Domestic workers' lived realities of empowerment and disempowerment within the South African labour legislative context: Two sides of the same "coin"

by Christel Marais[*] and Christo van Wyk[**]

Abstract

South Africa is heralded as a global ambassador for the rights of domestic workers. Empowerment, however, remains an elusive concept within the sector. Fear-based disempowerment still characterises the employment relationship, resulting in an absence of an employee voice. The dire need to survive renders this sector silent. This article explores the role that legislative awareness can play in the everyday lives of domestic workers. By means of a post-positive, forward-looking positive psychological and phenomenological research design the researchers sought to access the voiced experiences of domestic workers within their employment context. Consequently, purposive, respondent-driven self-sampling knowledgeable participants were recruited. In-depth interviewing generated the data. The distinct voice of each participant was noted during an open inductive approach to data analysis. Findings indicated that empowerment was an unknown construct for all participants. They lacked the confidence to engage their employers on employment issues. Nevertheless, domestic workers should embrace ownership and endeavour to empower themselves. This would sanction their right to assert their expectations of employment standards with confidence and use the judicial system to bring about compliant actions. The article concludes with the notion that legislative awareness could result in empowered actions though informed employee voices.

Key words: *employment standards, labour rights, labour legislative awareness, informal sector, women and work, empowerment*

1   Sectoral context

Africa is the third largest employer of domestic workers globally. According to the International Labour Organization's (ILO) global and regional estimates, Africa employs approximately 3.8 million female domestic workers across the continent (ILO 2013a). South Africa has the highest employment rate of domestic workers within the region, with an estimated engagement of 924 000 workers, of whom only 40 000 are male (Stats SA 2013). The omnipresence of domestic work as a phenomenon within the South African labour context has led to a nationally understood figure (Phillips 2011) of

---

[*]   Dr Christel Marais is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Vaal University of Technology.

[**]   Prof Christo van Wyk is attached to the School of Behavioural Sciences in the Faculty of Humanities at the Vaal Triangle Campus, North-West University.

Correspondence to: Dr C Marais, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management Sciences, Vaal University of Technology, P/Bag X021, Vanderbijlpark, 1911. E-mail: christel@vut.ac.za

those engaged in the sector. This "highly feminized sector" of the labour market (ILO 2013b) is characterised by predominantly black women emanating from disadvantaged backgrounds, with limited exposure to formal education and a dire need to survive on a daily basis. Their sectoral engagement is historically marked by low wages, long working hours and demanding working conditions.

In a sector characterised by progressive legislative reforms in recent years, the South African domestic worker sector's minimum employment standards and wages are regulated by Sectoral Determination 7 (South Africa 2002, 2013, 2014). Individuals, independent contractors or people employed by employment services performing domestic work within a private household in the capacity of gardeners, drivers, childminders or carers for elderly, frail or disabled members of the private household are covered by the stipulations of the sectoral determination (Department of Labour 2014; South Africa 2002). However, domestic workers who work on farms or who are covered by alternative sectoral determinations or bargaining council agreements in terms of the Basic Conditions of Employment Act or the Labour Relations Act are excluded from the sectoral "safety net" provided by Sectoral Determination 7 (Department of Labour 2002:36; Van Niekerk 2003:7-11). Stipulated employment standards relate to wages, written particulars of employment, hours of work, leave, the prohibition of child and forced labour and the termination of employment (South Africa 2002, 2014). In addition, the sectoral determination makes provision for minimum wage levels to be reviewed every three years. The stipulated sectoral salary increases consequently take effect annually in December of each year (Department of Labour 2014; South Africa 2002, 2014). It should, however, be noted there are no limitations in terms of benefits that exceed the stipulated minimum.

Although the evolution of these legislated stipulations is due, in part, to a history of exploitation that characterises this labour source globally (Matjeke, Viljoen & Blaauw 2012), it is still viewed as a new beginning affording lower-income workers an essential form of legislative protection (Burrow 2011; Sparks 2011; Bhorat, Kanbur & Mayet 2013). Despite the initial predictions of sectoral job losses as a result of stipulated minimum wage levels and employment conditions brought about by the proclamation of Sectoral Determination 7 (Volti 2008; Mangqalaza 2012) in conjunction with high unemployment rates and poverty levels (Fisher, Katz, Miller & Thatcher 2003; Stats SA 2014a, 2014b), the sector continues to show rising employment figures (Stats SA 2010, 2013).

Labour rights afford a sense of empowerment (Maher & Staab 2005) to a sector of the labour market that has long been described as vulnerable and invisible. Legislative interventions of this nature retain their value only if they remain open to scrutiny and are aligned with the needs of those the legislation aims to protect. Heralded as one of the most extensive efforts globally to formalise domestic employment (Ally 2008), the positive developmental outcomes of legislative reform are still being questioned within the South African employment context (Fish 2006; Tomei 2011). Ally (2011) alludes to the existence of a "silent paradox" that relates to the existence of progressive labour legislation's inability to bring about significant changes to the entrenched social inequalities that still characterise the sector. This could be attributed to the fact that a private home is not acknowledged as a formal workplace, so that in consequence those working within this individualised context are invisible (Neetha & Palriwala 2011) and are therefore unable to make legislative reforms part of their everyday reality.

The mere proclamation of sectoral employment standards does not guarantee legislative compliance by the employers of domestic workers (Marais 2007, 2009; Moya

2007). The literature continuously advocates the need for better legislative enforcement of employment standards (Zungu 2009). Employers, to date, have responded to the law voluntarily and often only in part owing to a lack of visible enforcement (Dinkelman & Ranchhod 2010). As a result of limited manpower to effect enforcement efforts, the geographical vastness of the sector and the complex nature of the employer-employee relationship in this sector (Blaauw & Bothma 2010; Archer 2011), the empowerment effect of legislative reform is inevitably watered down. Domestic workers are further also described as only notionally free to alter their conditions of employment owing to the entrenched notion of servitude within the sector (Woolman & Bishop 2007). The need for empowerment is therefore frequently voiced in conjunction with discussions about changing the plight of these poor and marginalised women. This implies the necessity to involve those whose voices are often silenced within the broader social realm as we explore pathways to even greater empowerment (Rosenberg 2013).

The creation of decent work for domestic workers remains an ever-present call for action at different administrative levels (Blackett 2011; ILO 2011; Tomei & Belser 2011; Witbooi 2011). The responsibility of both the state and the employer is clearly described by Sectoral Determination 7, and the various stipulations are enforceable (South Africa 2002, 2014). The potential role of the domestic worker in this tripartite relationship is, however, unclear and is often undervalued. It is argued that the extent to which domestic workers take ownership of their own employment context is still limited. Domestic workers' access to adult education facilities do aid their general communications skills – reading and writing – and even skills related to their work context, but these usually only relate to the cooking, cleaning and caregiving aspects of their job (Molema 2011). Little attention is given to their ability to access legislation and improve their knowledge of legislation and its application within their employment relationship.

