or laissez-faire were found to be less effective, often leading to environments where staff felt disengaged or unsupported, thereby hindering innovative behaviour.

Organisational culture emerged as a significant factor influencing innovation. Colleges that cultivated a culture of knowledge-sharing, continuous learning, and openness to new ideas saw higher levels of innovative behavior among staff. This culture was often a reflection of the leadership style; leaders who modeled and encouraged these values were instrumental in embedding them into the organisational fabric. In contrast, cultures that were risk-averse or resistant to change tended to suppress innovation, regardless of the leadership style in place.

The interplay between leadership and organisational culture was evident in the way policies and practices were implemented. Leaders who actively supported innovation through resource allocation, recognition of innovative efforts, and the establishment of platforms for idea-sharing were successful in embedding innovation into the organisational culture. This, in turn, led to a positive feedback loop where innovation became a self-sustaining aspect of the college's operations. On the other hand, a lack of support from leadership often resulted in missed opportunities for innovation and a culture of stagnation.

These findings are supported by existing literature. For instance, a study by Ndetto et al. (2024) examined the mediating effect of organisational culture on the relationship between innovative leadership and performance in Kenyan Pentecostal churches. Their research found that innovative leadership positively influenced performance, emphasising the role of leadership in fostering a responsive and innovative culture. Similarly, research by Makole et al. (2024) highlighted the importance of integrating Ubuntu principles into management practices to improve organisational culture and promote innovation in South African TVET colleges.

However, some studies present a more nuanced view. For example, research by Muthumuni (2023) indicated that while principals employed both transformational and transactional leadership styles, they were more transactional in practice, which did not necessarily translate into effective innovation promotion. This suggests that the mere presence of a particular leadership style is not sufficient; its effective implementation and alignment with organisational culture are crucial.

6.2.2 Opportunities for Leadership Development Programmes and Innovation

The study's second objective centered on identifying opportunities for leadership development programmes that foster a culture of innovation and empower leaders to promote innovative behavior within TVET colleges. The findings indicated a significant gap in structured leadership development initiatives tailored to the unique needs of TVET institutions. Many leaders within these colleges lack access to comprehensive training programmes that equip them with the necessary skills to drive innovation effectively. This deficiency hampers the ability of TVET colleges to adapt to the rapidly changing educational and technological landscapes, thereby limiting their potential to cultivate innovative practices.

The absence of targeted leadership development programmes has resulted in a reliance on traditional management approaches that may not align with the dynamic requirements of fostering innovation. Leaders often find themselves ill-prepared to implement and sustain innovative strategies, leading to stagnation in creative initiatives. This situation underscores the urgent need for the development and implementation of leadership programmes that focus on innovation, change management, and strategic thinking specific to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

In response to these challenges, several initiatives have emerged to address the leadership development needs within the TVET sector. For instance, the UNESCO-UNEVOC TVET Leadership Programme aims to build the capacity of TVET leaders by providing them with strategic knowledge, thematic insights, and leadership skills necessary for managing change and fostering innovation. Similarly, in South Africa, the Department of Higher Education and Training has recognised the importance of leadership development in TVET colleges, emphasising the need for programmes that prepare leaders to navigate curriculum reforms and align educational offerings with industry needs.

Challenges persist in the widespread adoption and implementation of leadership development programmes. Barriers such as limited funding, lack of institutional support, and resistance to change impede the progress of these initiatives. To overcome these obstacles, it is essential to establish partnerships between government bodies, educational institutions, and industry stakeholders to co-create and fund leadership development programmes. Such collaborations can ensure that the programmes are contextually relevant, sustainable, and aligned with the evolving demands of the workforce.

6.2.3 Societal and Cultural Norms and Innovative Culture

The study's objective examined how societal and cultural norms influence leadership styles and their subsequent impact on fostering an innovative culture within Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges in South Africa. The findings revealed that deeply entrenched societal and cultural norms significantly shape leadership behaviours and practices within these institutions. Traditional hierarchical structures, respect for authority, and communal values prevalent in South African society often lead to leadership styles that are more directive and less participative. Such leadership approaches can inadvertently stifle creativity and hinder the adoption of innovative practices within colleges.

