

An Exploration of Situational Leadership Support and Impact on Ghanaian SME Hotels

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Abstract

The Ghanaian hotel industry which is categorised under the tertiary sector and dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accounts for over half of tourist accommodation and contributes more to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Ghana than the other industries. Ghanaian SME hotels are however acknowledged to lack professional and multidisciplinary competent staff, who are characterised with high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance and affected by collectivist societal factors. Scholarly debate on the mechanisms through which leadership supports SME employee's competence development, for effective service delivery in the hotel industry is therefore inconclusive.

The aim of this research is to explore situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development and identify contextual factors, that need to be considered alongside employee readiness levels when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model.

Ghanaian SME hotel managers who often double as owner-leaders tend to exhibit the use of less structured leadership styles to support their employees competence development. Interventions within Ghanaian SME hotels are therefore likely to be affected by their behaviour, culture, beliefs, and form of business ownership due to their proximity to employees.

Limited research has showcased the different situational leadership styles used by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to support the competence development of their employees who are characterized as being first-time employees, senior high school (SHS) or vocational school leavers with no or limited competence and are also

placed in an industry characterised by high levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long working hours, and mood swings.

This research is underpinned by an interpretivist philosophy using a case study strategy to create new, deeper understanding and interpretations of social worlds and contexts using semi-structured interviews and hotel records from ten Ghanaian SME hotels to provide in-depth information to achieve the research aim and objectives. The data analysis process was implemented alongside data collection. The researcher adopted the use of thematic analysis supported by CAQDAT (NVivo) to analyse data and adopted the Gioia approach to presenting the results.

Findings revealed on-the-job training, use of the scrum system, face-to-face discussions, aligning staff passion to job roles, allowing staff initiative-taking, task-assignment and social and financial support as the leadership practices Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply to support their employees competence development, which are align with the four situational leadership styles. On-the-job training, which aligns with the directing and coaching styles within situational leadership model is used as a major managerial employee competence development practice by Ghanaian SME hotel managers. This is due to Ghanaian SME hotels liability of smallness, their rarely receipt of job applications from qualified staff, the lack of professionally trained key employees like receptionists, specific to the hotel industry, its associated cost-effectiveness and being focused on employee's training needs.

The research builds on current understanding of situational leadership support on employee's competence development, and develops a novel model recognising culture, family ties and religious factors as key contextual factors in the leadership process that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level at the various development levels. It also aligned Ghanaian SME hotel managers

leadership practices with situational leadership directive and supportive leader behaviours, to provide guidance on how managers or leaders can support the development of their employee's competence for effective service delivery to achieve organisational objectives.

Author Declaration

I declare that the work in this thesis is original and was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Worcester, except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of this thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award nor has it been presented to any other educational institution in the United Kingdom or overseas. Any views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University of Worcester.



Nurideen Alhassan Signed -----

Date: 14/7/2023-----

Dedication

The dedication of this study is to glorify Almighty God for seeing me through this journey amidst my health and family challenges throughout this Doctoral Study. To my late father, Alhaji Alhassan Adam (Me and You) and my lovely Mother, Hajia Adisah Alhassan for a wonderful upbringing and support. My late brother Luqman and to the love of my life Ruhiya, my children Fawaz, Fareeda, Firdaus and Fida-ah and the entire “Me and You” family for their love, encouragement, sacrifice, and patience throughout this Doctoral study, I am grateful.

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I would also like to thank all the managers and employees of the participating hotels in Ghana who willingly took time out of their busy schedules to answer all my interview questions. Without their inputs, this research would not have been possible.

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List of Abbreviations

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CAQDAT	Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Technique
D1	Employees with No Competence
D2	Employees with Low Competence
D3	Employees with Medium competence
D4	Employees with Professional Competence
DL	Distributed Leadership
EC	Employee Competence
ECD	Employee Competence Development
EE	Employee Engagement
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GHI	Ghanaian Hotel Industry
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Council
GSS	Ghana statistical Service
GTA	Ghana Tourism Authority
HACCP	Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Points
HI	Hotel Industry
HND	Higher National Diploma
LMX	Leader Member Exchange
MOTI	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MSED	Micro and Small Enterprise Development
MSME	Micro Small and Medium Enterprises
NBSSI	National Board for Small Scale Industries
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development

PE	Psychological Empowerment
POS	Perceived Organizational Support
RTF	Rich Text Format
S1	Directing Style
S2	Coaching Style
S3	Supporting Style
S4	Delegating Style
SHS	Senior High School
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SSNIT	Social Security and National Insurance Trust
TA	Thematic Analysis
TaTU	Tamale Technical University
T&D	Training and Development
TL	Transformational Leadership
UAE	The United Arab Emirates
UDS	University for Development Studies
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

Chapter One.

1.0 Introduction and Research Overview

1.1 Introduction

The support for the development of employee competence reflects the leadership styles adopted by leaders or managers operational within organizations. The training received by prospective employees from educational institutions and training providers is assumed to be different from the skills and competences required by employers in the job market. This has resulted in competence mismatch in most industries, impacting not only on the individual but society as a whole (Škrinjarić, 2022). To address this mismatch which increases operational cost and employees workload within organizations (Shury et al., 2010), the leadership styles adopted by leaders and managers will play a key role to support and develop the practical and cognitive (Hughes et al, 2018) competences as well as employees commitment within organizations (Tripathi et al., 2021) to achieve stated organizational goals. However, the difficulty in selecting the best leadership style by managers or leaders for effective leadership (Thompson & Glaso, 2015) has overwhelmed researchers especially Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) who are disadvantaged by their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012).

Laying the foundation for this research, this chapter presents an overview of the research, including the research context and research justifications, which explains the motivation of the researcher in this topic. The chapter also highlights the research gap, research questions and objectives, the proposed contribution to knowledge and concludes with the structure of this research.

1.2 Geographical Context of the Research

Ghana has developed a reputation as one of the more stable countries in West Africa spanning from 1992 when it transitioned to multi-party democracy. Gold Coast as it was formally known, Ghana gained independence from Britain in 1957, becoming the first sub-Saharan nation to break free from colonial rule. Gold, cocoa and more recently oil form the cornerstone of Ghana's economy have helped fuel an economic boom (BBC Monitoring, 2020). It has a Population of 30.832 million, with an area of 238,533 square kilometres (GSS, 2021).

The major languages used as medium of communication is English, African languages including Akan, Ewe and Dagbani whilst the major religious practices are Islam, Christianity, and indigenous beliefs. Life expectancy for men is around 64 years whilst that of women is 66 years with a legal tender called the Ghanaian Cedi (BBC Monitoring, 2020).

Ghana predominantly has a collectivist culture (Akoensi, 2018) with a very high-power distance based on exploring Hofstede cultural dimension (Danquah, 2018; Ansah, 2015). This means that people accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place, and which needs no further justification. Respect for family, spirituality (Akoensi, 2018), position, age, wealth, and other attributes are therefore very paramount among individuals in society and in organisations.

Consequently, the differences between cultures, particularly in terms of the values, attitudes and behaviours of individuals, and their divergence has implications for leadership in organisations (Hofstede & Hofstede, 2005) in Ghana. What employees will accept as an ideal and effective leaders style, for example, in the western world may not be the case in some cultures in Ghana (Dotse & Asumeng, 2014).

As part of the country's restructuring aimed to deliver tailor-made governmental support to its targeted industries, Aduhene & Osei-Assibey (2021) reiterates that the Ghanaian economy has been sectioned into three sectors namely, primary, secondary, and tertiary sectors. The primary sector consists of the agriculture and allied sector such as mining, fishing, and forestry. Service industries including industries involved in the manufacturing and production processes are categorized under the secondary sector whilst the tertiary sector involves all service provision industries like information technology, hotels, restaurants, education, real estate, banking, transport, travel, and tourism industry.

The average annual growth rate of Ghana's economy has not exceeded 6.3% for the last two decades accounting for 5.36% for the years 2000-2009 and 6.83% for the years 2010-2018 with the tourism and hospitality sectors which is dominated by SMEs contributing more to the GDP of Ghana than the other sectors (World Bank, 2019a) and hence places SMEs as the backbone of the Ghanaian economy as they make up about 92 per cent of businesses in Ghana (Asunka, 2017).

SMEs growth and sustainability is key to the economic development of every economy (Boadu, 2016; Chit, 2018), they are the highest contributors to GDP (Iqbal, Johl & Yussof, 2015), makes up 95% of companies in OECD countries and 99% of all businesses in the European Union (Ormazabal., Prieto-Sandoval, Puga-Leal & Jaca, 2018), and most SMEs act as the pivot to large organizations (Thanki & Thakkar, 2018).

The contribution of SMEs to the GDP of Ghana would have been more if government could account for all SMEs operating in Ghana due to their informal nature as there are an estimated 2.1 million businesses in the Ghanaian micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) sector creating an estimated 3.9 million jobs, employing roughly

2.5 million people at an average of 1-2 jobs created per micro enterprise per year. The small enterprises accounts for 15% of all SMEs, with about 320,000 businesses, accounting for 23% of all MSME jobs (1.9 million employees), thus 6 jobs created per small enterprise per year. Medium enterprises comprise of about 85,000 enterprises, making up 4% of all SMEs and contributing about 47% of the total MSME employment (approximately 3.9 million jobs), thus an average of about 46 jobs created per medium enterprise per year (Ministry of Trade and Industry MSME Policy Report, 2019).

The Ministry of Trade and Industry of Ghana (MOTI), (2019) Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) policy report reiterated that MSMEs are an integral part of the Ghanaian economy, and their importance is even more magnified, as they generate 70% of national output and employing more than 80% of the workforce. They constitute around 92% of businesses in Ghana, account for about 85% of manufacturing employment and contribute about 70% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

The inability of Government to account for all SMEs in Ghana is due to the fact that SMEs are grouped into two according to Kayanula & Quartey (2000), thus urban and rural SMEs. Urban SMEs are sub-categorised into “organized” and “unorganized”. Kayanula & Quartey (2000) further reiterated that the “organised” SMEs are those having paid employees with registered offices and the payment of employees social security and national insurance trust (SSNIT) whilst the “unorganised” and rural SMEs are the ones operating in temporary wooden structures, sometimes with no salaried employees and hence making it difficult for government agencies to recognize their contribution to economic development at the national level.

Due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012) as compared to large organisations, Ghanaian SMEs are characterized more as labour intensive with lower capital costs associated with job creation, mostly registered under sole proprietorship form of businesses, prevalence of largely informal employer-employee relationships, and owner's family members involvement in the activities of the business. They are also characterized with more owner-power for decision-making as SMEs tend to revolve around their owner-managers with a larger portion of their workforce split between hired staff, trainees, or apprentices (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019).

Given the relevance of SMEs to the health of any economic system, it is common within the history of Ghana to support the survival and growth of SMEs and hence the focus of a number of reports in Ghana, have called for new strategic directions if SMEs wants to sustain their competitiveness and financial success in the future (Ohene-Konadu, 2008). Researchers from both advanced and emerging countries, have underscored the need for SME development, necessitated by the increasing role that SMEs play in every economy (Abor & Quartey, 2001: Obi et al., 2018: OECD,2017: Tehseen, 2019).

The source of this standpoint is based on the peculiar problems relating to their limited resources and range of technological competencies: owners/managers interference in decision-making: dependence on limited customer base and suppliers: and focus on the efficiency of current operations (Badger et al., 2001). Specific to Ghana, challenges and constraints inhibiting the development of MSMEs include inadequate data on MSMEs, limited access to credit or finance, limited access to equipment and technology, inadequate entrepreneurial and managerial

skills, Regulatory and legal constraints, and limited access to market intelligence (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019).

Aryeetey and Ahene (2005) noted that old roles are being performed by older organisations amidst emerging initiative with the Ministry of Trade and Industry still retaining the primary responsibility for the indigenous private sector most of which are SMEs. Aryeetey & Ahene (2005) further noted that due to the severity of segmentation of SMEs, various other ministries have responsibility for implementing and promoting SME matters, including the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of Food and Agriculture and the Ministry of Tourism. Other agencies charged with the same responsibilities include the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), Ghana Free Zones Board and Ghana Export Promotion Council.

A specific development policy relative to MSME is non-existent in Ghana as the prevailing initiatives for enhancing the development of MSMEs in Ghana according to MOTI (2019) are enshrined in other government policy documents. These policy documents which include the MSME development is inherent in the Ghana Shared Growth and Development Agenda (2014 -2018) as activities within the Private Sector and Competitiveness Cluster. The Micro and Small Enterprise Development (MSED) is also addressed as a sub-sector within the MOTI Private Sector Development Strategy which is skewed towards small, medium and large enterprises, and the MSED is integrated into the Ghana Industrial Policy (2013) as a sub-sector. Again, the MSED initiatives are integrated within the Economic Development Term Plan (2014-2018): and finally, the MSED initiatives are integrated within MOTI Medium Term Plan (2014-2018) (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019, p.2).

This has prompted the Government of Ghana to roll out an initiative to support over 5000 SMEs and to oversee and implement a 10-year SME master plan to improve SME competitiveness and growth, foster high growth potential, upgrade skills and job opportunities by addressing skills mismatch, upgrading human capital and increasing market access and exports (Adams & Appiah, 2018).

Despite these initiatives, extant research in the Ghanaian SME sector indicates that government policies on taxation, access to finance and imports do not provide sufficient incentives to Ghanaian SMEs (Attrams & Tshehla, 2022). Consequently, Ghanaian SMEs are still struggling with high tax bills, limited access to finance and the importation of inferior goods which are affecting their development (Attrams & Tshehla, 2022; Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018).

1.3 The Ghanaian Hotel Industry

Evidence suggests that most hotel employees are always in the front line, and hence play a crucial role in service delivery (Terglav et al., 2016) due to their constant and frequent interaction with customers (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019).

The Ghanaian hotel industry (GHI) which is categorized under the tertiary sector of Ghana (Aduhene & Osei-Assibey, 2021) and dominated by SMEs (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018; Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017; Peacock & Ladkin, 2002). The sector accounts for 56.5% of tourists accommodation (Ghana Tourism report, 2019), contributes more to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Ghana than the other sectors (World Bank, 2019a; Aduhene & Osei-Assibey, 2021) hence, vital to the economic prosperity of Ghana.

The industry is also characterised with first-time employees, SHS or vocational school leavers with no or limited experience (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), diverse (Mircetic

et al., 2019), lack professional and multidisciplinary competent staff (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). It is also labour intensive (Marneros et al., 2021) and staff who tend to exhibit high levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long working hours, mood swings (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). As a result, staff therefore requires constant supervision (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019) by their leaders especially among Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

The hotel industry which is under the tourism and hospitality sector is part of the promotion of Ghana's Unique hospitality experience to maintain its brand identity along the slogan "Ghana- the gate way to Africa" (Xuhua et al., 2018). This promotion led to the influx of around 1.13 million visitors to Ghana in the 2018 "Ghana's Year of Return" celebration which pushed the growth of the tourism and hospitality sector by 18% over the previous year and above the global average of 5% (Ghana Tourism Report, 2019).

There has therefore been a continued rising trend in the contribution of the hotel industry to Ghana's GDP since 2014 (Sasu, 2021). The contribution of the industry to Ghana's GDP in 2020 stood around 3.9 billion Ghanaian cedis (around 640.9 million U.S. dollars), a decrease from nearly 6 billion Ghana Cedis (around 985.8 million U.S. dollars) in 2019 because of Covid-19 (Sasu, 2021).

Due to the temporary border closures, major attractions, partial lockdown and the closure of the tourism and hospitality centres in Ghana due to the covid-19 pandemic, the tourist attraction sector of the country alone lost \$171 million dollars between 2019 and 2020 (Aduhene & Osei-Assibey, 2021). The pandemic affected the accommodation, travel and tourism businesses more as compared to the food and beverage (F&B) businesses with SMEs operating in the industry unable to cope with their losses due to the lack of business insurance (Dayour et al., 2020).

Employees in the hospitality and tourism industry were faced with employment insecurity, anxiety, work related stress, mental health issues, COVID-19-caused layoffs, and economic hardship (Hervie et al., 2022) whilst the impact of the pandemic on businesses included shutdowns, booking cancellations, revenue drops, lay-offs and defaults in the payment of pension contributions and taxes (Dayour et al., 2020).

As a result, the real per capita spending on restaurants and hotels in Ghana was estimated at 74.13 U.S. dollars in 2022 and projected to reach 101.35 U.S. dollars per capita by 2025 after adjusting for the expected impact of COVID-19 (Degenhard, 2021) with an overall total consumer spending on restaurants and hotels projected to reach over 2.43 billion U.S. dollars in 2021 (Sasu, 2021).

Table 1.1. Licenced Tourism Accommodation in Ghana from 2016 to 2019

Year	Number of establishments (Accommodation)
2016	2,928
2017	3,246
2018	3,454
2019	4,131

Source: (Ghana Tourism Report, 2019)

Statistically there were 2,928 licenced hotels categorised into star-rated, guesthouses and budget hotels comprising of 680 star-rated hotels (only 3 Five-Star Hotels, 12 Four-Star Hotels and 39 Three-Stars, 170 guesthouses, and 2119 budget hotels in Ghana (Ghana Tourism Authority, 2016). The number of registered hotels steadily rose to 3,454 and 4,131 in 2018 and 2019 respectively (Ghana Tourism Report, 2019) with an additional 395 registered but non-licensed enterprises of this nature were counted in the country in 2019 (Sasu, 2022).

Statistically, the 2018 “Ghana’s Year of Return” revealed that 25 out of 29 tourists spent between 1-7 days in hotels in the country, 165 of 257 tourists spent 8-14 days

while 10 in 74 tourists used a hotel accommodation for a duration of 15-21 days (Sasu, 2022).

Table 1.2. Average occupancy rate of hotels in Ghana from 2014 to 2019

Year	5-star	4-star	3-star	2-star	Average (%)
2014	62.73	60.75	62.84		62.12
2015	63.00	67.11	61.49		63.87
2016	60.00	62.00	64.00		62.00
2017	61.00	53.00	50.40		54.80
2018	66.2	51.00	53.80		57.00
2019	66.3	59.20	55.30		60.27
Six-year average hotel occupancy					60.01

Source: Author reconstructed (Ghana Tourism Report, 2019)

The 2020 occupancy rates went down by half to 31%, 38%, and 31% for 5-star, 4-star and 3-star hotels respectively due to the effect of Covid-19 (Sasu, 2022) implying that 2-star and others recorded an occupancy rate below 31%.

Ghanaian SME hotels under the umbrella of the hotel industry, dominated by SMEs (Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017) primarily depend upon hotel employees who interact directly or indirectly with customers by performing essential functions such as greeting customers, serving customers and making customer-stay memorable for guest (Berry, 1995). These hotels, who struggle to succeed (Xuhua et al., 2018) or survive the second year of their inception (Oduro & Nyarku, 2018) is mostly due to deficiencies in leadership and management skills (Hayton, 2015).

It is also due to the use of vocational and senior high school (SHS) graduates as employees who lack the experience and possibly taking their first employment in the hotel industry with competence such as initiative-taking very difficult to develop (Appaw-Agbola, 2016) and also considering their employment as a job rather than a career path (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). This mind-set bruises the passion, commitment, and motivation of Ghanaian SME hotel staff, who are diverse in nature (Mircetic et al., 2018), always in the front line and playing a crucial role in service delivery

(Terglav et al., 2016) characterized with emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016) long hours and mood swings (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2014) due to their constant and frequent interaction with customers. This has led to the use of less structured leadership practices by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and managers to support the competence development of these employees for effective service delivery to achieve organizational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016).

It is important to reiterate that Ghanaian SME hotel management and leadership are mostly interwoven and placed mostly in the hands of the owner. Reviewing the leadership style of Ghanaian SME hotel managers is assumed to be consistent with reviewing the leadership style of the owner and vice versa. As a result, intervention within Ghanaian SME hotels is likely to be affected by the behaviour, culture, and beliefs of the SME manager (who is also mostly, the owner and leader) because of their proximity to the employees (Peel, 2004).

1.4 Management and Leadership Within Ghanaian SME Hotels

There are still scholarly debates on whether management and leadership overlap, are similar or different, since some managers of organisations do not exercise leadership, whereas other people lead without occupying any management positions (Algahtani, 2014). Management skills are used to plan, build, and direct organisational systems to accomplish missions and goals (Algahtani, 2014), whilst the acquisition of resources which is an important function of leadership (Kempster et al., 2018) utilises skills that focuses on a potential change by establishing direction, aligning people, and motivating and inspiring (Wajdi, 2017). Some researchers see management and leadership as being different (Nahavandi, 1997:

Algahtani, 2014), whilst others concluded that both management and leadership are complimentary (Wajdi, 2017) with Mladkova (2012) questioning whether managers are or can be good leaders.

Bláha, Mateicius & Kaňáková (2005) explained the three fundamental approaches to defining and explaining effective leadership from the perspective of management theory. This suggest that leadership is a function of management. The first approach is based on explaining leadership in terms of personal qualities and characteristics of the leader and other character theories. The second approach is based on analysing how leaders support their employees, which is centred on the behaviour of the leader and related styles of behaviour (leadership styles) and the final approach to explaining and defining effective leadership is to analyse how leaders carry out their function according to situations in which the leaders operate, thus the situational approach to leadership (Gonos & Gallo, 2013).

Given that most Ghanaian SME hotels are either owner-managed or owner-led (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019) due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012) and the use of the private resources of the owner to finance the operations of the SME hotel, the personal objectives of the owner-leader and the business objectives of the SME hotel are interwoven. The strategic objectives and the managerial practices to realise those objectives will therefore be carried out by the same person. Researchers including (Wajdi, 2017) view management and leadership to be complementary. This research holds the view that management and leadership within SMEs in the hotel sector of the hospitality industry are interwoven. One common thread which seems to be found in all the early leadership theories is power (Dambe & Moorad, 2008). The next subsection will explore the concept of power and leadership in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels.

1.5 Power and Leadership within Ghanaian SME Hotels

Researchers including, Pfeffer (1992), Dambe & Moorad (2008), Lunenburg (2012) and Goncalves (2013) have all acknowledged, the many definitions of power to involve the ability to influence others to get things done or one actor to overcome the resistance in achieving a desired result or affect the outcome of an activity.

Research also support the view that, often, the leadership of an organisation suffers when little attention is given to how power is used (Goncalves, 2013). In their taxonomy, Sassenach et al. (2019) concluded that one of the sources of acquiring power is through leadership. Leadership within organizations is thus attainable when it is combined with power (Goncalves, 2013). This acknowledges the connection of the concepts of leadership and power as inseparable (Humphreys & Rigg, 2020; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979; Owens, 2001).

Researchers have acknowledged that, one of the most influential theories of power comes from the work of French and Raven, who attempted to determine the sources of power leaders use to support others (Lunenburg, 2012; Goncalves, 2013; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979).

French and Raven identified five forms of power to include legitimate, expert, coercive, reward, and referent (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979).

Legitimate power is based on the position held within the organisation. The higher the position, the higher the legitimate power. A leader with high legitimate power induces compliance or supports others because they feel that this person has the right, by virtue of the position in the organization, to expect compliance (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979). Subordinates who play a major role in the exercise of legitimate, complies when they

view the use of power as legitimate (Gibson et al., 2012). Consequently, as most Ghanaian SMEs are registered under sole tradership form of business, using the private resources of the owners to finance its operations, with limited liability (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019), SME owners tend to occupy the highest position within the SMEs, which gives them the legitimate power to induce compliance.

Expert power is based on possession of expertise, skill, and knowledge. A leader, high in expert power is seen as possessing the expertise to facilitate the work behaviour of others. This leads to compliance with the leader's wishes (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979). Within the Ghanaian context, research support the view that Ghanaian SME managers tend to exhibit the use of less-structured approaches to achieve organizational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016) due to the lack of requisite managerial skills (D'Annunzio-Green et al., 2004). This seems to limit their expert power within the organisation. The extent to which followers attribute knowledge and expertise to the power holder may also affect expert power.

Coercive power is based on fear. A leader high in coercive power is seen as inducing compliance because failure to comply will lead to punishment, such as undesirable work assignments, reprimands, or dismissal (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer, 1979). Ghanaian SME leaders attain coercive power based on the legitimate power they acquire arising from forming and owning the SME. This gives them the coercive power to induce compliance. Instituting clearly defined policies on employee treatment, rules and procedures that govern how coercive power is used can prevent it being used arbitrarily and unethically. The institution of these policies however tend to be vested into the hands of the same leader, who is also the owner and manager.

Reward power is based on ability to provide rewards. Followers believe that their compliance will lead to pay raises, promotions, recognition, or other rewards (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer,1979). Ghanaian SME leaders attain reward power based on the legitimate power they acquire arising from forming and owning the SME. This gives them the power to promote, recognise and reward efforts. Reward power of the leader may however be affected by the value or importance the employee attaches to what is offered as a reward.

Referent power is based on personal traits. A leader, high in referent power is liked and admired, and others wish to be identified with him or her (Goncalves, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Hersey, Blanchard, & Natemeyer,1979). Referent power of leaders within Ghanaian SMEs tend to vary, as leaders tend to exhibit different personality traits, as the key traits of one person may be different for another (Howell, 2012).

Lunenburg (2012) grouped these sources of power into organisational and personal. Organizational power according to Lunenburg (2012) include legitimate, reward, coercive powers whilst personal power includes expert and referent powers. Generally, the personal sources of power are more strongly related to employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance than are the organizational power sources (Lunenburg, 2012).

Given the integral relationship between leadership and power, and their fluid social construction that is subject to multiple interpretations (Fiol et al., 2001), leaders must assess not only their behaviour, but also their possession and use of power, to understand how they support staff.

Given that most Ghanaian SME hotels are either owner-managed or owner-led (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019) due to the use of the private resources of the owner to finance the operations of the SME hotel, power and leadership within Ghanaian SME hotels are mostly vested into the hands of the same person. This research holds the view that power and leadership within Ghanaian SMEs in the hotel sector of the hospitality industry are interwoven, hence inseparable.

Research have largely supported the assumption that SMEs are more successful if they are under a dedicated and resourceful leadership (Ng & Kee, 2017) with one of the key constraints impacting SME performance identified to be deficiencies in leadership and management skills (Hayton, 2015). Scholarly debate on the mechanisms and styles through which leadership leverages SME employees behaviour, competence, and performance, especially in the hotel industry is therefore inconclusive (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019).

Consequently, the situational approach to leadership has been acknowledged to be able to accommodate behavioural and contingency variations by combining both behavioural and contingency approaches at varying degrees of maturity and task-readiness levels of employees (McCleskey, 2014) to develop and leverage employees affective and cognitive behaviour to achieve organisational objectives (Hughes et al., 2018).

Ghanaian SME hotel employees are acknowledged to be characterized mostly as being first-time employees, senior high school (SHS) or vocational school leavers with varied competence levels (Apaw-agbolo, 2016). These staff, from the perspective of SME employees will require leaders to adapt their leadership styles (Putra & Cho, 2019) to exert their support using different human resource practices and social-psychological means through their personality or leadership style (Chiu et

al., 2020) to support and develop these varied competence levels. However, limited research has explored how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders support the competence development of their employees taking into consideration contextual factors using different leadership styles as part of their managerial practices.

Research has however found a significant positive impact on the adoption of strategic human resource managerial practices on employee competence development in the Ghanaian hotel industry (Opoku, 2020). Consequently, managerial practices in the Ghanaian hotel industry should be configured in a way that supports and improves individual employees competencies which will enhance organisational performance (Otoo & Mishra, 2018).

The aim of this research is to explore situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development and identify contextual factors, that need to be considered alongside employee readiness levels when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model.

This research will contribute to the situational leadership and employee's competence development literature by addressing the call for further research by Opoku (2020) to examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

The leadership practices of Ghanaian SME hotel managers and how they support their employee's competence development using different leadership practices will builds on current understanding of how these practices align with situational leadership styles used to support employee's competence development. This will provide guidance on how managers can support the development of their employees competence for effective service delivery to achieve organisational objectives.

1.6 Research Questions and Objectives

The research questions and objectives have been carefully developed from the above context, to achieve the research aim.

1.6.1 Research questions

1. What leadership practices do Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply in the leadership process, to support employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives?
2. How do the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process to support employee's competence development, align with situational leadership styles?
3. What contextual factors need to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model?

1.6.2 Research objectives

1. To identify the different leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process to support employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives.
2. To explore how the application of leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process, to support employee's competence development, align with situational leadership styles.
3. To develop a model to show the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a situational

leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model?

1.7 Organization of Thesis Chapters

This thesis is structured into five chapters. Figure 1 offers a sequential overview of the thesis structure and a summary of each of the chapters is highlighted below.

Chapter one is an introductory chapter which provides a general overview about the research context, power and leadership and the aim of the researcher for conducting this research.

Chapter two which is the literature review chapter is structured in a logical manner by defining SMEs, contrasting management and leadership, reviewing leadership within SMEs, leadership theories and their limitations, leadership definition within Ghanaian SMEs, situational leadership theory and employee competence. Secondly, the chapter also identified the existing gap in knowledge based on the literature reviewed and finally concludes with studies that influenced the research.

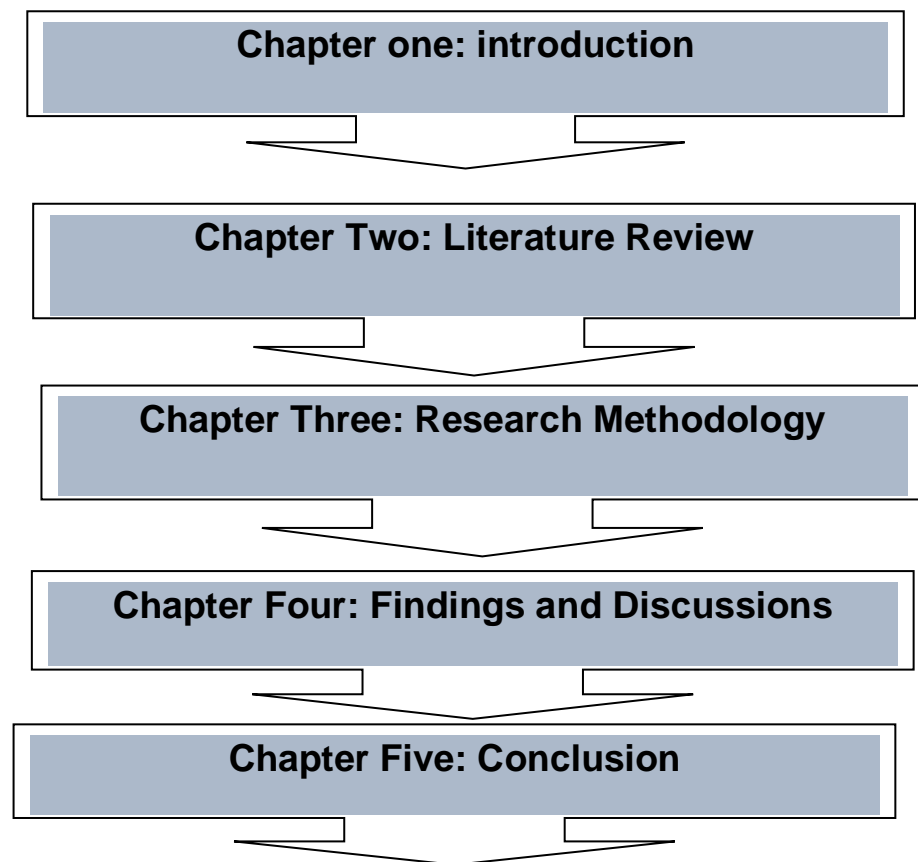
Chapter three is the research methodology chapter. This chapters explains the theoretical underpinning and research methods by explaining and justifying the research methodology by discussing and justifying the research philosophy, research approach, methodological choice, research strategies, data collection, data analysis methods, research rigor and ethical considerations.

Chapter four is the research findings and discussion chapter. This chapter provides the reader with the main findings from this research, how findings extends situational leadership literature, and suggests a new model detailing how Ghanaian

SME hotel managers leadership practices support the competence developments of employees and the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence within Ghanaian SME hotels.

The final chapter which is chapter five is the conclusion chapter. The research findings are justified to ensure that it achieved the research objectives. The chapter also highlights the research limitations and suggestions for further research. The chapter also highlights the research contribution to knowledge and practice, its transferability, and concludes with a personal reflection of the researcher's journey at the end of the thesis.

Figure 1.1 Structure of the thesis



Chapter Two.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

Small and medium-size enterprises (SMEs) are conceded universally for their distinctive impact to economic and social growth (Brahim & Nourredine, 2017) as they (SMEs) are known to be the highest contributors to gross domestic product (GDP) in most countries (Aamir, Johl & Yussof, 2015). SMEs play a major role in creating employment opportunities in most economies, be it a developed, emerging, or developing economy (Chit, 2018).

The fundamental need of SMEs in the African continent cannot be over emphasized, as SMEs are the backbone of most African economies, accounting for approximately more than 90% of all businesses, providing nearly 80% of the region's employment and contribute about 50% of Gross National Product (GDP) (Fjose et al., 2010; Kamunge, Njeru & Tirimba, 2014).

In Nigeria for instance, SMEs accounts for 96% of the country's businesses, 70% of its industrial jobs and 95% of its manufacturing sector (Kauffman, 2006; LSEG, 2019).

In Kenya, SMEs contribute about 40% of their GDP, create over 50% of new jobs and account for 80% of their workforce (Kithae et al., 2012; Mwarari & Ngugi, 2013). Again, Zambian SMEs accounts for 97% of businesses and 18% of its workforce (Parker, 1996).

Countries within the organisation of economic cooperation and development (OECD), SMEs make up 95% of companies and 99% of all businesses in the

European Union (OECD, 2019; Ormazabal et al., 2018), and most importantly, SMEs act as the pivot to large organizations (Thanki, Govindan & Thakkar, 2016).

In Japan and the United States of America (USA), even though may have relatively more large firms than SMEs (OECD, 2019), SMEs are over-represented in Australia and Southern European countries (OECD, 2019).

In Malaysia, which is in the south-eastern part of Asia, SMEs account for 97.3% of the total number of business organizations (Takah et al., 2017), accounts for 65% of the total employment in the labour market, contribute 32% of the GDP and 19% of their total export value (Aamir, Johl & Yussof, 2015).

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) which is located at the north-eastern end of the Arabian Peninsula on the Persian Gulf, the SMEs sector accounts for 95% of its businesses, 42% of its workforce and contributes to 40% of value added (Asunka, 2017).

An important antecedent and sub-process for SMEs to achieve novel outcomes have been identified to be through leadership (Hughes et al., 2018). Research also supports the view that, SME managers or leaders have an extraordinary opportunity to support their employees directly due to their closeness with their operating personnel (Pansiri & Temtime, 2006) as well as engage their employees (Serrano & Reichard, 2011).

The willingness of employees in an organisation plays a key role in the acceptance, adoption, and implementation of ideas (Tamayo-Torres et al., 2016) with leaders placed as individuals who have a differential role on the instigation, direction, and coordination of group activities (Smith et al., 2016; Von Rueden et al., 2014).

However, leadership research have placed more emphasis on motivational processes to the detriment of other understudied mechanisms (Hughes et al., 2018)

which are the impact of leadership behaviour which reflects their style on situational variables and contextual factors in the light of follower readiness (McCleskey, 2014). To guide the development of appropriate data collection questions to address the research gaps that will be highlighted appropriately, this chapter will provide a review of the definition of SMEs, the theoretical and empirical literature relevant to leadership theory, leadership within SMEs and situational leadership theory, contextual factors including cultural dimensions, and employees competence development. The key research gaps within the literature, how this research will address those gaps and the studies that have influenced the research concludes the chapter.