Although the initial legal vulnerability of the sector has been addressed through sound legislative reforms, there is still a void owing to the limited legislative awareness of the members of the sector. This article will postulate that empowerment through legislative awareness could hold the key to enabling domestic workers to bring about change within their employment relationship themselves. Moving away from their institutionalised passivity, domestic workers' voices can resonate to their benefit.

1.1 *Legislative empowerment*

To understand the true value of legislative reforms, provision must be made for multi-dimensional outcomes, where empowerment is one of the main achievements. Empowerment is a topic which has attracted interest in diverse disciplines (Yeap & Myint 2005; Mills, Fleck & Kozikowski 2013). Viewed as a multidimensional, never-ending expansive process, empowerment enables the initial sense of self to combine with the ability to act and bring about change, thereby shaping a person's "life outcomes" (Shields 1995; Yeap & Myint 2005; Hategekimana 2011). Empowerment is inevitably context-dependent and therefore both internally and externally derived (Spreitzer 1995; Stander & Rothmann 2009; Wagner, Cummings, Smith, Olson, Anderson & Warren 2010; Baden 2013; Mills et al 2013). Reflecting as it does employees' perceived control over their work life, empowerment within the domestic worker's context necessitates the removal of conditions that foster a sense of powerlessness and strengthen the position of the individual domestic worker. This inevitably requires access to resources, and in this context refers to the ability to access and apply a sound knowledge base regarding the various legislative stipulations

applicable to the work context. The initial structural empowerment of the sector came about through legislative reforms but will only come to fruition once domestic workers apply their ability to voice their thoughts, concerns and disputes themselves. Empowerment therefore implies that individuals take charge of their own destiny and influence decisions that affect their future work engagement (Zimmerman 1995).

1.2 *Fear-based disempowerment*

Domestic workers have been disempowered for many decades because of the very nature of their employment relationship. The power dynamics at play within the employer-employee relationship can put domestic workers at risk of retaliation and potential job losses should they confront their employer on issues related to their employment relationship (Mkandawire-Valhmu, Rodriguez, Ammar & Nemoto 2009). Thus the potential of retaliation gives rise to an ever-present sense of fear, which is a very real emotion present within all human beings to varying degrees (Phillips 2003; Horn 2004; Rich 2004). Within the employment context of the domestic worker, these feelings of fear render employees powerless and intensify their dependence on others to bring about change on their behalf (Thomas 2009). This sense of institutionalised fear, which has evolved over generations, is still deeply rooted and internalised in the domestic worker sector.

Employees normally think of the concept of retaliation in very broad terms, including aspects that could cause discomfort within the employment context when an opinion has been voiced (Walker 2008). Archer (2011) attributes this to the lack of direct communication on the part of the employer, which gives rise to growing uncertainty in the resultant understanding and actions of domestic workers. Domestic workers also refrain from involving a third party – intervention by labour inspectors – out of fear of the adverse effect this might have on their continued relationship with their employer (Abrantes 2013).

Communication is an integral part of all empowerment efforts. Employees continually face situations where they need to decide whether to speak up (i.e. voice) or remain silent (Morrison 2011). The problem, however, is that the domestic worker sector functions within the delimitations of what essentially constitutes a private household characterised by an individualised employment relationship – far different from what is generally encountered within an organisational context. Fear and its debilitating effects make it almost impossible for these women to speak out. The resultant silence implies that they are refraining from calling attention to issues that relate to their work context and relationship (Knoll & Van Dick 2013). This silence does, however, bear witness to both the absence and the inhibition of voiced dialogue (Styres 2008). The sectoral context of submissiveness provides for further cultivation of this silence (Ally 2008; Mkandawire-Valhmu et al 2009; Cock 2011; Griffin 2011).

1.3 *The need for employees' voice to be heard*

For generations the domestic worker sector has been described as silent. Worldwide action to empower this sector has resulted in the voices of domestic workers being heard within a broader variety of social and political contexts. Empowerment therefore constitutes the implementation and practical application of these voiced ideas and concerns within the employer-employee relationship. Morrison (2011) describes employee voice as a verbal act, based on discretionary behaviour, that is constructive in its intent. Even though employees have the right to access information and consultation (Bagchi 2011), employee voice remains an ambiguous concept as a result

of the perceived cost-benefit ratio that resultant actions may imply (Avey, Wernsing & Palanski 2012). This need for self-protection, when considering the choice between voice and silence, is especially relevant in the domestic worker sector owing to authoritarian power differences and an overriding need to secure and retain employment.

Porter (2013) emphasises that true empowerment can only exist when there is a sense of security which facilitates transformative mobilisation that benefits the affected parties. When reflecting upon the concept of "voice" within the labour context, it is necessary to consider who can and cannot speak, and who speaks for whom (Pereira 2008). The studies of employee voice within the context of employment relations have focused on the presence or absence of a union whose membership, it should be noted, does not act as a proxy for employee voice (Benson & Brown 2010). Historically, however, union membership has been advocated to provide employees with a channel to voice their concerns about their employment context and to effect redress (Benson & Brown 2010; Neetha & Palriwala 2011; Tsikata 2011). Ally (2008) argues that the inability of the sector to mobilise has been aggravated by the very legislative reforms that aimed to empower these workers. The proclamation of Sectoral Determination 7 could be viewed as a step towards emancipating domestic workers but its impact has been reduced by the continuous silence of employee voice within the sector. This is due in part to the fact that working conditions have not worsened in the last decade and therefore the need for a collective voice has faded into the background.

According to Fish (2006), union membership could certainly contribute to the sense of personal empowerment within the individualised employment context. The domestic worker sector is unfortunately often regarded as largely unorganisable (Middaugh 2012). Ally (2005) warns against the consequences of labelling domestic workers in this manner. Not only does it reinforce the notion of invisibility, it also devalues those actions taken to date to unionise and reform the sector. The need for alternative approaches to effect change remains pressing. The role that the individual domestic worker can play in this process is still largely undefined. Community-based networking centred around sound legislative knowledge could potentially play an important role in domestic workers' efforts to organise and access improved employment conditions (Kennedy 2010) by making their voices heard within their own employment context.