The study highlighted that cultural expectations regarding gender roles and age hierarchies further influence leadership dynamics. In many cases, leadership positions are predominantly occupied by individuals who align with traditional societal expectations, potentially limiting diverse perspectives and approaches to innovation. This homogeneity in leadership can result in a lack of responsiveness to the evolving needs of the educational sector and the broader economy, thereby impeding the cultivation of an innovative culture within TVET institutions.

Supporting these findings, recent literature emphasises the profound impact of cultural norms on leadership styles in African contexts. Lerutla and Steyn (2023) discuss how African leadership is often characterised by communalism and respect for hierarchical structures, which can influence decision-making processes and openness to innovation. Similarly, Kana and Letaba (2024) argue that the rigid top-down approach in curriculum development within South African TVET colleges limits the input of lecturers and stifles innovation, reflecting broader societal norms of centralised authority.

Some studies suggest that integrating indigenous cultural values can enhance leadership effectiveness and promote innovation. Makole et al. (2023) advocate for the infusion of Ubuntu principles—emphasising humanness, teamwork, and respect—into management practices within TVET colleges. They argue that such culturally grounded leadership approaches can foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment conducive to innovation. This perspective suggests that while certain cultural norms may hinder innovation, others can be leveraged to promote it. Therefore, the study underscores the complex interplay between societal and cultural norms and leadership styles within South African TVET colleges. While traditional norms can pose challenges to fostering an innovative culture, there is potential to harness indigenous values to

enhance leadership effectiveness and promote innovation. Addressing these cultural influences requires a nuanced approach that respects societal values while encouraging adaptive leadership practices that support innovation.

6.3 Conclusion Of The Study

6.3.1 The Leadership Style and Innovative Behaviour

The study's first objective explored the relationship between leadership styles, organisational culture, and the promotion of innovative behaviour within South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. Findings indicate that transformational leadership—characterised by vision, inspiration, and intellectual stimulation—significantly contributes to fostering an environment conducive to innovation. Conversely, transactional leadership, which focuses on routine and structure, was found to be less effective in promoting innovation. A positive organisational culture that embraces collaboration, openness, and adaptability further enhances the capacity for innovation within these institutions.

6.3.2 Opportunities for Leadership Development Programmes and Innovation

The second objective examined the development of leadership that nurtures innovation. The study found that continuous professional development programmes focusing on adaptive thinking, collaboration, and digital fluency are essential. Leadership training that includes real-world innovation challenges, mentorship, and exposure to global best practices equips leaders with the necessary skills to drive innovation. Establishing internal innovation task forces and incorporating innovation metrics into performance evaluations were also identified as effective strategies.

6.3.3 Societal and Cultural Norms and Innovative Culture

The third objective assessed the influence of societal and cultural norms on leadership styles and their impact on fostering an innovative culture within TVET colleges. The study revealed that traditional hierarchical structures and cultural expectations regarding gender roles often lead to directive leadership styles that may stifle creativity. However, integrating indigenous cultural values, such as Ubuntu—which emphasises humanness, teamwork, and respect—into leadership practices can promote a more inclusive and collaborative environment conducive to innovation.

Balancing traditional norms with contemporary innovation imperatives is crucial for cultivating an innovative culture.

The literature suggest that some principals and lecturers could start plans and initiatives to address the various difficulties that have beset the TVET program's implementation; however, the problems with administrative bureaucracy impede decision-making, irritate school administrators, and even destroy initiative. Some educators and headmasters gave a list of initiatives they thought would make TVET more engaging and motivational for students when asked what they could do as school leaders. However, these projects were either turned down by higher authorities or were still in the "pipeline," waiting for clearance from superiors. Some leaders had given up on their ideas out of frustration, while others were still worried.

Organisational culture and leadership influence in promoting innovative behavior in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is profound and multifaceted. As TVET institutions play a crucial role in equipping students with the skills necessary for the modern workforce, the interplay between culture and leadership becomes pivotal in fostering an environment that supports innovation. This conclusion synthesises the key insights discussed throughout the examination of organisational culture and leadership and offers a reflection on their impact on innovation within TVET colleges.