2.2 Definition of SMEs

SMEs growth and sustainability is key to Ghana's economic development (Boadu, 2016) as they (SMEs) provide about 85% of employment, contribute about 70% to Ghana's GDP (Fosu, 2015; Lee-Ross & Lashley, 2010) and account for 92% of businesses in Ghana (Asunka, 2017).

Husti & Mahyarni (2019) enumerated the advantages of SMEs over large firms to include its ability to innovate and simplify technology-oriented product development, familiar humanitarian relations in small businesses; flexibility and ability to adapt to changing market conditions quickly and being dynamic in its managerial and entrepreneurial role.

There is, however, no universally accepted definition of SME as they have different features and in different geographical locations (World Bank, 2013; OECD, 2018; Yang, 2018; Odoom, 2015). However, most SME definitions are quantitative in nature. Thus, the number of employees and performance measures (balance sheet

value and sales revenue) have been the consistently used variables including (the country and industry, business size, assets and products) to define SMEs (Augustine & Aseidu, 2017; Muriithi, 2017).

For instance, in the developed countries including Canada, United States, and Belgium, business with less than 100 employees are classed as small enterprises. Those businesses with up to 250 and 500 employees classed as medium enterprises in Germany and America respectively (Levine, 2005; Katua, 2014; Muriithi, 2017).

For developing countries including (African countries) a business with more than 100 employees is termed as large whilst a small business could have one to five employees (Levine, 2005; Katua, 2014; Muriithi, 2017). Consequently, extant definitions of SMEs agreed by researchers define SMEs as businesses or organisations with less than 250 employees (OECD, 2005; Levine, 2005; Fjose et al., 2010; Dalberg, 2011; Beck & Cull, 2014; Katia, 2014). Muriithi (2017), however reiterates that, very small businesses may have less than 50 employees while micro-enterprises have between 5 and 10 employees, particularly in low and lower middle-income countries.

A range of definitions have also been promulgated and accepted by the regulators of the SME industry in Ghana. Thus, the National Board for Small Scale Industries (NBSSI), the Ghana Statistical Service (GSS) and the Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF).

For GSS, SMEs are enterprises that employ 10 people or less whilst those that employ 10 people, or more are classified as Medium-sized and Large-Scale Enterprises. Alternatively, the NBSSI blends both the performance value and number of employees' to define SMEs. Thus, small enterprises employ between 6 and 29

people or with fixed assets not above US\$100,000 exclusive of land and building whilst medium-sized firms employ between 30 and 100 employees (Asunka, 2017). This research will use the definition by NBSSI as this will widen the inclusion of many SMEs in the research scope.

The growth and sustainability of SMEs has been acknowledged to be key to Ghana's economic development (Boadu, 2016) as they (SMEs) provide about 85% of employment, contribute about 70% to Ghana's GDP (Fosu, 2015; Lee-Ross and Lashley, 2010) and account for 92% of businesses in Ghana (Asunka, 2017). SMEs established in minor urban and rural areas in Ghana have been known to help reduce rural-urban migration by ensuring even supply of economic activities within a region (Ntiamoah, Li & Kwamega, 2016).

The Ghanaian hotel industry which is dominated by SMEs (Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017) have been shown to lack professionally and multidisciplinary competent employees (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). Consequently, Ghanaian SME hotels tend to exhibit the use of less structured leadership practices to achieve superior organizational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016) to guarantee the survival and growth of their businesses (Dias et al., 2017).

The next section therefore reviews leadership theories, justify how they fit or otherwise into the context of this research and how leadership is also defined in the context of this research.

2.3 Leadership Theory

The conceptualisation of the main leadership theories has evolved over time (Benmira & Agboola, 2021), with the earliest studies of leadership, Galton's (1869) Hereditary Genius emphasizing a basic concept which is still defining leadership

today (McCleskey, 2014) known as the great man theory (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). Benmira & Agboola (2021) reviewed the four main leadership evolution eras to include the Great Man theory (1840s), Trait theories (1930s–1940s), Behavioural era: behavioural theory (1940s–1950s), Situational era: contingent and situational theories (1960s).

The new leadership era according to Benmira & Agboola (2021) also include: transactional, transformational theories (1990s) and other theories from (2000s) which includes Shared, Collaborative, Collective, Servant, Inclusive and Complexity leadership theories.

2.3.1 Great Man theory (1840s) and trait theories (1930s–1940s)

The great Man theory is built on the premise that leaders are born and not made (Northouse, 2017) and hence focuses on natural born leaders (Benmira & Agboola, 2021). This will suggest that only a few individuals will possess this rare quality to be effective leaders. The traits theory however argued that leaders can be made, or some personal features can be inherited to make one an effective leader (Northouse, 2017). This has been met with inconsistent research findings (Colbert et al., 2012). As leadership traits are characteristics of an individual that do not change from situation to situation, the key traits for one situation may be different for another situation (Howell, 2012).

Germain (2019) also reiterates that the trait theory focuses exclusively on the leader and her traits, not on the followers or the situation, or what kind of leader is needed in a certain situation or what a leader should do given a set of circumstances. The traits approach therefore ignores situational specificity and consequently suffers from the difficulties of specifying the traits that constitute effective leadership.

Behaviourally, the traits theory seemingly ignores variability of a leader's behaviour across situations, the psychological processes and dynamics that underlie a leaders' behaviours and hence ignores reality (Gottfredson & Reina, 2019). Consequently, the great Man and traits theories may not fit well in influencing the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel staff with a specific trait or by just concentrating on the leader as they are characterized by limited experience (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), diverse (Mircetic et al., 2018), lack professional and multidisciplinary competence (Appaw-Agbola, 2016) high levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long working hours, mood swings (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016) and hence will require multidisciplinary leadership approaches.

2.3.2 Behavioural theory (1940s–1950s)

Behavioural theory evolved from trait theories and asserts that leaders are largely made, rather than born and that behaviours can be learnt to ensure effective leadership (Denison, Hooijberg & Quinn, 1995). With emphasis on the actual behaviour of the leader and not on their traits or characteristics, it focuses on how a leader's relationship and task behaviours are used in organisations (Northouse, 2017). This focus tend to largely ignore the situation and the environment of the leader. Whilst relationship behaviours concerns relationship orientation, concern for people, or supportive leader behaviour, task behaviour is concerned with, task orientation, concern for production, or directive leader behaviour and emphasized a focus on task accomplishment by clarifying followers' roles and the leader's expectations of followers (Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014).

Other dimensions added to leadership behaviour includes change-oriented leadership, which comprises transformational, charismatic, and inspirational (Yukl,

2013) and passive leadership which comprises of management by exception, passive and Laissez-faire (DeRue et al., 2011).

However, behavioural theorists can be criticised for relying on laboratory and field data for its prescriptions, which will suggest a departure from workplace reality and generalisability (Ola, 2017) and reliance on abstract leadership types that were difficult to identify (Glynn & DeJordy, 2010). This may suggest a misfit within Ghanaian SME hotels as most hotel staff requires constant supervision by their managers due to their frequent interaction with customers in a real-life setting which might present varied challenges contrary to the data used. The theory and some of its dimensions has also been criticized for the tendency of leaders to abuse their powers to manipulate followers' behaviour (Boddy, 2017) and its inability to consider networking behaviours (Anderson & Sun, 2015).

2.3.3 The contingent and situational theories (1960s)

The realisation of the significant role the environment can play in the leader-follower dynamics which were not considered by the prescriptions and dictates of the Great Man, traits and behavioural theories dominated the situational era (Yurii, Yevgen & Nataliia, 2018). The focus of the situational era was centred on leadership in particular situations, rather than on the traits or behaviours of leaders. This suggests that the assessment of the context in which the leader operates will play a key role in selecting leadership style to be adopted to fit the situation appropriately. The impact of internal and external environmental forces (example, behaviour of followers) may also play a significant role in its effectiveness. This dependency is the premise for the theory being called the contingency theory of leadership (Benmira & Agboola, 2021).

The contingency theories of leadership articulate the need for a regulatory fit of the leader's behaviour and the situation, based on a rational understanding of the situation and adopt a leadership style that is suitable for the occasion. This conception of leadership ousts the view that there are better and worse leadership styles and there is not a one-size-fits-all approach to leadership (Vidal et al., 2017). The contingency theory of leadership again prides itself as being designed in a multi-level-of-analysis framework to predict a leader's effectiveness based on two main factors; a leader's attributes, referred to as task or relationship motivational orientation and a leader's situational control (Ayman, Chemers & Fiedler, 1995). However, the inability of a leader to combine task oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours limits the effectiveness of the theory (Howell, 2012). The focus and dictates of the theory also seem to suggest that the only available alternative for an unalterable mismatch in leader orientation as well as an unfavourable situation is by changing the leader which may not be favourable when it comes to its application within the Ghanaian SME hotel sector. This is because, most Ghanaian SME hotels are either owner-managed or owner-led (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019) due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012) and the use of the private resources of the owner to finance the operations of the SME.

2.3.4 The new leadership era (1990)

2.3.4.1 Transactional leadership

Transactional leadership focuses on the exchanges that occur between leaders and followers (Bass, 2008). Transactional leadership allows followers to fulfil their own self-interest, minimize workplace anxiety, and concentrate on clear organizational objectives such as increased quality, customer service, reduced costs, and

increased production (Sadeghi & Pihie, 2012). Transactional leadership therefore focuses on the relationship between leaders and followers as a series of exchanges of gratification designed to maximize organizational and individual gains.

However, transactional leadership has also been criticized for its utilization of a one-size-fits-all universal approach to leadership theory construction that seemingly ignores situational and contextual factors related to organizational challenges (Yukl, 2011; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010).

2.3.4.2 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership (TL) according to Grimm et al. (2015) emphasizes on leaders who create change in deep structures, major processes, or overall culture. Transformational leaders primary focus is on organisational objectives (Bass, 2000) and the promotion of cognitive-based trust (Schaubroeck et al., 2011). Burns (1978, p. 141) therefore defined a transformational leader as “one who raises the followers’ level of consciousness about the importance and value of desired outcomes and the methods of reaching those outcomes”. McCleskey (2014) highlights that the four factors or components that emerged out of TL over the period include idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration.

However, TL has been criticized for the exclusion of task performance in its components (Andersen, 2018), lack of clear underlying mechanism of a leader’s support as well as its lack of sufficient identification of the impact of situational and contextual variables on leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2011)

2.3.5. Other emerging leadership theories (2000s)

Extant understanding of leadership featured it as a complex emergent process that is dynamically interactive (Pearce, Conger & Locke, 2008a) and non-hierarchical (Scott et al., 2017) between leaders and followers as opposed to being static as suggested by traditional leadership models. The use of the terms shared leadership (e.g., D'Innocenzo, Mathieu & Kukenberger, 2014; Nicolaidis et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2014), distributed leadership (e.g. Spillane, 2012), and collective leadership (e.g., Contractor et al., 2012; Friedrich et al., 2009) have therefore been used to describe these emerging non-hierarchical perspectives of leadership in teams.

Other new emerging leadership theories sharing similar features according to Benmira & Agboola (2021) includes Shared, Collaborative, Servant, Inclusive and Complexity leadership theories. A shared common feature of these emerging leadership is that they are relational, patterned, situated within the context, and can be formal or informal (Scott et al., 2017; Carter et al., 2015; Crawford & LePine, 2013).

2.3.5.1 Shared leadership

The criticisms of other leadership frameworks for being unbalanced and unequal in the distribution of power in teams or groups which results in leader-follower paradigm or a form of subordination (Pearce & Manz, 2014). Shared leadership ensues when all group members are engaged in a process of mutual support within the group toward the achievement of goals (Sivasubramaniam et al., 2002). Shared leadership occurs when leadership is distributed among many or all members of the group, instead of centred on a single member (Pearce & Manz, 2005). Ensley et al. (2006) therefore aligned the conception of shared leadership to a process in which

leadership is carried out by the team, not just a designated person. Shared leadership may be criticized for having a potential but cannot necessarily and fully be realized by all teams. There is the high likelihood of shared leadership to be affected by internal team features, for example networking and peer perceptions (DeRue et al., 2015).

2.3.5.2 Collaborative leadership

Researchers including (e.g., Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Van Wart, 2013) reiterate that collaborative leadership theories fit into studies of relational or horizontal leadership. Other researcher including (e.g., Newell, Reeher, & Ronayne, 2012; Van Wart, 2013) also referred to it as facilitative leadership, adaptive leadership, integral leadership, and catalytic leadership due to its focus on power sharing among groups, units, and organizations (e.g., Newell, Reeher, & Ronayne, 2012; Van Wart, 2013) and emphasis on enhancing relationships among individuals or organizations (Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012).

Rubin (2009) explains that the key to collaborative leadership is the purposeful implementation and exercise of behaviours, communication, and organizational resources that affects the perspective, beliefs, and behaviours of collaborative partners, to support the collaborative relationship. However, it may be suggested that a false collaborative partner's behaviour may lead to false implementation of a collaborative behaviour which may not be in touch with reality.

2.3.5.3 Leader-Member Exchange

Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory advocates that leaders should build differential relationships with their followers to be able to effectively use their resources, time, and energy (Matta & Van Dyne, 2020). The theory describes the

role-making process between the leader, the follower, and their exchange relationship over time (Yukl, 2010). Consequently, the quality of the relationship is likely to be affected by the context in which these relationships have been developed (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009).

A review by Law-Penrose, Wilson, & Taylor (2016) highlighted that the exchange relationship with the leader (i.e., LMX) which is associated with a broad set of highly valued resources, such as (the leader's trust and support), lower quality LMX with employees who cannot receive the valued resources, may lead these employees to engage in upward social comparison with their higher-LMX co-workers.

2.3.5.4 Complexity Leadership

Uhl-Bien (2021) stated that complexity leadership draws its concepts from the physical and natural sciences and demonstrates how they also apply to people and organizations, based on the premise that adaptive processes of nature are not only the laws of physics and biology, but also the laws of people. Research suggest that complexity theorists focuses on how behaviours, processes and outcomes are inherently challenging to predict (Maguire, 2011) due to the theory's focus on potentially infinite number of variables.

Consequently, the theory has been criticized for seemingly adopting a primitive, realist view in which leadership is just 'there' and is produced by (relatively) unproblematic interactions between preconfigured agents, hence, yet to develop a comprehensible and internally consistent account of leader–follower dynamics in organizations for which its advocates entirely subscribe to (Tourish, 2019) as with other theoretical paradigms.

2.3.5.5 Distributed Leadership

Distributed leadership (DL) emphasises the involvement of multiple leaders, both formal and informal with distinct but inter-related responsibilities (Yukl, 2010). The support in DL process will often involve peer support with occasional involvement of upward or downward hierarchical support (Avolio, Walumbwa & Weber, 2009). DL approach which also addresses teams, and organizational features (Goksoy, 2016) criticizes the older leadership models, in which one person is the hero, mentor, and accountable party, but rather distributes leadership positions among the organization's members (García-Torres, 2019; Goksoy, 2016; Berjaoui & Karami-Akkary, 2020; Mohd Ali & Yangaiya, 2015).

However, DL is criticized for being detached from its original underpinning in educational leadership theories (Hatcher, 2005) and lacks a clear and concise definition (Tian et al., 2016). DL inability to conceptualise power (Bolden et al., 2009) has led Lumby (2019) critiquing the assertion that DL offers a means of redistributing power, arguing that there is little evidence that this happens in any reliable way and hence deliberately ignores this enduring and important aspect of leading organisations.

2.3.5.6 Servant Leadership

Servant leadership prescribes that, leaders should recognise their social responsibilities to serve and institute modalities for the growth of their followers even if followers do not want to (Andersen, 2018). The focus of servant leadership and for that matter, servant leaders is concern for their followers by creating conditions that enhance followers' well-being (Stone et al., 2004) by helping followers to become healthy, wise, and more willing to accept their responsibilities (Yukl, 2010).

However, the humility, collectivism, and the sharing of power in servant leadership are considered inappropriate or ineffective in a social environment without democracy (McFarlane, 2011) and from being a servant to being a leader and vice versa, may seem difficult to accept (Wong & Page, 2003).

2.3.5.7 Collective Leadership

Collective leadership view leadership as “dyadic, shared, relational, strategic, global, and of complex social dynamics” (Avolio et al., 2009, p. 423), instead of an individual leadership role (Conger & Pearce, 2003). It therefore incorporates the involvement of multiple entities into the leadership process (Eva et al., 2021) and extending rather than reconsidering the person-centred leadership perspective (Fang Nguyen & Armstrong, 2022). The focus of this shared leadership style is therefore on the development of interpersonal skills and capabilities, rather than individual traits and intrapersonal capabilities, which is believed to result in increased effectiveness (Yukl, 2010).

However, collective leadership has been criticized for its effectiveness being increasingly dependent on the level of cooperation and coordination of various leaders belonging to a specific network and sharing a common objective (Yukl, 2010). Given that most Ghanaian SME hotels are owner-managed or owner-led, the personal objectives of Ghanaian SME hotel leaders are the same as the objective of the SME hotel, hence the differential personal objectives of the leaders may make it difficult to implement collective leadership among Ghanaian SME hotels.

The application of these leadership theories in organisational management which has some linkages with organisational competitiveness have mostly been concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs (Beavers & Hitchings, 2005). This has left a gap in the SME perspective, with research lamenting that the

key constraint on SME performance are deficiencies in leadership and management skills (Hayton, 2015). Evidence suggest that the success of SMEs depends on its leadership strategies (Gaskil, Van-Aukin & Kim, 1994) with research largely supporting the framework that SMEs are more successful if they are under a dedicated and resourceful leadership (Ng & Kee, 2017).

There is also evidence of a positive correlation between leadership and employee performance (Babcock-Roberson & Srickland, 2010). As the performance and achievement of organizational goals is largely dependent on its employees, effective leadership can leverage employee and firm level performance (Almatrooshi, Singh & Farouk, 2016). Leadership is thus an important driver in effectively developing employee strength and better able to leverage their engagement, behaviour, and organisational outcomes (Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Serrano & Reichard, 2011). From an industry perspective, leadership have been found to improve service quality, customer satisfaction and employee engagement in the hotel sector of the hospitality industry (Kouncu et al., 2013).

The hotel industry is acknowledged to be dominated by SMEs (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018; Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017; Lucas, 2004; Peacock & Ladkin, 2002). To reduce agency conflict and cost (De Massis et al., 2018), these SMEs are inevitably being managed, led, and controlled by their owners (Bridge et al., 2003) who mostly lack the requisite managerial skills to manage and lead their SMEs (D'Annunzio-Green et al., 2004). Findings from Chung & D'Annunzio-Green (2018) in a review of talent management practices among SMEs in United Kingdom (UK) hospitality sector however suggest that the lack of involvement by SME owners in its management could have serious consequences. Also, De Massis et al. (2018) in a review of owner-manager's multiple goal and self-control agency problems among

Italian family SMEs found that owner-manager's decisions does not univocally benefit nor detract SMEs performance but depends on owner's economic and non-economic goals.

The lack of separation between ownership and control within SME enterprises in Ghana put responsibility for the direction and development of their businesses in the hands of SME enterprise owners (Thompson-Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018). This may be due to the dominance of sole proprietorship form of businesses in the Ghanaian economy (Cochran, 1981) and the dominance of SMEs in the hotel industry within the Ghanaian economy (Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017).

Consequently, owners of Ghanaian SME hotels are likely to also take up both managerial and leadership roles within their organisations to be able to take major decisions to provide strategic direction for their businesses. Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the Ghanaian tourism industry (hereafter, GTI) also tend to recruit low-cost labour from university graduates, redundant experience staff, vocational and senior high school graduates (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). The leadership style of Ghanaian SME hotel managers and how they support their employees will provide valuable insight into the leadership styles within SMEs in the Ghanaian hotel industry which has been deemed as labour intensive in nature.

As a result, leadership interventions within Ghanaian SME hotels are likely to be affected by the behaviour, culture, and beliefs of the SME manager (who is also mostly, the owner and leader) because of their proximity to the employees (Peel, 2004). De Massis et al. (2018) therefore called for an exploration of small firm owner power (ability and willingness) to clarify the mechanism through which the owner power shapes the behaviour of firms and their consequences in different and key organisational outcomes. An understanding of how SME hotel managers support

their employees (followers) development to achieve organisational goals will open research avenues to explore leadership styles and hotel employees competence development among SMEs. This research will begin to address this gap to contribute to the literature by exploring how Ghanaian SME hotel managers use different leadership styles to support their employees (followers) competence development to achieve organisational goals.

In conclusion, even though management and leadership have different functions, they are interrelated within SME context as separating management from leadership will create agency conflict, agency cost as well as misalign SME owner's vision. As Ghanaian SME hotels management and leadership are mostly interwoven and placed mostly in the hands of their owners, scholars who are of the view that management and leadership are similar with the difference being changes in emphasis rather than principle may not be far from being right. It is pertinent to state that an understanding of leadership within SMEs and the personal and professional needs of employees from an SME leader's perspective and creating a climate that effectively recognises and supports their employees strengths are important factors that can close the owner-manager-leader skills and knowledge gap and improve SME performance and competitiveness.

The next section will discuss leadership within SMEs to understand their leadership styles and how SME employees are supported to develop their competence, to achieve organisational outcomes.

2.4 Leadership within SMEs

Researchers have largely supported the assumption that SMEs are more successful if they are under a dedicated and resourceful leadership (Ng & Kee, 2017). Other

researchers have also lamented that the key constraint on SME performance are deficiencies in leadership and management skills (Hayton, 2015). Scholarly debate on the mechanisms and styles through which leadership leverages SME employees behaviour and performance, especially in the hotel industry is therefore inconclusive (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019).

This has made it difficult to universally define leadership, as most SMEs in the hotel industry especially among Ghanaian SME hotels are characterized by sole proprietorship form of business (Cochran, 1981). This section reviews leadership definitions and adding insight to how leadership is defined in the context of this research.

2.4.1 Defining Leadership Among Ghanaian SME Hotels

Leadership is a phenomenon that is an important factor of every successful organization (Urošević et al., 2018). There has however not been any consensus among leadership scholars on the definition of leadership (Buciuniene & Skudiene, 2008) be it in large organisations or SMEs. Northouse (2017) conceptualised leadership as being a trait, a behaviour, a skill, an ability, a relationship or as an influential process and therefore defined leadership as “a process whereby an individual influence a group to achieve a common goal” (Northouse, 2017: p.7). Howell (2012: p.4) also defined leadership in line with these conceptualisations as “an influence process, usually (but not always) carried out by one person”. The leader influences a group, who view the influence as legitimate, towards the achievement of some goal or goals. Yukl (2012: p.3) incorporated ability into the definition of leadership by defining leadership as “the ability of an individual to influence, motivate and enable others to contribute more towards the accomplishment of their task leading to the achievement of organisational goals”.

Winston & Patterson (2006: p.7) in a review of 160 articles to come out with an integrative definition of leadership defined leadership relative to the leader as “a leader is one or more people who selects, equips, trains and influence one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities and skills and focuses the followers to the organisation’s mission and objectives, causing the follower to willingly enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organisational mission or objective”.

The focus of all these definitions seems to have been on the leader in the context of organisational goals or objectives. Scholars including (Padillar & Lunsford, 2013: Vugt, Hogan & Keiser, 2008) reiterates that leadership is much more than a person (leader) but a process that includes the leader, their followers and their interactions that are affected by their organisational context and environment.

It could be argued that most of the above definitions are aligned to large organisations who are mostly characterised by separate legal entities quite different from their owners. Hence the objectives of the organisation may be limited to profitability and shareholder value maximisation.

Cochran (1981) reiterates that SMEs are generally characterised by sole proprietorship form of business in the Ghanaian economy. This suggests that the organisational objectives within these SMEs extend beyond profitability but also include other objectives such as, the values (including, cultural, religious, social, and economic), aspirations and dreams (including, power) of the SME owner.

These other objectives seem to have been given little or no consideration in the above definition of leadership. Given that SME owners are mostly the leaders and managers of their SMEs (Bauweraerts et al., 2021), then the objective of the organisation (SME) is much as the objective of the SME owner. This reflects the

situation (the objective of the SME being the objective of the SME owner) in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels and in most other economies dominated by SMEs. Secondly, even though most leadership definitions including (Winston & Patterson, 2006; Yukl, 2012; Howell, 2012; Northouse, 2017) have all acknowledged influencing followers and enabling them to willingly commit to exerting efforts towards achieving organisational goals, these leadership definitions have however failed to incorporate the assessment of the willingness or task-readiness levels of employees in exerting their efforts towards organisational goals.

Winston & Patterson (2006, p.7) integrative definition of leadership defined leadership as '....one or more people who selects, equips, trains, and influences one or more follower(s) who have diverse gifts, abilities, and skills and focuses the follower(s) to the organization's mission and objectives causing the follower(s) to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional, and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve the organizational mission and objectives'. Given that the Ghanaian hotel industry is dominated by SMEs (Xuhua et al., 2018), they are characterized more under sole proprietorship form of business (Cochran, 1981). They also revolve around their owners who provide the requisite resources, provide managerial and leadership direction of the business (MOTI MSME Report, 2019) without any separation between ownership and control (Thompson-Agyepong, Mmier & Mordi, 2018) and focus their energy towards achieving the objective of the SME. This definition reflects to a larger extent, what Ghanaian SME hotel leaders do and have also incorporated all the elements in the leadership definitions offered by most scholars.

However, the objective of the Ghanaian SME hotel owner which reflects the objective of the Ghanaian SME hotel, the level of power as well as the task-

readiness level of the employees have not been considered in the definition.

Incorporating these two elements into Winston & Patterson (2006) definition will reflect the true picture of leadership definition among Ghanaian SME hotels.

This research therefore defines leadership in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels by expanding on (Winston & Patterson, 2006, p.7) definition as ‘an influential process where one or more people, usually, with more power, selects, equips, trains and influence one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities and skills and focuses the followers to the owner’s and organisation’s mission and objectives, by assessing the readiness level of followers and causing the follower to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve both the owner and the organisational mission or objective.

To achieve the objectives of Ghanaian SME hotels, leadership should pay particular attention to their followers as research reiterates that followers are mostly always in the front line and hence play a crucial role in service delivery through constant and frequent interactions with customers (Terglav et al., 2016). Consequently, emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long hours, and mood swings are a constant feature among Ghanaian SME hotel employees (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). This warrants constant supervision from their managers (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019) due to the diverse nature of these employees (Mircetic et al., 2018). Therefore, there is no best leadership style to be adopted by SME hotel managers or leaders (Sandstrom & Reynolds, 2019) to leverage these features, as establishing follower needs with a particular leadership style has generated controversies (Thompson & Glaso, 2015). Research has therefore called for SME hotel managers or leaders to improve their leadership skills to enable them to alter their leadership

styles (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019) and employ leadership styles that will develop, and leverage follower affective and cognitive behaviour as called by (Hughes et al., 2018) to achieve organisational objectives.

In conclusion, leadership have been acknowledged to be a complex phenomenon hence there has not been scholarly consensus on the definition of leadership.

Differences between large and small organisations with respect to decision making processes, ownership structure, organisational objectives as well as contextual and situational variations have played a major part in this dilemma. Definitions of leadership has failed to incorporate the task-readiness level of employees and the objectives of business owners in the context of SMEs. This research has therefore defined leadership in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels by adding power, employee's task-readiness and owner objectives as 'an influential process where one or more people, usually, with more power, selects, equips, trains and influence one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities and skills and focuses the followers to the owner's and organisation's mission and objectives, by assessing the task-readiness level of followers and causing the follower to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve both the owner and the organisational mission or objective'.

Ghanaian SME hotels are characterised by diverse cultural, religious, and social differences among followers with ownership, management and leadership mostly vested into the hands of the owner, hence the goals of the owner and that of the Ghanaian SME hotel are mostly the same. Leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotel should be able to accommodate these variations among different

organisations, staff, contextual factors, and behavioural variations in order to achieve the objective of leadership.

Among the different leadership styles, situational leadership styles has been acknowledged to be able to accommodate these variations by combining both behavioural and contingency approaches at varying degrees of maturity and task-readiness levels of employees (McCleskey, 2014) to develop and leverage employees affective and cognitive behaviour to achieve organisational objectives. A discussion of the constructs and application of situational leadership theory will therefore be pertinent. The next section will discuss situational leadership theory (hereafter, SLT) and how SLT leadership styles alongside the appropriate use of power supports employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels to achieve organisational outcomes.

2.4.2. Situational Leadership Theory

The situational leadership theory (SLT) opposes the trait and behavioural leadership theories that assert the existence of "best" characteristics and behaviours of leaders to support followers or subordinates (Gumus et al., 2016).

Scholars including Thompson & Glaso (2018) have acknowledged that SLT was first introduced as the "life cycle of leadership" by Hersey and Blanchard, in 1969 to introduce principles for dealing with newer employees by using more directiveness, and then gradually substituting directiveness with supportiveness as employee seniority increased. SLT which stresses the need to relate a leader's style to the maturity level of their followers, suggests that effective leadership needs a reasonable understanding of the situation with an appropriate response (Bryman, Grint & Collinson, 2011).

Effective leadership is acknowledged to be important in every organization (Benmira & Agboola, 2021) with research supporting the view that the adaption of an appropriate leadership style to a given situation based on the readiness or development level of followers to be an important part of effective leadership (Day & Antonakis, 2012). Research however acknowledges that, establishing and influencing followers and their needs with a particular leadership style has received some criticisms (Thompson & Glaso, 2015). The diverse nature of followers (Mircetic et al., 2018) have also created controversies with researchers questioning whether one leadership style is better than another or whether a leader can improve follower's performance, commitment, and organisational outcomes by adopting a particular leadership style (Bučiūnienė & Škudienė, 2008).

Cautions have also emerged, directed at SME owner-managers or leaders to mould their leadership style towards enriching followers to obtain better work performance (Vidal et al., 2017). How this leadership style is moulded to leverage followers to achieve organisational goals especially among Ghanaian SME hotels who mostly have their owners acting as leaders and managers at the same time needs to be explored further.

This section therefore discusses SLT, how it overcomes the limitations of the other leadership theories, and its limitations to explore scholarly debate and gaps on SLT leadership style and how it supports employee's competence development for the achievement of organisational outcomes.

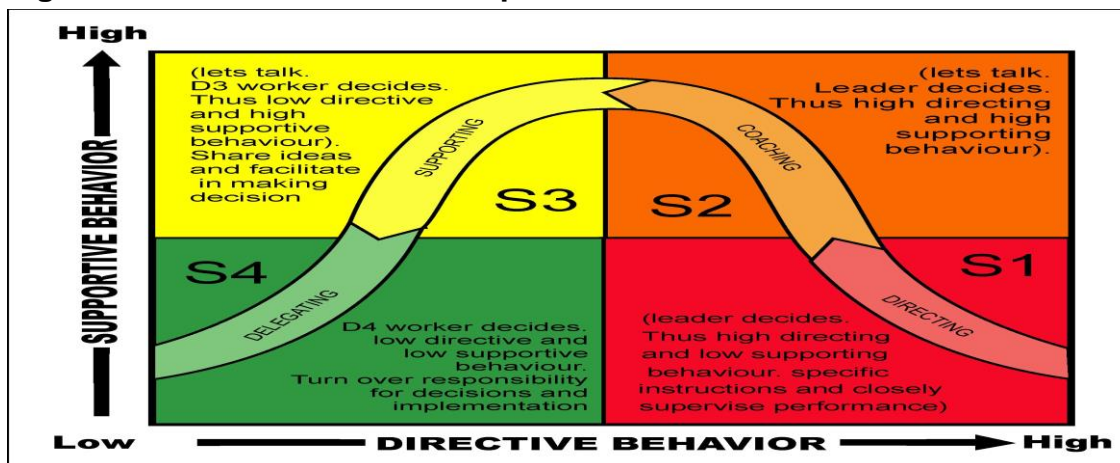
2.4.2.1. Overview and Journey of Situation Leadership Theory

The difficulty in selecting the best leadership style for effective leadership has challenged researchers (Thompson & Glaso, 2015) with some scholars (for example, Ebrahimi, Moosavi & Chirani, 2016) suggesting that it lies in selecting the most

suitable leadership style based on the followers' readiness level. Other scholars (see Vecchio, Bullis, & Brazil, 2006) acknowledged that leadership style for effective leadership is a joint function of leader behaviour and situational requirements. This section explores scholarly work on this debate and gaps that might need further exploration.

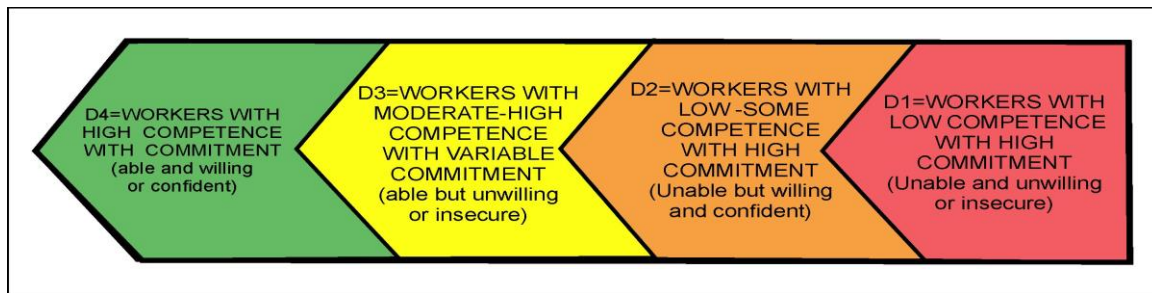
Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) reiterates that SLT has gone through a series of changes (example the revised 1977 version: Blanchard, 1988: Blanchard et al., 1985, 1993: Blanchard, 2007, 2010) to maintain its dynamic focus and principles in leadership studies. Thompson & Vecchio (2009) reviewed the three versions of the leadership dynamics derived from Hersey and Blanchard's SLT as (1) the original 1972, statement of the theory: (2) the revised, 2007, theory: and (3) an alternative statement of the theory's essential principle of differential follower response to "autonomy afforded by the leader" in conjunction with "follower development or readiness level" (Thompson & Vecchio, 2009, p.3). These three versions of leadership dynamics which are aligned to the four leadership styles in situational leadership (Blanchard, 2000) are derived from the two main leader behaviours, directive and supportive behaviours as shown in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1. Situational Leadership Model



Source: Author reproduced from Blanchard, (1997 and 2000).

Figure 2.2. Follower competence development or readiness levels



Source: Author reproduced from Blanchard, (1997 and 2000)

2.4.2.2 Situation Leadership fit within this research.

Leadership theories and classifications are acknowledged to be based on Great Man and trait theories, behavioural theories, contingency and situational theories, new and emerging leadership (Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Gandolfi, Franco, & Seth-Stone, 2021; Hai & Van, 2021). These leadership theoretical eras have all been criticized for failing to address certain aspects of leadership.

The Great Man and traits theories have been criticized for focusing exclusively on the leader's traits and ignoring situational specificity (Germain, 2019) and leader's behavioural variability across situations (Gottfredson & Reina, 2019).

Secondly, behavioural theories have been criticized for its reliance on field data and largely ignoring the situation and the environment of the leader (Ola, 2017; Northouse, 2017).

Again, Contingency theories has also been criticised for its inability to combine task oriented and relationship-oriented behaviours (Howell, 2012).

Further, new and emerging leadership theories including, transactional leadership criticized for ignoring situational and contextual factors (Yukl, 2011; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010), transformational leadership exclusion of task performance in its components (Andersen, 2018), Authentic leadership theory focus on the leader and not on the

leader's role (Einola & Alvesson, 2021) and Shared leadership affected by internal team features (DeRue et al., 2015).