1.4 *Awareness of labour legislation*

Legal education is an important strategy for the advancement of women. The South African Domestic Service and Allied Workers Union (SADSAWU) advocates the effective implementation of labour legislation through education (Ally 2008). Knowledge is a liberating force and its basis is information (Annan 1997). This necessitates the identification and removal of conditions that cause feelings of disempowerment which inhibit the employee's ability to take control of challenges that may arise within the work context (Bekker & Crous 1998). Training and development play a pivotal role in defining empowerment efforts and imply a need to raise awareness of the various legislative stipulations that could facilitate improved employment conditions.

Awareness is regarded as the point of departure of any learning experience that aims to empower (Cavaleros, Van Vuuren & Visser 2002). Awareness is a powerful tool with the potential to bring about change and it helps to structure an individual's understanding of his or her interaction with the world (Mann 1993). Through education on legal rights, critical awareness can be created about both rights and obligations on the part of not only the employer – as is so often the case – but also the employees,

thereby enhancing their ability to assert these rights and bring about positive change in future engagements (Agimba, Butegwa, Osakue & Nduna 1994).

Access to credible information remains vital as a means of enhancing domestic workers' legislative awareness. The sectoral demographics pose a challenge, however. Coming from what is generally described as an impoverished background, domestic workers often have limited levels of formal education and an overall fear of confronting employers, and thus an alternative approach to reaching this group of workers is required. It is suggested that awareness efforts should be aimed at transcending the institutionalised dependence culture that expects others to bring about change on behalf of the domestic worker within the legislative context. This view might appear harsh given the historical context of the sector. However, we believe that substantial sectoral empowerment will only be realised once the domestic workers themselves assume ownership of their own employment relationship based on their awareness of legislated employment standards. Communication initiatives therefore need to focus on enhancing employee voice. This requires communication strategies that disseminate information that is viewed as reliable by all recipients (Valentini 2012).

1.5 *Embracing ownership*

There is an urgent need within the sector to change the mindset from knowing about the existence of legislative reforms to actually having the ability and confidence to apply this knowledge within the employee's daily work engagement. A mature approach from both the employer and the domestic worker is therefore required. This implies the need to acknowledge that while awareness helps to order one's actions (Curle 1972), it is not a once-off event, but instead implies an empowering journey. The role and function of a unionised voice within the sector will therefore have to be reconstructed (Ally 2008). Hogan (2000) affirms the need for individuals to take responsibility for their own empowerment whatever their circumstances. Domestic workers who perceive themselves as empowered would therefore be more inclined to speak up and make their voices heard amidst reduced levels of uncertainty and accompanying emotional strain (Greasley, Bryman, Dainty, Price, Soetanto & King 2005).

Employee voice implies action with the intent to bring about improvements (Wilkinson & Fay 2011). The enabling properties of legal rights education are dependent on the context in which the education takes place and the manner in which this knowledge is applied by particular users (Meyer 2002). It is therefore the responsibility of the users of the knowledge to take ownership of the process while voicing personal choices, preferences and discontent (Chalofsky 2010; Porter 2013).

Legislative reforms have afforded domestic workers the autonomy to effect change. As long as employees perceive themselves as dependent on others to bring about change, their ability to speak up will be limited (Bekker & Crous 1998). Domestic workers' activism at personal and grassroots level holds the key to recognising and claiming their rights (Gurung 2009). The creation of awareness plays a vital role in sectoral members' accessing relevant information to bring about this sense of ownership and engage in actions that are indicative of autonomous legislative empowerment.

2 Research design and the co-construction of meaning

A forward-looking orientation, based on positive psychology (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi 2000; Bushe 2007; Froman 2010; Jose, Ryan & Pryor 2012) informed

the interpretivist phenomenological research design that was used to access the voiced experiences of domestic workers within their employment context (Fox & Bayat 2013; Hammond & Wellington 2013; Loseke 2013). As the study focused on understanding and interpreting social actions as a result of their daily lived realities, participant recruitment was central to the design and outcome of this study (Schwandt 2003; Hill & Nutt Williams 2012). Because domestic workers are characterised as a vulnerable sector within the South African labour force, we did not approach potential participants at their place of employment (Byrne 2012; Rubin & Rubin 2012). Acknowledging further that employers could act as potential gatekeepers and that our presence might influence their individualised employment relationship negatively, we opted for what Deschaux-Beaume (2012) describes as a "real-life" approach to recruitment. In view of the implicit need for researcher mobility and the establishment of an initial rapport with participants, the first author personally distributed 2000 recruitment leaflets at taxi ranks, on public transport and on foot within the demarcated geographical area of the study (Municipal Demarcation Board: Emfuleni Local Municipality 2011). This facilitated an initial subjective interest in the focus of the study among potential participants. Telephonic responses by interested parties indicated a willingness to participate in the study. The attrition rate was noticeably high during the time between the initial telephonic exchange and the actual conducting of the interviews, due in part to the participants' cited fear of losing their jobs as a result of their participation in the study.

Participants' willingness to engage with the researchers resulted in purposive, respondent-driven self-sampling being used as a recruitment strategy (Kirkevold & Bergland 2007; Daniel 2012; Schensul 2012; Seale 2012). Inclusion criteria implied being an employed domestic worker as defined by Sectoral Determination 7 (South Africa 2002), as well as first-hand knowledge of and the ability to articulate experiences relating to the phenomenon being studied. Twenty black female participants, between the ages of 27 years and 59 years, took part in the study. None of the participants belonged to a labour union. This number of participants was deemed substantial for a lived realities study (Smith & Eatough 2008; Quinlan 2011; Bernard 2013). They had a limited level of formal education, the average being a primary-level qualification. This did not impact on their ability to engage with us and share their rich and densely descriptive accounts of their lived realities. In order to obtain their informed consent, the researchers addressed the fears and uncertainties voiced by the participants, clarified their role in the research effort, explained their right to withdraw and re-affirmed confidentiality.

In-depth interviewing was conducted to generate data as meaning was co-constructed rather than data merely being collected (Bloch 2007; Denscombe 2011; Lapan, Quartaroli & Riemer 2012; Zikmund, Babin, Carr & Griffin 2013). During the pilot study the dynamic interplay between us as the researchers and the domestic workers as the participants, the tentative topic and the interview questions became evident (Glesne 2011). A developmental semi-structured interview guide (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson 2012; Englander 2012; Layder 2013) was therefore drawn up to guide the conversation around broadly formulated metaphorical questions which added a further dimension to this process of knowledge creation. Interviews were conducted in a variety of social settings, mostly after hours and over weekends, and concluded with a debriefing conversation addressing participants' feelings or questions resulting from our interaction. The research relationship did not extend past the interview interaction, but each participant was handed a copy of Sectoral Determination 7 (South Africa 2002, 2013) as she left the interview setting.

