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Applying the nominal group technique in an employment relations conflict: A case study of a university maintenance section in South Africa

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Abstract

After a breakdown in employment relations in the maintenance section of a higher education institution, the authors were asked to intervene in order to try and solve the employment relations conflict situation. It was decided to employ the Nominal Group Technique (NGT) as a tool in problem identification during conflict in the workplace. An initial investigation of documentation and interviews with prominent individuals in the organisation was carried out. The NGT was then used in four focus group discussions to determine the important issues as seen by staff members.

The NGT facilitates the determination of shared perceptions and the ranking of ideas. The NGT was used in diverse groups, necessitating adaptations to the technique. The perceived causes of the conflict were established. The NGT can be used in a conflict situation in the workplace in order to establish the perceived causes of employment relations conflict.

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