Other criticisms of emerging leadership theories includes collaborative leadership criticized for its tendency of implementing a false collaborative behaviour, LMX yet to develop a comprehensible and internally consistent account of leader–follower dynamics in organizations for which its advocates entirely subscribe to (Tourish, 2019). DL is criticized for its lack of a clear and concise definition (Tian et al., 2016) and inability to conceptualise power and redistribution of power (Bolden et al., 2009; Lumby, 2019).

Finally, Servant leadership is also considered inappropriate or ineffective in a social environment without democracy (Mcfarlane, 2011) and whilst Collective leadership criticized for its dependence on the level of cooperation and coordination of various leaders belonging to a specific network and sharing a common objective (Yukl, 2010).

The essence of situational leadership which have been described by Vecchio, Bullis, & Brazil (2006), contend that, leader effectiveness (measured typically by subordinate or group performance) is not merely a function of leader behaviour, but rather, a joint function of leader behaviour and situational requirements. This according to Hersey & Blanchard (1988) is based on an interplay of: the amount of direction (task behaviour) a leader gives, the amount of socio-emotional support (relationship behaviour) a leader provides as highlighted in figure 2.1, and the “development or readiness” level as highlighted in Figure 2.2 that followers exhibit on a specific task, function, activity or objective that the leader is attempting to accomplish through the individual or group (follower/s).

SLT therefore overcomes these limitations by being able to combine both behavioural theories (focuses on leaders' behaviours as either task or people focused) and contingency theories (portrays effective leadership as contingent based on follower maturity) at varying degrees of maturity levels, thus both job and psychological maturity (McCleskey, 2014). This reflects the reason for the theory's strong opposition of leadership theories that assert the existence of "best" characteristics and behaviours of leaders to leverage subordinates (Gumus et al., 2016).

Contextually, the characteristics of Ghanaian SME hotel highlighted in previous section, will require multidisciplinary leadership approaches to support their competence development. Situational leadership therefore fits in with the aim and context of this research as it does not submit to a one-size-fit-all leadership approach used to support employee competence development but combines both behavioural and contingency theories at varying degrees of job and psychological maturity levels to support staff competence development, which the other theories have failed to consider.

However, despite the application of situational leadership in various organisational contexts, Nicholls (1985) described three flaws with SLT dealing with its consistency, continuity, and conformity relative to its constructs. Bass (2008) also noted the lack of internal consistency, conceptual contradictions, and ambiguities. SLT has also failed to consider other organisational factors such as office politics (Sinnicks, 2018) or culture (Hartnell et al., 2016), which can leverage the relationships between leaders and followers, and hence may force the leader to adopt a specific leadership style. Furthermore, leaders' individual characteristics, such as emotions, motivation and access to information have also not been given consideration in SLT.

These notwithstanding, this research will showcase the practices that leaders or managers can apply in their exhibition of either directive behaviour or supportive behaviours to support their employees competence development and will also explore contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development at the various development levels within Ghanaian SME hotels which the model has failed to address.

Research has acknowledged that SME hotel employees are mostly always in the front line and hence play a crucial role in service delivery (Terglav et al., 2016). They (staff) are diverse (Mictic et al., 2018) and characterised by emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long hours, and mood swings (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016) due to their constant and frequent interaction with customers and hence requires constant supervision (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019) by their leaders in order to meet customer demands and satisfaction.

These acknowledgements and features align with the situation among Ghanaian SME hotels, except that, Ghanaian SME hotels are largely characterised by owner-manager leadership. Interestingly, research by Wood (2002) found that, the right attitude exhibited by owner-managers of SMEs with an entrepreneurial ability contributes to SME success. Jui-chen & Silverthorne (2005) has therefore called for the adoption of adaptable leadership style to encourage employee's willingness or readiness to perform, as the recognition and promotion of the uniqueness of the diverse workforce is needed to be able to manage a successful global hospitality business (Gobelna, 2015).

In conclusion, it has been highlighted that, there is no best leadership style but rather a matching style by selecting the appropriate leadership style based on leader

behaviour, contingent on situational variables, contextual factors and follower development or readiness level. SLT out of which emanated situational leadership styles, overcomes the limitations of other leadership styles by combining behavioural and contingency theories with follower development or readiness level being a key factor when deciding to adopt and apply a SLT leadership style. How this is manifested among Ghanaian SME hotel employees may have implications for employees capacity development from contingency and behavioural perspectives. For example, Ghanaian SME hotel managers tend to hire employees as-and-when they need them, and employees also leave as-and-when they want as there seem to be no binding employment contract between the two parties.

The next section will discuss the constructs of situational leadership model which dictates the adoption of different SLT leadership styles under different situations and the appropriate use of power, to explore its implications for leadership outcome and effectiveness among Ghanaian SME hotels.

2.4.2.3. Constructs of situational leadership and employee development levels

It has been acknowledged that situational leadership model as highlighted in figure 2.1 does not use a one-size-fit-all approach to leadership style construction (Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). It rather incorporates both behavioural and contingency approaches (McCleskey, 2014) and the impact of situational variable and contextual factors on leadership effectiveness (Yukl, 2011) at varying degrees of maturity levels, thus both job and psychological maturity (McCleskey, 2014).

This section discusses the constructs of situational leadership model and the appropriate use of power, to explore how these support employee's competence development for organisational outcomes.

Ghanaian SME hotels just like in other economies primarily depend upon hotel employees who interact directly or indirectly with customers by performing essential functions such as greeting customers, serving customers, and making customer-stay memorable (Berry, 1995). This may require employees (followers) of Ghanaian SME hotels to possess certain skills to be able to discharge their duties effectively.

Appaw-Agbola (2016) in an examination of the selection issues in SME hotels in Ghana, found that employees in the GHI must possess requisite mixture of skills, aptitudes, and motivations to be able to carry out their role diligently and efficiently for organisational performance. There is also research evidence by Otoo & Mishra (2018) linking organisational performance to employee (follower) competence in the hotel industry.

Interestingly, vocational, and senior high school graduates who lack the experience and possibly taking their first employment in the industry represent the largest segment of employees (followers) working within Ghanaian SME hotels, with competence such as initiative very difficult to develop (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

Managing and developing employee attitude and competence is therefore one of the difficult challenges facing hotel managers (who mostly double as owners and leaders) within Ghanaian SME hotels (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). Consequently, this may suggest the adoption of behaviours reflected in hotel managers leadership styles that has the tendency to leverage the behaviour and competences of their diverse staff. SLT which does not use a one-size-fit-all approach, warrants that a leader combines directive and supportive behaviours by employing four different leadership styles directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3) and delegating (S4) as highlighted in figure 2.1. These styles are matched to the development or readiness levels (D1, D2, D3 and D4) of employees (followers) as highlighted in

Figure 2.2 to be able to leverage employees (followers) behavioural and improve their competence.

Directive behaviour is the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication, spell out the follower's role and tell the followers what to do, where to do it, when to do it and how to do it: and then closely supervises performance (Blanchard, 1985: Thompson & Glaso, 2018). On the other hand, supportive behaviour on the other hand is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985: Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

Doris (2002) postulates that employee behaviour among Ghanaian SME hotels are temporal and may contextually vary due to situational variables and environmental factors. It is therefore prudent to expect a hybrid of explanatory theorems to underlie their individual cognitive and moral orientation, socialisation processes, gender role differentiation and situational experiences. Consequently, as-and-when changes occur in any of these variables, Ghanaian SME hotels leaders need to equally adapt accordingly by adopting a behaviour with a style based on the development or readiness level of the followers to address the situation. This will suggest combining both directive and supportive behaviours to support employee's competence development.

Bastardo & Van Vugt (2019) also reiterated that leadership and followership are adaptive solutions to various kinds of organisational challenges associated with group living, with the effectiveness of a leader seen in his or her ability to support his followers to take on certain activities to achieve a common goal (Mirčetić, 2018). It is pertinent that the leader adopts, exhibit, and demonstrate a leadership style that can

appropriately support employee's competence development, taking into consideration contextual factors alongside follower readiness or maturity levels to achieve the desired leadership outcome.

Fernandez & Vecchio (1997: p.68) defined employee or follower readiness as "the extent to which a follower has the ability and willingness to accomplish a given function" and ability defined as "the knowledge, experience, and skill that an individual brings to a particular activity", whilst willingness is "the extent to which an employee possesses confidence, commitment, and motivation for accomplishing a given task". How this readiness level is leveraged among Ghanaian SME hotel employees remains unpromising since most Ghanaian SME hotels employees tend to see their employment as a job, rather than a career (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). Uhl-bien et al. (2014) in a systematic review of followership literature, concluded that followership theory offers promise to recognize the importance of follower roles, follower behaviours in the leadership process and equally appreciate the need for followership development (follower competencies), not just leadership development. Day & Antonakis (2012) advised that a leader should not apply the same leadership style for all situations but needs to adapt his or her leadership style to the given situation based on the readiness or development level of his/her followers. The development level of followers in effect plays a significant role in the leadership process, and hence one of the indicators of successful leadership is determining the development level of the followers (Cvijanovic et al., 2018).

Followers develop a role orientation that reflects their development level. A leader's ability to use an appropriate behaviour reflected in his or her leadership style to leverage follower behaviour and ability at each stage of their development is an important construct for leadership success in situational leadership.

The constructs of situational leadership and how it helps leverage and unlock Ghanaian SME hotel employees potential for organisational outcomes at the various follower development levels is discussed in the next four sub-sections.

2.4.2.3.1. Directing style (S1) under situational leadership and employee development

With scholars acknowledging that Ghanaian SME hotels mostly employ vocational and senior high graduates (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), it is common to find employees who have never previously been employed and hence taking their first employment among Ghanaian SME hotels. These new and first-time-employment employees (followers) will be unfamiliar to a team or a given task in the HI setting. They (new and first-time-employment employees) will have no experience in relation to their new roles, but will be very enthusiastic, excited, optimistic, and willing to learn.

Mistakes are most likely due to their lack of experience.

Their follower role orientation according to Lapierre & Carsten (2014) will align with the historical viewpoint that followers are passive, deferent, and obedient. This school of thought according to Carsten et al. (2010) believes that followers should be passive recipients of a leader's support and that the follower role is best enacted by remaining silent and deferent to the leader's directives. Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) portrays these type of employees as enthusiastic beginners characterized as low on competence but high on commitment and hence likened them to D1 followers in Figure 2.2 above. Leveraging and developing D1 followers will suggest the use of a directing style (S1) of leadership (directing style defined as low-supportive behaviour in combination with high-directive behaviour) as highlighted in figure 2.1.

This suggest the provision of clear goals and specific direction and additionally show and tell how tasks are to be completed and provide feedback on the follower's

results. According to Blanchard (2000), directing style is composed of a high directive and low supportive behaviour by giving detailed guidelines to followers, what, how, when, and where to do something and additionally, monitor the follower's effects to both receive and give feedback on the performed tasks.

To engage effectively using directing style, the leader often needs coercive power. D1 tend to respond to penalties for not following rules. If employees are unable or unwilling, sanctions (the perceived power to fire, transfer, or demote) may induce compliance from them. The leader's coercive power may motivate D1 employees to avoid punishment by obeying the leader's directives (Hersey, Blanchard & Natemeyer, 1979).

However, directing style has failed to highlight the leadership practices to be adopted by the leader under directing style to be able to show high directive behaviour and low supportive behaviour to be able to give detailed guidelines to followers, what, how, when, and where to do something and additionally, monitor the follower's effects in order to both receive and give feedback on the performed tasks. An important consideration to be made according to Hamstra et al. (2014) is the regulatory fit between the leader and follower as different followers exhibit different preferences and a leader's ability to model his behaviour to accommodate these differences and make them feel valued (Hamstra et al., 2014) plays a key role in small firms' growth (Andersen & Tell, 2009). The modelling of the leader's behaviour to accommodate the preferences of their followers will require an understanding of the contextual factors alongside these preferences and their readiness levels. These contextual factors have however not been highlighted and incorporated into the application of directing style in SLT.

2.4.2.3.2. Coaching style (S2) under situational leadership and employee development

Ghanaian SME hotels, just as in other Hotel Industries in different economies, expect its employees to possess the requisite professional skills for guest satisfaction (Appaw-Agbola, 2016) as an employee's (follower) violation of ethical and professional behaviour in the hotel industry violates guest expectation and satisfaction (Frempong, 2019).

However, Ghanaian SME hotel leaders tend to employ low-skilled employees (followers) due to their limited financial and resource capabilities (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). These employees spend some time with the SME, haven't gained their first employment to build their experience and professionalism to become attractive for large hotels. These employees (followers) work and learn for some time in a group or on a task to become more familiar with tasks and group activities. They may feel discouraged, confused, and demotivated because their competence may still not have been complete for them to move to the next job role that requires more competence within the organisation.

So, their role orientation according to Lapierre & Carsten (2014) will align with the historical viewpoint that followers are passive, deferent, and obedient with the belief according to Carsten et al. (2010) that followers should be passive recipients of a leader's support and that the follower role is best enacted by remaining silent and deferent to the leader's directives.

Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) described these category of employees (followers) as disillusioned Learners, characterized as being low on competence to having some competence in combination with low commitment, and hence likened their behaviour to D2 followers in Figure 2.2. It will be feasible for Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to

guide D2 followers and make sure they know they are in a development and learning process and that mistakes are part of the process.

Leveraging D2 followers suggest the adoption of a coaching style (S2) of leadership (coaching style defined as high-supportive behaviour in combination with high-directive behaviour) towards these type of followers (Blanchard, 2000) as highlighted in figure 2.1. Control over decision-making however will remain with the leader, who will be giving this type of followers detailed directions regarding tasks but equally maintaining and increasing a two-way communication by listening to followers and exchanging ideas (Blanchard, 2000).

D2 followers will appreciate this leadership style as it aligns with their focus (building their professional competence for better job prospects) to the focus of the SME (competent employees for guest satisfaction and organisational performance). This is in consonance with scholars' findings that workplace learning is highly appreciated by SME employees as it builds their confidence and job satisfaction (Tam & Gray, 2016).

To engage effectively with D2 employees using the coaching style, their development is often enhanced by the reward power of the leader. Since D2 staff are willing to try new behaviours, the leader who is perceived as having access to rewards may gain compliance and reinforce growth in the desired direction. The use of legitimate power is also feasible at this point as a follower reaches D2 levels of maturity, will perceive the power of the leader as legitimate, and compliance is induced by the leader's position in the organisational hierarchy (Hersey, Blanchard & Natemeyer, 1979).

However, coaching style has failed to highlight the leadership practices to be adopted by the leader under coaching style to be able to apply high directive

behaviour and high supportive behaviour to give detailed directions regarding tasks but equally maintaining and increasing a two-way communication by listening to followers and exchanging ideas.

It is also important to note that any coaching style or intervention within Ghanaian SME hotels is likely to be affected by the behaviour, culture, and beliefs of the SME manager especially the owner-manager because of their proximity to the employees (Peel, 2004). These may have a contextually negative impact on the support of coaching style on employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotel employees, considering their varied cultural beliefs and religious backgrounds, which coaching style has failed to incorporate into its application under situations leadership.

2.4.2.3.3. Supporting style (S3) under situational leadership and employee development

The GHI values and consider employees human relations, problem-solving and communication skills as important and due to the financially constrained nature of Ghanaian SME hotels, they lose this type of employees to the big hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), forcing owner-managers or leaders to rely on those employees (followers) who have built their professional capabilities in-house through directing and coaching. They will be characterised as followers who are capable but cautious performers.

This type of employees would have become an integral part of the SME workforce with moderate or highly competent in relation to a given task or with full understanding of the SME tasks and can push the organization towards a mutual goal. Interestingly, their motivation at this point may begin to vary as they would have been making productive contributions towards the goals of the SME. However, unless there are continuous development opportunities for these types of

employees, there is a danger of them becoming bored with over-familiar tasks and subsequently demotivated.

Scholars (such as, Cvijanovic et al., 2018: Thompson & Vecchio, 2009: Thompson & Glaso, 2015, 2018) described these types of followers as capable but cautious performer, who is moderate to high on competence but has variable commitment, and hence likened them to D3 followers as highlighted in Figure 2.2, who will want to be given an opportunity to practice their own ideas.

Their role orientation according to Lapierre & Carsten (2014) will be that of proactive followers. That is, they will view their role as followers who are neither passive nor ineffectual but as a role that is best performed by taking initiative, thinking independently, and challenging the leader when needed. Followers with a proactive role orientation according to Carsten et al. (2010) believes that it is their job to associate with leaders by articulating ideas and opinions, taking initiative to identify and solve problems, and seeking ways to help the work unit more effectively to achieve its goals.

Proactive followers believe that they have something valuable to offer and contend that leadership processes (and by extension, organizational outcomes) are improved when followers actively engage with leaders. Bastardo & Van Vugt (2019) findings suggest that most employees find interactions with their direct bosses the most stressful part of their job. But the business world of today according to Lapierre & Carsten, (2014) requires active and engaged followers who work with leaders to advance the mission and objectives of the organization.

Supporting D3 followers will suggest the adoption of a supporting style (S3) of leadership (supportive style defined as high-supportive behaviour in combination with low-directive behaviour) as highlighted in figure 2.1 by the Ghanaian SME hotel

leader. This will require the showing of high supportive behaviour with low directing behaviour (Blanchard, 2000), through for example, recognition, motivation and exchanging ideas with D3 followers.

The importance of supporting style is acknowledged in the work of Galabova & McKie (2013) who found an important relationship between well-being and human capital among SMEs. Their findings summarised the views of SME managers relative to well-being of employees to align with support from other staff, the SME manager, and the overall company to help employees improve their skills, be it directly on the job or indirectly on related tasks they join in to make better. This suggests that supporting style adopted by the leader can provide active listening, facilitate problems with tasks or decisions made by followers and motivating followers which may be valuable for employees categorised under D3 within Ghanaian SME hotel employees.

Supporting style tend to be effectively utilized to support D3 staff if the leader has referent power. This will be based on good personal relations with employees who are able but unwilling or insecure. Referent power can provide confidence, encouragement, and recognition, to D3 employees as they will generally respond in a positive way because they like, admire, or identify with the leader. The use of legitimate power is also feasible at this point as an employee who reaches D3 level of maturity, will perceive the power of the leader as legitimate, and compliance is induced by the leader's position in the organisational hierarchy (Hersey, Blanchard & Natemeyer, 1979).

Consequently, it will be practicable for Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders to enhance the working culture of their organisations by providing a motivating, friendly and even family-like work environment to accommodate D3 employee. These

practices that will be adopted by the leader to recognise, motivate, and exchange ideas with D3 employees has however, not been highlighted by supporting style to be able to apply high supportive behaviour and low directive behaviour. These contextual factors have however not been highlighted and incorporated into the application of supporting style in SLT.

2.4.2.3.4. Delegating style (S4) under situational leadership and employee development

Employee competence has been found to have a significant effect on organisational performance with training and development acknowledged to equally support employee competence in the hotel industry (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). Interestingly, attracting suitably qualified and motivated employees is difficult among Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

It is acknowledged that Ghanaian SME hotels find it difficult to attract professionally qualified, and skilled employees (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). Those whose professional competence have been improved in-house, through directing, coaching, and supporting by the leadership of Ghanaian SME hotels tend to feel less intrinsically and extrinsically motivated due to SME liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012).

This is compounded by the limited financial resource capabilities and opportunities at the disposal of Ghanaian SME hotels (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). These employees (followers) who are deemed to be professionally competent, are familiar with their task and the business policy of the SME.

They display behavioural independence in the activities they carry out, achieve results, extremely competent and very committed to achieving results. Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) described these type of employees (followers) as self-reliant achievers with the highest development level within the industry characterised as

high on both competence and commitment, and hence likened their behaviour to D4 followers as highlighted in Figure 2.2.

Since professional competence is considered important among Ghanaian SME hotel employees (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), employees (followers) who have attained this height in the industry according to Lapierre & Carsten (2014) are most likely to exhibit an anti-authoritarian role orientation or a rebellious behaviour and hence feels that they should avoid domination by a leader and combat the leader's authority or desire to control them. They tend to ignore directives or avoiding opportunities to work with the leader to solve problems to avoid it being misconstrued as giving in to the leader's authority (Carsten et al., 2013).

The use of innovative human resource practices by SMEs (Kroon et al., 2013) may be practicable by adopting a low directive and low supportive behaviour through a delegating (S4) leadership style (delegating defined as low-supportive behaviour in combination with low-directive behaviour) that displays the leader's confidence in the ability of the employee (follower) as highlighted in figure 2.1. This could potentially support D4 followers (Blanchard, 2000) within Ghanaian SME hotels. The leader discusses tasks and problems with D4 followers and when a mutual agreement is achieved further processes are fully delegated to the follower (Blanchard, 2000).

Consequently, D4 followers will respond most readily to expert power with the use of delegating leadership style. Thus, a leader who possesses expertise, skill, and knowledge may influence and gain respect most readily from a follower who has both competence and confidence (Hersey, Blanchard & Natemeyer, 1979).

However, delegating style has failed to highlight the leadership practices and approaches to be adopted by the leader under delegating style to be able reach a

mutual understating that demonstrates the use of low directive behaviour and low supportive behaviour with D4 followers.

Pansiri, (2008) reiterates that skilled SME manager's or owner's conceptual and creative contributions will not be misplaced if routine task are delegated and used as an avenue to train, motivate and tap into employee strength. Jennings & Beaver (1997) also found that financial success significantly correlates with the SME owner's delegation of lower-level tasks to subordinates and concentrate on more critical activities to prevent SME managers from drowning in a pool of routine activities.

Figure 2.3 which has 15 components summarises the situational leadership styles, the power bases applied by SME managers or leaders, the category of employees, development levels and features.

S1 to S4 represent the four situational leadership styles of directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating which are the four situation leadership styles applied in each quadrant of the situational leadership model.

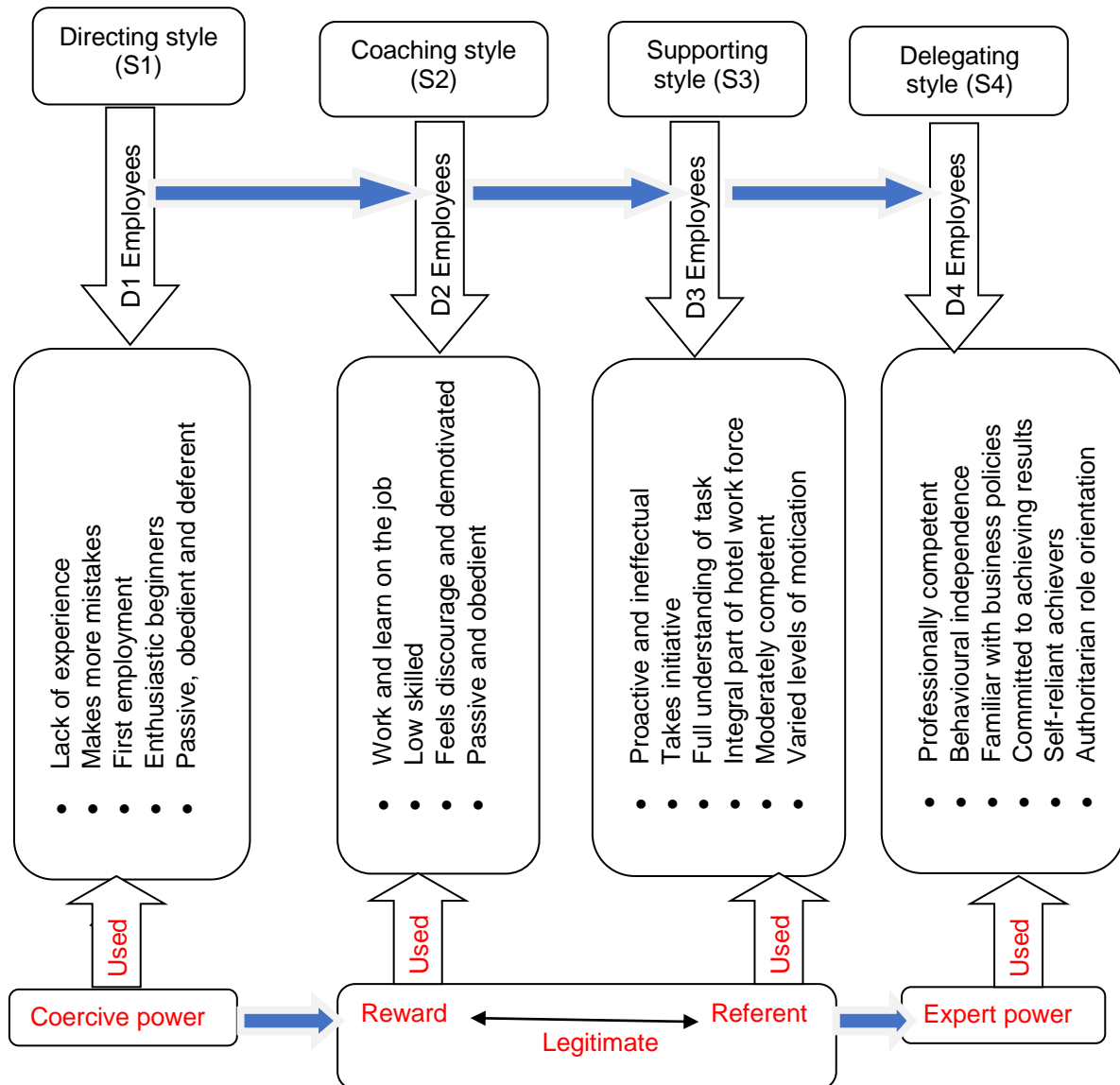
D1 to D4 represent the competence or development levels of the four categories of employees identified under situational leadership. Directing style is applied to support D1 staff, coaching style applied on D2 staff, supporting style applied on D3 employees and delegating style applied on D4 employees in an ascending order as employees competence improves as highlighted by the direction of the blue arrows, the features of D1 to D4 explained in the next four components.

The last three components at the bottom represent the power base that may be effectively utilised to support the leadership style at the various development levels.

The first eight components of figure 2.3, directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3) and delegating (S4) and D1 to D4 were developed from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to situational leadership model and follower development

levels. The last three components were developed from the work of Hersey, Blanchard & Natemeyer (1979). By extension, the researcher added the four components at the bottom explaining the features of the various category of employees and the blue arrows depicting the progression from one competence development level to the next based on the research's comprehension within the literature.

Figure 2.3. Application of Situational Leadership, power, and employee competence development



Source: Author construct, 2022

The competence and experience of employees among Ghanaian SME hotels seems to be limiting Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders desire to delegate work to subordinates and concentrate on other important issues as research by Thompson & Glasø (2015) found that, leader directiveness was inversely associated with experience, indicating that supervisors acting consistently with SLT recommendation will need to provide more direction with less competent employees. Adopting human

resource practices that support the development of employee competence among Ghanaian SME hotels is therefore vital.

Otoo & Mishra (2018) in a review of the impact of human resource management (HRM) practices on hotel Industry's performance relative employee competencies in the Ghanaian hotel industry called for more research to examine the mediating role of human resource practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian Hotel industry.

In conclusion, this review has highlighted that Ghanaian SME hotel managers tend to exhibit the use of less structured approaches to achieve organizational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016). This is due to the lack of professionally and multidisciplinary competent employees among Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), to guarantee the survival and growth of their businesses (Dias et al., 2017).

The multiplicity of individuals among Ghanaian SME hotels (Frempong, 2019) are characterised as being vocational and senior high school graduates with limited professional skills and experience (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). These individuals will require leaders to exert their support on employees using different human resource practices and social-psychological means through their personality or leadership style to develop their task readiness and competence levels that will enhance their professional skills and experience.

Extant literature in employee competence according to Alberton et al. (2020) has again emphasized the necessity to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out relative to how the individual competence of their employees are supported within their organisations. Employee competence thus seem key to Ghanaian SME hotel managers and leaders in the realisation of organisational objectives, but this is seldom supported or managed.

Research by Kuzma et al. (2017) revealed that the management of employee competence amplifies individual potentials and converges their objectives with those of the organisation.

The next section will discuss employee competence development and the mechanisms through which Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders support the competence development of their employees to deliver effective customer service to achieve organisational objectives.

2.5. Employee Competence Development

Spencer & Spencer (1993) indicated that competence can objectively be applied to human resource management activities such as recruitment, performance, management, educational training, career development and successor plans.

Gorenak, Špindler & Brumen (2019) in an examination of the influence of competencies of managers on job satisfaction of employees in the Slovenian hotel industry concluded that competencies are a mixture of knowledge, abilities, skills, experiences, and values of an individual gathered during their primary socialization, various levels of education and work life. Competence is also understood as an employee's opinion of self-ability to implement assigned everyday jobs and responsibilities based on knowledge, skills, and experience (Turnipseed & VandeWaa, 2020).

Spencer & Spencer (1993) classified the characteristics of competence under explicit and implicit characteristics, with explicit characteristics being visible and include knowledge and skills whilst implicit characteristics include motivation and internal or personality characteristics. These classifications are aligned to Suhairom et al. (2019) who also stated that competence can be subdivided into two categories,

namely, visible competency, which includes technical and non-technical capabilities, and invisible competency, which includes self-concepts, personal qualities, physical qualities, and behaviours, both of which in turn affect work performance and contextual performance.

Culturally and linguistically diverse workforce spirituality and faith has also been found to affect employee development and optimism in the hotel industry (Manoharan, 2021). An understanding of the potential impact of context on leadership is therefore vital (Muchiri, 2011).

The next section will therefore explore the theoretical constructs of culture and the impact of contextual factors on employee competence development (ECD) in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

2.5.1 Contextual factors and employee competence development

Understanding and being able to interpret contextual factors is an important tool in leading and managing the internal dynamics of small teams at different levels, as it furthers our understanding of small groups in relation to their surroundings (Heldal & Antonsen, 2014). An understanding of the potential impact of context on leadership is therefore vital (Muchiri, 2011).

Contextual factors in the context of this research are the socio-cultural factors, overt or covert which defines the demographics, beliefs, attitudes, and traditions of the inhabitants in Ghanaian societies. These tend to affect and alter leadership practices to be accommodated, especially in Africa (Gray, Shrestha, & Nkansah, 2008).

Many African societies including Ghana emphasizes in-group collectivism based on family ties, religious or ethnic backgrounds (Munchiri, 2011). Ghana has a predominantly collectivist societal culture (Akoensi, 2018) with a very high-power distance (Danquah, 2018; Ansah, 2015). Many of these societies exhibit values such

as selflessness, kindness, and love, and hence tend to be affected by, among other things, family experiences, religious, and cultural norms. Respecting and upholding family values, religious, and cultural beliefs are therefore mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies (Akoensi, 2018). This makes family, religion, and culture important factors to be considered in the leadership process in the Ghanaian context, as the views of leaders and employees would be affected by these factors. The next three sub-headings explores the impact of culture, religion, and family on Ghanaian hotel staff competence development.

2.5.1.1 Culture and employee competence development

Culture is a complex multilevel, and multidimensional phenomenon (Aymin & Korabik, 2010). Culture has been acknowledged by researchers including (Segundo, 2023; Ayman et al. 2012) to be interwoven with leadership processes within organisations. The values prevalent in organisations therefore tend to be affected by the dominant cultural values and context of those who built those organisations (Munchiri, 2011).

It is therefore difficult to coordinate the actions of people in organisations without a deep understanding of their values, beliefs, and expressions (Hofstede, 1984). The exercise and application of the right blend of attitudes and behaviours in a specific cultural context by organisational leaders is therefore vital in achieving positive organisational outcomes (Konopaske, Ivancevich & Matteson, 2018).

Sochor (2020) reiterate that, there is no one definition of culture on which scholars subscribe to. However, researchers including (Hofstede, 2001; Schein, 1992; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998) seem to agree on what most people consider or understand as culture. Accordingly, most people understand culture as a

“set of shared values, beliefs and customs within a given community” (Socho, 2020, p. 271).

Some definitions of culture for example (Schein, 1992), defined culture in terms of its utility as an organisational variable or the purpose it serves in helping organisational members make sense of their social world and cope with problems of adaptation as “the sum total of everything an organization has learned in its history in dealing with the external problems – which would be goals, strategy, how we do things – and how it organizes itself internally”.

Other definitions conceptualised culture contextually as “the material and spiritual product that human beings have produced, inherited and developed, which is manifested in a nation’s history, geography, customs, lifestyles, social norms and values” (Yang, 2019, p.1320).

One of the most widely accepted and adopted views of culture according to Smith (2010) is in the works of Hofstede (1980b, 1994, and 2001a) who defined culture as “the collective programming of the human mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from those of another. Culture in this sense is a system of collectively held values” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 51) or “the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another” (Hofstede, 2001, p. 9).

This research however defines culture by combining the definitional variables of Hofstede (1999, 2001), Schein (1992) and Yang et al. 2019) as “a system of collectively-held values that has been programmed in the human mind, to embrace and defend, the material, spiritual, and traditional products that human beings have produced, inherited and developed, which is manifested in a nation’s history, geography, customs, lifestyles, social norms and values, that distinguishes the

members of one group or category from another, to serve as a guide for its members to know what is permitted and what is prohibited”

As culture tend to serve as a guide for its members to know what is permitted and what is prohibited (Sutrisno, 2018), it would affect the attitudes and behaviour of all members for example, in an organisation, including the owners, managers, and employees. There is therefore a significant (positively) correlation between culture and the behaviour of leaders and followers (Tsai, 2011).

Hofstede (1980b) characterised four dimensions of culture which has been widely used and referenced in the development of other cultural frameworks to further our understanding of diverse cultural behaviour and values. These include, power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism, and masculinity.

2.5.1.1.1 Power Distance

Power distance describes the power gap that exists between individuals in society, with the less powerful acknowledging this gap and feel comfortable with the power inequality (Hofstede, 1980b). Power distance as a cultural factor characterizes the attitude to leadership in national culture and determines the degree of leaders' encouragement to use their power (Blyznyuk, 2022). Hofstede (1980b) classified power distance as low and high.

Low power distance societies exhibit minimal inequality, redistribution of power, easy access to superiors, and the existence of harmony between the powerful and powerless (Segundo, 2023). On the other hand, high power distance societies exhibit an order for inequality, inaccessible superiors who are entitled to privileges, and conflict the existence between the powerful and the powerless (Segundo, 2023). It is anticipated that leadership styles in high power distance cultures will seek to demonstrate tolerance, respect for age, compromise, and consensus in working out

rules for working together which are acceptable to all (Jogulu, 2010). On the other, in low power distance cultures, relations between employees are formed on emphasized social equality and partnership, whilst the leader uses his power in exceptional cases (Jogulu, 2010).

Consequently, D1 and D2 employees without or with low competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit high power distance by accepting the leader's command and asking leaders what to do without questions. On the other hand, D3 and D4 employees who have moderate to high competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit low power distance and tend to require involvement in decision-making and respond to empowerment (Newman & Butler, 2014).

2.5.1.1.2 Uncertainty Avoidance

Uncertainty avoidance describes a society in which members are intolerant of uncertainty or ambiguity, attempt to control unstable situations by establishing formal laws and rules, frowning upon deviant behaviours, providing stable career options, belief in absolute truths, and the attainment of expertise (Hofstede, 1980b).

Uncertainty avoidance as a cultural factor characterizes the level of uncertainty, social instability, ambiguity, which is normal and in which members of the society feel comfortable (Blyznyuk (2022). Hofstede (1980b) classified uncertainty avoidance into strong and weak.

In strong uncertainty avoidance societies have higher levels of anxiety and aggressive behaviours that create an inner need in societal members to work hard, avoid risk, and adhere to rigid laws, rules, and procedures, a strong need for consensus, with ordinary citizens seen as incompetent compared to authorities (Segundo, 2023). On the other hand, weak uncertainty avoidance societies have

less-formal laws and rules, less emotion is shown, less stress, high tolerance for deviation, aggressive behaviour is unacceptable, minimized nationalism, risk taking behaviours, hard work is not a virtue, and authorities serve the citizens (Segundo, 2023).