The distinct voice of each participant was evident in the verbatim-transcribed interviews. An open inductive approach to data analysis assisted in developing an ever-growing insight into participants' shared accounts with each new interview that was conducted (Huy 2012; Harding 2013; Lichtman 2014; Miles, Hunberman & Saldaña 2014). Codes were allowed to emerge from the data (Nieuwenhuis 2011; Rivas 2012) through a circular, value-adding transitional process (Tesch 1990; DeCuir-Gunby, Marshall & McCulloch 2011; Bazeley 2013; Saldaña 2013; Creswell 2014). MAXQDA (1989–2013), a qualitative data analysis software programme, helped to establish a detailed audit trail as themes and subthemes developed. One of the main themes that crystallised during the analysis related to the awareness within the domestic worker sector of labour legislation as an empowerment tool. Four further subthemes were identified: Survival mode, domestic workers' perceptions of the post-Sectoral Determination 7 era, an urgent need to learn more about the various legislative stipulations, and empowerment consequences.

3 Findings

3.1 *Survival mode*

The need to survive on a daily basis is one of the strongest forces driving employment within the domestic worker sector. Participants shared accounts of the general state of impoverishment which characterised their past, present and perceived future existence. *"We're still in that condition, the bad condition …"* is how Rita explained her daily struggle to make ends meet. Emilia extended this notion, saying, *"… first one ma'am, sometimes I'm working without food. I'm working from morning until I'm going without nothing. The second thing ma'am is money, the money is too little, the money is little for me…"* Mireya in turn stated, *"… I do not worry about the food, I only worry about the money, they must just give me my money. Another thing again, ma'am, eish, I'm scared."* Money is both a commodity and an exchange method within the sectoral context. Libby illustrated this notion by alluding to the nature of her employment context, *"… the madam is good, but the money is little"*. Acknowledging their dependency upon a regular income, participants characterised their compensation as *"better than nothing"*. Mandi voiced her thoughts in this regard by saying, *"… I know in my heart that I work and at least I get something, as you say it's better than nothing."* Grateful for the fact that they had managed to secure employment, the exchange of labour for compensation took centre stage, and money – especially the lack of it – emerged as a common concern.

3.2 *The post-Sectoral Determination 7 era*

Participants were all aware of the fact that legislative conditions within the domestic worker sector had changed but lacked detailed knowledge in this regard. They voiced a general mistrust in the ability of the Department of Labour and their inspectors to improve employment standards within the sector despite the proclamation of the legislation. Amina described her perception in the following words, *"… if you're going to Labour some will help you, some will never help you because it'll take a long process, yes. To go there and to take that form… You know, it's a long process … Not wasting for money but wasting of time."* Mandi claimed that, *"… the people go their but are not treated okay… they chase them away"*. Rita expressed her feelings of hopelessness by identifying the problem as, *"… you go there, what next?"* Because these perceptions are regarded as serious allegations, participants often remain voiceless rather than

taking their concerns to the relevant authorities. Sammy firmly believes that, *"you go to the Department; they are not going to help you…"* This might be due in part to the lack of visible policing of the sector, as not one participant had ever encountered a labour inspector at her place of employment. Connie expressed her disappointment by saying, *"… they said they are going to come to this house but they did not come".* In addition to the lack of visibility, which they perceived as empty promises, participants were also concerned about perceptions of corruption and scheming with employers which could affect their job security. Central to this distrust – the feeling that they could not rely on others – was the fear of potential job losses which acts as an inhibiting force preventing domestic workers from speaking up or voicing their concerns.

Voicing their desire to engage with their employers on issues of legislative compliance, they said that they find themselves in a "catch-22 situation": speak up and potentially lose their job or, alternatively, keep quiet and remain in a disadvantaged position. Most participants indicated that retaining their employment status is the deciding factor when it comes to engaging with their employers on issues related to employment standards. This is again attributed to their dire need to survive at the most basic level. Participants seldom negotiated aspects related to their conditions of employment and very few had a signed copy of their contract of employment. When reflecting upon their employment conditions, perceptions of inequitable compensation levels within the sector, the relationship between workload and compensation, working hours and the absence of a formal contract stood out as issues of concern. Most participants, however, noted that their employers did register them for Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) purposes, although they did not have any written proof of this. All the participants were strongly in favour of government's stepping in and creating more awareness of the plight of domestic workers. Pleading for change and improved employment conditions, Emilia said, *"I think ma'am government, to make a better for a domestic worker if he give a domestic worker something like we know our salary because our salary now is not the same and then we don't know about what time to start your work, what time to go home and then the other thing ma'am, we ask government to make, what is this, medical for domestic workers."*

3.3   *Looking for a needle in a haystack*

Despite their sense of isolation, which the participants shared with us, the invisible nature of the sector, and their fear of confronting employers, issues related to empowerment did feature – although not by name. It was noted that the concept of empowerment was an unknown construct for all participants. Their conversations continuously centred on the fulfilment of their basic needs and their lack of alternatives. This can be attributed in part to their lack of a collective voice and inability to influence their own conditions of employment and those of others. Elise noted, *"… we don't have union, and we are not supposed to go on strike."* Ann jokingly added that domestic workers do not go on strike (*"toi-toi"*).

Participants' knowledge of the stipulations of Sectoral Determination 7 was inadequate and in some cases they were misinformed. Belinda admitted to her level of uncertainty by saying, *"I hear, but I didn't know it. Like this papers I see, I don't know what's happening here. I read, I read mama, I can't understand what's happening there."* Their knowledge was based mostly on hearsay from within their broader social engagement. Amina's uncertainty was also evident from the following statement: *"I know about hours. If I'm right, we must work seven hours or eight, no, not seven hours. Seven hours or eight hours a day, yes. Money, you must get… some other people say*

you must get one thousand eight hundred a month or some people say you must get one thousand seven… I don't know." Rita unashamedly admitted, *"…we are afraid to go and ask someone".* Nevertheless, the participants indicated a hunger to learn and understand aspects of legislation that would help them to speak with authority on matters related to their employment relationship. This implies urgency about taking ownership of empowerment initiatives by accessing credible knowledge themselves. Furthermore, the participants also indicated a willingness to share their reliable legislative knowledge, once gained, with their broader social network, thereby potentially expanding the empowerment consequences of legislative awareness even further within the sector.

4   Discussion

The plight of domestic workers is well documented globally. Empowerment remains an elusive concept within the sector, however. Despite substantial reforms in the area of labour legislation, the call for "decent work" – a loaded concept in itself – remains ever-present (Burrow 2011). The challenge of empowering this sector lies in the ability of the sectoral role players to make these reforms relevant in the lives of those for whom domestic work is a daily reality.