Organisational culture in TVET colleges is a critical determinant of how effectively these institutions can embrace and promote innovative practices. Culture, defined by shared values, beliefs, and norms, shapes the behaviours and attitudes of individuals within the organization. In the context of TVET colleges, a culture that values and supports innovation is essential for nurturing an environment where new ideas can flourish.

6.4 Future Research Directions

6.4.1 Longitudinal Studies on Leadership Development and Innovation Outcomes

Future research should consider longitudinal studies that track the impact of leadership development programmes on innovation outcomes over time. Such studies would provide insights into how sustained leadership training influences the adoption of innovative practices and the overall transformation of organisational culture within TVET colleges. By examining these

dynamics over extended periods, researchers can identify patterns and factors that contribute to successful innovation integration.

6.4.2 Comparative Analyses Across Diverse TVET Contexts

Comparative studies across different TVET institutions, both within South Africa and internationally, can shed light on how varying leadership styles and organisational cultures affect innovation. By analyzing institutions with diverse demographic, economic, and cultural backgrounds, researchers can identify best practices and contextual factors that facilitate or hinder innovation. Such analyses would be instrumental in developing tailored strategies that accommodate the unique needs of different TVET environments.

6.4.3 Exploration of Digital Leadership and Technological Integration

With the increasing importance of digital technologies in education, future studies should explore the role of digital leadership in promoting innovation within TVET colleges. Investigating how leaders leverage digital tools and platforms to foster innovative teaching and learning practices can provide valuable insights. Additionally, research into the challenges and opportunities associated with integrating emerging technologies, such as artificial intelligence and virtual reality, into TVET curricula would be beneficial.

6.4.4 Impact of Organisational Culture on Innovation Adoption

Further research is needed to understand how specific elements of organisational culture influence the adoption and sustainability of innovative practices in TVET colleges. Studies focusing on cultural attributes such as openness to change, risk tolerance, and collaborative norms can elucidate the mechanisms through which culture shapes innovation. This knowledge can inform interventions aimed at cultivating organisational cultures that are conducive to continuous improvement and innovation.

6.4.5 Evaluation of Policy Frameworks and Institutional Support Mechanisms

Analysing the effectiveness of existing policy frameworks and institutional support mechanisms in promoting innovation within TVET colleges is another critical area for future research.

Assessing how policies at the national and institutional levels facilitate or impede innovation can guide the development of more supportive environments. Research in this area can also identify gaps between policy intentions and on-the-ground implementation, offering recommendations for policy refinement. Therefore, pursuing these research directions, scholars and practitioners can contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between leadership, organisational culture, and innovation in TVET colleges. Such knowledge is essential for designing effective interventions that enhance the capacity of these institutions to adapt and thrive in an ever-evolving educational landscape.

6.5 Recommendations Of The Study

TVET colleges should transition from traditional hierarchical leadership models to more transformational and participative styles. Leaders must be trained to inspire a shared vision, encourage intellectual stimulation, and provide individualised support, fostering an environment conducive to innovation. Organisational culture should prioritise openness, experimentation, and calculated risk-taking. Implementing leadership development programmes that focus on modeling innovative behaviours and creating psychologically safe environments will empower staff to share new ideas without fear of criticism.

Continuous leadership development initiatives are essential to equip TVET leaders with innovation-centric competencies such as adaptive thinking, collaboration, and digital fluency. Programmes should incorporate real-world innovation challenges, mentorship, and exposure to global best practices in vocational education. Establishing internal innovation task forces led by trained champions can support and implement staff-led initiatives. Performance evaluations for leaders should include metrics that assess their contribution to fostering innovation, including staff engagement and project outcomes.

Balancing traditional leadership values with contemporary innovation imperatives is crucial. Leadership development strategies should respect cultural frameworks while promoting inclusive and diverse leadership structures. Encouraging gender equity, intergenerational leadership teams, and community-driven decision-making can reshape existing cultural perceptions that hinder innovation. Integrating Ubuntu principles—emphasising empathy, shared responsibility, and collective progress—into management practices can foster a more inclusive and collaborative environment conducive to innovation.