Enterprises operating in a national culture, whose representatives seek to avoid uncertainty (high uncertainty), employees prefer order when they are set specific goals and objectives (Jogulu, 2010). Actions of the leadership to engage the employees in the management of the company may receive the approval of representatives of cultures with a high level of uncertainty acceptance (Jogulu, 2010).

In low uncertainty avoidance, on the other hand, it may be ineffective if leader's behaviour is directed to the formation of relationships with subordinates. In this case, employees may have a very strong desire to participate in management and independently address issues related to their job responsibilities (Jogulu, 2010). Consequently, D1 and D2 employees with low or without any competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit high uncertainty avoidance to avoid risk and adhere to rigid laws and procedures. On the other hand, D3 and D4 employees with moderate to high competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit low uncertainty avoidance and tend to respond to less formal rules and procedures and intolerant of aggressive behaviour (Newman & Butler, 2014).

2.5.1.1.3 Individualism

Individualism as a cultural dimension describes the notion that people are expected to take care of themselves and immediate families only and have a loose social network where the concern is only for the individual's goals, needs, and initiative, everyone has the right to a private life, and value standards should apply to all

Hofstede (1980b). Individualism versus collectivism as a cultural dimension characterizes social orientation as an idea of the relative importance of the individual's interests in relation to the interests of the group to which he belongs, and which indicates the attitude and cooperation of employees in individual or collective actions (Blyznyuk, 2022).

In individualistic cultures, leaders focus their behaviour on individual employees rather than on the team. Leadership is thus based on the management of the individual in the group, with considerable attention to the management structure (Blyznyuk, 2022).

On the other hand, collectivist societies in direct contrast to individualistic societies refer to groups that are tightly knit where individuals act in the best interest of the group, expecting the group to look after them and commit their loyalty to the group, or organization in return (Hofstede, 1980b). Collectivist societies emphasize belonging to a group, where individuals depend on the organisation for stability and opinions are predetermined by leadership (Segundo, 2023). It is anticipated that leaders in collectivist cultures will prioritise the needs of groups and view leadership effectiveness as a long-term goal resulting from subordinate loyalty, extra effort, and satisfaction with the leader (Jogulu, 2010). Furthermore, collectivist cultures prioritise the needs of the group, family and overall community when engaging in leadership actions (Jogulu, 2010).

Consequently, D1 and D2 employees with low or without any competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit a collectivist orientation, and therefore will tend to value group welfare and depend on others in the group. On the hand, D3 and D4 employees with moderate to high competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will

tend to exhibit an individualists orientation, hence will tend to value, and motivated by individual achievement (Newman & Butler, 2014).

2.5.1.1.4 Masculinity

Masculinity in societies is characterized by assertiveness, the acquisition of material items, uncaring of others, live to work, performance and ambition are key. The show of manliness are also valued, where men are expected to be assertive and women nurturing (Hofstede,1980b). Feminine societies in direct contrast are characterized by sex equality, service to others and quality of life are key, sympathizes with the less fortunate, interdependence is ideal, and men are not expected to be assertive but can also assume nurturing qualities (Segundo, 2023).

Consequently, in masculine cultures, the actions of the leader, tend to be focused on obtaining results or increasing participation of employees in management (Blyznyuk, 2022) whilst in a feminist culture, the leader's actions are focused on the values and ability to organize conflict-free group work, reach consensus, develop a fair motivation, and build relationships (Blyznyuk, 2022).

Consequently, D1 and D2 employees with low or without any competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit a feminine orientation, therefore tend to be interdependent. On the other hand, D3 and D4 employees with moderate to high competence within Ghanaian SME hotels will tend to exhibit a masculine orientation, therefore will tend not to care for others (Newman & Butler, 2014).

Figure 2.4 which has 35 components summarises the cultural dimensions, employee cultural orientation, the calibre of employees those orientation applies to and the situational leadership styles applicable to those employees.

The arrow from left to right pointing to "Low" represents low cultural dimension whilst the arrow from left to right pointing to "high" represent high cultural dimension.

Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism versus individualism and femininity Vs Masculinity represents the four cultural dimensions.

S1 to S4 represent the four situational leadership styles of directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating which are the four situation leadership styles applied in each quadrant of the situational leadership model.

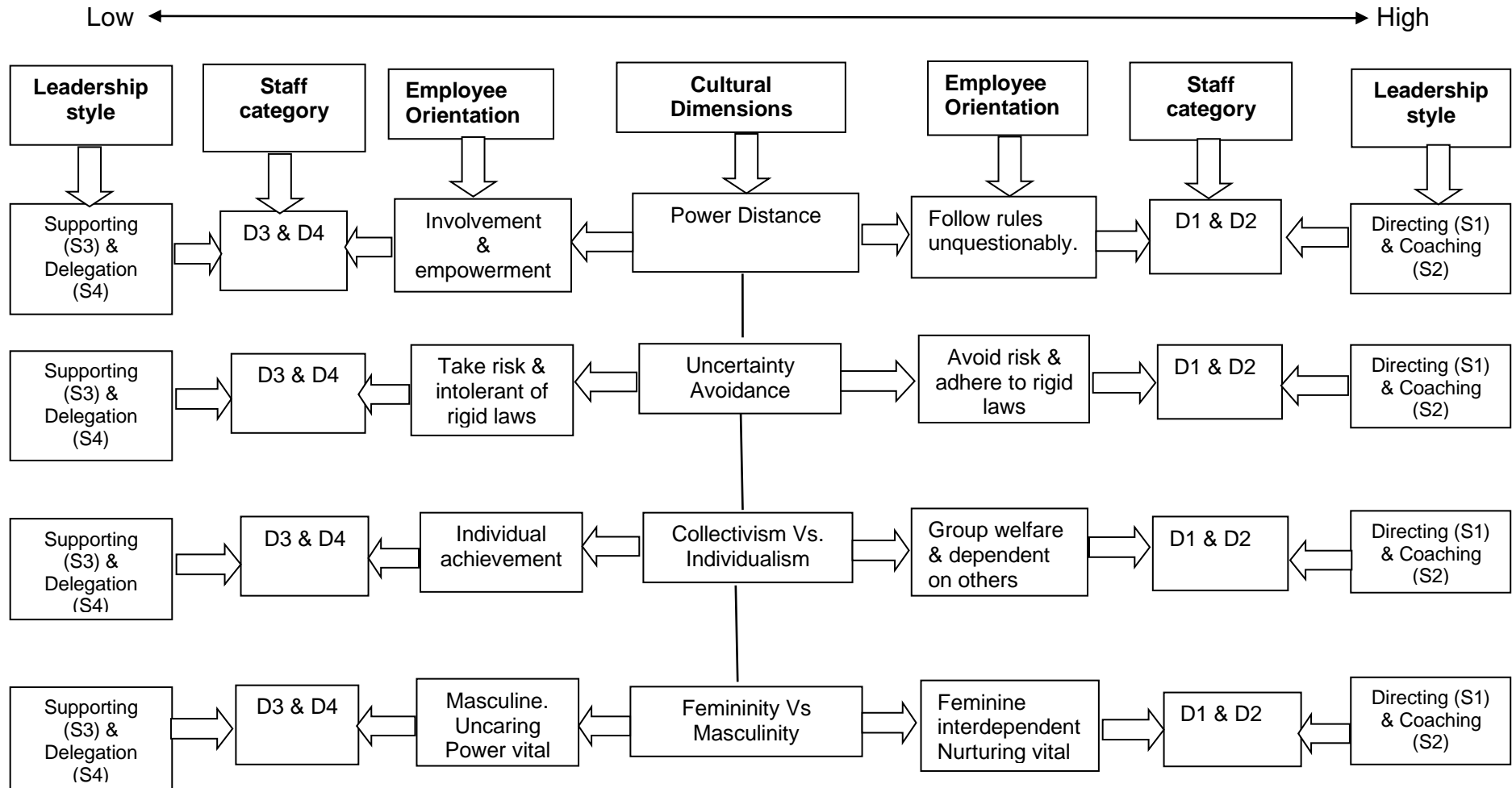
D1 to D4 represent the competence or development levels of the four categories of employees identified under situational leadership. Directing style is applied to support D1 staff, coaching style applied on D2 staff, supporting style applied on D3 employees and delegating style applied on D4 employees. The orientation of employees in each cultural dimension is explained under the orientation column.

The development levels D1, D2, D3, D4, and leadership styles directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3) and delegating (S4) were developed from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to situational leadership model and follower development levels.

Cultural dimensions relating to Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism versus individualism and femininity versus masculinity were developed from Hofstede, Hofstede & Minkov (2010) whilst the employee orientations were developed from Newman & Butler (2014).

The four cultural dimensions of Power distance, uncertainty avoidance, collectivism versus individualism and femininity versus masculinity according to Hofstede are in the middle of the figure under the heading "Cultural Dimensions". To the left of the figure highlights staff with low cultural dimensions (D3 & D4), their orientation and the SLT leadership style that can support their development. To the right of the figure also highlights staff with high cultural dimensions (D1 & D2), their orientation and the SLT leadership style that can support their development.

Figure 2.4. Situational leadership, cultural dimensions, and employee competence development



Source: Author construct, 2022

The collectivist and high-power distance culture within most Ghanaian societies and organisations reflects the value placed on family. However, the virtual absence of family-friendly policies in government and private organisations in Ghana, makes it difficult for employees to balance work and family (Aryee, 2005).

The next sub-section reviews family ties and how it impacts employee competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels.

2.5.1.2 Family ties and employee competence development

Historically, the hotel sector of the hospitality industry is one of the industries where non-traditional hours and unusual work schedules are the norm. Hence, it is particularly difficult to achieve “work -life balance” in the industry (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2014). The promotion of this culture is ultimately detrimental to gaining a work-life-balance (Cullen & McLaughlin, 2006).

Research however supports the view that, the priority employees give to their families gives them influence, recognition, enjoyment of the leisure of life, peace of the world and independence (Schwartz, 2015). This makes family, in the working life of every employee, an important factor to be considered in the leadership process. Cultural principles in Ghana, which is a predominantly collectivist society, endorses marriage and procreation as the culturally dominant family arrangement (Oheneba-Sakyi & Takyi, 2006). The extended family system again, in most Ghanaian societies tend to put a traditionally overbearing form of guilt and risk associated with family feud, when family members are unable to fulfil kinship demands such as elderly care, daily household chores, and participation in a family members’ rites of passage. Respecting and upholding family values are therefore mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies (Akoensi, 2018).

Work and family conflict in Ghana tend to be unusual (Akoensi, 2018), hence the application of SLT leadership styles to support the competence development of the diverse staff categories in the Ghanaian hotel industry may be affected by family ties. To obtain optimal return on employees, it will therefore be important to understand the interplay between work and family (Mohanty & Mohanty, 2014) in the leadership process.

The spiritual and faith values also tend to have an impact on family members in the Ghanaian culture, as it reflects the spiritual blessing bestowed on the family and its members (Akoensi, 2018).

The next sub-section will explore religious beliefs and how it impacts on employees competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels.

2.5.1.3 Religious beliefs and employee competence development

Religious identity is acknowledged to be tied to a range of important workplace outcomes (Héliot et al., 2020). Culturally and linguistically diverse workforce spirituality and faith has also been found to affect employee development and optimism in the hotel industry (Manoharan, 2021). Expressing one's religious views and seeking religious accommodations in the workplace has therefore become a common practice (Morgan, 2004). Be it overt or covert, employees working in religiously diverse organisations are prone to increased interpersonal conflicts and misunderstandings because of their religious affiliation which tend to affect their commitment and engagement (Messarra, 2014).

Héliot et al. (2020) identified three key features that appear to influence how religious identities interact with an individual's occupation. Thus, (i) the individual's personal preferences, (ii) the opportunities the work role provides to express that identity, and (iii) the characteristics of the worker's specific religious belief system. The various

categories of employees (D1, D2, D3 and D4) within Ghanaian SME hotels who tend to be identified with different religious beliefs, will display behaviours that then to reflect these features.

Consequently, a positive connection of these features, occupational and religious values tend to enhance employees workplace decisions and behaviours (Morrison & Borgen, 2010). On the other hand, a negative connection between these features, occupational and religious values tend to adversely affect employees behaviours and outcomes (Ghumman et al., 2013).

In conclusion, this review has highlighted that, Ghana is characterized by a high-power distance culture with a tight social framework and a strong and cohesive societal emphasis on in-group collectivism based on family ties, and religious or ethnic backgrounds. The understanding of the potential impact of contextual factors including culture, family and religion on leadership is important in the leadership process. Munchiri (2011) in a review of extant literature to build a logical framework depicting the interrelationships between leadership and the contextual factors of societal culture and patrimonial behaviours in sub-Saharan Africa has therefore called for the incorporation of context into leadership research to determine the impact of context on the relationship between leadership behaviours, followers' responses, and organisational effectiveness.

Research has identified the hospitality sector as a case environment for consideration of skills in services (Baum, 2002) as it indicates a rich agenda for researchers to pursue (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). Skill-enhancing human resource practices (for example, cultural and religious competence, selection or recruitment and training) are the best solutions to address several issues that tourism firms are faced with (Chang et al., 2011). For instance, low-skilled, low-paid, seasonal

workforce (Wikhamn, 2019), low level of qualification and a high turnover rate (Hjalager, 2002; Kattara & El-Said, 2013; Yang & Wan, 2004; Walsh et al., 2008). Kotey & Folker (2007, p .215) stated that “training is believed to be the most prevailing driver to improve the competencies of employees and to assist towards the growth and increase of profitability of an organisation”. Chandler & McEvoy (2000) further stated that organisations that empower employees through training and development are prone to have less employee turnover, greater productivity, and greater financial performance.

Consequently, implementing skill-enhancing human resource training practices is significant for SMEs strategy to focus and address customers’ wants and needs (Domi & Domi, 2020), as Ghanaian SME hotels showcase diverse employees (Mircetic et al., 2018) with varied competence levels and the lack of multidisciplinary competence (Appaw-Agboola, 2016).

Given the diversity within the industry, research has found strong indications of significant differences on the usage and importance of training and development practices in hotels (Chand & Ambardar, 2010). This recognition makes it difficult to provide uniform training for a fragmented sector. It is argued that it is less likely for unanimity to be achieved with respect to the use of training and development (Baum, 1997) especially among SMEs in the tourism or hospitality industry.

The next section will discuss training and development (T&D) as one of the mechanisms use to support employee competence (EC) and how leaders can enhance employees competence among Ghanaian SME hotels to achieve organisational objectives using T&D.

2.5.2 Training and Development

Extant literature has showcased the connection between training of human resources and performance of SMEs (Sirinaga, Khatibi & Ferdous-Azam, 2020) and SME employee's overall satisfaction (Rahaman & Uddin, 2022). The support for employees to improve their skills and competencies for both current and future roles is acknowledged to be through training and development (Anwar & Abd Zebari, 2015). Training with development are acknowledged to be human resource practices aimed at increasing an organization's ability to produce a positive outcome (Anwar & Balcioglu, 2016) and hence, can be offered to an employee at the same time (Anwar & Shukur, 2015) or at different times (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015).

Training is said to offer employees a continuous improvement in their abilities, skills, style of thinking, current processes and interaction with customers using different learning techniques (Hameed & Anwar, 2018) to hit targeted outcomes (Anwar, 2017). It offers employees an understanding of the mechanisms of things relating to future issues and demands, which may occur over a longer period (Anwar & Ghafoor, 2017) to take on more responsibilities based on their levels of efficiency (Anwar, 2017). On the other hand, development supports more organisational growth and a change in the direction and focus of status of employees, which is a key objective of development (Anwar & Climis, 2017).

Researchers have acknowledged the merits and significance of employee training and development on organizational outcomes (Zhang et al., 2019; Nda & Fard, 2013; Walters & Rodriguez, 2017). These include but not limited to the improvement of the overall quality of work processes and service delivery (Zhang et al., 2019) and improved performance (Danvila-del-Valle, Estévez-Mendoza & Lara, 2019) including SMEs (Sirinaga, Khatibi & Ferdous-Azam, 2020).

Human resource training which has been explained to align with the application of formal processes to impart knowledge by supporting employees to acquire the skills necessary for them to perform their assigned roles satisfactorily (Erina, Ozolina-Ozola & Gaile-Sarkane 2015). This is suggested to be able to prepare staff for the coming years, whilst working hard for it in the current (Anwar, 2016) as they will be the main source of energy to their organization (Abdulla et al., 2017).

However, Ghanaian SME hotels tend to use unstructured and informal processes to impart knowledge through training and development as the application of formal processes are suggested to be marred by high cost of training (Young-Thelin & Boluk, 2012; Ramendram et al., 2014), limited resources of SME hotels (Parida et al., 2012) and context including culture and religion (Munchiri, 2011).

Generally, however, researchers including Anwar & Louis (2017) and Rahaman & Uddin (2022) have highlighted that T&D can be categorised under two main types as either on-the-job training or off-the-job training.

On-the-job training consists of coaching or mentoring trainees by skilled and experienced staffs within the confines of the job environment (Anwar & Abdullah, 2021) by providing the necessary guidelines and other job-related knowledge to enhance employee job productivity and performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). On the other hand, off-the-job training is training that is conducted away from the job environment but still providing the necessary guidelines related to the job role (Anwar & Surarchith, 2015).

The five main types of training methods that are mostly applied by SMEs to develop the competence of their employees according to researchers including (Dewhurst et al., 2007; Paauwe, 2009; Lee & Bugler, 2017) includes: on-the-job training, computer-based learning, workshops, lectures and seminars and case studies.

The need for the application of T&D and its methods within Ghanaian SME hotels reflects in the category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees who are characterized as first-time employment employees with either basic or total lack of experience and competence in their roles. These employees have been described by scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) as D1 followers. Due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012), Ghanaian SME hotels tend to use T&D methods (for example, on-the-job training) as a first and necessary step to give these employees the basic skills required to start work immediately, for fear of customer dissatisfaction. Orientation and on-the-job training thus seem vital for this category to settle into their new roles.

The need for T&D among Ghanaian SME hotel employees also reflects in the second category of employees characterized by those employees (followers) who have worked and learned for some time and have become a little familiar with their roles but still classed as having low competence. These employees have been described by scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) as D2 followers. This category of employees strive to continue with the learning process for proper service delivery and customer satisfaction. The application of T&D methods (for example, on-the-job training, computer-based learning) may seem feasible. This gives managers the opportunity to use them as temporary replacement when competent staff resign or walk out.

The third category of employees among Ghanaian SME hotel employees whose competence is supported by T&D are those employees who take initiative, think independently, and have the tendency to challenge the leader when needed as they have something valuable to offer after learning the requirements of their role.

Scholars (for example, Cvijanovic et al., 2018; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009; Thompson & Glaso, 2015, 2018) described them as D3 followers. Further developing these employees may seem feasible as they would have been moderately competent and hence will need less on-the-job training and more development methods (for example, using workshops, seminars, and lectures) to broaden their knowledge of industry practices.

The final category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees are those characterized to be deemed professionally and extremely competent in their roles. Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) described them as D4 followers. They feel empowered in themselves and hence will need less on-the-job training and more development methods (for example, using workshops, seminars, and lectures) to broaden their knowledge of industry practices.

The application of the needed training and development to support and develop the competence and skills of employees within SMEs have been acknowledged to be challenging, especially among hotels in the hospitality industry (Hyasat, Al-Weshah & Kakeesh, 2022) due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012).

Consequently, the high cost of training pushes SMEs to embark on cost-cutting or under-investing in training activities (Young-Thelin & Boluk, 2012; Ramendram et al., 2014). This is seemingly justified by SME hotel owners and leaders who believe that it takes time to see actual results of training, as there is no direct return on training which they can use to justify its high cost (Kyriakidou & Maroudas, 2010; Young-Thelin & Boluk, 2012; Ramendram et al., 2014).

The development of training programmes that can meet employee needs and marketplace requirements has also been acknowledged to be challenging for hotel

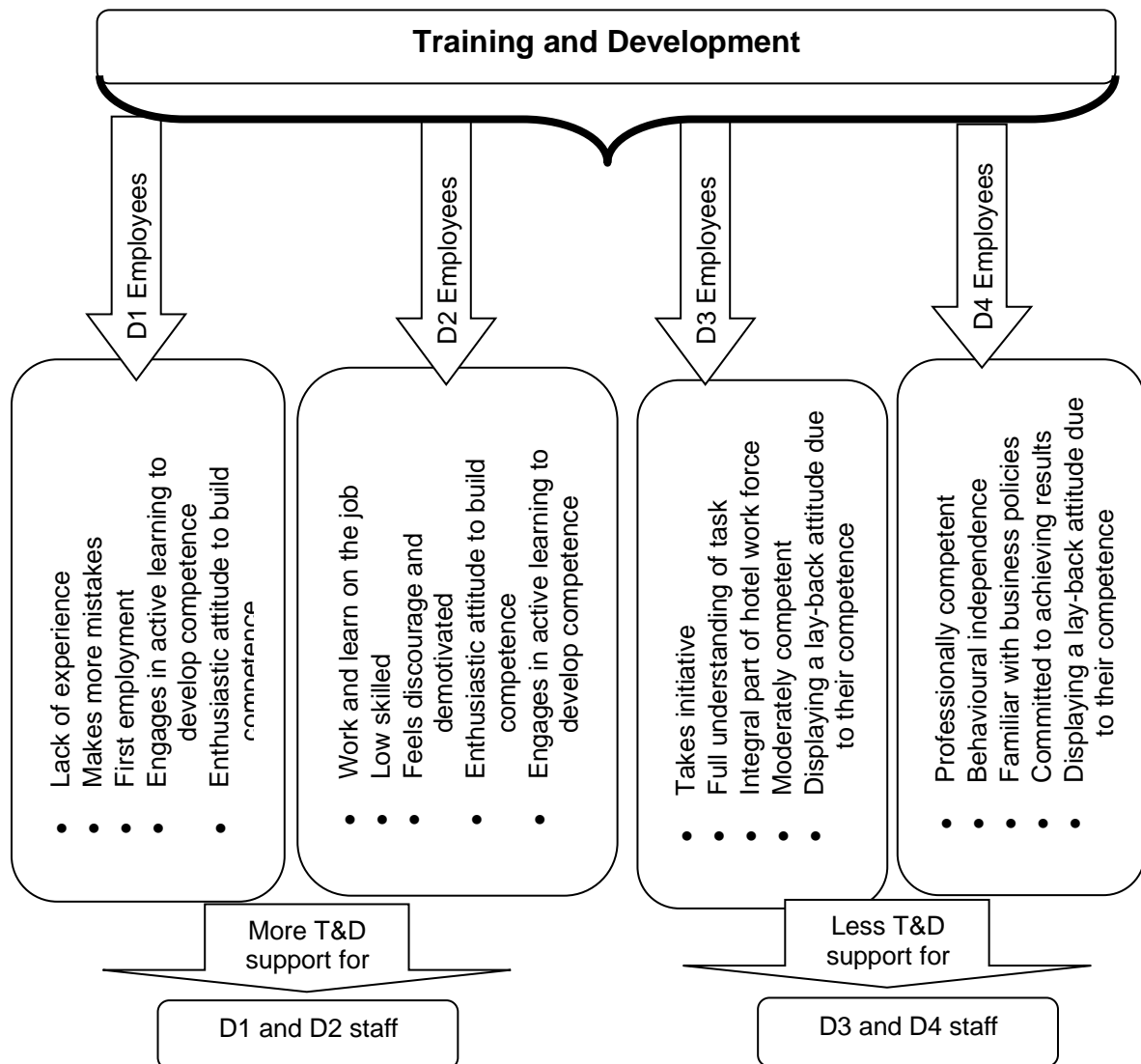
SMEs (Al-Weshah, 2018). The difficulty in managing workplace diversity among SME hotel employees which brings out Issues such as religion, cultural, and language differences among employees might have a (negative or positive) impact on training and development (Al-Weshah, 2019a).

Hyasat, Al-Weshah & Kakeesh (2022) has suggested the need for additional efforts to be tailored at establishing new training methods which should focus on SMEs within the hospitality industry. Given the high employee turnover among Ghanaian SME hotels and the prevalence of a larger portion of their workforce split between hired staff, trainees, and apprentices (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019), it may be suggested that the impact of training and development may be less felt in the long run. Ghanaian SME hotels owners, managers or leaders are therefore assumed to be sceptical on the investment and type of training they offer to their employees, given their limited resources.

Figure 2.5 which has 12 components summarises the level of T&D applied by Ghanaian SME hotels managers or leaders to the various categories of employees at the various employees competence development levels and features. D1 to D4 represent the competence or development levels of the four categories of employees identified under situational leadership. The features and competence levels of D1 to D4 explained in next four components, the next two components represents the level of T&D support to be given to the staff and the last two components at the bottom of the figure represents which category of staff the level of T&D should be targeted at. The first eight components of figure 2.5, D1 to D4 were developed from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to situational leadership model and follower development levels. By extension, the researcher added the last four components at

the bottom explaining the level of T&D and the staff it should be targeted at based on the researcher’s comprehension within the literature.

2.5 Theoretical Application of Training and Development within Ghanaian SME Enterprise hotels



Source: Author construct, 2022

Extant literature in competence according to Alberton et al. (2020) has emphasized the necessity to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out relative to how the individual competencies of their employees are supported within their organizations. Scholars have reiterated that when employees observe that they are being empowered they tend to be involved in active learning, exhibit supportive behaviour, get engaged in work, and display commitment towards their

organization by suggesting a profitable business solution (Maan et al., 2020).

Psychological empowerment (hereafter PE) is part of a leader's or manager's internal mechanism, with a high potential to materialize a positive confirmation of a link between organisational contextual factors and the engagement of employees (Stander & Rothmann, 2010). Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders thus have an extraordinary opportunity to support the competence development of their employees directly due to their closeness with their operating personnel (Pansiri & Temtime, 2006) since different types of leadership impact employees' psychological empowerment differently and equally determine how empowered the organization's employees feel (Murari & Gupta, 2012).

Psychological empowerment which is another mechanism that supports employee competence (EC) will be discussed in the next section to explore how leaders uses psychological empowerment to connect employees with their task and organisational values among Ghanaian SME hotels to achieve organisational objectives.

2.5.3. Psychological Empowerment

Research has highlighted the view that psychological empowerment (PE) is able to motivate employees and hence can have an impact on their work-related outcomes (Nawrin, 2016). Kuo, Yin & Li (2008) hold the view that when individual employees are empowered, they become more resilient, creative and take initiative within their roles with a sense of commitment to the organization. PE also represents and reflects a source of power and authority presented and opened to an employee within an organisation to reduce negative energy and generate a positive attitude (Seibert et al., 2011). Manoharan et al. (2021) also found psychosocial support from work and non-work sources to play a role in maintaining employees positive expectations of future careers in the hotel industry.

Researchers including, (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Luthans et al., 2008; Avey et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2012; Shah et al., 2019), all support the positive relationship between psychological capital and employee attitudes (such as, employee job satisfaction, organizational commitment and reduced turnover intention). An important consideration in PE has also been revealed to be the personality (such as core self-evaluations and self-esteem) of the employee (Wang et al., 2013), as this may impact on the outcome of PE.

Thomas & Velthouse (1990) extension of Conger & Kanungo (1988) work on empowerment to develop a general approach aimed at conceptualising PE in terms of changes in cognitive variables (called task assessments), in motivating employees identified four dimensions of psychological empowerment namely, impact, competence, meaningfulness and self-determination.

Task assessments according to Thomas & Velthouse (1990) are acknowledged to be the proximal cause of intrinsic task motivation and satisfaction occur within the person in reference to the task being carried out rather than the context of the task or to rewards or reprimands facilitated by others.

The next four sub-sections will discuss the four dimensions of task-assessment relative to how Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders promote these dimensions to intrinsically motivate their employees for better organisational outcomes.

2.5.3.1 Impact dimension of task-assessment in Psychological Empowerment

Thomas & Velthouse (1990: p.672) defined the impact dimension of task assessment as 'the degree to which behaviour is seen as "making a difference" in terms of accomplishing the purpose of the task, that is, producing intended effects in one's task environment'. First-time employees of Ghanaian SME hotels are characterized with vocational qualifications with no experience in relation to their new

roles (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). They may be likened to D1 followers (Cvijanovic et al., 2018; Thompson & Vecchio, 2009; Thompson & Glaso, 2015, 2018) in Figure 2.1 above as they are passive and deferent, but very enthusiastic, excited, optimistic and willing to learn.

They are apologetic to hotel guests for their mistakes with explanations relative to being new employees in the organization and in their role, viewing and acknowledging impact to be a possible diffuser, but the competence to perform is lacking (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). They are therefore willing to do better subsequently to make an impact to impress both the customer and the manager to maintain their jobs. How this behaviour is sustained will depend to a large extent how Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders psychologically empower this category of employees to induce impact.

The second category, thus those employees (followers) among Ghanaian SME hotels are those employees who have worked and learned for some time in a group or on a task within Ghanaian SME hotels to become more familiar with tasks and group activities may also feel discouraged, confused, and demotivated. Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) described this category of employees (followers) as disillusioned learners and likened their behaviour to D2 followers in Figure 2.1. How this behaviour is diffused for a continuation of the learning process for proper service delivery and customer satisfaction will depend to a large extent on how Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders psychologically empowers this category of employees to induce impact.

The third category of employees among Ghanaian SME hotels are those employees who view their role as followers who are proactive, neither passive nor

incompetent but have something valuable to offer after learning the tenets of their role. They take initiative, thinking independently, and have the tendency to challenge the leader when needed. Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) likened this type of followers to D3 followers as highlighted in Figure 2.1, who will want to be given an opportunity to practice their own ideas.

How this behaviour is managed, and the negative aspect diffused for a proper service delivery and customer satisfaction will depend to a large extent on how Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders psychologically empowers this category of employees to induce impact.

The last category of employees among Ghanaian SME hotels are those type of employees (followers) who are deemed to be professionally competent and familiar with the business policy of the organization. They display behavioural independence in the activities they carry out, achieves results, extremely competent and very committed to achieving results.

Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) described these type of employees (followers) as self-reliant achievers with the highest development level within the industry and likened their behaviour to D4 followers as highlighted in Figure 2.1.

They may exhibit a rebellious behaviour and hence feels that they should avoid domination by a leader and combat the leader's authority or desire to control them (Lapierre & Carsten, 2014). Psychologically empowering this category of employees to induce impact by maintaining and striking a balance between their authority and the authority of the manager or leader for proper service delivery and guest

satisfaction is among the major challenges of Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders.

2.5.3.2 Competence dimension of task-assessment in Psychological Empowerment

Competence is also understood as an employee's opinion of self-ability to implement assigned everyday jobs and responsibilities based on knowledge, skills, and experience (Turnipseed & VandeWaa, 2020). This aligns with Thomas & Velthouse (1990, p.672) explanation of competence as "the degree to which a person can perform task activities skilfully when he or she tries". The meaning of competencies can also be explained relative to involving the aggregate of knowledge within an individual skills and organizational units that can generate competitive advantage (Fleury & Fleury, 2004).

An exhibition of competence dimension of task-assessment in PE reflects the category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees characterized as first-time employment employees with either basic or total lack of experience and competence in their roles try as much as practicably possible to gain the needed competence to sustain their employment and earn a living. Described by scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) as D1 followers, their level of competence is likened to what Spencer & Spencer (1993) referred to as threshold competencies.

Due to the availability of unemployed graduates and senior High school leavers, seeking their first employment to gain the needed experience and exposure for either career development or self-sustenance, Ghanaian SME hotel managers take advantage of this by dismissing employees who have not yet gotten their heads around their roles but are ready to learn, for fear of customer dissatisfaction. Little

attention is given to how this category of employees can be motivated by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers to bring out the best in them.

Competence dimension of task-assessment in PE also reflects in the second category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees characterized by those employees (followers) who have worked and learned for some time and have become a little familiar with roles but still classed as having low competence. Described by scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) as D2 followers, their level of competence is likened again to what Spencer & Spencer (1993) referred to as threshold competencies. This category of employees also try as much as they can to gain the needed competence by striving to continue with the learning process for proper service delivery and customer satisfaction. A little latitude is however given to this category of employees when they fall short in their roles as Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers use them as temporary replacement for resignations and walk-outs by competent staff.

Competence dimension of task-assessment in PE also reflects in the third category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees characterized as those employees (followers) who engage with Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers, take initiative, think independently, and have the tendency to challenge the leader when needed as they have something valuable to offer after learning the tenets of their role. Described by scholars (for example, Cvijanovic et al., 2018: Thompson & Vecchio, 2009: Thompson & Glaso, 2015, 2018) as D3 followers, their level of competence is likened to what Spencer & Spencer (1993) referred to as differentiating competencies. This category of employees do not try as much as the first two categories as they would have been moderately competent and hence have

the tendency to either resign or walk out as they are more likely to secure a new job more easily due to the experience gained.

Competence dimension of task-assessment in PE reflects in the final category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees characterized as those employees (followers) who exhibit a rebellious behaviour and feels that they should avoid domination by a leader because they are deemed to be professionally and extremely competent. Described by Scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) as D4 followers, their level of competence is likened to what Spencer & Spencer (1993) referred to as differentiating competencies as well. They feel empowered in themselves and hence display behavioural independence and are mostly spared of rebuke by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers for fear of losing them to the big organizations.

2.5.3.3. Meaningfulness dimension of Task-assessment in Psychological Empowerment

Thomas & Velthouse (1990, p. 672) explained meaningfulness as a dimension that “concerns the value of the task goal or purpose, judged in relation to the individual's own ideals or standards. In other words, it involves the individual's intrinsic caring about a given task”.

The first category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (first-time employment employees with no experience) synonymous to D1 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will place the value of the task goal or job role above their own ideals as they accept whatever is thrown at them by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers in order to gain the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment and earn a wage. Their own ideals are therefore disguised

to achieve these with Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's focus being targeted at service delivery by this category of employees to the neglect of this disguised behaviour.

The second category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with low competence and with little experience) synonymous to D2 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also place the value of the task goal or job role slightly above their own ideals as they accept whatever is thrown at them by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers in order to continue the learning process aimed at gaining the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment. Their own ideals are also a little disguised to achieve these with Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's focus being targeted at service delivery by this category of employees to the neglect of this disguised behaviour.

The third category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with moderately high competence) synonymous to D3 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also place the value of the task goal or job role slightly above their own ideals as they accept whatever is thrown at them by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers in order to continue the learning process aimed at gaining the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment. Their own ideals are also a little disguised to achieve these with Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's focus being targeted at service delivery by this category of employees to the neglect of this disguised behaviour.

The last category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those who are professionally competent) synonymous to D4 followers based on scholars such as

Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also place the value of the task goal or job role slightly above their own ideals as they accept whatever is thrown at them by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers in order to continue the learning process aimed at gaining the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment. Their own ideals are also a little disguised to achieve these with Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's focus being targeted at service delivery by this category of employees to the neglect of this disguised behaviour.

2.5.3.4 Self-determination dimension of task-assessment in Psychological Empowerment

Self-determination dimension is assimilated to locus of causality, explained as involving issues relative to whether a person's behaviour is perceived as self-determined (Thomas & Velthouse, 1990). Self-determined employees are perceived or characterized as being more flexible, creative, resilient, and self-regulated (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

Hostile hotel guests are perceived and known to emotionally exhaust hotel staffs, with hotel employees mostly complaining of lack of appreciation (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016) which has the tendency to negatively affect job performance and service delivery. How these emotional exhaustion and lack of appreciation is handled by the various categories of employees working in Ghanaian SME hotels reflects how self-determined they are.