The domestic worker sector is often a haven of employment opportunities for those who have limited education, are unemployed, confronted by an impoverished existence and lack social support. Confronted by the dire need to survive and meet the most basic of needs, these women find themselves in a position where they are often at the mercy of others and merely endure their situation. This reality is further amplified by the sheer cost of living in relation to the wages earned. Currently the minimum sectoral wage in South Africa equates to less than one US dollar per hour (South Africa 2013, 2014), which was deemed inadequate by the participants. Nevertheless, the alternative prospect of "no income" was viewed as counterproductive. Participants voiced the belief that "any money is better than no money." This is indicative of the position domestic workers still find themselves in – impoverished and unable to effect change. They are so dependent on the limited income that they do earn that the prospect of potential job losses, should they attempt to alter their working context, inhibits their willingness to voice their concerns. Admittedly the notion of being empowered is an enigmatic idea for these women, given the daily hardships they have to confront.

The first step in empowering domestic workers is to acknowledge the gravity of their disempowered state. Because their position is often described in financial terms and related to the fulfilment of basic needs, the ability of domestic workers to effect change themselves is undervalued. The proclamation and implementation of legislated reform in South Africa has partially levelled the power balance within the employer-employee relationship. Stipulated minimum wages and employment standards act as the benchmark for cultivating positive engagement between employer and domestic worker. Unfortunately, the mere proclamation of legislation does not equate to spontaneous compliance. Although the purpose of this study was not to assess legislative compliance, participants' accounts of their daily realities were in many instances indicative of noncompliance by the employer. The ability and willingness of domestic workers to confront their employers was, however, impaired by a sense of fear-based disempowerment. This is indicative of the lack of alternatives that characterises employment within this sector and the perceived consequences of potential job losses should they engage their employer in a discussion on their employment conditions (Bell 2008). Tangirala and Ramanujam (2012) describe this as

a "mediation chain" of continuously judging the perceived influence their voice might have prior to consultation with the employer. The perceived willingness of the employer to discuss these conditions further influences the employees' willingness to voice their opinions or remain silent (Landau 2009; Burris 2012).

Employee voice is an inherent aspect of all employment relationships (Wilkinson & Fay 2011). Fear-based disempowerment, however, is an inhibiting internal motivational state that dampens the spirit of an employee's voice. This silence – a noticeable absence of voice – is attributed in part to the invisible nature and context of the low-status work being performed behind closed doors. Fear that leads to a non-confrontational mood of engagement between the employer and the employee often gives rise to internal and interpersonal conflict, misunderstanding and dissatisfaction (Horn 2004). A lack of legislative awareness, we argue, adds to the insecurities that fuel the nature of this engagement and reinforces the entrenched subordinate position of domestic workers.

To bring about change and establish a new way of thinking requires the effective implementation, monitoring and enforcement of legal instruments (Hobden 2011). However, monitoring compliance within private households as place of employment is easier said than done (Fish 2006; Tomei & Belser 2011). The literature also notes that there is a general lack of visible enforcement and regulation by authorities within the sector (Matjeke, Viljoen & Blaauw 2012). The over-reliance by domestic workers on the efforts of others – the Department of Labour – to effect change on their behalf and the general mistrust in these authorities voiced by participants signal the need for an alternative approach to bringing about positive employment conditions. Engaging the parties in this relationship ultimately holds the key to true empowerment of the sector. Legislative awareness campaigns have mainly been focused so far on the legislative obligations of the employer and the consequences of noncompliance.

Legal rights education should be viewed as an enabling tool that can enhance domestic workers' resourcefulness within their own employment context. Taking ownership of this process will increase their ability to confront noncompliant employment contexts and enhance existing positive employment relationships. This empowerment aim can be attained through information sharing and legislative awareness. Not only will this sanction domestic workers' rights to assert their expectations of employment standards with confidence, it will also enable them to use the judicial system to their advantage without fear of inviting some form of corrective action.

Empowerment is about having and exercising choice (Hogan 2000). As long as domestic workers lack this choice they are not empowered. It is argued that empowerment efforts that contribute to enhancing these levels of self-determination (Spreitzer 1995; Spreitzer 1996; Spreitzer 2007; Stander & Rothmann 2010) will reinforce positive employment relations between the various role players in the sector. This result would be driven by the domestic workers' purposefully taking ownership of their own employment engagement and consequent outcomes. The notion of self-monitoring is already apparent in participants' accounts of how they "check up on their employers" to see whether the employer has registered them for UIF purposes. The domestic worker's voice should constitute an upward expression with a constructive agenda (Tangirala & Ramanujam 2012). This requires first-hand knowledge of the various stipulated employment standards that ought to govern their employment relationship. It is, however, vital that employees recognise any presence of a pseudo voice – where opportunities are granted for them to voice concerns without the intention

of really considering the input (De Vries, Jehn & Terwel 2012). This kind of voice would be counterproductive to the intended empowerment efforts of government within the South African domestic worker sector. The call for greater reform within the domestic sector through a collective voice therefore still remains an urgent issue despite reforms to date.

5 Recommendations and practical implications of research findings

Heightened legislative awareness can result in empowered actions. We recommend that further research efforts focus on the development of an awareness programme specifically aimed at empowering domestic workers with sound legislative knowledge. This should form the basis of an ongoing rollout programme by the Department of Labour aimed at empowering domestic workers within their employment context. This will not only sensitise sectoral role players to the everyday realities of domestic workers even further, but also contribute to an understanding of the need for responsible employment engagement within the private household context. Such a programme will, however, have to accommodate the unique demographics of the sector. Labour inspectors' sectoral involvement and increased visibility should be directed towards enabling self-advocacy among domestic workers rather than merely "policing" employers' compliance levels. The role of the employer as potential empowerment catalyst in the development of the employee voice needs to be further explored and advocated. We suggest that the primary focus should be on enhancing positive employment relations within the sector, which in turn could spill over into the broader South African labour context.

6 Limitations

This study was limited to the experiences shared by participating domestic workers, all of whom worked in an urban setting. The views of other sectoral role players were not sought. In addition, the actual levels of legislative awareness were not formally assessed owing to the epistemological stance of this article.