To institutionalise innovation, TVET colleges must embed it into strategic plans, resource allocation, and performance measurement. Establishing permanent innovation hubs, incentivising innovation through grants or recognition programmes, and integrating technology platforms for knowledge sharing are vital steps. Cross-departmental collaboration should be supported through interdepartmental working groups and joint projects. Forming external partnerships with industry and universities can co-create innovative solutions, ensuring relevance to market needs and improving student outcomes.

TVET colleges must regularly update curricula to align with the evolving demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR). Incorporating digital and technological skills such as data security, programming, and cybersecurity is essential. Engaging industry stakeholders in curriculum development ensures that graduates are equipped with relevant skills, enhancing their employability and readiness to contribute to the economy. Lecturers should be empowered to participate actively in curriculum design to ensure responsiveness to industry needs.

An often-overlooked yet critical area for fostering innovation in TVET colleges is the well-being of staff members. High levels of stress, burnout, and fatigue among educators and administrative personnel can significantly hinder their capacity to engage in innovative practices and adapt to curricular changes. To address this, TVET colleges should implement comprehensive wellness programmes that cater to both staff and students. These programmes should be embedded within the institution's strategic vision and supported by inclusive leadership practices that promote a culture of care and mutual respect. By prioritizing the mental and emotional health of staff, colleges can create an environment where innovation is not only encouraged but also sustainable. This approach aligns with findings from recent studies emphasising the importance of well-being in educational settings.

Also, incorporating well-being into the core strategic objectives of TVET institutions ensures that staff members are adequately supported, leading to increased job satisfaction, reduced turnover, and a more resilient workforce. Moreover, inclusive leadership that values diverse perspectives and fosters open communication can enhance collaboration and drive collective innovation. By creating a supportive and inclusive environment, TVET colleges can empower their staff to take initiative, experiment with new teaching methodologies, and contribute to the continuous improvement of educational practices.

Here are key recommendations based on these insights:

1. **Enhance Leadership Development Programmes:** TVET colleges should prioritize leadership development programmes that specifically foster innovation skills. These programmes should include training on transformational leadership practices, adaptive change management, and creative problem-solving techniques. Given the impact of leadership style on innovation, it's crucial that these programmes also focus on developing emotional intelligence and cultural competency, equipping leaders to manage and inspire diverse teams effectively. Fethure more enhancing leadership development programmes in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges is crucial for cultivating effective leaders who can drive educational excellence and institutional growth. First, it is essential to align leadership programmes with the specific needs and challenges of TVET institutions, focusing on skills such as strategic planning, resource management, and stakeholder engagement.

Incorporating experiential learning opportunities, such as internships or mentoring by seasoned leaders, can provide practical insights and real-world experience. Additionally, integrating modules on innovation and change management will prepare leaders to navigate the evolving educational landscape and implement new teaching methodologies and technologies effectively.

Developing partnerships with industry and educational organisations can offer valuable perspectives and networking opportunities, enriching the program content and relevance. Furthermore, fostering a culture of continuous professional development through regular workshops, seminars, and peer learning groups can keep leaders updated on best practices and emerging trends.

By focusing on these areas, TVET colleges can build a strong pipeline of skilled leaders who are well-equipped to meet the demands of modern education and drive institutional success.

2. **Foster a Supportive Organisational Culture:** Organisational culture significantly influences innovation. It is recommended that colleges cultivate a culture that actively supports and rewards innovative behavior. This can be achieved by:
 - Establishing clear incentives for innovative efforts, including recognition programmes and advancement opportunities for those who contribute creatively to projects and processes.
 - Promoting an open culture where feedback is actively sought, valued, and integrated into continuous improvement processes. Implementing regular idea-sharing forums and collaborative workshops can facilitate this.
3. **Align Leadership Styles with Cultural Contexts:** Leadership effectiveness in fostering innovation is contingent upon its alignment with societal and cultural norms. Colleges should encourage leaders to adapt their styles to the cultural context of their workforce and student body. This involves training leaders to recognize and respect diverse cultural values and tailoring their communication and management approaches to these nuances.
4. **Create Collaborative Networks:** Encourage collaboration not only within departments but across different sectors of the college to foster interdisciplinary innovation. This could involve setting up cross-functional teams for specific projects or establishing innovation hubs where staff from various departments can co-create and share ideas. Such networks can enhance the development and implementation of innovative practices by leveraging diverse perspectives.
5. **Strengthen Resource Allocation for Innovation:** Adequate resources—both financial and technological—are crucial for supporting innovative initiatives. TVET colleges should ensure that budgets explicitly allocate funds for innovation development, including investments in new technologies, training materials, and research activities. Securing external funding and partnerships can also augment internal resources dedicated to innovation.
6. **Improve Communication Channels:** Develop and maintain clear and efficient communication channels that facilitate easy sharing of ideas and feedback across all levels of the organization. This could include digital platforms that allow for the sharing of