The first category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (first-time employment employees with no experience) synonymous to D1 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will demonstrate a behaviour characterized by flexibility,

resilience and self-regulation to accommodate emotional exhaustion and lack of appreciation from both hotel guest and Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders. This behaviour reflects their readiness and determination to learn the tenets of their job role to gain the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment and earn a wage. Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's places less emphasis on how this category of hotel employees can be psychologically empowered.

The second category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with low competence and with little experience) synonymous to D2 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also demonstrate a behaviour characterized by flexibility, resilience, self-regulation with a level of creativity to accommodate emotional exhaustion and lack of appreciation from both hotel guest and Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders.

This behaviour reflects their readiness and determination to further learn and become competent in their job role to sustain their employment, earn a wage, and develop a career. They begin to attract the attention of Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers because of the little experience gained and show of commitment and creativity in their job role and hence, steps are gradually taken on how to psychologically empower this category of staff.

The third category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with moderately high competence) synonymous to D3 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will demonstrate a behaviour characterized by a diminishing flexibility, resilience, self-regulation but with a high level of creativity due to their level of competence. Their behaviour and focus will now be channelled to finding a more

challenging and rewarding role outside the organisation. Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders begin to engage in a two-way communication with this category of employees to retain them. Whether this is enough or not to psychologically empower them is left to the judgement of the staff.

The last category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those who are professionally competence) synonymous to D4 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also demonstrate a behaviour characterized by almost lack of flexibility, resilience, self-regulation but with a high level of creativity due to their professional level of competence. Their behaviour and focus will now be channelled towards the service of high-profile hotel guest, diffusing staff-guest conflicts, and giving directives. Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders delegate authority and engages in a two-way communication with this category of employees to retain them. Whether this is enough or not to psychologically empower them is left to the judgement of the staff.

Research has found employees in the hospitality industry to mostly complain of emotional exhaustion, low pay, and lack of appreciation (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016) which has the tendency to negatively affect job performance and service delivery. PE of employees according to (Namasivayam, Guchait, & Lei, 2014) can be one of the profiled key solutions that addresses these problems among hospitality organizations.

Doris (2002) found that employee behaviour among Ghanaian SME hotels are temporal and may contextually vary. This is due to situational variables and environmental factors and hence it is prudent to expect a hybrid of explanatory theorems to underlie their individual cognitive and moral orientation, socialisation

processes, gender role differentiation and situational experiences to motivate them psychologically.

When employees in an organisation feels psychologically empowered by managers or leaders, they develop a sense of identity, connect with the organization's values, and gets involved further at work (Joo et al., 2019) and hence are better able to manage effectively unpredicted situations that might occur during service delivery, which often require employees "to depart from the script" (Shimko, 1994). New leadership strategies are therefore needed to motivate the 21st-century workforce to increase their positive psychological capital (Deloitte, 2014).

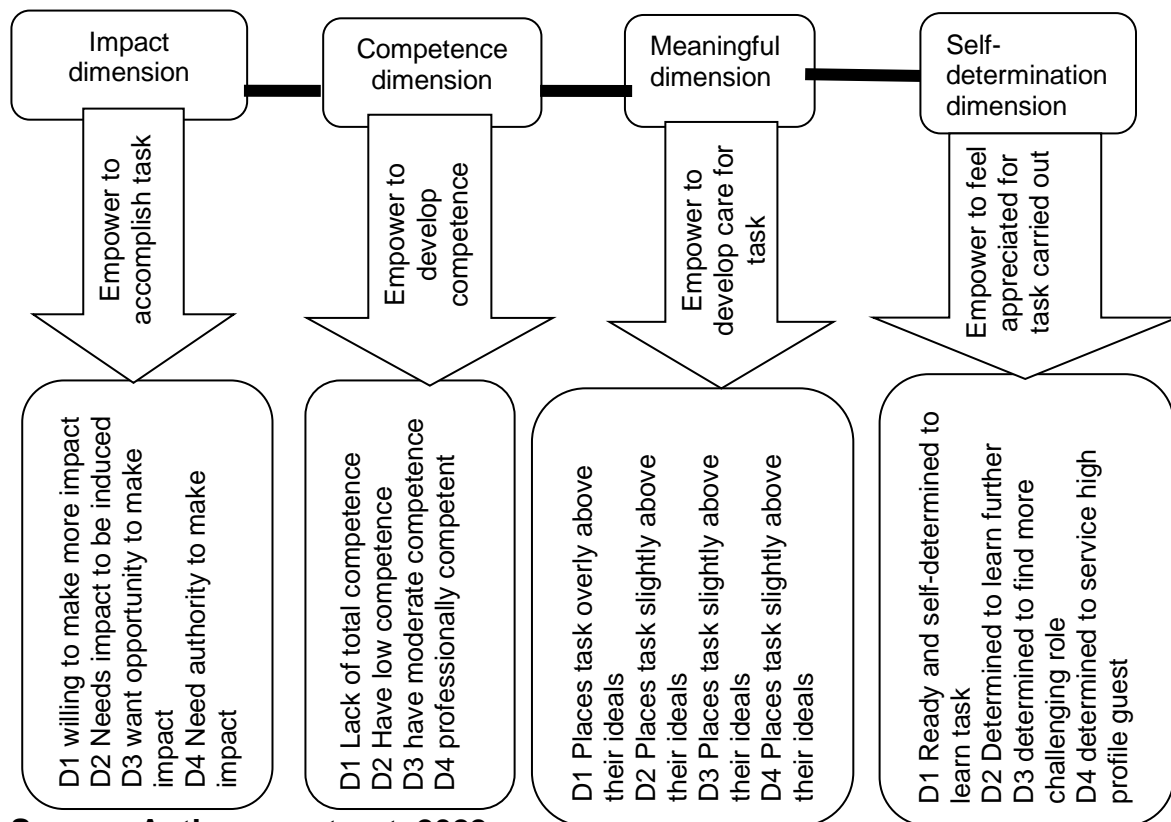
Chiu et al. (2020) has therefore called for an examination of how managers exert influence using social-psychological means, such as through their personality or leadership styles to achieve their goals within the firm.

Figure 2.6 which has 12 components summarises the four dimensions of psychological empowerment, the objective each dimension seeks to achieve when exhibited on employees at the various development levels and features of the various categories of employees in the constructs of situational leadership. Impact, competence, meaningfulness and self-determined representing the four dimensions, the four arrows under each dimension explains what each dimensions seeks to induce from the various employees categories (D1 to D4) and the bottom four components under each arrow representing the various categories of employees (D1 to D4), their features and empowerment needs in the constructs of situational leadership.

The first four (4) components of figure 2.6, impact dimension, competence dimension, meaningfulness dimension and self-determined dimension were developed from Thomas & Velthouse (1990) extension of Conger & Kanungo (1988) work on

empowerment and employees categories D1 to D4 from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to follower development levels. By extension, the researcher added what each dimension seeks to induce within the arrows and the explanation of the features and requirements of each category of employees (D1 to D4) in each of the last four (4) components at the bottom based on the researcher's comprehension within the literature.

Figure 2.6. Dimensions of Psychological Empowerment among Ghanaian SME Enterprise Hotel Staff



Source: Author construct, 2022

In conclusion, research suggests that hotel employees often face critical situational dilemma, for example, of unable to put hotel guest on hold nor approach other professionally competent employees or managers to seek help (Kang et al., 2020). PE in the hotel business, enable employees to take immediate and relevant decisions without constantly approaching higher authorities to offer appropriate

customer service advice (Al-douri, 2018). This tend to make employees proactive (Lee et al., 2019). Consequently, managers or leaders in Ghanaian SME hotels are likely to prioritize the empowerment of professionally competent employees (D4 followers) and those with moderately high competence (D3 followers) as they (D4 and D3 followers) can take immediate and relevant decisions for proper service delivery over D2 and D1 followers. This suggest that little is done to psychologically empower those with low competence (D2 followers) or without any competence (D1 followers) as these two categories can be replaced with ease. This may have implications for the organizational support these categories of employees may receive to develop their competence.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is acknowledged to have the tendency of inducing an intellect of commitment among workers or employees to repay the organization's care by acquiring skills, behaviour, and attitudes (Tripathi et al., 2021). This tend to increase their desire and involvement in active learning (EL Hajjar & Alkhanaizi, 2018; Maan et al., 2020) which can profit an organization.

The next sub-section will explore perceived organizational support among Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders and how it helps in promoting learning, the acquisition of skills and the development of employee competence.

2.5.4. Perceived Organizational Support.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is acknowledged to have the tendency of inducing an intellect of commitment among worker or employees to repay the organization's care by acquiring skills, behaviour, and attitudes (Tripathi et al., 2021). Employees therefore tend to be involved in active learning (Maan et al., 2020) which can profit an organization.

Researchers including Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) have considered organisational support theory to facilitate our understanding of POS. Employees tend to be more emotionally connected with the establishment, extra devoted and loyal (Gokul, Sridevi, & Srinivasan, 2012; Yuan et al., 2018) due to mutuality, when they start perceiving their organization to be compassionate. This mutuality is the basic premise of organizational support theory.

The influence of organisational and management support on employees attributes such as competence have been highlighted by scholars including (Osei & Ackah, 2015; Vargas-Halabí et al., 2017; Elbaz et al., 2018; Zarefard & Jeong, 2019).

Bufquin et al. (2017) and Manoharan et al. (2021) both found that hospitality and hotel employees supportive relationships with supervisors, employers, and co-workers can influence career optimism among hotel staff. This section will explore perceived organizational support among Ghanaian SME hotels and how leaders or managers can use it to help in promoting learning, the acquisition of skills and the development of employee competence.

POS can be explained as an employees' belief relative to the degree at which their contributions and the upkeep of their well-being is being acknowledged by the organization (Eisenberger et al., 1986). POS has the tendency to induce an intellect of commitment among personnel to repay the organization's care by acquiring skills, behaviour, and attitudes that can be profitable for the establishment. Shani et al. (2014) reiterate that hotel employees are highly sensitive to the manner they are treated by their supervisors, as they feel hurt when they perceive that they are not being treated with fairness, kindness, and respect.

Those employees whose competence are aligned with D4 employees (professional competence) and D3 employees (moderately high competence) tend to receive more

organisational support as they are perceived by Ghanaian SME hotels leaders or managers to be the driving force of the organization and losing them will cost the organization more than D2 (low competence) and D1 (no competence). D4 employees (professionally competent) and D3 employees (moderately high in competence) instead of being committed and involved in further learning due to POS (Maan et al., 2020), rather tend to display a lay back attitude due to their competence levels as they can gain immediate employment elsewhere when dismissed.

On the other hand, those employees whose competence are aligned with D2 employees (low competence) and D1 employees (no competence) tend to receive less organisational support as they are perceived by Ghanaian SME hotels leaders or managers to be contributing less to organizational success and losing them will not affect the organization in anyway as they can be replaced with ease.

This perception is caused by the availability of unemployed vocational and senior high graduates (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). D2 employees (low competence) and D1 employees (no competence) instead of being laidback and not get involved in further learning due to less POS, tend to rather get involved with active learning to gain the needed competence to sustain their employment. This seems to contradict Maan et al. (2020) suggestion that an employee's observation of POS tend to be involved in active learning, exhibit supportive behaviour, get engaged in work, and display commitment towards their organization.

With Ghanaian SME hotels acknowledged to mostly employ vocational and senior high graduates (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), due to limited resources, level of proximity and limited number of staff, Ghanaian SME hotel owner-managers or leaders are usually close to their operating personnel and hence are provided with an

extraordinary opportunity to influence employees directly (Temtime & Pansiri, 2006), and POS can be felt more by these staff.

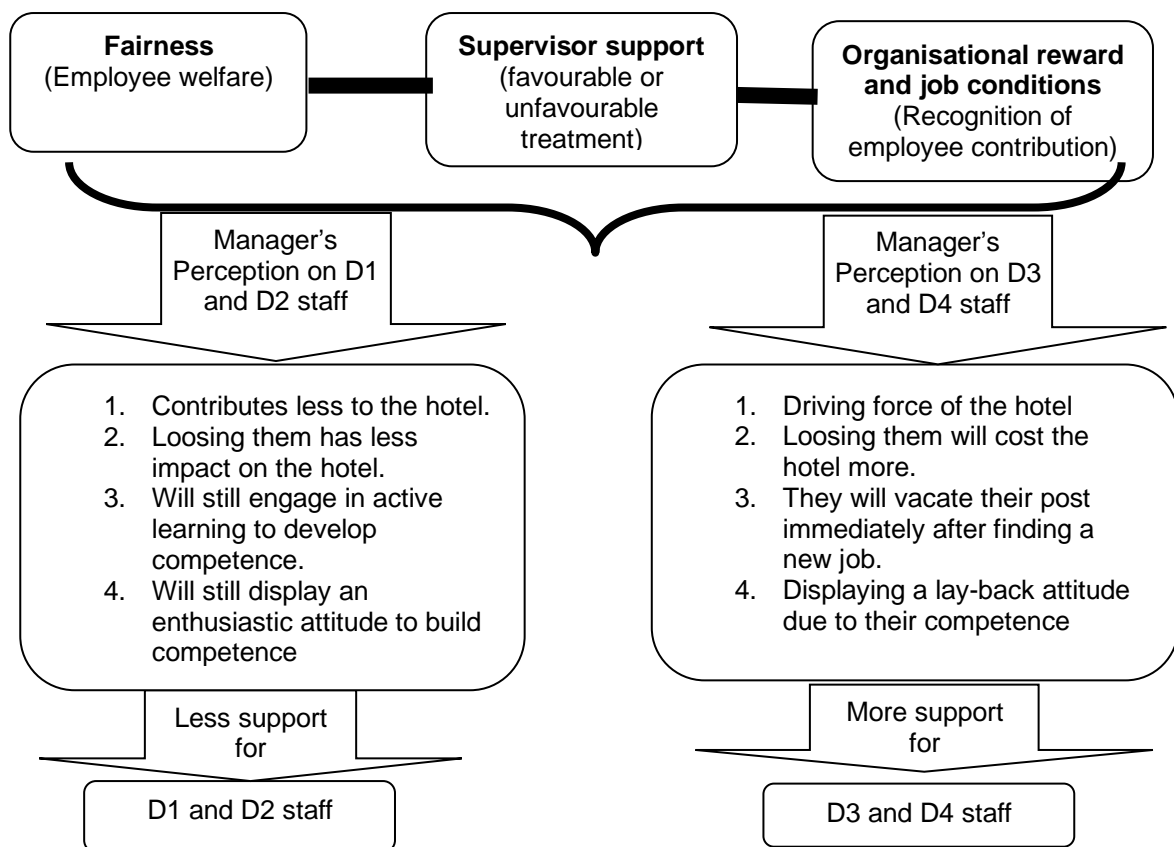
However, D4 employees (professionally competent) and D3 employees (moderately high in competence) when they find better employment contracts and conditions with the big hotels, either vacate or resign their post and leave service delivery to D2 employees (low competence) and D1 employees (no competence). Mistakes, reduced service quality are bound, and this attitudinal cycle continues when they (D2 and D1 staff) also gain the needed competence due to the feeling of lack of POS. How to shape this behaviour among employees and its impact on organizational outcomes is key to the survival of Ghanaian SME hotels.

De Massis et al. (2018) therefore called for an exploration of small firm owner power (ability and willingness) to clarify the mechanism through which the owner power shapes the behaviour of firms and their consequences in different and key organisational outcomes.

Figure 2.7 which has 11 components summarises the antecedents of perceived organisational support, manager's perception of employees contribution to the SME, features of the various categories of employees and the level of organisational support given to the various categories of employees based on the development levels. The first three components, fairness, supervisor support and organisational reward and job conditions represent the three antecedents of POS. Managers perceptions of the various categories of employees (D1 to D4) in the next two arrows pointing to their perceptions about the various employees and the last four components at the bottom highlighting the level of support the various categories of employees received.

The first three (3) components of figure 2.7, Fairness, supervisor support and organisational reward and job conditions were developed from Rhoades & Eisenberger (2002) review of perceived organisational support literature and employees categories D1 to D4 developed from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to follower development levels. By extension, the researcher added managers perception of the various categories of employees and the level of support they receive in the last four (4) components at the bottom based on the researcher's comprehension within the literature.

Figure 2.7. Theoretical Application of Perceived Organizational Support Antecedent within Ghanaian SME Enterprise hotels



Source: Author construct, 2022

In conclusion, Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's POS tend to be concentrated on D4 employees (professionally competent) and D3 employees (moderately high in competence) with D2 employees (low competence) and D1

employees (no competence) having a feeling of lack of POS. Consequently, job satisfaction and employee engagement seem to be absent among most Ghanaian SME hotel staff.

POS is acknowledged to be closely connect with better job satisfaction (Caesens & Stinglhamber, 2014) and have been underscored by scholars to positively affect employee engagement, inducing an inherent interest in tasks allocated to them (Chan, 2017). Such engaged employees incline to have a positive emotional work attitude quite progressive for themselves (Murthy, 2017) which tends to have a positive impact on organizational outcomes.

The next sub-section will explore employee engagement and how it can induce and support the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel employees.

2.5.5. Employee Engagement

Research support the view that employee engagement (EE) in hospitality businesses leverages an organisation and improves job performance, as such engaged employees are more dedicated and deliver better service quality work than those who are less engaged at work (Rich et al., 2010). This section will explore employee engagement and how it is used by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers to induce and influence the competence development of their staff.

Employee engagement has frequently been described as a psychological state in a work environment in which feeling competent and safely secured, motivates employees to physically, cognitively, and emotionally dedicate and commit to their assigned roles (Schaufeli et al., 2002).

From the viewpoint of Schaufeli et al. (2002), engagement is conceptualized as a three-dimensional construct, thus vigour, dedication, and absorption. Worker's experience of vigour is characterized by (desire and commitment to perform their

jobs energetically and to do their very best), dedication (being devoted to and inspired by their job), and absorption (being completely focused on and immersed in the task).

The category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (first-time employment employees with no experience) synonymous to D1 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will demonstrate all the three-dimensional construct (thus vigour, dedication, and absorption) conceptualized by Schaufeli et al. (2002) unknowingly or disguisedly. This behaviour reflects their desire to learn the tenets of their job role to gain the needed competence and experience to sustain their employment and earn a wage. Ghanaian SME hotel leader's or manager's exploit this behaviour by assigning most of the difficult manual tasks to them to complete the process of service delivery whilst employees also exploit this by disguisedly getting themselves engaged to acquire the needed competence for a more lucrative employment later.

The second category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with low competence and with little experience) synonymous to D2 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also demonstrate all the three-dimensional construct (thus vigour, dedication, and absorption) conceptualised by Schaufeli et al. (2002). This behaviour reflects their desire to enhance the little competence gained to either move up the promotional ladder or prepare themselves for a more lucrative employment. A little latitude is given to these employees relative to the task assigned to them, as they begin to attract the attention of Ghanaian SME

hotel leaders or managers because of the little experience gained and hence, steps are gradually taken on how to engage this category of staff.

The third category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those with moderately high competence) synonymous to D3 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will demonstrate a behaviour characterized by a diminishing enthusiasm on all three-dimensional construct (thus vigour, dedication and absorption) conceptualized by Schaufeli et al. (2002) but with a high level of creativity due to their level of competence.

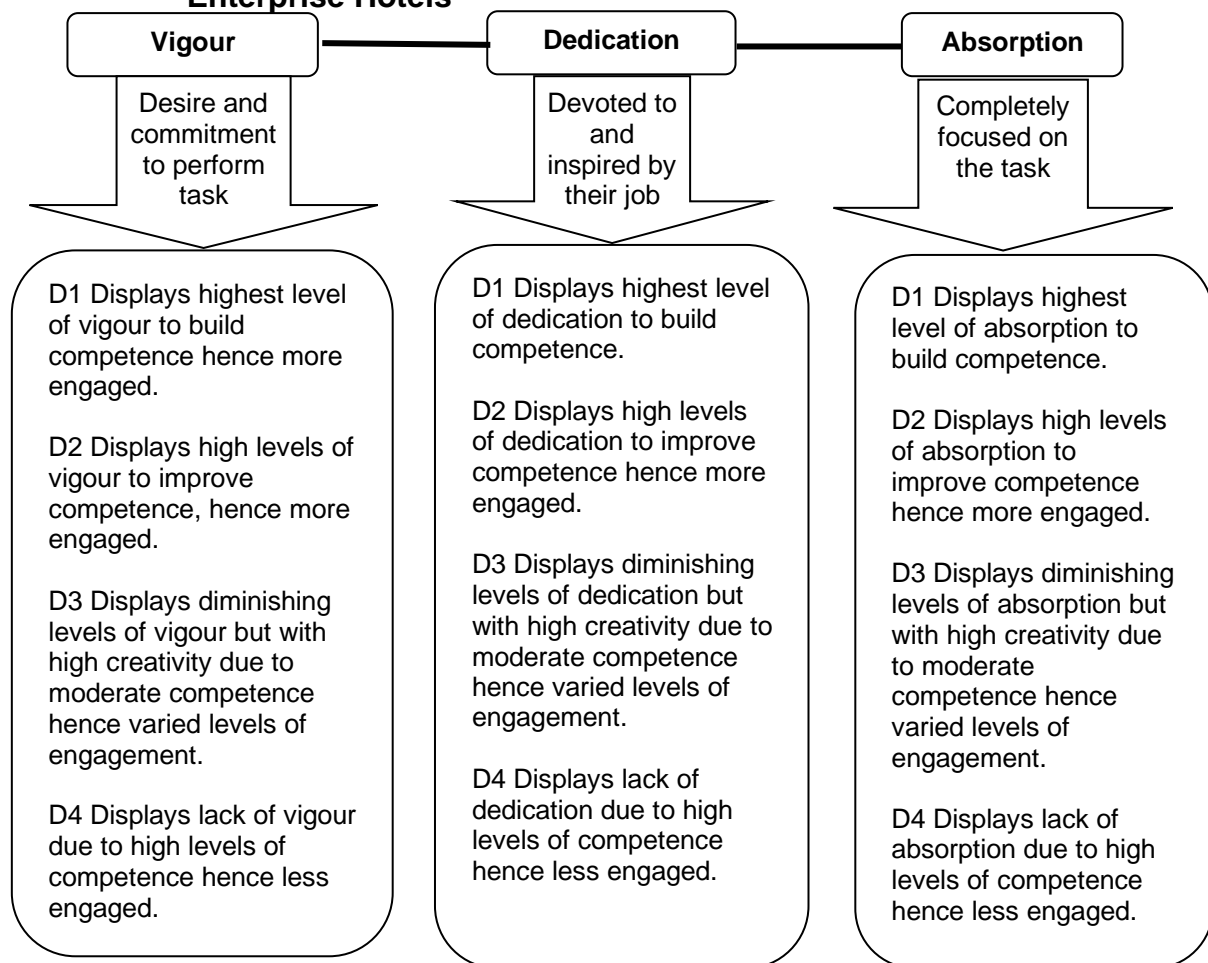
Their behaviour and focus will now be channelled to finding a more challenging and rewarding role outside the organisation. For fear of losing them, Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders begin to find ways or exhibiting behaviour that will get these employees engaged to retain them.

The last category of Ghanaian SME hotel employees (those who are professionally competent) synonymous to D4 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions will also demonstrate a behaviour characterized by almost lack of all the three-dimensional construct (thus vigour, dedication, and absorption) conceptualized by Schaufeli et al. (2002) due to their professional level of competence. Their behaviour and focus will now be channelled towards the service of high-profile hotel guest who, unfortunately are seldom found in Ghanaian SME hotels.

Figure 2.8 which has 9 components summarises the dimensional constructs of employee engagement and the engagement levels of the various categories of employees relative to each dimension. The first three components, vigour,

dedication, and absorption represent the three-dimensional constructs. The three arrows under each construct explains the construct and the last three components at the bottom explains the engagement levels of the various categories of employees (D1 to D4). The first three (3) components of figure 2.8, vigour, dedication and absorption were developed from Schaufeli et al (2002) and employees categories D1 to D4 developed from the work of Blanchard (1997 and 2000) relating to follower development levels. By extension, the researcher added the engagement levels of the various categories of employees in the last three (3) components at the bottom based on the researcher's comprehension within the literature.

Figure 2.8. Conceptual view of Employee Engagement among Ghanaian SME Enterprise Hotels



Source: Author construct, 2022

Rich et al. (2010) have elucidated that, employees who put their heads, hands, and heart in their job roles show they are fully engaged. Ghanaian SME hotel leaders should be able to induce the variables such as job satisfaction, work culture and fairness at work, which are considered to foster employee engagement (Singh, 2017). It is assumed common to find some of these variables impacting employee engagement among Ghanaian SME hotel employees due to Ghanaian SME hotel leaders' inability to induce or promote these variables within the workplace.

An examination of how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers exert their power, personality, and leadership style to positively promote these variables will yield positive organizational outcomes. Chiu et al. (2020) has therefore called for an examination of how managers exert influence using social-psychological means, such as through their personality or leadership styles to achieve their goals within the firm.

In summary, Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers seem to have lost strategies on how to engage their employees due to limited promotion of variables that induces employee engagement. Hence, there seem to be an inverse relationship between employee competence and employee engagement among Ghanaian SME hotel staff.

Those who are professionally or moderately competent are seemingly characterized with less vigour (desire and commitment to perform their jobs energetically and to do their very best), dedication (being devoted to and inspired by their job), and absorption (being completely focused on and immersed in the task) as they want to use their professionalism to serve high profile guest, who seldom patronise Ghanaian SME hotels. So, they look out for more challenging roles with the big hotels.

Those who are incompetent or with low competence are seemingly characterized with more vigour (desire and commitment to perform their jobs energetically and to do their very best), dedication (being devoted to and inspired by their job), and absorption (being completely focused on and immersed in the task) as they want to develop their professionalism for a possible future career or to seek better employment prospects.

The next subsection which is the conclusion to the literature, summarises the review on situational leadership and employees competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels.

2.5.6 Literature Review Conclusion

Operating in a predominantly collectivist society (Akoensi, 2018) with a very high-power distance (Danquah, 2018; Ansah, 2015), Ghanaian SME hotels are characterised by diverse cultural, religious, and social differences among their employees. Ownership, management, and leadership is mostly vested into the hands of the owner, hence the goals of the owner and that of the Ghanaian SME hotel are interrelated. Leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotels should be able to accommodate these variations among different organisations, staff, contextual factors, and behavioural variations to achieve the objective of leadership.

Among the different leadership styles, SLT leadership style has been acknowledged to be able to accommodate these variations by combining both behavioural and contingency approaches at varying degrees of maturity and task-readiness levels of employees (McCleskey, 2014) to develop and leverage employees affective and cognitive behaviour to achieve organisational objectives. How this is manifested among Ghanaian SME hotels characterised by staff who are diverse with emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long hours, and mood swings will provide further

insight into the constructs of follower readiness or development levels (Luo & Liu, 2019) and may have implications for leadership capacity development from a contingency and behavioural perspectives.

The review has also acknowledged the lack of professionally and multidisciplinary competent employees among Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

Consequently, Ghanaian SME hotel leaders tend to exhibit the use of less structured approaches to achieve superior organizational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016) to guarantee the survival and growth of their businesses (Dias et al., 2017).

This suggest that employee competence development is key to Ghanaian SME hotel managers and leaders in the realisation of organisational objectives. This is however seldom supported or managed. An exploration of how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out (Alberton et al., 2020) to support the individual competence potential of these employees within their organizations is vital (Kuzma et al., 2017) as this enables hotel employees to be able to diffuse critical service situational dilemmas (Kang et al., 2020).

PE in the hotel business which enable employees to take immediate and relevant decisions (Al-douri, 2018) among Ghanaian SME hotels is assumed to be concentrated on professionally competent employees (D4 followers) and those with moderately high competence (D3 followers) as compared to those with low competence (D2 followers) or without any competence (D1 followers). Consequently, this may affect the amount of the organizational support these categories (D2 and D1) of employees receive to develop their competence, resulting to disengaged staff. The review also suggests that the lack of appropriate organisational support is likely to reduce employees engagement and hence, can create an inverse relationship

between employee competence and employee engagement among Ghanaian SME hotel staff.

Consequently, those who are professionally or moderately competent are seemingly characterized with less vigour (desire and commitment to perform their jobs energetically and to do their very best), dedication (being devoted to and inspired by their job), and absorption (being completely focused on and immersed in the task) as they want to use their professionalism to serve high profile guest, who seldom patronise Ghanaian SME hotels. So, they look out for more challenging roles with the big hotels. Those who are incompetent or with low competence are seemingly characterized with more vigour (desire and commitment to perform their jobs energetically and to do their very best), dedication (being devoted to and inspired by their job), and absorption (being completely focused on and immersed in the task) as they want to develop their professionalism for a possible future career or to seek better employment prospects.

The next section will provide a summary of the literature, highlight the key literature findings, research gaps and how this research proposes to address those gaps as well as discusses the key studies that have influenced and underpinned this research to achieve the research aim.

2.6. Summary of literature

This section provides a summary of the literature by highlighting the key literature findings, research gaps and how this research proposes to address those gaps. It also discusses the key studies that have influenced and underpinned this research to achieve the research aim.

2.6.1 Key literature findings and research gaps

This section explores the key findings in the literature, and how this research proposes to address those gaps identified in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels to achieve the research aim above.

The literature has revealed that, the Ghanaian hotel industry is dominated by SMEs (Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017) who are mostly registered under the sole tradership form of business (Cochran, 1981). Due to the use of the private resources of SME owners to finance its operations, there is mostly no separation of powers between leadership, management, and control. Consequently, management and leadership are interwoven with more power vested into the hands of SME Ghanaian hotel owners, who mostly double as managers and leaders (Thompson-Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018). Leadership practices therefore tend to be synonymous with managerial practices within Ghanaian SME hotels.

Again, organisational performance has been linked to employee development in the Ghanaian hotel industry (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). However, due to the seldom receipt of job applications from qualified jobseekers, vocational, and senior high school graduates who lack multidisciplinary competence and possibly taking their first employment in the hotel industry represent the largest segment of employees working within Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

Leadership or managerial practices research in the Ghanaian SME sector have also explored for example, separation of ownership and management among SME Agribusinesses (Michaela Quaicoo, & Kwasi Bannor, 2023). Scholars including Otoo & Mishra (2018) have therefore highlighted limited research on the possible mediating effects of employee performance on human resource management practices in the Ghanaian hotel. Research exploring how Ghanaian SME hotel

managers support the competence development of their staff using different human resource management practices for effective service delivery is therefore lacking. In line with Otoo & Mishra's (2018), Opoku (2020) in an examination of the effect of strategic HR practices on the competitiveness of hotels in the Central Region of Ghana also called for more research to examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

Secondly, the literature has found that Ghanaian SME hotels have a liability of smallness and hence, seldom receive job applications from qualified jobseekers. Staff employed are therefore mostly inexperienced vocational and senior high school graduates (Frempong, 2019; Appaw-Agbola, 2016). These staff have varying competence levels, diverse, exposed to intensive labour, long working hours, emotional exhaustion, mood swings and limited work-life balance. Competences such as initiative taking are therefore very difficult to develop (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). This presents emerging problems which requires a contingent, multidisciplinary, or adaptable managerial or leadership approaches to address, given their uniqueness, challenges and diversity.

This research which is underpinned by situational leadership is deemed to overcome the limitations of other leadership theories, does not submit to a one-size-fit-all leadership approach and able combine behavioural and contingency theories at varying degrees of development levels to support staff competence development. The review also found that the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in organisational management have been mostly concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs (Beavers & Hitchings, 2005). There is therefore lack of a clear picture on how the application of Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership or managerial practices adopted to support employees

competence at various staff development levels showcases leaders supportive and directive behaviours and align with situational leadership styles. Liu et al. (2020) in an examination of the influential mechanism of leader empowerment behaviour on employee creativity has therefore called for more research to study the mechanisms for ensuring the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour in particular contexts.

Finally, the literature has found that respecting and upholding family values, religious, and cultural beliefs are mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies, as it is a predominantly collectivist society (Akoensi, 2018) with a very high-power distance (Danquah, 2018; Ansah, 2015). This makes family, religion, and culture important factors to be considered in the leadership process in the Ghanaian context, as the views of leaders and employees would be affected by these factors. As leadership within this research has been contextually defined, an understanding of the potential impact of context on leadership is therefore vital to lead small groups in relation to their surroundings.

However, situational leadership theory (SLT) has placed more significance on employee development or readiness levels when deciding on a leadership style to support employee competence development. This emphasis has side-lined the study of contextual and situational variables in the leadership process (Hughes et al., 2018), especially among SMEs due to their liability of smallness (Parida et al. 2012). Research exploring contextual factors among hospitality and hotel employees has also concentrated on specific elements, for example, emotional labour in Israel (Shani et al., 2014), occupational stigma in Sub-saharan Africa (Moufakkir, 2023) or in large hotels for example, emotional and behavioural reactions to customer mistreatment in China (Wong & Pan, 2023), a particular group of people, example

perceptions of hotel managers towards disability service provision in Sydney (Darcy & Pegg, 2011).

There is therefore a gap in the literature exploring employee behaviour relative to the contextual factors that needs to be considered, alongside staff development or readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style within the Ghanaian SME hotel context.

Consequently, leadership and management practices in African (Gray, Shrestha, & Nkansah, 2008) and within Ghanaian SMEs have been tempered with to accommodate contextual factors. Munchiri (2011) has therefore called for more research to examine the impact contextual factors may have on followership constructions and behaviour in the follower role.

How this research will begin to address these gaps to achieve the research aim is discussed in the next sub-section.

2.6.2. How the key research gaps will be addressed.

This section highlights how this research will begin to address the key literature gaps identified to achieve the research aim.

The literature has highlighted that limited research explore how Ghanaian SME hotel managers support the competence development of their staff using different human resource management practices for effective service delivery (Otoo & Mishra, 2018). Opoku (2020) has therefore called for an examination of the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry. To begin to address this gap, this research proposed to solicit information from Ghanaian SME hotel managers to identify the different leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives.

Secondly, the literature has highlighted lack of a clear picture on how the application of Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership or managerial practices adopted to support employees competence at various staff development levels showcases leaders supportive and directive behaviours and align with situational leadership styles. Liu et al. (2020) has therefore called for more research to study the mechanisms for ensuring the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour in particular contexts. To begin to address this gap, this research proposed to solicit information from hotel managers and employees to explore how the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employees competence development showcases leader supportive and directive behaviours and align with situational leadership styles in the various quadrants of the situational leadership model.

Finally, the literature has highlighted that leadership and management practices in African (Gray, Shrestha, & Nkansah, 2008) and within Ghanaian SMEs have been tempered with to accommodate contextual factors. Munchiri (2011) has therefore called for more research to examine the impact contextual factors may have on followership constructions and behaviour in the follower role. To begin to address this gap, this research proposed to solicit information from Ghanaian SME hotel managers and employees to identify contextual factors that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to develop employees competence.

In addressing these research gaps, key studies that have significantly influenced the research aim and the development of the research objectives and questions are discussed in the next section.

2.6.3. Key studies that have influenced this research.

This section highlights studies that have significantly influenced the research aim and the development of the research objectives and questions.

There are some key researchers and studies that have significantly influenced the research aim and the development of the research objectives and questions.