7 Conclusion

This article has advocated the need for the employees' voice to be heard within the employer-domestic worker relationship. The voices of domestic workers are often silent because of their sense of fear-based disempowerment. We suggest that in order to amplify these voices and thereby empower thousands of women to be co-constructors of a positive employment engagement, more awareness of the legislation should be created. The voice of the domestic worker is a fragile aspect of their lived realities, and often dependent on the work context. Building the competencies of the domestic worker's voice requires empowerment efforts that are directed towards assuming self-ownership of their future engagement, based on factual knowledge of the relevant legislative stipulations. Empowerment and legislative awareness should therefore coincide. Legislative awareness has the potential to empower this historically disenfranchised sector of the South African labour market through the active participation of domestic workers. Employee voice is the catalyst for legislative awareness to be transformed into action, resulting in improved employment conditions and relationships. The key to empowering the domestic worker sector lies in the ability

of this sector to establish dialogue between employees and their employers where the dialogue is based on their knowledge of legislation and is free from fear of retaliation.

List of references

Abrantes, M. 2013. A matter of decency? Persistent tensions in the regulation of domestic service. *Revista de Estudios Sociales* 45:110-122.

Agimba, C, Butegwa, F, Osakue, G & Nduna, S. 1994. *Legal rights awareness among women in Africa: A handbook for non-lawyer legal educators*. Women in Law and Development in Africa: Harare.

Ally, S. 2005. Caring about care workers: Organising in the female shadow of globalisation. *Labour, Capital and Society* 38(1):185-207.

Ally, S. 2008. Domestic worker unionisation in post-apartheid South Africa: Demobilisation and depoliticisation by the democratic state. *Politikon* 35(1):1-21.

Ally, S. 2011. On laws, rights and conventions: A provocation. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13(3):457-461.

Annan, K. 1997. Address delivered at the World Bank Conference, *Global Knowledge '97*. Toronto, Canada: United Nations.

Archer, S. 2011. "Buying the maid Ricoffy": Domestic workers, employers and food. *South African Review of Sociology* 42(2):66-82.

Avey, JB, Wernsing, TS & Palanski, ME. 2012. Exploring the process of ethical leadership: The mediating role of employee voice and psychological ownership. *Journal of Business Ethics* 107:21-34.

Baden, S. 2013. Women's collective action in African agricultural markets: The limits of current development practice for rural women's empowerment. *Gender and Development* 21(2):295-311.

Bagchi, A. 2011. Who should talk? What counts as employee voice and who stands to gain. *Marquette Law Review*. University of Pennsylvania Law School.

Bazeley, P. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis: Practical strategies*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bekker, QE & Crous, F. 1998. Demystifying empowerment. *Journal of Industrial Psychology* 24(2):34-43.

Bell, DA. 2008. Employers and domestic workers. *Dissent* 55(1):91-100.

Benson, J & Brown, M. 2010. Employee voice: Does union membership matter? *Human Resource Management Journal* 20(1):80-99.

Bernard, HR. 2013. *Social research methods: Qualitative and quantitative approaches*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Bhorat, H, Kanbur, R & Mayet, N. 2013. The impact of sectoral minimum wage laws on employment, wages, and hours of work in South Africa. *Journal of Labor and Development* 2(1):1-27.

Blaauw, PF & Bothma, LJ. 2010. The impact of minimum wages for domestic workers in Bloemfontein, South Africa. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management* 8(1):1-7.

Blackett, A. 2011. Introduction: Regulating decent work for domestic workers. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 23:1-45.

Bloch, A. 2007. Doing social surveys. In: Seale, C. (Ed.) *Researching society and culture*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Burris, ER. 2012. The risk and rewards of speaking up: Managerial responses to employee voice. *Academy of Management Journal* 55(4):851-875.

Burrow, S. 2011. Decent work is not a slogan. *OECD Observer* 282/283:45-46.

Bushe, G.R. 2007. Appreciative enquiry is not (just) about the positive. *OD Practitioner* 39(4):30-35.

Byrne, B. 2012. Qualitative interviewing. In: SEALE, C. (Ed.) *Researching society and culture*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Cavaleros, C, Van Vuuren, LJ & Visser, D. 2002. The effectiveness of a diversity awareness training programme. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* 28(3):50-61.

Chalofsky, NE. 2010. *Meaningful workplaces*. San Francisco: Wiley and Sons.

Cock, J. 2011. Challenging the invisibility of domestic workers. *South African Review of Sociology* 42(2):132-133.

Creswell, JW. 2014. *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. 4th edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Curle, A. 1972. *Mystics and militants: A study of awareness, identity and social action*. London: Tavistock.

Daniel, J. 2012. Sampling essentials: *Practical guidelines for making sampling choices*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

De Vries, G, Jehn, KA & Terwel, BW. 2012. When employees stop talking and start fighting: The detrimental effects of pseudo voice in organisation. *Journal of Business Ethics* 105:221-230.

Decuir-Gunby, JT, Marshall, PL & McCulloch, AW. 2011. Developing and using a codebook for the analysis of interview data: An example from a professional development research project. *Field Methods* 23(2):136-155.

Denscombe, M. 2011. *The good research guide for small-scale social research projects*. Berkshire: McGraw-Hill.

Department of Labour. 2002. *Recommendations of the Employment Conditions Commission on the investigation into the domestic worker sector*. Pretoria.

Department of Labour. 2014. Department of labour resumes discussions on domestic workers minimum wage review and conditions of employment. Available at: www.labour.gov.za/DOL/media-desk/media-statements/2014/department-of-labour-resumes-discussions-on-domestic-workers-minimum-wage-review-and-conditions-of-employment/?searchterm=domestic%20work (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Deschaux-Beaume, D. 2012. Investigating the military field: Qualitative research strategy and interviewing. *Current Sociology* 60(1):101-117.

Dinkelman, T & Ranchhod, V. 2010. *Evidence on the impact of minimum wage laws in an informal sector: Domestic workers in South Africa.* Working Paper No 44. Cape Town, South Africa: Southern Africa Labour and Development Research Unit, University of Cape Town.

Easterby-Smith, M, Thorpe, R & Jackson, P. 2012. *Management research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Englander, M. 2012. The interview: Data collection in descriptive phenomenological human scientific research. *Journal of Phenomenological Psychology* 43:13-35.

Fish, JN. 2006. Engendering democracy: Domestic labour and coalition-building in South Africa. *Journal of Southern African Studies* 32(1):107-127.

Fisher, J, Katz, L, Miller, K & Thatcher, A. 2003. *South Africa at work*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press.

Fox, W & Bayat, MS. 2013. *A guide to managing research*. Cape Town: Juta.

Froman, L. 2010. Positive psychology in the workplace. *Journal of Adult Development* 17:59-69.

Glesne, C. 2011. *Becoming qualitative researchers: An introduction*. Boston: Pearson.