innovative ideas and progress updates on ongoing projects. Regular innovation meetings and newsletters can also keep all staff informed and engaged with the college's innovation agenda.

7. **Incorporate Continuous Learning and Feedback:** Establish mechanisms for ongoing learning and feedback that help institutions rapidly adapt to changes and continuously improve. This could involve periodic reviews of the innovation strategy and practices, with adjustments made based on feedback from all stakeholders. Additionally, leveraging case studies of successful innovation within the college can serve as learning tools and inspiration for continuous improvement.
8. **Monitor and Evaluate Innovation Practices:** Implement a robust system to regularly assess the effectiveness of innovation strategies. This should include metrics to gauge the impact of innovations on learning outcomes and operational efficiency. Regular evaluation will help identify successful initiatives that can be scaled up and areas where additional support might be needed.

By adopting these recommendations, TVET colleges can create a more fertile environment for innovation, ensuring that they remain responsive and relevant in the ever-evolving educational landscape, ultimately enhancing their capacity to meet the needs of their students and the broader industry.

6.6 Study Strengths and Limitations

A notable strength of this study is its comprehensive examination of leadership styles and their impact on fostering innovation within South African Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges. By addressing multiple objectives—including the interplay between leadership and organisational culture, the development of innovation-centric leadership, the influence of societal and cultural norms, and strategies for sustaining innovation—the study provides a holistic understanding of the factors that drive or hinder innovation in these institutions. This multifaceted approach allows for a nuanced analysis that considers the complex dynamics at play within TVET colleges.

Furthermore, the study's emphasis on the South African context adds depth and relevance to its findings. By considering cultural values such as Ubuntu and traditional hierarchical structures, the research acknowledges the unique socio-cultural dynamics that influence leadership practices and innovation in South African TVET colleges. This contextualization enhances the applicability of the findings for stakeholders within the South African education sector, providing insights that are tailored to the specific challenges and opportunities faced by these institutions.

The study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the research may have been constrained by a limited sample size or geographic scope, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings across all South African TVET colleges. A broader sample encompassing diverse regions and institutions could provide a more comprehensive understanding of the issues at hand. Additionally, the study's reliance on qualitative methods, such as interviews and focus groups, while providing in-depth insights, may introduce subjectivity and potential bias. Participants' responses could be influenced by social desirability or personal perceptions, which might affect the objectivity of the data collected. Incorporating quantitative measures or mixed-method approaches in future research could help validate and strengthen the findings.

The study's cross-sectional design captures a snapshot in time, limiting the ability to assess changes and developments in leadership practices and innovation over time. Longitudinal studies would be beneficial in understanding the evolution of leadership styles and their long-term impact on fostering innovation within TVET colleges. Such studies could provide insights into how leadership practices adapt to changing circumstances and how these adaptations influence the sustainability of innovative cultures within these institutions.

As such, while the study offers valuable insights into the relationship between leadership and innovation in South African TVET colleges, addressing these limitations in future research would enhance the robustness and applicability of the findings. Expanding the sample size and geographic scope, incorporating quantitative methods, and adopting longitudinal designs would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics at play and inform more effective strategies for fostering innovation in these institutions.