The first key author and underpinning research is Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey situational leadership theory. The publication of Hersey and Blanchard textbook in 1969 titled “Management of Organizational Behaviour”, which was inspired by the changing leadership style and the limitation of the Reddin’s 3-D “Management style theory” inspired them to start the use the term Situational Leadership in 1972. Ken Blanchard Situational Leadership II was later developed by Ken Blanchard and Paul Hersey in 1985 (Blanchard, Zigarmi and Nelson, 1993) and subsequently to Blanchard (1997 and 2000).

The concept of supportive and directive behaviours replaced task behaviour and relationship behaviour to align with the four styles of directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating in situational leadership II. Development levels also replaced readiness or maturity levels, competence replaced ability and commitment replaced willingness in situational leadership II.

Changes to the description of the four development levels were also made in situational leadership II. Development level 1 (D1) described as “able but unwilling” was changed to “high commitment but low in competence”. Development level 2 (D2) described as “unable but willing” was changed to “low commitment and low competence”. D3 described as “able but unwilling” to “high competence with variable commitment” and finally D4 described as “able and willing” changed to “high competence with high commitment”.

These changes have remained in the situational leadership literature even after 35 years and it is still valuable and being used in current research including Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018), Gyeltshen (2020), Al-Khamaiseh et al. (2020), Wuryani et al. (2020) and Putra & Riyanto (2021) to manage and influence employees in different context. Situational leadership is appropriate for this research because it uses adaptable leadership to manage and influence employees with varying development levels. This is the situation among Ghanaian SME hotels as they are acknowledged to be filled with different employees who lack multidisciplinary competence for proper service delivery. However, the premise of situational leadership is to be able to combine supportive and directive behaviours appropriately to manage and support employees at different development levels to achieve organisational outcomes. This research in addition to exploring situational leadership impact on employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels, will also explore contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development at the various development levels which the model has failed to address.

The second study underpinning this research is Thomas & Velthouse (1990) cognitive elements of empowerment. Their model attempted to improve upon existing models. For example, by considering job characteristics (Hackman & Oldham, 1980), leaders' behaviour (Bennis & Nanus, 1985), and other variables outside the individual (Conger & Kanungo, 1988) relating to empowerment and intrinsic task motivation which were focused largely on the role of objective external conditions or events as independent variables. Their model presented a cognitive model of empowerment to identify key interpretive processes to introduce diversity

into individuals' cognitions which are thought to have an additive effect upon the individual's task assessments and, hence, on their empowerment.

They explained empowerment in relation to an increased level of intrinsic task motivation with four cognitions (task assessments) as the basis for worker empowerment: thus, sense of impact, competence, meaningfulness, and choice.

These changes have remained in the empowerment and intrinsic motivation literature for over three decades and still being used in current research including Joo & Shim (2010), Joo & Lim (2013) and Shah et al. (2019) to facilitate individuals' psychological needs, such as autonomy, sense of competence, relatedness, and self-efficacy (Avey et al., 2010).

Evidence within the Ghanaian hotel industry including (Apaw-Agbola, 2016) revealed that employees in the industry are diverse and mostly lack multidisciplinary competent staff. The identification of variables that will be able to interpret their cognitions will facilitate the adoption of appropriate leadership styles to empower and support the competence development of these staff. This research explores how these cognitions are supported by SME leaders to enhance Ghanaian SME hotel employees competence development of task readiness in the various quadrants of the situational leadership model.

In summary, this research will draw significantly and build on the previous research of situational leadership, follower development and task-readiness by Hersey and Blanchard (1997 and 2000) and Thomas & Velthouse (1990). It will build on previous research of Hersey and Blanchard (1997) by identifying contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of the situational leadership model.

Finally, the research will add insight to Thomas & Velthouse (1990) by exploring how the four cognitions are supported by SME leaders to enhance Ghanaian SME hotel employees task readiness and development in each of the quadrants of the situational leadership model.

The next section will discuss the research philosophy, research methodology, as well as the justification for the most appropriate method to collect data and the data analysis process to ensure strong links and coherence are maintained throughout the research.

Chapter Three.

3.0 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Hallebone & Priest (2008) explained the term 'methodology' as a set of tactics and supporting steps that supports the chosen science and logic of an enquiry. Other researchers have associated the meaning and descriptions of methodology as the research logic undertaken by a researcher as a paradigm to establish the researcher's philosophy, research methods and research design or strategies (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

A researcher's stance, which describes and expresses the supporting reasons, relationships, processes, and substance of generating, assembling, and analysing data, determining, and validating study findings, and reporting a research conduct and results is a crucial element of a comprehensive and rigorous research (Hallebone & Priest, 2008). The stance which must be mutually consistent with the paradigm according to Hallebone & Priest (2008) is often ignored. It is also crucial for the researcher to envisage that a specific view of the world will affect the advancement of the entire research (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2011), in that it will influence how the research ought to be conducted and interpreted.

Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019) reiterates that business and management scholars have failed to reach a consensus on whether the multiplicity of philosophies, paradigms and methodologies are desirable. Scholars with a unification view see business and management to be fragmented and hence multiplicity prevents it from becoming a true scientific discipline (Pfeffer, 1993) whilst

scholars such as Knudsen (2003) who has a pluralist view argue that multiplicity enriches business and management because of its dynamic nature.

To help in the outline and choice of the research philosophy, to achieve the aim of this research, which is to explore situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development and identify contextual factors, that need to be considered alongside employee readiness levels when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model, this research adopt a pluralist view in line with Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019).

Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill (2019) suggests that each research philosophy and paradigm contributes something unique and valuable to business and management research, representing a different and distinctive way of seeing organisational realities. Consequently, to achieve the research aim above, the research philosophy and paradigm identified within this research will help the researcher to qualitatively explore situational leadership support and impact on employees competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels, to explore these research questions.

1. What leadership practices do Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply in the leadership process, to support employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives?
2. How do the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process to support employee's competence development, align with situational leadership styles?
3. What contextual factors need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to

support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model?

This chapter discusses the next step of the research process after reviewing literature in the previous chapter to explain and justify how the research was conducted to achieve the research aim and the research questions set. The chapter has been divided into two sections to guide the reader on what underpins the research theoretically, and what methods have been adopted by the researcher in the conduct of the research.

The theoretical underpinning section (3.2) which includes research philosophy (section 3.2.1), research approach and methodological choice (section 3.2.2) and research strategies (section 3.2.3), provided the theoretical foundation, basis, and justification upon which the research methods were built upon to achieve the research aim.

The methods section (3.3) which includes the time horizon (section 3.3.1), data collection process (section 3.3.2), data analysis process (section 3.3.3) and research rigour (section 3.3.4) provided an explanation and justification of the procedures adopted in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels for each of the research questions above to aid in accomplishing the research aim.

The chapter is therefore structured as follows: the theoretical underpinning is discussed under section 3.2: the research methods is discussed under section 3.3 and the summary which concludes the chapter is discussed under section 3.4.

3.2 Theoretical Underpinning

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, p.130) constitutes “a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge”. A well-considered assumption will constitute a credible research philosophy, which will underpin the choice of methodology, strategy and data collection techniques and analysis (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Scholars have reiterated that, extant empirical research requires the selection of one consistent guiding philosophy known as a research paradigm to reflect the philosophy and the scientific approach that is considered most suitable for the purpose, context and focus of the research being undertaken (Hallebone & Priest, 2008).

These assumptions which includes (but may not be limited to) assumptions relating to the realities a researcher encounters about his or her research or what a researcher assumes can be studied (ontological assumption), connecting that to human knowledge or what the researcher can know about it (epistemological assumption) and the way and extent of how the researcher’s own values affects the research (axiological assumption) and the methodological approach in the collection of data (Easterby-Smith, Thorpe & Jackson, 2012: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) which are key to a successful research.

To distinguish between philosophies (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), many arguments among philosophers are relative to assumptions concerning ontology, epistemology, and axiology (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012: Saunders et al., 2011: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019: Hallebone & Priest, 2008). The reasons for these arguments according to Mkansi & Acheampong (2012) is because of their

share of critical assumptions but emphasizing very different implications of those assumptions and equally adopt different methodological categorisation and classification.

Saunders et al. (2009) and Guba & Lincoln (1994) indicate a perspective that views philosophies (positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism) from an ontological, epistemological, and axiological stance. This research discusses the importance, distinctions and implications of these assumptions and stance in the next sections to evaluate and choose an appropriate philosophy to guide this research by breaking down the differences among these philosophies.

3.2.1.1 Ontology

This section explores the ontological perspective of this research and the way the researcher defines the truth and realities of this research relative to the research aim above.

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) explained ontology as an assumption which is about the nature of reality. Though may be abstract in nature, but it shapes how researcher see and study their objects which may include organisations, management, individual working lives, events, and artefacts. Ritchie & Lewis (2003) view of ontology include realism, materialism, critical realism, idealism and relativism.

Saunders et al. (2011) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) have described two universal aspects of ontology among business and management researchers, which are objectivism and subjectivism.

Objectivism stands for the position that assumes social entities to exist in a reality external to and independent of social actors which can be measured and hence embraces realism (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Subjectivism on the other

hand, asserts that social reality or phenomena are the result of the actions and perceptions of social actors or players (Creswell, 2007; Saunders et al., 2011). Subjectivity according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) ontologically embraces nominalism or conventionalism.

Nominalism in its extreme asserts that social reality is created by social actors using language, conceptual categories, perception, and consequent actions, hence as people perceive reality differently, it will make sense to explore multiple realities rather than a single reality that is supposed to accommodate everyone. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) further opined that a less extreme form of nominalism is often related to social constructionism. Social constructionism asserts that reality is created through social interaction in which social actors create partially shared meanings and realities, which according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), nominalism follows positivist philosophy.

Ontologically, positivists assume that reality is objectively given and is measurable using properties which are independent of the researcher and instruments: thus, knowledge is objective and quantifiable, and it is equally concerned with the uncovering of truth and presenting it by empirical means (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). On the other hand, Interpretivists ontological perspective assume that knowledge and meaning require acts of interpretation (Gephart,1999) and hence Meyer (2009) argues that the premise of interpretive researchers is that access to reality (whether given or socially constructed) is only through social constructions such as language, consciousness, and shared meanings.

Morgan (2014) however reiterates that in social research today, breaking down the dualism between realism and idealism and contrasting its close separation between post-positivism and constructivism, has been a central feature in applying the

philosophy of knowledge to social research. Therefore, ontological arguments about either the nature of the outside world or the world of our conceptions are just discussions about two sides of the same coin.

Consequently, Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009) opined that an important determinant of the epistemology, ontology and axiology research adopts is the research question as, one may be more appropriate than the other for answering questions. Hence, the need to work with variations in a researcher's epistemology, ontology, and axiology from the perspective of pragmatism.

Characteristically, qualitative research ontology views reality as being subjective and multiple as seen by research participants and hence the researcher tries to use quotes and themes to provide evidence of the different perspectives (Creswell, 2007). Consequently, interpretivists ontology will bring out the shared meaning of leadership styles and how it supports and impacts employee's competence development and task-readiness in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

The researcher's ability to interpret the shared meanings about reality, narratively accounted for from the opinion of Ghanaian SME hotel owner-managers or leaders and their employees will depend on what can be known about the realities within the hotel industry, and this is shrouded in epistemology. The next sub-section discusses the epistemological underpinnings and its relevance and implications for this research.

3.2.1.2 Epistemology

Scholars have reiterated that whereas ontology may seem abstract, the relevance of epistemology seems obvious. Hence, epistemology is based on knowledge and what constitute acceptable, valid, and legitimate knowledge and how that knowledge can

be communicated to others (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019), or what can be known about reality and the relationship between what is known and reality (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012). This section explores the epistemological perspective of this research relative to what can be known about reality and the relationship between what is known and reality to achieve the research aim above.

Saunders et al. (2011, p. 132) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009, p. 112) both defined epistemology as “what constitutes acceptable knowledge in a field of study”. There are two main kinds of researchers, who are known as “resources” and “feeling” researchers (Saunders et al., 2011, p. 134). The resources researcher considers reality to be akin to natural sciences and represented by objects that are “real, such as cars, laptops, or actual employees leading to the collection and measurement of evidence with limited bias and therefore embraces a positivist philosophy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

On the other hand, feeling researchers believe that people’s feelings, attitudes, and perceptions cannot be seen, modified or measured and must therefore be interpreted by the researcher in a narrative form by embracing an interpretivist philosophy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009).

Qualitative research epistemology is characterized by the researcher’s attempt to bridge the distance between him or herself and that which is being researched and hence tries to become an insider by collaborating and spending time in the field with participants (Creswell, 2007). Epistemologically, the researcher basically believes that knowledge about how leadership style supports and impact employee’s competence development and task-readiness in the different quadrants of situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels can be known from the perspective of the leader and the follower within the organization. Consequently, spending time

with the leaders and their employees within Ghanaian SME hotels will be an integral part of the research process.

How the researcher will go about finding out what she or he believes can be known and the value-guide of the research is shrouded in the axiological stance the researcher (the inquirer or would-be knower) adopts. Having explored the ontological and epistemological stance, the next sub-section will discuss the axiological underpinning and its implications for this research.

3.2.1.3 Axiology

Axiology translates ontological and epistemological principles into guidelines that demonstrates how research is to be conducted (Sarantakos, 2005). This sub-section discusses the axiological underpinning and implications for this research.

Axiology refers to “the role of value and ethics” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019, p.134). Axiology according to Saunders et al. (2011) reflects how the researcher’s judgments with respect to value leverages the research process and results. Saunders et al. (2011) and (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) both argue that a researcher’s choice of philosophical approach or data collection techniques reflects that researcher’s values.

Qualitative research axiology is characterized by the researcher acknowledging that the research is value-laden and that biases are present and hence tries to mitigate this by openly discussing the role of value that shapes the narrative of the research including juxtaposing the researcher’s interpretation with that of his or her participants (Creswell, 2007).

Table 3.1 shows the comparison of axiology’s meaning among the five research philosophies (positivism, critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism).

Table 3.1 Axiological meaning among the five philosophies

Philosophy	Axiological meaning (Research's view of the role of value)
Positivism	Value free research. Research is detached and independent of what is researched. Researcher maintains an objective stance.
Critical realism	Value-laden research. Research acknowledges bias view of the world. Cultural experience and upbringing. Researcher tries to minimize bias and errors and researcher is as objective as possible.
Interpretivism/ constructivism	Value bound research. Researchers are part of what is being researched. Subjective. Researcher interpretation is key to contribution. Researcher reflexive
Postmodernism	Value constituted research. Researcher and research embedded in power relations. Research narratives are repressed and silenced at the expense of others. Researcher radically reflexive.
Pragmatism	Value-driven research. Research initiated and sustained by researcher. Researcher reflexive.

Source: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, pp. 144-145)

Consequently, following interpretivism as a researcher, this current research is value-bound, embedded in multiple realities pertaining to facts, values and in different real-life contextual experiences (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). This approach has been followed throughout the process of this research from the formulation of research aim, questions and design, data collection through semi-structured interviews, recording and transcription of interviews, data analysis and results interpretation and final development of a model.

It is pragmatic to reiterate that, the choices made concerning the research philosophy and the entire research process, were and are determined by personal and career interest, belief, and experience, drawing on the vast scholarly reflections of other researchers in the SMEs sector pertaining to leadership styles, follower

readiness or development and competence in the hotel industry. The justification for the philosophical choice of this research is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.2.1.4 Philosophical choice and Justification

To shape the research process, researchers assume a particular stance by making a choice of a research philosophy which will guide their actions relative to their basic belief (Creswell, 2007). To help the researcher to make sense of and outline the philosophical basis for the chosen research paradigm and research approach, this section explores and justifies the choice of research philosophy for this research.

Guba & Lincoln (1989) have linked positivism, post-positivist, and constructivist to critical realism based on his classification of philosophies, whilst Saunders et al. (2009) and Guba & Lincoln (1994) perspective views of philosophies include (positivism, realism, interpretivism, and pragmatism) from an ontological, epistemological, and axiological stance.

This research puts this multiplicity of complexities relating to these philosophies on hold, but dwell on Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, p. 144) five major philosophies (positivism, critical realism, post-modernism, pragmatism and interpretivism) relative to business and management research in the selection and justification of the research philosophy for this research. These are discussed below.

3.2.1.4.1 Positivism

Scholars reiterate that positivism entails working with observable social realities to produce law-like generalization (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Positivism holds the premise that the social world exists externally and can be estimated objectively rather than being subjectively deduced through reflection or feelings (Easterby-Smith et al., 2012).

Researchers with a positivist philosophy prefer to gather data about an observable reality and explore regularities and causal relationship in the data to create law-like generalizations (Gill & Johnson, 2010; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) through a cause and outcome phenomenon (Creswell, 2009). Thus, addressing research issues through a process of discovery by assessing a cause of action that might lead to an outcome, which may among others be through experimentation.

Positivist researchers believe that everything is objective and exists out in the world, thus, they can observe and measure them. Saunders et al. (2011, p. 134) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, p. 146) holds that positivist researchers often use “existing theory to develop hypotheses. These hypotheses will be tested and confirmed, in whole or part, or refuted, leading to the further development of theory which then may be tested by further research”. Research with a positivist philosophy will remain neutral and detached from the research and data to avoid influencing the findings of the research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Since leadership style support and impact on employee’s competence development can only be observed but not measured, using a positivist approach for this research would result in only describing an overarching view of the relationship between the interacting factors between leaders and followers rather than exploring leadership behaviour which reflects their style and how it supports employee’s competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

Consequently, the researcher holds reservations for the adoption of a positivist philosophy in answering the research questions, as the results of this research cannot be generalized due to its context-specific nature and will not help the researcher to deeply explore and understand different contextualised support and

experiences of both leaders and followers in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

3.2.1.4.2 Critical Realism

The essence of realism which is similar to positivism according to Saunders et al. (2011, p.136) is “what we sense is reality: that objects have an existence independent of the human mind”. Saunders et al. (2011) identified two types of realism, which are direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism according to Saunders et al. (2011) assumes that a researcher can understand a phenomenon through observation. This implies that the sense of experience of a researcher can exactly describe the phenomenon.

In contrast, critical realism according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) focuses on explaining what we see and experience in terms of the underlying structure of reality that shapes the event being observed. This experience from the researcher’s perspective may consist of the feelings and the images the researcher has of a phenomenon in the real world, which may be fallible due to the influence of the social world (Saunders et al., 2011). Critical realists interpret phenomenon through sensations and mental processes to understand the reality of the world (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Critical realists axiological position follows the premise that our knowledge of reality is as a result of social conditioning and hence providing explanations for observable organizational events through in-depth historical analysis of social structures underpins critical realism (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Employing critical realism may therefore be inappropriate for the aim of this research, which attempts to explore situational leadership impact on employee’s competence development as well as develop a model to explain SLT leadership

style impact on employee competence development, and the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development.

3.2.1.4.3 Postmodernism

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) contend that postmodernism (not to be confused with postmodernity, which denotes a particular historical era) focuses on the role of language and of power relations, seeking to question accepted ways of thinking and give voice to alternative marginalised views by emphasizing on the chaotic primacy of flux, movement, fluidity, and change.

Sim (2001) viewed postmodernism as an updated version of scepticism more concerned with destabilizing other theories and their pretensions to truth than setting up a positive theory of its own, hence a deployment to undermine the authoritarian imperative in our culture and way of life.

Hassard (1999) contend that the epistemology of postmodernism concerns knowledge of localized understandings and acceptance of a plurality of diverse language forms, hence postmodernism sees the fragmentation of grand narratives and the discrediting of all meta-narratives. Postmodernist researchers according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) from an organisational perspective may focus on ongoing processes of managing, organising, and ordering rather than approaching the organisation as being constituted of things and entities such as management, performance, and resources.

Accordingly, postmodernists researchers according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) hold the view that there is no order in the social world beyond that which we ascribe to it through language and hence will reject the modern objectivists and

ontology of things. Fundamental also to the postmodernist researcher is the recognition that power relationship between the researcher and the research subjects shape the knowledge created as part of the research process.

However, this recognition of power relationship between the researcher and the research subjects is likely to promote biases, prejudices, and interests (Sweetman, 1999), and hence, will undermine the legitimacy, objectivity, and ethics of this research.

Postmodernism, which challenges organisational theories and concepts may be inappropriate for this research, which is to explore situational leadership impact on employees competence development or readiness among Ghanaian SME hotels to bring out unbiased facts in a real-life setting.

3.2.1.4.4. Pragmatism

One of the best places to get a sense of both the broad outlines of pragmatism as a philosophy and its orientation to problem solving according to Morgan (2014) is in the work of John Dewey. Morgan (2014) underscored the importance of pragmatism by reiterating that pragmatism as a philosophy goes beyond being well suited to the analysis of problem solving as a human activity.

Patton (2002) explained pragmatism to mean judging the quality of a study by its intended purposes, available resources, procedures followed, and results obtained, all within a particular context and for a specific audience. Pragmatism emphasizes on practical solutions and outcomes using multiple methods, thus multiple sources of data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Creswell, 2003). Pragmatism aims to contribute practical knowledge that informs future practice by striving to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, facts, values, and different contextualised experiences by considering theories, concepts, ideas, and research findings not in

an abstract form, but in terms of their practical consequences in specific contexts (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016).

Scholars such as Biesta (2010), Green & Hall (2010), Patton (2002) and John & Onwuegbuzie (2004) have all provided explanations and justification for the use of pragmatism in qualitative research.

The importance of pragmatism is evidenced by its ability to help researchers to ask better and more precise research questions about the philosophical implications and justification about their research design (Biesta, 2010).

Secondly, Green & Hall (2010) see pragmatism as resulting in a problem-solving action-oriented inquiry process, based on commitment to democratic values and progress.

Further, pragmatism does not subscribe to a one-sided paradigm allegiance and hence increases the concrete and practical methodological options available to researchers (Patton, 2002).

Finally, pragmatism facilitates the elimination of doubt in the selection of methodological mixes that can help researchers to answer many of their researched questions (John & Onwuegbuzie, 2004).

The concepts of pragmatism according to (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008) are only relevant where they support action as reality matters to pragmatists as practical effects of ideas, and knowledge is valued for enabling actions to be carried out successfully.

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) however, cautioned researchers not to treat pragmatism as an escape route from the challenge of understanding other philosophies, by striving to reconcile both objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, accurate and rigorous knowledge and different contextualised experiences

as advocated by pragmatists. This reconciliation according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) is achieved by considering theories, concepts, ideas, hypotheses and research findings not in an abstract form, but in terms of the roles they play as instruments of thought and action, and in terms of their practical consequences in specific contexts.

Pragmatic researchers in Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) view, will therefore normally start with a problem, and aims to contribute practical solutions that inform future practice with their (researcher) values driven by the spontaneous process of inquiry, triggered by doubt and a sense of sceptic mind. The most important determinant of the research design and strategy for pragmatic researchers is the research problem and research questions they are addressing, which most often places emphasis on practical outcomes.

Consequently, they (pragmatic researchers) recognise that there are many ways of interpreting the world and undertaking research, thereby permitting the use of multiple realities. This does not mean, according to Kelemen & Rumens (2008) that pragmatists always use multiple methods but rather they use the method or methods that enable credible, well-founded, reliable, and relevant data to be collected to advance their research to achieve the research aim.

Pragmatism is therefore not suitable for this research as it aligns with the evaluation of research to contribute practical solutions to problems that informs future practice. As this research is more conceptual by focusing on people's views and experiences rather practical, pragmatism falls outside the focus of this research.

3.2.1.4.5 Interpretivism

Just like critical realism, interpretivism developed as a critique of positivism but derived from a subjectivist perspective (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Interpretivism highlights that humans are different to objects because they create meaning. Interpretivist researchers try to take account of this complexity by collecting what is meaningful to their research participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). In general, interpretivists emphasise the importance of language, culture, and history (Crotty, 1998) in the shaping of our interpretations and experiences of organisational and social worlds.

A central feature of interpretivist researchers is that they must learn about any social world from the social actors who inhabit in it (Blaikie, 2007), hence the interpretivist researcher will often concentrate on particular contexts, such as the place where people work and live, to understand it from a cultural and historical context.

With its focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretations, and sense-making, interpretivism is explicitly subjective (Saunders et al., 2011), hence human being and their social construction cannot be researched by the similar method as physical phenomena (Smith, 2009). An axiological implication of this is that interpretivists recognise that their interpretation of research materials and data, and thus their own values and beliefs, play an important role in the research process.

Saunders et al. (2011) opined that there is a crucial need for the researcher to adopt a compassionate stance and accept the challenge to enter the research field to comprehend the participants' world from their perspectives. Polkinghorne (1988) reiterates that unlike positivism, interpretivism does not try to test hypotheses: the purpose of interpretivism is to create new, deeper understanding and interpretations of social worlds and contexts.

Thus, an interpretivist approach is suitably appropriate for this research because the research aim is to explore how leadership style supports and impacts employees

competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

This is to explore leadership practices used to support employee's competence development and understand contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to support their employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model to achieve organizational objectives.

It is pertinent for the researcher to adopt an appropriate research approach and methodology that will facilitate the achievement of the research aim above and accept the challenge to enter the research field to comprehend the participants' world from their perspectives. The next section discusses the research approach and the choice of methodology appropriate to facilitate the achievement of the research aim.

3.2.2 Research approach and methodological choice

Bryman & Bell (2015) contend that researchers may adopt a deductive, inductive, or abductive approach as the three main approaches to research.

The deductive approach according to Saunders et al. (2007) relates to theory-testing research, which has implications for developing a theory or hypotheses from existing literature, then designing a strategy to test the hypothesis through the collection of appropriate data for its analysis. Deductive approach emphasises structure, quantification, generalisability, and testable hypotheses (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) hence it is most likely to be considered related to positivist philosophy (Saunders et al., 2011; Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Secondly, the inductive approach involves a process of developing theory from data collection and has criticised deduction for its rigid methodological structure that does not permit the use of alternative explanations (Saunders et al., 2007). Research using inductive approach focuses on context, small sample, qualitative data and multiple methods of data collection. Consequently, its focus is on subjective interpretation and hence most likely to be underpinned by interpretivist philosophy (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Finally, abductive approach formally known as retroduction (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) has been described by Suddaby (2006) as mixing the deductive and the inductive approaches. Due to its flexibility, researchers use it within several different philosophies and a well-developed abductive approach is most likely to be underpinned by pragmatism.

As this research is aimed at collecting data to explore a phenomenon, thus (leadership style) to understand the perspective of research participants in a real-life setting, research approach that will aid in exploring a phenomenon in its real-life context will be more ideal. Further, qualitative research method which involves the exploration of life experiences, behaviours, and different perspectives on issues to determine their complexities (Rahman, 2017) as well as explore the experiences of individuals to understand their meanings and interpretations will be appropriate for this research.

Inductive approach has therefore been used to induce responses regarding the different leadership styles used by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to support their employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model and how these styles are applied. Inductive approach has equally been used to induce responses from Ghanaian SME hotel managers and employees

relative to what contextual factors need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development in each of the development levels.

Inductive approach has also been used to align the leadership styles induced from Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to SLT leadership styles and whether those leadership styles are in line with the dictates of situational leadership and follower development levels, but not to explain how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders leverages contextual factors at the various employee development levels.

The data induced from both the leaders and their employees will be used to develop the model explaining how leadership style supports employees competence development or readiness at the various development levels taking into consideration contextual factors. This helped in answering and achieving research objectives one, two and three.

How the researcher went about using the inductive approach to answer the research questions to achieve the research objectives, emanated from the strategy or the design of the research. The next section discusses the research design or strategy to highlight the general plan as to how the researcher went about this research.

3.2.3 Research design or strategy

Saunders et al. (2007, p. 131) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, p.173) both explained research design as “the general plan as to how you go about answering your research question (s)”. Given its diversity, qualitative research strategies are likely to cause the greatest confusion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). As many as twenty-six qualitative research designs have been identified by Tesch (2013) with Mason (2002) suggesting an overview of the generally used before selecting the appropriate design.

Due to the lack of consensus on the number and terminology of available research strategies, this research discusses eight of the most utilised research strategies available to qualitative researchers. They are Grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), Ethnography (LeCompte & Preissle, 1993), Action research (Lewin, 1946), Narrative research (Lieblich, Tuval-Maschiach, & Tamar, 1998), Phenomenology (Schutz, 1967), Qualitative survey (Nardo, 2003), Archival research and Case study (Yin, 2013). The eight research strategies will be discussed in more detail within this section and the research strategy adopted for this research will be justified.

3.2.3.1 Grounded Theory strategy

Developed by Glaser & Strauss, 1967 in their book “The Discovery of Grounded Theory” as a research method used to discover the phenomenon in the real world without preconceived hypothesis (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). It is useful for research that seeks to predict and explain behaviour using induction and deduction to theory building (Saunders et al., 2007). It always begins with a problem, even though the initial ideas might not be clear, but the study is driven by data and enables the researcher to interpret the phenomenon and from this, theory is generated as well as tested (Saunders et al., 2007, 2011).

Consequently, grounded theory is often applied when developing theoretical explanations of complex social interaction to make sense of it through a systematic and emergent approach to data collection and analysis (Birks & Mills, 2011: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). For purposes of data saturation in the development of a complete theory, researchers adopting grounded theory research design may collect between 20 to 60 interviews taking an inductive approach (Creswell, 2007).

Scholars including Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) however reiterate that, it may be appropriate to think of it as an abductive approach as the researcher collects and analyses data concurrently which is referred to as simultaneous data collection and analysis before collecting more data.

This research however adopts an inductive approach to generate data to explore a phenomenon, thus situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. Since the aim is not to build a theory using systematic and simultaneous data collection and analysis, Grounded theory may not be suitable for this research.

3.2.3.2 Ethnography research strategy

Ethnography literally means “a written account of a people or ethnic group” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, p.199). The purpose of ethnography, which is deeply rooted in inductive approach, is to describe and explain research subjects in their own environment or social world and tell it as if the subjects were saying it themselves (Saunders et al., 2007). Categories of ethnographic data may fall under interviews, observation, surveys, test and measures, content analysis, audio-visual methods, network research, elicitation methods and spatial mapping (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).

It is important for the researcher to understand that a significant feature of the ethnographical strategy is for the researcher to live with the subjects being studied to observe, talk to them to produce a detailed cultural account of the shared beliefs, behaviour, language, interactions, and rituals that shapes the lives of the subjects (Cunliffe, 2010; Wolcott, 2010).

This is important for the researcher to gain insight of the context and better understand and interpret it from the perspective of those being researched. Another important consideration the researcher needs to be wary about is the need to build trust and become a full-time member of the social context of the subjects (Saunders et al., 2007; Wolcott, 2010). However, differences among social groupings may have the tendency to undermine the focus of ethnographic strategy, hence have led to other dimensions of ethnography, thus realist, interpretive and critical ethnography (Cunliffe, 2010).

The realist ethnographer believes in objectivity and factual (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). The interpretive ethnographer adopts a more pluralistic approach and believes in the likelihood of multiple meanings rather than being able to identify a single (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) whilst the critical ethnographer who has a radical purpose explores and explains the impact of power, privilege, and authority on those who are subjected to these effects and marginalization (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

This research however adopts an inductive approach to generate data to explore a phenomenon, thus situational leadership support and its impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. Since the aim of this research is not to live with and study research participants in their own environment and reproduce research findings as if they were being told by the subjects but inductively narrate the research findings in the researcher's own words, Ethnographic strategy is not suitable for this research.

3.2.3.3 Action research strategy

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019, p.201) defined action research as “an emergent and iterative process of inquiry that is designed to develop solutions to real organisational problems through a participative and collaborative approach which uses different forms of knowledge, and which will have implications for participants and the organization beyond the research project”. An important feature of action researchers is often the drive to change a process in the context and equally a study of the process at the same time.

Its purpose according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) is to promote organizational learning to produce practical outcomes through the identification of issues, planning actions to mitigate them, implementing the proposed plan of action, and evaluating the action taken. On a broader level, Reason (2006) reiterate that action research brings practical knowledge to improve the economic situation, spirituality, political, and social community.

In action research processes, knowledge is shared between researcher and participants because each of them brings different knowledge and perspectives into the process (Saunders et al., 2011). Hence, a process in Greenwood & Levin (2007) view, can only be called action research if it combines research, action and participation. This makes participation a critical component of action research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Since the aim of this research is not to change a process through the participation of all actors, thus research, action, and participants but to adopt an inductive approach to generate data to explore a phenomenon, thus situational leadership support and its impact on employee’s competence development in the different quadrants of the

situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels, Action research strategy may not be suitable for this research.

3.2.3.4 Narrative inquiry research strategy

Narrative inquiry research strategy seeks to connect events chronologically and sequentially as told by the narrator or participants to enrich understanding and aid analysis, with a key feature being the collection and analysis of the experiences of participants as complete stories rather than fragmented individual experiences and stories (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

Consequently, Czarniawska (2004, p.17) defines narrative research as “a spoken or written text giving an account of an event or action or series of events or actions, chronologically connected”. Other scholars, Lewis, Thornhill, & Saunders (2007) view narrative research strategy as a research context where the researcher thinks that the experiences of research subjects can be accessed through gathering and analysing these as complete stories, rather than collecting them as fragmented data gathered through interview questions to avoid errors during the data analysis process.

Overall, narrative research tends to collect stories from participants about their lives and experiences. Clandinin (2006) acknowledges the use of in-depth interviews as the main method of gathering stories, of which the outcome according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) is likely to produce thick descriptions of contextual details and social relations which are often shaped by researchers into a chronology, although they may not be told in any temporal sequence by the participants.

The aim of this research is not to connect events and produce thick descriptions of contextual detail of the live experiences of leaders and their employees in the hotel industry of Ghana in a narratively chronological order but to adopt an inductive

approach to generate data to explore a phenomenon, thus situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels, hence Narrative research strategy may not be suitable for this research.

3.2.3.5 Phenomenological research strategy

Alase (2017) reiterate that phenomenology which is a well-known and well-used qualitative research strategy was first conceptualized and theorized by Husserl in 1931, to comprehend the context of the lived experiences of social inhabitants (research participants) and the meaning of their experiences. Phenomenology which focuses on the "content" of the story being told (Zikmund et al., 2013) aims to understand the deep-rooted meaning of the lived experience of social inhabitants through the individual's relationship with time, space, and personal history (Schutz, 1967), of which in-depth interviews and observations are favoured as the data collection methods.

Phenomenology, which has been described as research of individuals' perspective from their experience (Sadala & Adorno, 2002) help researchers to transform and transfer the 'lived-experiences' of research participants into sensitive psychological expressions, so that these experiences can be written in a more reflective and descriptive manner (Creswell, 2013).

The aim of both phenomenological and narrative research strategies may seem intertwined as they both focuses on exploring participant's experiences. Narrative research strategy however concentrates on "how" the story was told collectively rather than fragmented (Lieblich et al., 1998: Lewis, Thornhill & Saunders, 2007).

Again, the aim of this research is not to explore the lived experiences in order to understand the deep-rooted meanings of the lived experiences of leaders and their

employees in the hotel industry of Ghana but to adopt an inductive approach to generate data to explore a phenomenon, thus situational leadership support and its impact on employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels, hence phenomenological research strategy may not be suitable for this research.

3.2.3.6 Survey strategy

Survey strategy according to Saunders et al. (2007) is associated with the deductive approach and used to answer who, what, where, how many and how much questions. Survey strategy, which is often used in exploratory and descriptive studies (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) tend to use sample of members to analyse population characteristics, which is often applied in quantitative research (Groves, 2004).

There is however a qualitative survey which instead of looking at frequencies, tend to investigate variation in populations to determining the diversity of some topics within a given population (Jansen, 2010). Similarly, survey strategy which favours questionnaire for quantitative analysis with a limit on the number of questions that can be asked, qualitative survey strategy favours structured observations and structured interviews with similar and standardized questioned asked of all participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Based on structured nature of research instrument used in qualitative survey, limited number of participants (from ten to fifty) are normally selected from the study population (Jansen, 2010).