Greasley, K, Bryman, A, Dainty, A, Price, A, Soetanto, R & King, N. 2005. Employee perceptions of empowerment. *Employee Relations* 27(4):354-368.

Griffin, L. 2011. Unravelling rights: "Illegal" migrant domestic workers in South Africa. *South African Review of Sociology* 42(2):83-101.

Gurung, SH. 2009. Nepali female migrants and informalisation of domestic care work: Service or servitude? *Journal of Workplace Rights* 14(3):375-396.

Hammond, M & Wellington, J. 2013. *Research methods: The key concepts*. New York: Routledge.

Harding, J. 2013. *Qualitative data analysis from start to finish*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Hategekimana, C. 2011. Women's empowerment in the post-1994 Rwanda: The case study of Mayaga region. Doctoral thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

Hill, CE & Nutt Williams, E. 2012. The sample. In: Hill, CE (Ed.) *Consensual qualitative research: A practical resource for investigating social science phenomena*. Washington: American Psychological Association.

Hobden, C. 2011. Revisiting a history through international labour law. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 13(3):451-456.

Hogan, C. 2000. *Facilitating empowerment.* Sterling: Stylus.

Horn, A. 2004. *Face it: Recognising and conquering the hidden fear that drives all conflict at work.* New York: Amacom.

Huy, QN. 2012. Improving the odds of publishing inductive qualitative research in premier academic journals. *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 48(2):282-287.

ILO. 2011. Convention and recommendation concerning decent work for domestic workers. *International Labour Review* 150(3-4):439-454.

ILO. 2013a. Domestic workers across the world: Global and regional statistics and the extent of legal protection. Geneva: International Labour Office.

ILO. 2013b. Who are domestic workers. Geneva: International Labour Office. Available from: www.ilo.org/global/topics/domestic-workers/WCMS_209773/lang--en/index.htm (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Jose, PE, Ryan, N & Pryor, J. 2012. Does social connectedness promote a greater sense of well-being in adolescence over time? *Journal of Research on Adolescence* 22(2):235-251.

Kennedy, EJ. 2010. The invisible corner: Expanding workplace rights for female day laborers. *Berkeley Journal of Employment and Labor Law* 31(1):126-159.

Kirkevold, M & Bergland, AD. 2007. The quality of qualitative data: Issues to consider when interviewing participants who have difficulties providing detailed accounts of their experiences. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies on Health and Well-being* 2:68-75.

Knoll, M & Van Dick, R. 2013. Do I hear the whistle...? A first attempt to measure four forms of employee silence and their correlates. *Journal of Business Ethics* 113: 349-362.

Landau, J. 2009. When employee voice is met by deaf ears. *SAM Advanced Management Journal* 74(1):4-12.

Lapan, SD, Quartaroli, MT & Riemer, FJ. 2012. Introduction to qualitative research. In: Lapan, SD, Quartaroli, MT & Riemer, FJ (Eds.) *Qualitative research: Introduction to methods and designs*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Layder, D. 2013. *Doing excellent small-scale research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lichtman, M. 2014. *Qualitative research for the social sciences*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Loseke, DR. 2013. *Methodological thinking: Basic principles of social science design*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Maher, KH & Staab, S. 2005. Nanny politics. *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 7(1):71-89.

Mangqalaza, H. 2012. The economic worth of domestic workers in South Africa. Master's dissertation, Tshwane University of Technology.

Mann, H. 1993. Patterns of human awareness and action: An interpretation of Ghandi's world view in comparative perspective. Master's dissertation, University of Cape Town.

Marais, C. 2007. Labour legislation in Emfuleni's domestic worker sector: Awareness and compliance. Master's dissertation, Vaal University of Technology.

Marais, C. 2009. Labour legislation in Emfuleni's domestic worker sector: Awareness and compliance. *South African Journal of Labour Relations* 33(1):65-85.

Matjeke, A, Viljoen, JM & Blaauw, PF. 2012. The effect of labour market regulation on domestic workers in Orchards and Soshanguve, Pretoria. *South African Journal of Human Resource Management* 10(1):1-11.

MAXQDA 1989–2013. MAXQDA, software for qualitative data analysis. Berlin, Germany: VerbiSoftware.

Meyer, HWJ. 2002. Information as a resource for rural development. *Mousaion* 20(1):93-108.

Middaugh, L. 2012. Lessons from the "unorganisable" domestic workers organising. *Kennedy School Review* 12:12-13.

Miles, BM, Hunberman, AM & Saldaña, J. 2014. *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook.* Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Mills, MJ, Fleck, CR & Kozikowski, A. 2013. Positive psychology at work: A conceptual review, state-of-practice assessment, and a look ahead. *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 8(2):153-164.

Mkandawire-Valhmu, L, Rodriguez, R, Ammar, N & Nemoto, K. 2009. Surviving life as a woman: A critical ethnography of violence in the lives of female domestic workers in Malawi. *Health Care for Women International* 30(9):783-801.

Molema, TM. 2011. Educational needs of domestic workers in Pietersburg circuit – Polokwane. Master's dissertation, University of Limpopo.

Morrison, E. 2011. Employee voice behavior: Integration and directions for future research. *The Academy of Management Annals* 5(1):373-412.

Moya, JC. 2007. Domestic service in a global perspective: Gender, migration and ethnic niches. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 33(4):559-579.

Municipal Demarcation Board: Emfuleni Local Municipality. 2011. Available at: www.demarcation.org.za/pages/downloads/maps/Gauteng/GT421.zip (accessed on 11 March 2011).

Neetha, N & Palriwala, R. 2011. The absence of state law: Domestic workers in India. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 23:97-119.

Nieuwenhuis, J. 2011. Analysing qualitative data. In: Maree, K (Ed.) *First steps in research*. Pretoria: Van Schaik.

Pereira, PPG. 2008. Anthropology and human rights: Between silence and voice. *Anthropology and Humanism* 33(1/2):38-52.

Phillips, N. 2003. *Fear without loathing: Why life/work balance doesn't matter but you do*. Oxford: Capstone.

Phillips, L. 2011. "I am alone. I am a woman. What are my children going to eat?" Domestic workers and family networks. *South African Review of Sociology* 42 (2):29-44.

Porter, E. 2013. Rethinking women's empowerment. *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development* 8(1):1-14.

Quinlan, C. 2011. *Business research methods*. Hampshire: Cengage.