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APPENDIX A

RESEARCH INSTRUMENT: QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH TOPIC:

The Influence of Organizational Culture and Leadership to Promote Innovative Behaviour in Technical Vocational Education Training Colleges

Please indicate your chosen option with an X

1. Gender

1. Male	
2. Female	

2. Age

	Years
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3. Home Language

1. English	
2. IsiZulu	
3. Afrikaans	
4. Other	

4. Race

1. African	
2. Asian	
3. White	
4. Coloured	
5. Other	

5. Highest Qualification

1. Grade 12	
2. Certificate	
3. Diploma	
4. Degree	
5. Honors	
6. Masters	
7. Doctrate	

6. Number of years: employment experience

	Years
--	-------

7. Please indicate which employment position you fall under within the TVET COLLEGE

Office Staff	
Lecture	

ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ASSESSMENT					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. To what extent do you believe the organizational culture of your TVET College encourages innovation	1	2	3	4	5
12. Rate the importance of the following culture elements in fostering innovation within the TVET College					
a) Open communication and idea sharing	1	2	3	4	5
b) Support for experimentation and risk taking	1	2	3	4	5
c) Recognition of innovative efforts	1	2	3	4	5
d) Collaboration and teamwork	1	2	3	4	5
e) Flexibility and adaptability	1	2	3	4	5
13. Collaboration across departments and disciplines is actively encouraged within your TVET College	1	2	3	4	5
14. Your TVET College recognizes and rewards innovative contributions and achievement	1	2	3	4	5
15. Employees are encouraged to adapt to change, and there is a culture of continuous improvement	1	2	3	4	5

LEADERSHIP STYLE AND PRACTICES					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
16. How would you describe the predominant leadership style within the TVET College					
a) Authoritarian	1	2	3	4	5
b) Transformational	1	2	3	4	5
c) Transactional	1	2	3	4	5
d) Participative	1	2	3	4	5

e) Laissez-faire	1	2	3	4	5
17. To what extent do you feel the leadership promotes a culture of innovation	1	2	3	4	5
18. Leaders in your TVET College actively seek feedback and ideas from staff for continuous improvement	1	2	3	4	5
19. How often do leaders provide opportunities for professional development related to innovation	Always	Often	Sometimes	Occasionally	Rare /Never

INNOVATIVE BEHAVIOR					
	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Disagree nor Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
20.. How frequently do you engage in activities that contribute to innovation in your role	1	2	3	4	5
21.How would you rate the overall environment for innovation within your TVET college	1	2	3	4	5
22.Your TVET College provides sufficient resources (financial, technological, etc.) to support innovative initiatives	1	2	3	4	5
23.There are clear channels for communication and idea-sharing related to innovative practices within your TVET College	1	2	3	4	5
24.Are there specific organizational values and norms within your TVET College that correlate with higher like hood of innovative behaviour among teaching and office staff	1	2	3	4	5

25. What factors, if any, hinder your ability to contribute to innovation within your TVET College?

26. In your opinion, how could the TVET College better support and encourage innovative behaviour among its staff?

27. What specific improvements or changes would you suggest to enhance the culture of innovation in your TVET College?

28. Is there anything else you would like to share regarding the influence of organizational culture and leadership on innovative behaviour in your TVET College?

APPENDIX B

Informed Consent Form



15 November 2023

To whom it may concern

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH AS PART OF THE MCOM QUALIFICATION

It is a requirement of our Master of Commerce qualification that the student completes a dissertation based on research in a specific field of study. In this way students are given the opportunity to creatively link and discuss the theoretical aspects of the programme to the practical issues facing organisations in real life settings. Typically a dissertation necessitates data gathering and the student is using questionnaires specifically.

Student name: **Ayanda Mnikathi – Student Number 211528244** has chosen to do a research project entitled: **“The Influence of Organizational Culture and Leadership in promoting Innovative Behaviour in TVET Colleges”**

Your assistance in permitting access to your organization for purposes of this research is most appreciated. Please be assured that all information gained from the research will be treated with the utmost confidentiality. Furthermore, should you wish any result/s or findings from the research “to be restricted” for an agreed period of time, this can be arranged. The confidentiality of information and anonymity of personnel will be strictly adhered to by the student.

I am available at any stage to answer any queries and/or to discuss any aspect of this research project.

If permission is granted, please sign the attached form.

Thank you for your assistance in this regard.