The structured and standardized nature of surveys as its key feature, with the use of either structured interviews or questionnaires and structured observations will limit participants ability to freely express their views and bring out the feelings of Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and their staff.

Since the aim of this research is not to bring out standardized and structured responses from respondents to answer the research questions but allow participants to freely express themselves relative to the research questions on situational leadership support and its impact on employees competence development or readiness in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels, survey strategy may not be suitable for this research.

3.2.3.7 Archival research strategy

Archival research strategy focuses on research that seeks to explore the past as well as changes in time using administrative records and documents as principal sources of data (Saunders et al., 2007) with the use of content and citation analysis (Das, Jain & Mishra, 2018). Archival strategy adds “empirical depth” (Das, Jain & Mishra, 2018) as archival researchers follow pre-defined protocols to achieve their research aims (Welch, 2000).

Compared to interview data, Archival researchers view archival sources mostly from (communication records, email, telephone records, census data, court proceedings, patent office records, credit histories, educational records, corporate annual reports, personnel files and survey responses) as being more detailed, less obtrusive, and less contingent, and often provide a very precise and immediate record of the interfirm interactions being studied (Huber & Power, 1985).

Reservations for the use of archival research strategy according to Hughes & Griffiths (1999) stems from its sources being constraint by the nature of the documents and records, compromised in the quality due to missing data points and errors as well as its high susceptibility to experimenter bias, that is, archival researchers may be tempted to examine data and accordingly formulate convenient hypotheses.

Archival strategy may not be suitable for this research as the data sources and type for this research will be generated from organisational records and research participants (Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and their staff) which cannot be found in archives. The use of archived data may not be able to bring out the feelings and expressions of participants to enable the researcher to answer the research questions.

3.2.3.8 Case study research strategy

Case study research strategy have been defined by Robson (2002, p.178) as “a strategy for doing research that involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence”. Yin (2018) describes case study as an in-depth inquiry into a topic or phenomenon within its real-life setting.

The “case” in case study according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) may be in reference to an individual person, a group of persons, an organisation, an association, a change process, or an event. Case study according to Yin (2013), may involve the study of either a single case or multiple cases within a particular real-life context or a number of real-life contexts.

Yin (2018) differentiates between four types of case study designs, which are based upon two discrete dimensions: single case versus multiple cases and holistic case versus embedded case.

A single case is often applied when it is typical, critical, or unique and it gives the researcher a chance to observe and investigate phenomenon that has not been considered before (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). The five conditions necessary for the use of a single case will often be related to an unusual, if the case is revelatory, common, critical or a longitudinal case (Yin, 2013).

On the other hand, researchers select multiple case strategies if they are looking for replication (Yin, 2013) or where similar results can be predicted from each case (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019). Each case must be carefully chosen that either (a) it predicts similar results (a literal replication) or (b) it predicts contrasting results but for anticipatable reasons (Yin, 2013).

The second dimension, holistic versus embedded, which are related to unit of analysis. Where a researcher investigates, takes, or treats an entire organization as a whole as its unit of analysis, then the case study would be considered as a holistic case study (Yin, 2018). On the other hand, a case study is considered embedded where it considers other department within an organization as part of its unit of analysis (Yin, 2018).

Case study researchers employ case study strategy when the boundaries between the phenomenon being studied and the context within which it is being studied is not always apparent (Yin, 2018) as well as to gather deeper understanding of how their research context and processes are being enacted (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Saunders et al. (2011) indicate that the case study strategy is often used to generate answers to “How”, “What” and “Why” research questions.

The design and wide use of case study strategy therefore allows it to draw on qualitative, quantitative data or mixed, used in exploratory, explanatory, or descriptive research with either deductive, inductive or abductive reasoning as well as being employed by both positivist and interpretivist researchers (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill 2019).

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) support a maximum of 25 cases whilst Campbell (2015) supports a maximum of 12 cases for case study research.

This research employed the case study strategy to achieve the research aim of exploring situational leadership and its impact on employees competence development or readiness in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. This is to understand the leadership practices Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply to support their employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model, taking into account contextual factors to achieve organizational objectives.

This research is exploring the leadership practices of Ghanaian SME hotel leaders, and its implications are that it will be rooted in their (leaders) behaviour, personality and in a real-life context. This makes it unfeasible to be studied in an abstract form but rather in a real-life context.

A key feature of case study strategy is its ability to explore what, how and behavioural research questions and can fit with inductive, deductive or both (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016). This can facilitate the understanding of the dynamics of leadership styles on worker task-readiness and its support on employee's competence development, taking into account contextual factors within its real-life context (Yin, 2018) and to discover how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders uses situational leadership to exert their support for organizational outcome (Campbell, 2015).

This study again does not intend to explore the entire hotel industry to get a wholistic view of the hotel industry, as it has the tendency to limit the researcher's effort to dig deeper to get an in-depth understanding of leadership style support and impact on employee's competence development or readiness. The use of a small sample will afford the researcher to get a rich and in-depth understanding of a prolific industry and create avenues for further research.

Compared to the other seven strategies as highlighted above, case study strategy fits well with the aim of this research and hence it is appropriately suitable for this research as the researcher wants to induce participants to express their feelings freely to answer what, how and behavioural questions not in an abstract form but in a real-life context (within Ghanaian SME hotels). This is to obtain a rich and in-depth understanding of the research context (explore situational leadership and its impact on employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model) using a small sample (Saunders et al., 2011).

Each case unit has been defined as a Ghanaian SME hotel (unit of analysis) and managers and employees as the units of inquiry with two data points (primary data from semi-structured interviews and secondary data from company documents) thereby allowing for the selection of more informative case units with similar features to be explored in detail.

The researcher has factored in the time span for the execution of this strategy, which is an important consideration in the design of the research. This is discussed in the next section.

3.3 Research Methods

3.3.1 Time Horizon

An important consideration and question to arise in the research design pertains to the length of time to collect data and whether data collection should be a snapshot at a particular time or a representation of events at a given time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Saunders et al. (2011, p.190) allude that there are two types of time horizon, which are cross-sectional and longitudinal study.

The cross-sectional time horizon relates to collecting snapshot data at particular times whilst the longitudinal involves gathering data as diary perspectives or series of events over a long period of time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This research, therefore employed a cross-sectional time horizon to avoid the challenge of observing Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and their employees without being a full-time member as well as afford me the opportunity to complete my doctoral studies within its time frame r to address the research gaps identified.

Another key consideration in the research design is how the data to be collected for the research will fit in the time horizon to complete the research within the stipulated time. The next section will discuss the data collection processes relevant to this research.

3.3.2 Data Collection

This section discusses the various aspects in the data collection process relevant to this research, which includes the type of data, the justification and use of semi-structured interview and extraction: use of purposive sampling strategy: pilot test, participant profiling challenges: sample characteristics: interview recording procedure: interview process: storing data and ethical issues.

3.3.2.1 Type of Data

Davis & Davis (2015) identified two types or categories of data, being qualitative and quantitative Data. In their (Davis & Davis, 2015) view, qualitative data expresses names such as male, female, ethnicity, full or part-time student whilst quantitative data expresses numeric value such as number quantity. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) also classified data as either primary data (raw and unedited), secondary data (compiled data that have received some form of selection or summarising),

structured data (organized into a format that is easy to process) or unstructured data (not easy to search or process as, in their current form, and do not follow a predefined structure).

This research aims to explore an already prolific segment of the hotel industry in Ghana (Ghanaian SME hotels) and information relating to their profile would have already been processed and compiled making it easy for the researcher to access, to build a profile of the sampled Ghanaian SME hotels used for the research. The research also aims to explore situational leadership support and its impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. This is to understand the leadership practices Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply in supporting employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model taking into account contextual factors to achieve organisational goals.

This will be rooted in their undocumented behaviour, personalities, feelings, and expressions and hence a first-hand account of these information from Ghanaian SME hotel managers and their employees will bring these out to help the researcher explore the research questions to achieve the research aim. A combination of primary unstructured data and structured secondary data have been used for this research. How this data is collected is discussed in the next section.

3.3.2.2 Primary and secondary data collection

Harrell & Bradley (2009) identified surveys, focus groups, observation, extraction, and interviews among the many forms of data collection methods. This research adopted semi-structured interviews and extraction as the two data collections methods. Whilst secondary data was collected through extraction from hotel records, primary data was collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews. These

two methods helped to achieve methodological triangulation. Triangulation which involves the use of various methods of data collection ensured the richness, reliability, and trustworthiness of the study (Fusch & Ness, 2015).

Extraction according to Harrell & Bradley (2009) is the collection of data from documents, records, or other archival sources. This generally includes using an abstraction process to cull the information desired from the source. The company documents for review included registration certificates, standard operations manual, training and development policy, employee records, assets, facilities register, services provided as well as the profile of the sampled SMEs.

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) provided three typologies of interviews as structured, unstructured, and semi-structured interviews. Structured interviews are known to use standardised predetermined set of questions to collect quantifiable data. In Unstructured interviews also, questions emerge rather than predetermined without a guide and can be in-depth.

To explore and gain an in-depth understanding of Ghanaian SME hotels leaders leadership practices and its impact on employee's competence development, it was pertinent to develop a pre-determined list of themes and key open questions relative to those themes. This will guide the conduct of each interview to 'probe' responses, for further explanations, build on previous answers or understand the reasons for the decisions, attitudes, and opinions that participants have taken, in order to collect rich primary data, thereby guiding the interviewees to stick to the focus of the research. These fits well with the features and focus of Semi-structured interviews according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019).

Semi-structured interviews is also well suited for the exploration of the perceptions and opinions of Ghanaian SME hotels leaders and their employees regarding the

complexities and sensitivity of leadership issues, thereby allowing for more probing for information and clarification of answers (Barriball & While, 1994). Finally, the multiplicity of followers and leaders with respect to the diverse professional, educational, and personal histories, and competencies of the sample respondents, precluded the use of a standardized interview schedule (Barriball & While, 1994). This provided the necessary flexibility for this study to follow relevant emergent concepts and categories which have not been considered prior to the interview (Whiting, 2008).

The researcher adopted a Face-to-face and one-to-one interview as opposed to telephone, internet, one-to-many, two-to-many, group, and visual interviews (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) for the conduct of the interview. This was to enable the generation of honest answers and due to the complexities and sensitivity of certain issues (Barriball & While, 1994), participants may have been unwilling to answer certain questions honestly in the presence of their colleagues or leaders, in a group or virtually.

The semi-structured interviews were carried out on a sample of Ghanaian SME hotels, their managers, and staff. The strategy used in arriving at an appropriate sample is discussed in the next section.

3.3.2.3 Sampling strategy

To reduce the limitation and restrictions of time, resources and access, sampling technique is a key consideration that enables researchers to reduce the amount of data that is needed by considering data from a sub-group rather than all possible cases or elements (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Purposive sampling which supports case study research allows the researcher to select relevant cases or participants that can best answer the research questions (Saunders et al., 2007) and

enable the researcher to get access to reliable data (Creswell, 2013b). Consequently, homogeneous, and typical case purposive sampling was adopted for this research as opposed to other purposive sampling (extreme case, heterogeneous and critical case) strategies in order to explore situational leadership style support and impact on follower development among Ghanaian SME hotels in greater depth (Saunders et al., 2007).

Therefore, in line with Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) and Campbell (2015), this study purposively sampled 10 cases from the Ghanaian hotel industry with each case (SME hotel) as units of analysis and managers and employees as units of inquiry with two data points (primary data from semi-structured interviews and secondary data from hotel records) thereby allowing for the selection of more informative cases with similar features to be explored in detail.

Selection criteria will be based on a purposive homogeneous random sample of Ghanaian SME hotels based on SME definition within this research from the Ghana Tourist Board's list of Ghanaian SME hotels. A purposive typical random sample of 2-star Ghanaian SME hotels based on Ghana Tourist Board star-rating categorization was selected, for all sampled hotels to have similar features typical of leaders requiring the use of different leadership styles support employees with different development levels and career aspirations to be explored to achieve the research aim.

Employees working in the sampled SME hotels were also categorised into junior employees and senior employees based on their managers assessment of their competence development levels. Junior employees were categorised as employees who started their employment without any hotel industry experience or with low experience and probably taking their first employment after school whilst senior

employees were employees with moderate or professional experience in the hotel industry.

In the context of this research, the researcher aligned the descriptions of junior employees with D1 and D2 followers whilst senior employees were aligned with D3 and D4 followers in line with scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions of D1 to D4 followers. Tables 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 contains the features of the sampled SME hotels, their managers, senior and junior staff respectively.

Table 3.2 Features of sampled Ghanaian SME Hotels

SME Name	Registration status	Year established	No. of staff	No. of rooms	Form of business ownership
Hotel-1	Yes	2002	20	42	Sole proprietorship
Hotel-2	Yes	2017	45	11	Sole proprietorship
Hotel-3	Yes	1984	24	22	Private company
Hotel-4	Yes	2004	62	62	Private company
Hotel-5	Yes	2013	10	55	Sole proprietorship
Hotel-6	Yes	2008	70	126	Private company
Hotel-7	Yes	2004	36	84	Sole proprietorship
Hotel-8	Yes	2012	30	150	Public company
Hotel-9	Yes	2008	54	102	Sole proprietorship
Hotel-10	Yes	2015	32	30	Sole proprietorship

Source: Author construct from Interview Data (2022)

Table 3.3 Profile of sampled Ghanaian SME Hotel Managers

SME Manager	Name	Academic qualification	Industry experience (years)	Age bracket	Interview length
Hotel-1-Manager	Fawaz	Master's degree	15	35-40	35 minutes
Hotel-2- Manager	Firdaus	Master's degree	30	55-60	28 minutes
Hotel-3- Manager	Khadija	First degree	38	60-65	34 minutes
Hotel-4- Manager	Fida-ah	First degree	6	40-45	58 minutes
Hotel-5- Manager	Na-eem	Master's degree	3.5	40-45	29 minutes
Hotel-6- Manager	Fareeda	Master's degree	4	35-40	30 minutes
Hotel-7- Manager	Alhassan	HND	7	30-35	28 minutes
Hotel-8- Manager	Latif	Master's degree	3	30-35	28 minutes
Hotel-9- Manager	Ruhiya	First degree	14	45-50	27 minutes
Hotel-10- Manager	Luqman	First degree	21	35-40	38 minutes

Source: Author construct from Interview Data (2022)

The lowest tenure in hotel management experience of the managers was 6 months and the highest 38 years. All the managers were 30 years and above with the minimum age bracket being in the early 30's and the maximum age bracket being in the mid 65's. All the managers had tertiary level education with the lowest qualification being an HND and the highest being an MA and MSc.

Table 3.4 Profile of sampled Ghanaian SME Hotel Senior Employees

SME Senior employees	Name	Academic qualification	Industry experience (Years)	Age Bracket	Interview length
Hotel-1- Senior	Mubarak	First Degree	11	30-35	32 minutes
Hotel-2- Senior	Faris	HND	2	35-40	26 minutes
Hotel-3- Senior	Sadia	First degree	5	30-35	26 minutes
Hotel-4- Senior	Abdallah	HND	11	45-50	28 minutes
Hotel-5- Senior	Mariam	SHS	9 months	20-25	26 minutes
Hotel-6- Senior	Adnan	DBS	7	35-30	24 minutes
Hotel-7- Senior	Fauzia	HND	5	30-35	24 minutes
Hotel-8- Senior	Na-imah	First degree	13 months	20-25	23 minutes
Hotel-9- Senior	Yussif	HND	9	35-40	39 minutes
Hotel-10- Senior	Rukaya	First degree	4 months	25-30	33 minutes

Source: Author construct from Interview data (2022)

Out of the 10 senior staff, 4 had undergraduate degrees, 4 Higher National Diploma (HND), 1 Diploma in Business studies (DBS) and only 1 Senior High School (SHS equivalent to UK General Certificate School Examination). The minimum industry experience of the senior employees was 4 months whilst the maximum was 11 years. In terms of age, the minimum age bracket of the senior employees was in the early 20's whilst the maximum age was in the late 40's.

Table 3.5 Profile of Sampled Ghanaian SME Hotel Junior Employees

SME Hotel Junior employees	Name	Academic qualification	Industry experience (Years)	Age bracket	Interview length
Hotel-1-Junior	Fadil	SHS	7	30-35	23 minutes
Hotel-2-Junior	Faiza	SHS	2 months	20-25	22 minutes
Hotel-3-Junior	Hikima	First degree	5	30-35	25 minutes
Hotel-4-Junior	Malak	SHS	6 months	20-25	24 minutes
Hotel-5-Junior	Nabila	SHS	2 months	20-25	21 minutes
Hotel-6-Junior	Mu-aisin	Diploma	1.5	30-35	21 minutes
Hotel-7-Junior	Munira	Tertiary	1 year, 4 months	30-35	22 minutes
Hotel-8-Junior	Rashad	Diploma	1.5	25-30	26 minutes
Hotel-9-Junior	Zenabu	First degree	1 year, 4 months	20-25	26 minutes
Hotel-10-Junior	Seidu	First degree	2	25-30	26 minutes

Source: Author construct from Interview Data (2022)

Regarding the junior staff, 3 out of the 10 junior employees had undergraduate degrees, 3 with Diploma certificates whilst the other 4 had SHS certificates. The minimum industry experience of the junior employees was 2 months whilst the maximum industry experience was 7 years. In terms of age, the minimum age was identified to be 22 years and the maximum age as 35.

An appreciation of the development and how the semi-structured interview questions were designed for the collection of primary data for analysis from the sampled hotels to achieve the research aim is necessary, and this is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.3.2.4 Development of semi-structured interview questions

To gain an in-depth understanding of how Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply leadership practices to support their employees (followers) development, semi-structured interview questions were developed, mainly derived from the topics evident in the literature review to corroborate the data and strengthen the research rigor (Dworkin, 2012).

Therefore, the development of the interview questions in this study is based on the study's research questions and the key outcomes of the literature review without any

predetermined sequence before each interview. The researcher selected the sequence of the interview question based on the real situations during the interview (Whiting, 2008).

The researcher developed a table and incorporated all the research questions, headings and sub-headings from the literature review and all possible interview questions related to each heading and sub-heading the researcher could think about. To decide which questions can best answer each research question to achieve the research aim, the researcher checked for gaps and overlaps and deleted unsuited questions. As this research is exploring leadership support and impact which will be rooting in behaviour, deep personal and reflexive questions that brought out the feelings and thoughts of managers and employees were asked at the latter part of each interview using open-ended questions after building rapport with participants with introductory and technical questions.

The flow of the interview determined the order of the interview questions during the interview after the final list of interview questions developed into an interview template (see Appendix one) were reviewed for appropriate language, phrasing, biases, and leading questions.

3.3.2.5 Semi-structured interview questions

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) cautioned researchers about the importance of the five “Ps” (Prior Planning prevents Poor Performance), by carefully linking interview questions to research objectives or questions (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2010) as it is the key to a successful design and execution of semi-structured interviews. Therefore, the design of the semi-structured interview questions in this study was guided by the study’s research objectives, questions, the key outcomes, and the research gaps identified in the literature review. The researcher continually

monitored the data collection process to ensure these links were always maintained, thus guaranteeing the validity of the interview questions in relation to the intended outcomes of the research.

The interview questions were framed in line with the research objectives and questions as stated above.

Key and probing questions targeted at answering each research question that formed part of the interview guide and brought out the views and feelings of participants based on the above themes to aid in answering the research questions are stated in table 3.6 below:

Table 3.6. interview questions seeking answers to research questions.

No	Interview question	Research question to probe and answer
1	What are the developmental or competence levels of employees you currently have for service delivery	Probing to answer research question one and achieve research objective one
2	How are you able to tell the different levels of development or competence of employees within the organisation	Probing to answer research question one and achieve research objective one
3	What leadership practices do you use to support the development or competence level of the different type of employees within the organisation for effective service delivery	Probing to answer research question one and achieve research objective one
4	How do you use those leadership practices to support the development or competence of different type of employees within the organisation for effective service delivery	Probing to answer research question two and achieve research objective two
5	What contextual (circumstantial) factors have you noticed that needs to be considered or affect the competence development of the different type of employees within the organisation for service delivery	Probing to answer research question three and achieve research objective three
6	As the manager, how does these (contextual factors) affect the different leadership practices you use to support staff competence development within the organisation for service delivery	Probing to answer research question three and achieve research objective three

Source: Author construct, 2022

The use of multiple cases and face-to-face interviews for this research has implications for the researcher to gain traditional access to both participants and documents. This is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.3.2.6 Access negotiation and challenges

The use of multiple cases and face-to-face interviews for this research meant that the researcher had to gain traditional access to both participants and documents. Traditional access according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) involves face-to-face interaction, telephone conversation, correspondence, and visits to data archives.

Following University of Worcester ethical guideline and to ensure that the selected sample provided accurate and reliable data for this study, the researcher negotiated access with SME hotel owners or leaders by explaining the purpose of the research and its implications as evident in appendix one.

After being granted access, the researcher then sort consent from participants who were willing to fully commit to the research and provide honest answers as evident in appendix two. The researcher did not confront many challenges in gaining access and consent because many of the SME owners or leaders had an idea of how doctoral research is conducted and their implications. Secondly, my ability to speak most of the Ghanaian languages gave me an opportunity to win the trust of participants.

Following University of Worcester ethical guidelines to gaining access and consent afforded the researcher to pilot the semi-structured interview questions to identify challenges. This is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.3.2.7 Pilot test of semi-structured interviews

To assess the interview question's ability to elicit the required information, the researcher conducted a pilot test with two Ghanaian SME hotels with similar characteristics as the sampled Ghanaian SME hotels sampled for the study. Two Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and four employees from the two SME hotels were interviewed. The researcher paid attention to issues with respect to timing of the interview duration, ambiguity of questions, participant competence and maturity, level of education and the role played by each participant.

Listening to and reading a random selection of the two audio-taped interviews or transcribed interviews enabled the researcher to test the quality of the audio recorder and the accuracy of the transcriptions. The pilot test also allowed the researcher to identify weaknesses in and between the two interviews. This not only gave the researcher a valuable experience but also gave the researcher an idea of the adjustments that needed to be made on the interview guide before the actual interview for the data collection phase.

Piloting the research with two similar Ghanaian SME hotels also enabled the researcher to avoid the situation where participants will be coerced by their leaders as to what to say during the interview which may have some implications on the reliability of the data collected. All these informed the researcher on the adjustments that needed to be made by rewording questions based on participants' attitudes, educational stage, competence, and level of maturity (Yin, 2014).

The main interview was carried out after minor adjustments to the interview questions based on the outcome of the pilot interview which did not change the focus of the interview and the data generated. The main interviewing process is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.3.2.8 Interviewing process

Prior to interviewing research participants, the researcher considered the five “Ps” (prior planning prevents poor performance) advocated by Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) by gathering and testing all necessary resources (audio recorder, batteries, stationery and laptop). A telephone appointment was made with the leaders of all the sampled hotels for a face-to-face pre-discussion meeting, which explain the research topic, the purpose of the research and the interview process.

To maintain the formality of the process, all the interviews were conducted at the office premises of all the sampled hotels at a time convenient for all participants. At the start of each interview, the researcher reinforced the formality of the process by reminding all participants of the research topic, the purpose of the research, the interview process and their rights of participation or withdrawal at any time during the process. All participants were also assured of their privacy and confidentiality of their responses.

English was the medium of communication for all the interviews and were immediately transferred into the researcher’s laptop and a copy into a USB stick to avoid data lost before transcription. To allow participants to delve deep into the research themes, all interviews with every participant lasted between 15 and 40 minutes or over. Table 3.7 shows the summary of the interview protocols, such as pre-interview communication, interview location, length of each interview, and recording process.

Table 3.7 Summary of interview protocols

Protocol	Hotel-1 to Hotel-10		
Pre-interview communication	Managers	Senior employees	Junior employees
Interview date and location	Hotel premises	Hotel premises	Hotel premises
Length of interview	20-50 mins	15-30 mins	15-30mins
Consent to be participate in the research	Yes	Yes	Yes
Allowing researcher to record the interviewing process	Yes	Yes	Yes
Full transcription after the interview	Yes	Yes	Yes
summarize content after interview with participants	Yes	Yes	Yes
Contact after interview to clarify unclear themes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Source: Author construct, 2022

In line with Leavy & Hesse-Bieber (2006), the interviewing guide was phased into four, thus introductory phase, opening questions phase, key questions and closing questions phases.

Introductory Phase: this phase generally was about why the participant was there, ethical issues of the research and familiarisation. After the researcher had introduced himself, he explained the purpose of the research, the nature of the data to be collected and the likely outcomes of the use of the data in the research, thus reports, thesis, or articles.

Ethical issues explored and assured participants of data confidentiality, permission, and consent with respect to the use of voice recorders and consent to willingly participate or right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

Finally, familiarisation sought answers about the background of the participant, such as their education, age and role within the hotel and anything the participant knew about the history of the hotel using closed questions (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). Details of the introductory statement read to each participant can be found under the heading 'introduction' in Appendix one.

Introductory phase questions sought responses relating to participants background and the profile of the sampled SME hotels from all the managers, senior and junior staff. Questions that solicited these responses are highlighted in table 3.8.

Table 3.8. Introductory phase interview questions

Participants	Hotel Managers	Hotel Senior and junior staff
Introductory phase questions	Age bracket: Sex: How long have been the manager for this hotel or working in the hotel industry? Highest educational or vocational credential? What is the name of this hotel? When was it formed? How long has it been in operation? What is the legal status of the hotel? Which departments is it registered with? What is the hotel's form of business ownership? How many employees does the hotel have? What is the capacity of the hotel? that is number of rooms?	Age bracket: Sex: How long have been a senior/junior employee in this hotel or working in the hotel industry What is your Highest educational or vocational credential?

Source: Author construct, 2022

Opening Questions phase: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) suggest the commencement of the opening phase with specific and close questions about particular themes, example “in your own view, can you describe the role you play within this organisation?” or “can you tell me how your manager or leader assisted or supported you to make you competent in your current role”. These questions even though were answering some of the research questions, but they were also creating a rapport and settling a comfortable environment to enable them to share their perspectives and experience as well as set the preamble for key issues. Even though these questions were broad, but they were also specific to certain themes in

the research (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). These questions were intended to explore the development level of the employee. Table 3.9 some of the opening interview questions.

Table 3.9. Interview opening question.

Participants	Hotel Managers	Hotel Senior and junior employees
Opening questions	<p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me more about what your job role involves on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>As a manager, can you tell me how you recruit you employees for service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager, can you tell me more about the development or competence levels of employees you currently have for service delivery</p>	<p>As a senior or junior employee, can you tell me more about what your job role involves on a day-to-day basis.</p> <p>As a worker, in your own view can you describe how you have been able to develop your competence.</p> <p>As a worker can you tell me more about the support you have received from your manager or leader that has helped to develop your competence for this job</p>

Source: Author construct, 2022

Key questions: the main part of the interview process was to ask key questions or probing questions to explore responses that are significant to the research or seek for further clarification on a particular theme (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) to gain vital data to answer the research questions. The researcher often used many probing or follow-up questions (can you tell me more about..., how do you..., why do you..., what are or were...) during this step to get more specific data (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2010). This phase is seemingly the most important aspect of the whole interview process, thus those interview questions that focuses on addressing the research questions. Key questions that addressed these questions are stated in table 3.10 below.

Table 3.10 key Interview Questions

Participants	Hotel Managers	Hotel Senior and junior employees
Key questions	<p>As a manager, how are you able to tell the different levels of development or competence of employees within the organisation.</p> <p>As a manager, what leadership practices do you use to support the development or competence level of the different type of employees within the organisation for effective service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager, how do you use those leadership practices to support the development or competence of the different type of employees within the organisation for effective service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager, what do you think are the factors or circumstances that affect employees competence development even when the needed support is given to them?</p>	<p>As a worker, can you tell me some of the factors or circumstance that affect your ability to develop your competence even when you are supported by your manager or colleagues.</p>

Source: Author construct, 2022

Closing questions: Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) advocate that closing question should be reserved for sensitive questions at the end of the interview. This enables the participants to answer freely at this point as the researcher would have gained the researcher’s trust based on the behaviour, responses, and gestures from both the opening and key question phases. For example, can you tell me how your manager reacts when you use your own initiative. These are sensitive questions employees might not feel comfortable to answer about their managers or leaders. But haven been assured of confidentiality and gained their trust, they might feel comfortable to answer honestly.

Winding up the interview, it is crucial for the researcher to slowly decrease rapport and create a distance before leaving the interview to minimise the element of bias due to attachment but also should ask the participant to give some suggestions and lessons from their experience before finishing the interview (Hesse-Bieber & Leavy, 2010). Appendix three gives a complete list of the semi-structured interview template and questions.

Table 3.11 below highlights the closing interview questions.

Table 3.11 Closing Interview Questions

Participants	Hotel Managers	Hotel senior and junior employees
Closing interview questions	<p>As a manager or leader, can you describe the competence levels of the employees you currently have for service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me how you allow employees to take their own initiative during service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me how you support your employees to develop their competence for effective service delivery.</p> <p>Based on you experience as a manager, what suggestions can you share relative to how contextual factors impact employees to develop their competence for service delivery.</p> <p>Are there any lessons you can equally share?</p>	<p>As a worker, how would you describe the leadership style of your manager.</p> <p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager reacts when you use your own initiative.</p> <p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager reacts when you make a mistake and his/her reaction makes you feel.</p> <p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager motivates you to want to make you develop your competence.</p> <p>Based on you experience as a worker, what suggestions can you share relative to how your manager or leader can support the development of your competence for effective service delivery</p>

Source: Author construct, 2022

To transcribe or listen to the detail conversations during the interview later, the researcher needed to record the interviewing process. The interview recording process is discussed in the next sub-section.

3.3.2.9 Recording of interviews

Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) underscored the importance of recording an interview as well as taking notes. Barriball & While (1994) reiterates that audio recording of interviews has been the frequently used method as, it provides detailed insight into the performance of both the respondent and the interviewer, access to the nuances of their (e.g., intonations, pauses) and help to validate the accuracy and completeness of the information collected.

Audio records also reduces the potential for interviewer error by, for example, recording data incorrectly or cheating by logging an answer to a question that was not asked. Creswell (2013) also recommended the use of a predesigned form to record information or take notes about the responses of the interviewee during an interview as, it can help researchers organize their thoughts on items, with respect to main ideas, and the information required at the introductory, key and closing phases of the interview.

The researcher therefore used a voice recorder and a predesigned form to help capture the data given by the respondents (see Appendix three) for this research. Even though this was successful, and the researcher rarely needed to take additional notes, certain notes were taken just to demonstrate to the participants that their information is important and to maintain interviewer-interviewee relationship (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019).

3.3.2.10 Data storage

A researcher's inability to store data collected (primary or secondary) before its analysis for the research may lead to a research failure. Similarly, not storing research findings appropriately after the research may affect its impact and engagement with society and other researchers. Creswell (2013) underscores the importance of data storage phase in the research process as it can help researchers to journey back and re-look at it when it is needed.

This according to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) is to ensure that recorded interview data, notes and transcribed data are safely secured. Consequently, making a backup copy of files, protecting the identities and the anonymity of interviewees through the use pseudonyms or codes in the data and development of a master list of the types of information or data gathered is therefore vital (Davidson, 1996).

This research adopted case Hotel-1 to case Hotel-10 for the 10 sampled SMEs, Hotel-1-Manager to Hotel-10-manager for the leaders of the 10 sampled SMEs, Hotel-1-senior to Hotel-10-senior for the 10 senior employees interviewed and Hotel-1-junior to Hotel-10 junior for the 10 junior employees interviewed in the 10 sampled hotels.

Data storage included the audio recordings of the 10 semi-structured interviews, field notes and interview transcriptions. These were all safely stored electronically on multiple hard drives and backed-up on the researcher's USB.

3.3.2.11 Ethical issues

Ethical consideration in research tries to set standards to minimise the possibility of causing harm resulting from the research (Denscombe, 2012). Potential ethical issues relating to this research might include, ensuring quality and integrity of this research, seeking informed consent, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary

participation of SME hotels, their managers, employees and the security of participants. Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) reiterated the critical role of ethics in the success of any research and therefore referred to ethics as the standard of behaviour that guides a researcher's conduct in relations to the rights of those who become the subjects of the research or are affected by the researcher.

The research adopted a purposive homogeneous sample of willing and consented participants who have experienced the leadership phenomena (Marques, 2010) to explore the situational leadership style impact on employees competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels.

The first ethical issue considered by the research related to consent. A three-tier written consent agreements were reached in person and documented: one was between the researcher and the SME hotel, the researcher and the SME leader or manager or owner and finally between the researcher and the willing employees who wanted to participate in the research. These were all granted with the final consent gained at the point of interviewing for the use of an audio recording device.

The rights of the participants were the second ethical issue the researcher considered. Participants received an explanation of their rights regarding the interview process with respect to withdrawal at any time, asking of questions and the refusal to grant permission to the researcher for the use of recording devices during the interview process.

The third ethical issue the researcher also considered was to do with the assurance of participants privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality on the part of the researcher. All willing and consented participants were therefore assured that their identity and data will be private, anonymous, and confidential.

Finally, University of Worcester ethical approval process and code of ethics was strictly followed in the implementations of these ethical issues to guide the conduct of this research.

The standard of this research will depend on the rigorousness and rigorous processes adopted by the researcher as argued by Tracy (2010). The next section discusses the rigorous processes undertaken by the researcher to explore the research questions to achieve the research aim.

3.3.3 Rigour

Smith & McGannon (2018) aligned the focus of rigor to a necessary marker of research quality by researchers and scholars. The standard of quality of qualitative research has been argued by Tracy (2010) to depend on the rigorousness and rigorous processes adopted by the research.

Scholars have assessed the issues of rigour in quantitative research based on validity, reliability, generalisability, and objectivity (Amaratunga et al., 2002; Tracy, 2019). The means to achieving rigour in qualitative research according to Tracy (2019) is multiple and varies. This has prompted scholarly debate on whether the same means, criteria and approaches should be used in assessing and achieving rigor in both qualitative and quantitative research (Koch, 2006; Vivar et al., 2007) or different approaches should be used for qualitative and quantitative research (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Ballinger, 2004; Tracy, 2019).

Creswell & Poth (2016) identified eight strategies or criteria for addressing validity in qualitative research, but reiterated that triangulation, participant confirmation of written narrative report and the use of thick descriptions are the most widely used criteria for most qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) also identified trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability, dependability, and transferability as criteria

for assessing rigour in qualitative research. This research however adopts Tracy (2019, p. 270) eight big 'tent' criteria for assessing rigour in qualitative research as it incorporates both Creswell & Poth (2016) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) criteria with additional criteria as discussed below.

Tracy (2019) identified worthy topic, rich rigor, sincerity, credibility, resonance, significant contribution, ethical research practice and meaningful coherence. These are discussed below with the strategies adopted to achieve them.

3.3.3.1 Worthy topic

A research topic is considered worthy if it provokes transformation, reveals an aspect of life that has been overlooked, misunderstood, taken for granted, challenges well-accepted ideas (Tracy, 2019). This research explored situational leadership and its impact on employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. Ghana's SMEs provide about 85% of employment, contribute about 70% to Ghana's GDP (Fosu, 2015; Lee-Ross and Lashley, 2010) and account for 92% of businesses in Ghana (Asunka, 2017) whilst the hotel industry, which is dominated by SMEs is promoting Ghana's hospitality experience as the gateway to Africa (Xuhua et al., 2018).