Rich, D. 2004. *How to click with everyone every time*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Rivas, C. 2012. Coding and analysing qualitative data. In: Seale, C (Ed.) *Researching society and culture*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Rosenberg, JS. 2013. Strengthening women's collectiveness: Qualitative research informs pathways' programming in India. Pathways to Secure Livelihoods. Available at: www.carepathwaystoempowerment.org/strengthening-womens-collectives-qualitative-research-informs-pathways-programming-india/ (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Rubin, HJ & Rubin, I. 2012. *Qualitative interviewing: The art of hearing data*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Saldaña, J. 2013. *The coding manual for qualitative researchers*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Schensul, JJ. 2012. Methodology, methods, and tools in qualitative research. In: Lapan, SD, Quartaroli, MT & Riemer, FJ (eds.), *Qualitative research: Introduction to methods and design*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Schwandt, TA. 2003. Three epistemological stances for qualitative inquiry: Interpretivism, hermeneutics and social constructionism. In: Denzin, NK & Lincoln, YS (eds.), *The landscape of qualitative research: Theories and issues*. 2nd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Seale, C. 2012. Sampling. In: Seale, C. (Ed.) *Researching society and culture*. 3rd edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Seligman, M.E.P. & Csikszentmihalyi, M. 2000. Positive psychology: An introduction. *American Psychologist* 55(1):5-14.

Shields, LE. 1995. Women's experience of the meaning of empowerment. *Qualitative Health Research* 5(1):15-35.

Smith, JA & Eatough, V. 2008. Interprative phenomenological analysis. In: Lyons, E & Coyle, A (Eds.) *Analysing qualitative data in psychology*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

South Africa. 1995. Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. *Government Gazette*, 366 (16861). Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. 1997. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997. *Government Gazette*, 390 (18491). Pretoria: Government Printer.

South Africa. 2002. Sectoral Determination 7: Domestic Worker Sector, South Africa. (1068). *Government Gazette* 446(23732), 15 August:1-38.

South Africa. 2013. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Sectoral Determination 7: Domestic Worker Sector. (36933). *Goverment Gazette*. Available from: www.greengazette.co.za/documents/national-gazette-36933-of-15-october-2013-vol-580_20131015-GGN-36933.pdf (accessed on 28 October 2015).

South Africa. 2014. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997, Correction notice: Sectoral Determination 7: Domestic Worker Sector. (38254). *Goverment Gazette*. Available at: http://us-cdn.creamermedia.co.za/assets/articles/attachments/52876_n953.pdf (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Sparks, A. 2011. [Review of the book *From servants to workers: South African domestic workers and the democratic state*, by S. Ally]. *Industrial Relations* 66(3):486-488.

Spreitzer, GM. 1995. Psychological empowerment in the workplace: Dimensions, measurements and validation. *Academy of Management Journal* 38(5):1442-1465.

Spreitzer, GM. 1996. Social structural characteristics of psychological empowerment. *Academy of Management Journal* 39(2):483-504.

Spreitzer, GM. 2007. Taking stock: A review of more than twenty years of research on empowerment at work. In: Cooper, C & Barling, J (Eds.) *The handbook of organisational behaviour*. London: Sage.

Stander, MW & Rothmann, S. 2009. Psychological empowerment of employees in selected organisations in South Africa. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* 35(1):196-203.

Stander, MW & Rothmann, S. 2010. Psychological empowerment, job insecurity and employee engagement. *South African Journal of Industrial Psychology* 36(1):1-8.

Stats SA. 2010. *Quarterly labour force survey: Quarter 1*. Pretoria, South Africa: Statistics South Africa.

Stats SA. 2013. *Quarterly labour force survey: Quarter 3*. Pretoria, South Africa: Statistics South Africa.

Stats SA. 2014a. *Poverty trends in South Africa: An examination of absolute poverty between 2006 and 2011.* Available at: http://www.beta2.statssa.gov.za/publications/ Report-03-10-06/Report-03-10-06March2014.pdf (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Stats SA. 2014b. *Quarterly labour force survey: Quarter 3 (July to September)*, *2014.* Avaiable at: http://www.statssa.gov.za/?p=3453 (accessed on 28 October 2015).

Styres, S. 2008. The silent monologue: The voice within the space. *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* 4(2):89-101.

Tangirala, S & Ramanujam, R. 2012. Ask and you shall hear (but not always): Examining the relationship between manager consultation and employee voice. *Personnel Psychology* 65(2):251-282.

Tesch, R. 1990. *Qualitative research: Analysis types and software tools*. Abingdon, England: Routledge.

Thomas, KW. 2009. *Intrinsic motivation at work*. San Francisco: Berret-Koehler.

Tomei, M. 2011. Decent work for domestic workers: Reflections on recent approaches to tackle informality. *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 23(1):185-212.

Tomei, M & Belser, P. 2011. New ILO standards on decent work for domestic workers: A summary of the issues and discussions. *International Labour Review* 150(3-4):431-438.

Tsikata, D. 2011. Employment agencies and the regulation of domestic workers in Ghana: Institutionalising informality? *Canadian Journal of Women and the Law* 23(1):213-234.

Valentini, E. 2012. Giving voice to employees and spreading information within the firm: The manner matters. *Journal of Knowledge Management, Economics and Information Technology* 2(4):1-7.

Van Niekerk, A. 2003. *Employing a domestic worker*. Claremont: Siber Ink.

Volti, R. 2008. *An introduction to the sociology of work and occupations*. Thousand Oaks: Pine Forge Press.

Wagner, JIJ, Cummings, G, Smith, DL, Olson, J, Anderson, L & Warren, S. 2010. The relationship between structural empowerment and psychological empowerment for nurses: A systematic review. *Journal of Nursing Management* 18:448-462.

Walker, R. 2008. Mitigating the fear of retaliation: Helping employees feel comfortable reporting suspected misconduct. *Journal of Health Care Compliance* 10(2):19-24.

Wilkinson, A & Fay, C. 2011. Guest editors' note: New times for employee voices? *Human Resource Management* 50(1):65-74.

Witbooi, M. 2011. South Africa has just recognised United Nations Convention C189 to ensure the labour protection of domestic workers. Available at: www.sadsawu.com/.

Woolman, S & Bishop, M. 2007. Down on the farm and barefoot in the kitchen: Farm labour and domestic labour as forms of servitude. *Development Southern Africa* 24(4):595-606.

Yeap, LL & Myint, L. 2005. *To empower, be empowered*. Singapore: McGraw-Hill.

Zikmund, WG, Babin, BJ, Carr, JC & Griffin, M. 2013. *Business research methods*. Manson: Cengage.

Zimmerman, MA. 1995. Psychological empowerment: Issues and illustrations. *American Journal of Community Psychology* 23:581-599.

Zungu, LI. 2009. Employment conditions and challenges associated with being a domestic worker in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa. *Occupational Health Southern Africa*, March/April**,** 15(2):16-21.