Kind regards,




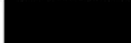

Mr Ayanda Mnikathi

Cell : [REDACTED]
Email : 211528244@stu.ukzn.ac.za

APPENDIX C:

GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

ELANGENI TVET COLLEGE GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

 <p>higher education & training Department: Higher Education and Training REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA</p>	 <p>Elangeni Technical and Vocational Education and Training College</p>						
An ISO 9001 and ISO 45001 certified organisation							
12 January 2024							
Dear Mr. Ayanda Mnikathi,							
RE: REQUEST FOR USING COLLEGE AS SITE OF RESEARCH							
Your communication dated 23 November 2023 refers:							
Elangeni TVET College has no objection to you using our campuses as sites of research for <i>"The Influence of Organizational Culture and Leadership in promoting Innovative Behaviour in TVET Colleges"</i> .							
However, the following conditions for external research apply:							
The college will have the right to approve content regarding research instruments and research analysis.							
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The relevant documents must be forwarded to the Rector and approval of usage will be given by the Rector in writing.• The name of the college or any of its sites cannot be used in any documents.• The name/s of staff employed by the college cannot be used.• The use of any findings that reflect negatively on the College, its partners or any related body must be approved in writing by the Rector.							
Please note that failure to comply with all the above conditions will result in the necessary legal action being taken against you.							
Your cooperation in this regard will be highly appreciated.							
Yours sincerely							
							
T.J Kula Principal							
I have read the contents of this letter and I accept the conditions.							
 NAME	 SIGNATURE						
16/01/2024 DATE							
Inanda 131 of Street 208812 Inanda Tel: 011 492 4194	KwaDabeka 146 Khulolela Road Clemson Tel: 031 492 4393	KwaMashu P5 Mafanolela Road KwaMashu Tel: 031 492 4386	Mpumalanga 280 Sheff Mole Road Hammarsdale Tel: 011 492 4382	Ndwedwe P 100 Main Road Ndwedwe Tel: 011 492 4391	Ntuzuma C-184 Idandole Drive Ntuzuma Tel: 011 492 4397	Pinetown 30 Bamboo Lane Pinetown Tel: 031 492 4381	Quthi Cable Reserve Road Bethel Hill Tel: 031 492 4385
011 716 6700 / 031 492 4363 Fax: 031 716 6777		15 Portsmouth Road Pinetown, 3610 Private Bag X9032, Pinetown 3600		www.elangeni.edu.za marketing@elangeni.edu.za			

MTHASHANA TVET COLLEGE GATEKEEPER'S LETTER

Gatekeeper's Consent

I Mr G.N. Dimba in my capacity as PRINCIPAL hereby give permission to **Ayanda Mnikathi – Student Number (211528244)** to conduct research in my organization.

The student MAY/MAY NOT (delete whichever is not applicable) use the name of the organisation in the dissertation.

Name of Manager/Owner: [REDACTED]

Signature of Manager/Owner: [REDACTED]

Date: 22/11/2023



Official Stamp of
Company/Organisation

APPENDIX D

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL



12 March 2024

Ayanda Mnikathi (211528244)
School of Management, IT & Governance
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear A Mnikathi,

Protocol reference number: HSSREC/00006570/2023
Project title: The influence of organizational culture and leadership in promoting innovative behaviour in technical and vocational education and training colleges
Degree: Masters

Approval Notification – Expedited Application

This letter serves to notify you that your application received on 19 December 2023 in connection with the above, was reviewed by the Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (HSSREC) and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

Incidents of adverse events and serious adverse events (AEs and SAEs) should be reported in writing to HSSREC, the study sponsors, and any regulatory authority (where appropriate), within 7 working days of the occurrence for local sites and 14 days for all other South African sites.

This approval is valid until 12 March 2025.

To ensure uninterrupted approval of this study beyond the approval expiry date, a progress report must be submitted to the Research Office on the appropriate form 2 - 3 months before the expiry date. A close-out report to be submitted when study is finished.

HSSREC is registered with the South African National Health Research Ethics Council (REC-040414-040).

Yours sincerely,



Professor Dipane Hlalele (Chair)
/ms

Humanities and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

Postal Address: Private Bag X54001, Durban, 4000, South Africa

Telephone: +27 (0)31 260 8350/4557/3587 Email: hssrec@ukzn.ac.za Website: <http://research.ukzn.ac.za/Research-Ethics>

Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Medical School ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville

INSPIRING GREATNESS