Leadership which is also known to facilitate positive organisational outcomes (Chang, Bai & Juan, 2015), can support the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel staff, as they are known to employ low-skilled employees from senior high schools (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), the findings of this research will provoke transformation in the hospitality and SMEs sectors of the Ghanaian economy considering the complexities in leadership and the challenges of Ghanaian SME hotels relative to attracting professionally competent employees for professional service delivery.

3.3.3.2 Rich rigor

Achieving rich rigor according to Tracy (2019) is to identify theoretical goals that align to the research context and sample, spending enough time in the field to gain trust, practicing appropriate procedures in terms of writing field notes, conducting interviews, and analysing data and collecting enough data to significantly support research findings.

To achieve this, the researcher followed Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) five “Ps” (Prior Planning prevents Poor Performance) to designing and carefully linking interview questions to research objectives and questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010). The sample used for the collection of data from 10 Ghanaian SME hotels was in line with Campbell (2015) by spending time with participants during official working hours at their various offices for the collection of data through the transcription of an audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and analysis of organisational documents. This enabled the researcher to explore an existing theory in its real-life context to significantly support the research findings.

3.3.3.3 Sincerity

Sincerity as a mark of research quality in achieving reliability and validity in qualitative research is by being approachable and friendly throughout the research as well as the acknowledgement of the vulnerabilities in the research process and its implications on data collection, on participants and the analysis of data. Sincerity is therefore fostered through self-reflexivity and transparency (Tracy, 2019).

Self-reflexivity focuses on the sincerity of the researcher with respect to the researcher’s strength and weaknesses and their realities, the realities of participants and the realities of the research process from the start of the research, through to

writing the final report (Tracy, 2019). The research adopted a reflective appraisal of the research based on Shenton (2004).

Transparency on the other hand focuses on the researcher revealing surprises or mistakes in the research process and how these changed the research aim or questions (Tracy, 2019). And transparency is also referred to as dependability (Guba & Lincoln, 1989).

There were no major surprises or mistakes that shaped the aim of the research or required that the research questions be changed as the researcher sets standards that shaped the conduct of the research and ensured the integrity of the research (Denscombe, 2012). It also ensured that the research sampled willing and consented participants who have experienced the leadership phenomena (Marques, 2010) to explore the situational leadership and its impact on follower competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels to avoid major surprises and mistakes.

3.3.3.4. Credibility

Credibility is achieved using “thick descriptions, triangulations, multivocality and partiality and member reflection with participants” (Tracy, 2019, p.275). These descriptors are synonymous with the three recommended strategies by Creswell & Poth (2016) for achieving rigour in qualitative research. Lincoln & Guba (1985) also recommended credibility as a necessary mark of research rigour.

To ensure the credibility of this research, the researcher adopted an appropriate methodology (Yin, 2018), an appropriate sample of participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Campbell, 2015) with an appropriate procedure for recording and transcribing semi-structured interviews (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) using multiple sources of data (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008). The researcher also ensured honesty among participants (Barriball & White, 1994), stored participants responses

and data (Creswell, 2013) before the application of analytical procedures for data analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

There was equally constant and frequent debriefing between the researcher and his supervisors (Shenton, 2004) with the outcome of the research linked to the research literature (Braun & Clarke, 2013) and compared with other research findings (Shenton, 2004).

3.3.3.5. Resonance

Resonance relates to how the impact of qualitative research finding engages others or research audience and their ability to utilise the findings in another context (Tracy, 2019). This is synonymous with Lincoln & Guba (1985) transferability with respect to qualitative research rigour.

To ensure resonance or transferability of this research, the researcher adopted both homogenous and typical purposive sample of 10 Ghanaian SME hotels (Saunders et al., 2007), using 30 interviews (Campbell, 2015) thus 3 interviews in each of the sampled SME hotels. The research also used thick descriptions (Saunders & Poth, 2016) to make readers feel they were there and can intuitively apply them to their own situation (Tracy, 2019) as well as focused extensively on features explicit to Ghanaian SME hotels.

3.3.3.6. Significant contribution

Significant contribution as a mark of research quality relates to how research findings can be extended, transformed, or complicate a body of knowledge, theory, or practice, in new or important ways (Tracy 2019, p.281).

The key research gaps highlighted in the literature in the previous chapter has emphasised the need to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders

are carried out relative to how the individual competence of their employees are supported within their organizations (Alberton et al., 2020). Chiu et al. (2020) has therefore called for an examination of how managers exert their support using social-psychological means, such as through their personality or leadership styles to achieve their goals within the firms.

This research addresses this gap by identifying how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders use different leadership practices to support their employees (followers) competence development to achieve organisational goals.

This research will contribute to the literature by building on SLT, to further our understanding of the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotel employees in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

3.3.3.7. Ethical research practices

Ethical research practices focus on considerations relating to rules and procedures, specific ethics relating to the context of a study as well as ethics relative to working with participants (Tracy, 2019). This research has demonstrated and covered ethical issues relating to this research extensively in section 3.3.2.11.

3.3.3.8. Meaningful coherence

Meaningful coherence as a mark of research quality in terms of its reliability and validity is achieved by demonstrating that the research has achieved its stated aim, employed the use of appropriate methods, concepts and representative practices that partner well with theories and paradigms. These should be coherently and logically presented to readers who when read, should understand the purpose of the

research, and feel that the findings were delivered in relation to the stated research aim (Tracy, 2019).

This research explored situational leadership theory's and its impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model in a real-life setting. It presented a logically coherent report that introduced the research context to the reader, explored extant literature for gaps that needs further exploration, demonstrated, and justified the processes and procedures adopted to explore the identified gaps.

It also critically analysed what has been explored using appropriately justified analytical techniques and presented findings that are in relation to the research gaps identified. This has provoked interest on Ghanaian hospitality industry especially, how Ghanaian SME hotel leaders support their employee's competence development using social psychological means such as their leadership style or personality which are underexplored, demonstrating the research impact and how it is engaging with its audience.

Once vigorous steps have been taken by the researcher to ensure the adequacy and quality of the data collected, it is imperative at this stage for the researcher to think of how the data will be analysed to achieve the research aim. The next section discusses the processes and techniques employed in analysing the data collected to achieve the research aim.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

This research employed the use of multiple sources of data which were collected through semi-structured interviews and from SME historical documents and reports. Large sums of data involving multiple contextualised realities and views were therefore gathered to explore situational leadership and its impact on employees

competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

Using an interpretivist research philosophy, the researcher recognized, it permitted the use of multiple realities, employing the use of different ways of interpreting and analysing these multiple realities to enhance the credibility and reliability of the research findings (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008). To comprehend and make meaning of the large, contextualised and varied-view qualitative data for further analysis, the data needed to be simplified, reduced, and summarized (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) using an appropriate analytical technique.

The next sub-section justifies the analytical technique adopted in analysing the data collected from both the semi-structured interviews and document extracts.

3.3.4.1 Analytical technique and its justification

Analytical techniques used in qualitative data according to Saunders et al. (2007) and Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2019) includes thematic analysis, template analysis, grounded theory analysis, data display and analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, visual analysis, explanation building and analysis and analytic induction.

After careful exploration of the purpose and focus of these qualitative data analytical techniques, Thematic Analysis (TA) which focuses on themes or patterns that occurs across a dataset (such as series of interviews, observations, document diaries) emerged more appropriate for this study (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) and has also been adopted in case study research (including, Cedervall & Åberg, 2010). Thematic analysis according to Braun & Clarke (2006) is the process of identifying patterns or themes within qualitative data. It has the advantage of providing researchers with the core skills that will be useful for conducting many other kinds of

analysis compared to the other analytical techniques. Thematic analysis, compared to the other analytical techniques is seen as a method rather than a methodology and hence it is flexible and not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective (Braun & Clarke 2006: Clarke & Braun, 2013).

This research is aimed at inductively and deductively gaining an in-depth and deeper insight into situational leadership support and its impact on employees competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model from the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotels leaders and their employees (followers) in a real-life setting using semi-structured interviews and extracts from documents. The use of TA is therefore fundamental to explore the varied contextualised meanings that emanated from the interviews, defined and enabled the researcher to achieve his research aim by identifying themes to support the analytical process.

The latent level of theme identification was adopted as opposed to the semantic level of theme development based on the distinction of Braun & Clarke (2006). Semantic themes explore “within the explicit or surface meanings of the data and the analyst is not looking for anything beyond what a participant has said or what has been written” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84).

On the other hand, the latent level of theme development in contrast, looks beyond what has been said and “starts to identify or examine the underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualisations and ideologies that are theorized as shaping or informing the semantic content of the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 84). This enabled the researcher to move beyond describing what was said by research participants to focus on interpreting and explaining what was said and how it informs and answers the research objectives and questions.

This research therefore followed the six-step thematic analysis (see table 3.12) advocated by Braun & Clarke (2006) after data transcription, which are discussed in the following sections.

Table 3.12. Thematic Analysis steps

Steps	Process
Step one	Reading and familiarization of transcribed text
Step two	Generating initial Codes
Step three	Searching and Development of themes
Step four	Review themes
Step five	Defining themes
Step six	Writing up report

Source: Adopted from Braun & Clarke (2006)

3.3.4.2 Interview transcription process and its justification

To facilitate the analysis of the audio-recorded interviews, the researcher transcribed the oral audio-recorded interviews in to written language from the audio recorder on to a word-processed document after every interview using Sonocent and Dragon software. Transcription is to “reproduced verbatim as a word-processed account” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019, p. 644).

In-depth listening of the recorded interviews, analysis and interpretation of the transcribed data created an avenue for the researcher to interact and get involved with the data. Starting the analytical process of data alongside data collection to make meaning and find emerging themes (Merriam, 1998) enabled a more thorough and deeper understanding of the data from the start of the data analysis (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010).

Sonocent and Dragon software allowed the researcher to listen to and highlight important aspects of the audios that related more to the research to be transcribed and retained for the final analysis and inclusion in the thesis. To maintain

confidentiality and anonymity and ease of identification, every transcribed file was given a different name that identified the SME, their managers, and employees.

3.3.4.3 Reading and familiarization

Familiarisation involves moving through the entire dataset. Keeping notes (example, in transcript margins in a separate notebook) ensures these early analytic observations are remembered and can be referred back to. To make the most of this process, the researcher can synthesize observations and notes into ideas or insights related to the dataset, related to the research focus.

Familiarization according to Terry et al. (2017) is the researcher's first opportunity for what they referred to as immersion in the dataset, by moving through the dataset and intimately knowing the dataset to facilitate a deeper engagement with the data. By re-listening to the audio-recorded interviews, it enabled the researcher to self-question the emerging noticeable patterns, understanding participants perceptions and comprehending the meaning of the data rather than just absorbing the data. A clear picture of the data therefore emerged which enabled the researcher to answer the research questions.

The researcher started to make written notes of some ideas and key concepts emerging while reviewing the transcripts, which is in line with Maguire & Delahunt (2017) who stressed the need at this stage, to make notes and jot down early impressions.

3.3.4.4. Coding

The method of coding was determined by the research questions and the researcher's perspective (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher developed initial ideas about coding after the data and transcript familiarization. This related to

the process of fragmenting data into small categories, for the purposes of assigning the fragmented categories with codes (Creswell, 2012). NVivo, the qualitative data analysis software developed to manage the 'coding' procedures is considered the best in this regard (Hilal & Alabri, 2013).

The researcher employed the use of NVivo software, a Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Techniques (CAQDAT) to aid in coding and theme development. The NVivo software allowed the researcher to utilize the Node function in the software after the importation of all transcripts before codes were assigned to the emerged themes (Bazeley, 2007). Basit (2003) reiterate the importance of the researcher to create the categories, do segmenting and coding, and decide what to retrieve and collate as CAQDAT does not do the analysis for the researcher.

In line with Basit (2003), the first step in the coding process was to load NVivo on to my computer, and then create a project in NVivo, which I called the 'First Phase'.

Importing all the 30 audio-recorded transcripts in word format but saved as Rich Text Files (RTF) into NVivo followed ready for electronic coding.

Having predetermined the main categories, the researcher prepared a list of codes for these categories (called 'nodes' in NVivo). These categories (nodes) were each assigned a position on top of the tree. 'trees' constituted the node listing for the NVivo project. The researcher further entered sub-categories called 'child nodes' in NVivo and sibling nodes in the trees under the main nodes that they are related to.

Finally, the researcher added a list of other nodes which were identified but could not fit into a tree (called 'free nodes' in NVivo), as their meaning did not link with the three higher-level 'tree nodes'. These free nodes were, nevertheless added because of their significance to the analysis and were identified during the process of coding individual interview transcripts.

Basit (2003) explained that coding can be carried out by selecting segments of text using line numbering in the document, or by highlighting the specific quotation to be coded. Quotation coding was used instead of line numbering coding to avoid incomplete codes. All interview transcripts and the entire document were coded similarly by, using different tree nodes, child nodes and free nodes.

3.3.4.5 Constant comparison

In comparing data generated from the semi-structured interviews for data quality, validity and reliability, the researcher made two distinct comparisons, thus within case comparison (data comparison within the same unit of analysis and among units of enquiry) and comparison among the different cases (data comparison among the different unit of analysis). Constant comparison was integrated into the analytical procedure. Charmaz (2006), explained constant comparison as a constant process of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept employed for particular research.

Within case comparison explored data between Ghanaian SME hotels leaders and their employees to enable the researcher to identify the emergent themes among the 10 SMEs with respect to the various categories. The comparison between the different cases (SMEs) compared data emerging among the 10 SMEs to assist the researcher in recognising similarities in views or divergent views with respect to the various categories and emerging themes.

This process assisted the researcher to develop further codes for the emerged themes which fell outside of the predetermined codes (free nodes) for data quality, reliability, and consistency.

3.3.4.6 Analysis of interviews

For the researcher and readers to be able to contextualise and link the views expressed by participants to their respective hotels for easy analysis, the researcher anonymised the names with pseudonyms. Hotel managers (identified as hotel-1-manager through to hotel-10-manager), senior employees (identified as hotel-1-senior through to hotel-10-senior) and junior employees (identified as hotel-1-junior through to hotel-10-junior) who shared personal information contributing to the diversity of the study. All participating hotels were two-star hotels, duly registered with the relevant legal and regulatory bodies in Ghana.

3.3.4.6.1. Recording, storage, and transcription of data

The researcher recorded all the interviews with a recorder, saved them onto the researcher's laptop with names of the SME hotels used as the file names. Hotel-1-manager through to hotel-10-manager was used to save hotels managers files, hotel-1-senior through to hotel-10-senior used to save senior employees files and hotel-1-junior through to hotel-10-junior used to save junior employees files. The researcher also transcribed each file onto a word document save with the same name as the audio files for easy identification and analysis.

3.3.4.6.2. Familiarization and development of themes

After the transcription, the researcher familiarized himself with the data based on Braun & Clarke (2006) and Terry et al. (2017) by moving through the dataset and intimately knowing the dataset to facilitate a deeper engagement with the data. The researcher re-played the audio-recorded interviews, to enabled me to self-question the emerging noticeable patterns, understanding participants perceptions and comprehend the meaning of the data rather than just absorbing the data. I made

written notes of some ideas and key concepts emerging while reviewing the transcripts, which is in line with Maguire & Delahunt (2017).

3.3.4.6.3. Coding and Theme development

The method of coding was determined by the research questions and the researcher's perspective (Maguire & Delahunt, 2017). The researcher developed initial ideas about coding after the data and transcript familiarization. This related to the process of fragmenting data into small categories, for the purposes of assigning the fragmented categories with codes (Creswell, 2012). NVivo, the qualitative data analysis software developed to manage the 'coding' procedures is considered the best in this regard (Hilal & Alabri, 2013). Main categories were hotel-1 through to hotel-10 for the ten sampled hotels. These formed the unit of analysis. Sub-categories were hotel-1-manager through to hotel-10-manager for the ten sampled managers of the ten hotels, hotel-1-senior through to hotel-10-senior for the ten senior employees and hotel-1-junior through to hotel-10-junior for the ten junior staff, also forming the units of enquiry relative to the three research questions.

3.3.4.6.4. Categorization and theme development

The written notes made from each transcript was analysed, categorized and the data reduced to information with common traits and themes. This helped the researcher to eliminate irrelevant material. Some data formed themes of leadership practices, how they are applied to support employee's competence development and the contextual factors to be considered alongside employees readiness level from the perspective of all the hotel managers (hotel-1-manager to hotel-10-manager).

Themes also emerged from showcasing the hotel managers leadership practices, how they have been able to support their competence development, management support and the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee

readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence from the perspective of both senior and junior staffs of the ten hotels. Additional themes compiled from the participants emerged forming new information. This research study includes summarized results from the interviews and corresponding themes.

3.3.4.6.5. Constant comparison

Charmaz (2006), explained constant comparison as a constant process of comparing data with data, data with category, category with category, and category with concept employed for particular research.

The researcher compared data between SME-1 through to SME-10 (data comparison among the different unit of analysis) and it brought out contextual themes and profile information among the different SMEs. Thus, services rendered, number of rooms, number of employees, registration status, year of establishment, form of ownership and target customers. To bring out the Views relative to managers leadership styles and how they are applied, the researcher again compared the themes and quotations of SME-1-manager through to SME-10-manager.

To support these views expressed by the ten hotel managers, the researcher compared the views of all the ten senior and ten junior staffs. This brought out how employees have been supported to build their competence and the leadership practices their managers employed. The perspective of all the hotel managers, all senior employees, and all junior employees relative to contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development were also compared. Thus, within case comparison (data comparison within the same unit of analysis and among units of enquiry).

Within case comparison explored data between Ghanaian SME hotels leaders and their followers to enable the researcher to identify the emergent themes among the ten SMEs with respect to the various categories. The comparison between the different cases (SMEs) compared data emerging among the ten SMEs to assist the researcher in recognising similarities in views or divergent views with respect to the various categories and emerging themes.

The interpretation, summaries and quotations of each participant's experiences helped me to understand the phenomena of situational leadership support and its impact on employees competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels.

A presentation and explanation of the results should help produce a better level of understanding of situational leadership support and its impact on employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels.

3.3.4.6.6. Data presentation method and justification

3.3.4.6.6.1 Justification of data presentation method

Reay et al. (2019) identified five (5) ideal-type approaches for presenting qualitative research finding. Table 3.13 summarizes the various approaches.

Table 3.13 Approaches to qualitative data presentations

Approach	Description	Primary Data Source
Gioia	Theoretical coding structure used to organize text: Gioia chart illustrates coding: data tables organized by coding structure: Snippets of text provided.	Interviews and archival
Vignette	Short stories derived from data organize text: tables use vignettes to illustrate aspects of phenomenon.	Ethnographic
Temporal Phases	Text organized to present story that unfolds over time: process model illustrates temporal aspects: data tables organized temporally.	Ethnographic, interviews and archival
Long Data Excerpts	Large text segments showing conversational exchanges structure text.	Interviews and Ethnographic
Anthropological	Overall research context emphasized in text: provides comprehensive understanding of phenomena of interest.	Ethnographic

Source: Reay et al. (2019, p. 205)

Compared to the other approaches, the Gioia approach has the advantage of allowing authors to display the breadth of their data grounded in their theoretical claims. Because the Gioia approach focuses on coding small text segments (that will fit in a box in the evidence tables), it seems particularly suitable for research based on interviews and archival data (Reay et al., 2019).

Combining both interview and archival data, gives the Gioia approach an added advantage of being able to clarify a match between data segments and theoretical coding, guides the reader in following an analytic pathway. It also resonates well with most scholarly research reviewers due to its familiarity and indicates 'rigor' as it is widely understood (Reay et al., 2019). Dacin, Munir & Tracey (2010) and Tracey &

Phillips (2016) both adopted the Gioia approach in the presentation of their qualitative research findings.

This research therefore adopted the Gioia approach in presenting the findings of this research as the main source of data collection for this research was both semi-structured interviews and archival company documents which aligns well with the focus of the Gioia approach.

3.3.4.6.6.2. Application of the Gioia approach to presenting interview data.

The collection of data from the 10 sampled Ghanaian SME hotels, through the semi-structured interviews generated 30 transcripts. Thus 10 from the SME hotel managers, 10 from senior employees, and 10 from junior employees.

To present the vast data utilising the Gioia approach, the researcher first self-questioned the emerging noticeable patterns, whilst reviewing the interview transcripts, to understand and comprehend the meaning of the data rather than just absorbing it.

Within case review and among case review was made. Within case review explored data within the same unit of analysis (SME hotel) and among units of enquiry (managers, senior and junior staff). Among case review on the other hand explored data between the different cases (SME hotels).

In line with Maguire & Delahunt (2017), this aided the researcher to reduce the 30 interview transcripts into written notes, ideas, and key concepts. The key concepts which reflected the terms used by participants and aligned to the three research questions relating to leadership practices, how they are applied to support employees competence development and the contextual factors were grouped into three. This was to reflect the notes, ideas and concepts emanating from managers,

senior and junior employees of each of the 10 sampled SME hotels. This reflected what Corley & Gioia (2004) referred to as first-order analysis.

Secondly, the first-order analysis helped the researcher to develop more knowledge of the data and began to think at the level of the participants' terms and codes. This enabled the researcher to move beyond describing what was said by research participants to focus on interpreting and explaining what was said and how it informs and answers the research questions. This assisted the researcher to further analyse and reduce the data to information with common themes which can account for the concepts to describe leadership practices, how they are applied to support employees competence development and the contextual factors. This reflected what Corley & Gioia (2004) referred to as second-order analysis.

Finally, the emerged concepts (first-order), which were organised into themes (second-order) based on the interpretation of the researcher, were further filtered into what Corley & Gioia (2004) called the aggregate dimension. This provided a graphic representation of the participants' voice with the arrays of the first-order terms, second-order themes, and the aggregate dimensions.

The reduction and analysis of the data utilising the Gioia approach helped the researcher to explore and display the depth of the data gathered that were grounded in the situational leadership theory and employee competence development or readiness levels. The researcher used figures to illustrate the theoretical coding structure (Gioia charts. See section 4.3) and a findings section structured according to the same coding pattern in line with the focus of the Gioia approach.

The use of NVivo software also helped the researcher to develop common areas and allowed the presentation of the data in table format. A presentation and explanation of the results therefore help produce a better level of understanding of situational

leadership and its impact on employees competence development or readiness in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

3.3.4.7. Achieving research aim with data analysis procedures.

The researcher developed semi-structured interview questions which enabled him to probe the research questions to achieve the research objectives as highlighted in table 3.3 above.

The analysis of interview questions 1 to 3 in Table 3.6 brought out themes relative to the different leadership practices used by Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders that matches the competence development or readiness level for the different categories of employee. The themes relative to the leadership styles were reviewed in line with situational leadership styles as highlighted in figure 2.1 in chapter two (situational leadership styles) whilst the themes relative to competence or development levels of employees was reviewed in line with Figure 2.2 (follower readiness) in chapter two.

This helped the researcher to answer research question one, achieved its objective and paved the way for exploring research objective two, thus how those themes (leadership styles) identified are used by managers to support the competence development or readiness of the different type of employees they relate to, using interview questions 4 in table 3.6.

Analysis of interview questions 5 and 6 in table 3.6 brought out the themes on contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development and its application to the development level of the type of employees

they relate to and built a big model putting together the views, analysis and results from managers, junior and senior employees.

Based on the analysis, each leadership practice theme identified were linked to how that approach is used to support the competence development or readiness levels of the type of employees it relates to as well as the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside each category of employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development.

This helped the researcher to develop a model that identifies the leadership practices used to support the different developmental levels of employees in order to achieve the research aim which is to explore situational leadership support and impact on employees competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels and identify contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model.

3.4 Summary

This research was conducted based on a theoretical framework underpinned by an interpretivist philosophy using a case study strategy. Semi-structured interviews and extraction from ten Ghanaian SME hotels provided in-depth information that aided the achievement of the research aim and objectives.

The data analysis process was implemented alongside data collection. The researcher adopted the use of CAQDAT (NVivo) with thematic analysis to analysed data. This method helped the researcher to appropriately code emerged themes after data transcription to explore and obtain a deeper comprehension of situational leadership impact on employees (followers) competence development or readiness

in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

There were six steps in the data analysis process, which were, familiarization of transcripts, coding, theme development, theme review, theme definition and reporting. This was complimented with two levels of comparison (within case comparison and among case comparison) throughout the data analysis process. To ensure reliability and validity of the data gathered, the researcher sought the authentication of the summaries of the data analysis to clarify differences in aspects of the data gathered and analysed from participants perspectives. The researcher also adopted the Gioia approach to presenting data for ease of comprehension of research findings by readers.

The application of the above data analysis procedures to the actual data collected from the interviews and company documents helped to answer the research questions from a real-life perspective to achieve the research aim. The next chapter presents a discussion and analysis of the data collected from the research participants and company documents.

Chapter Four.

4.0 Results and Discussions

4.1 Introduction

The extant literature has revealed that leadership strategies are needed to motivate and support employees task readiness, physical competence and psychological capital for effective service delivery for positive organizational outcome among Ghanaian SME hotel employees (Deloitte, 2014). This is based on the premise that, a leader cannot apply the same leadership style or strategies for all situations but needs to adapt his or her leadership style to the given situation based on employees development levels (Day & Antonakis, 2012).

This chapter which is divided into three main sections provides an analysis of the data collected from Ghanaian SME hotels. The first section provides a summary of the contextual details of the ten Ghanaian SME hotels sampled for this research. The second section addresses the research questions in the light of the literature through a comparison across ten Ghanaian SME hotels, ten Ghanaian SME hotel managers, ten Ghanaian SME hotel senior employees and ten Ghanaian SME hotel junior employees. Section three, which is the last section provides the summary of the research findings.

4.2 Case Contextualisation (Ghanaian SME Hotels)

The contextual analysis of the 10 cases (see Appendix four) have showcased some similarities and differences among the cases, highlighted the leadership practices and styles used by the hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff and the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support Ghanaian SME

hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

The similarities and differences among the case hotels showcased by the contextual analysis are discussed in the next sub-section.

4.2.1. Similarities and differences among case hotels

The contextual analysis showcased some similarities and differences among the case hotels.

The similarities among the ten sampled Ghanaian SME hotels based on the contextual analysis in appendix four include; high employees turnover, the employment and use of vocational and SHS graduates, liability of smallness, the use of similar recruitment procedures, similar leadership practices, more power vested into the hands of SME owners, the use of on-the-job training for employees capacity development, owner-managed or owner-led, all legally registered, mostly registered under the sole proprietorship form of business, affected by cultural and religious factors and most of their managers or leaders possessed tertiary educational level certificates.

The 1963 Companies Code of Ghana, Act 179 makes it a mandatory requirement for the registration of all businesses in Ghana under any of the three forms of business ownership (thus, sole proprietorship, partnership, or a company) before the commencement of the business. This explains the similarities in the legal registration of all the SMEs hotels. The prevalence of the sole proprietorship form of business among the case hotels is due to the lower capital costs associated with registering and starting a sole proprietorship form of business, mostly from personal resources in Ghana (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019). Consequently, this suggests their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012) resulting in the lack of separation between

ownership and control and the responsibility for the direction and development of their businesses in the hands of SME enterprises owners (Thompson-Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018). Consequently, the personal objectives, cultural and religious orientation affects the operation of the SME.

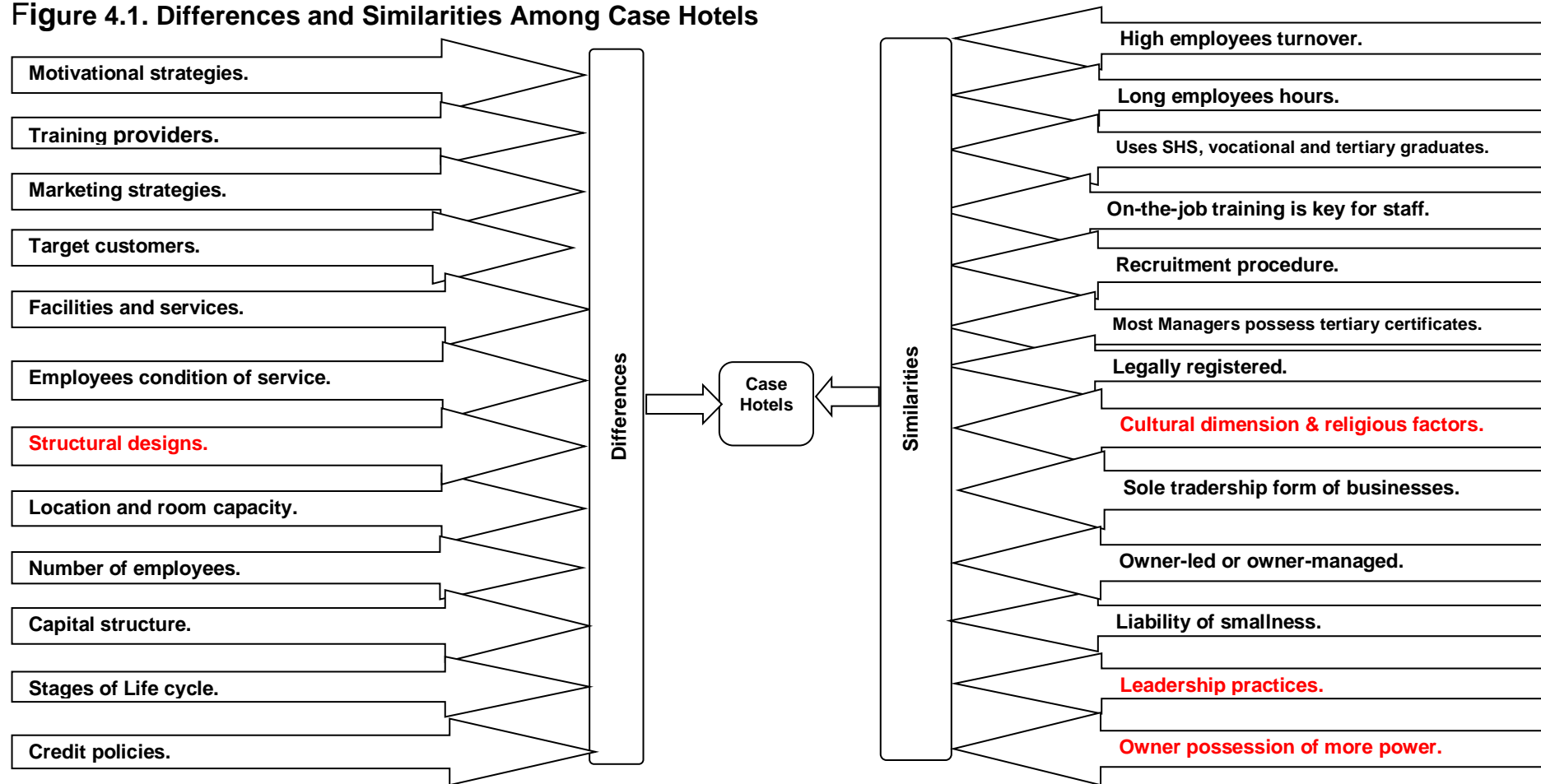
Again, their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012) and limited access to finance (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019) leads to their inability to finance most of their operations. They therefore tend to use less structured recruitment procedures which seemingly attracts SHS and vocational school graduates with limited competence who they can afford to remunerate with limited resource require them to work for long hours. The development of the competence of these employees which should have been developed using professionals is rather done in-house using on-the-job training due to their limited resources, reflecting the use of similar leadership practices. The demand for competent and professional employees in the Ghanaian hotel industry particularly among SME hotels pushes these new employees who may have gained some on-the-job competence to explore other hotels for better remuneration and hence the high incidence of employees turnover among Ghanaian SME hotels.

There were also some differences that were showcased in the contextual analysis of the ten cases hotels. These include the use of different credit policies, motivational strategies, training providers, target customers, different facilities, and services.

There were also variations in the design of hotel structure, their number of rooms (room capacities), number of employees, capital structures, employees condition of services, and variation in their business life cycles. It looks mostly that these variations are to a large extent, are affected by their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012), the lack of separation between ownership and control (Thompson-

Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018), their personal objectives, cultural and religious orientation their limited access to finance (MOTI MSME Policy Report, 2019). The decision-making of owner-managers or owner-leaders according to (for example, MOTI, MSME Policy Report, 2019) also affect the above variations. Figure 4.1 highlights the similarities and difference among the case hotels.

Figure 4.1. Differences and Similarities Among Case Hotels



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

4.3. Discussion of Results and Findings

The information from the interviews with the hotel managers, senior and junior employees have brought out the views from their experiences applicable to the practices used to support employees competence development, how the application of those practices align with situational leadership styles and what contextual factors need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to develop their competence. Common themes emanating from the participants' views might serve as a resource for understanding situational leadership support and its impact on employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotel staff.

4.3.1 Leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support employee's competence development.

The first research question seeks answers to what leadership practices Ghanaian SME hotel managers apply to support their employees competence development to achieve organisational goals. This section discusses the various leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders to support their employees (followers) competence development to address research question one.

Results from the research indicates that, on-the-job training, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, aligning employees interest to job roles, task assignment and the use of the SCRUM system are the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff. These practices are discussed below.

4.3.1.1 On-the-job training

A common theme that emerged from all the ten managers interviewed was the use of on-the-job training. All the ten managers acknowledged this approach to be the

quickest and easiest way to support the competence development of employees since getting professionally trained hotel employees is difficult in Ghana.

For example, Fawaz stated,

“I train my employees on-the-job, based on customer feedback. I try to establish a friendly relationship with my regular customers and so they are not afraid to give me feedback good or bad on the professionalism of my employees and see how we can re-strategize to move the hotel forward”.

Firdaus drew a similar picture but described on-the-job training as using a hands-on approach embedded in the Ghanaians culture (high-power distance) relative to the respect between an elderly person and a young person.

“I do things on my own and because of the culture of this region, they don’t want to sit down and see an elderly person doing something. So, once they see me doing certain things, often after a few times with them, you will see that they will begin doing it themselves. Example, for my breakfast service, all the waitresses know how to prepare the breakfast dishes but ideally, someone from the kitchen should be doing this”.

Fida-ah, who rose from a pantry employee to a manager in the same hotel, mentioned,

“When they employed us here, we went through three months training. You had to study the menu, how to lay the table, the type of glasses and the type of drinks. We went through some thorough training, and we had to even go to the kitchen to see how the dishes are prepared. The training alone was a form of building our competence”.

Na-eem also stated,

“We always go through training and it’s like a reminder and others that have just joined us also pick up fast from the training”.

Fareeda stated:

“With the new starters, it is orientations and with those who have been in the job for some time, it is still day-to-day meetings, updates and trainings that we have”

Alhassan stated:

“The department in which they have been employed takes them through training frequently, and I the manager also comes in once in a while to take them through training. And those employees who have been here for a while we include them when we are training new employees to refresh their skills too”

Latif mentioned,

“With this approach, newly employed employees are orientated and trained in the department they are assigned to. Subsequent trainings are held for all employees both new and existing”.

Ruhiya stated:

“Within the hotel, we orientate new employees and also take all the employees through training, which I must confess it’s not easy. So, we bring in experts to train them”.

Luqman stated:

“I am not looking for someone who is too fast or someone who can do the work. Sometimes within this training is to look for someone who has the mind to truly work. So, in the kitchen, if there is no patience, the person doesn’t even want to get to pantry section to work. So, when the need comes for you to get there to support, you

are not ready to do so. So, I start my training by letting you know who you are in the establishment”.

4.3.1.2. Task assignment

Task assignment is another leadership practice used by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff. Used by 6 out of the 10 hotel managers interviewed, Fawaz also sees it as an avenue to share responsibilities.

“I assign tasks to employees to enable me share responsibilities across board. I have a supervisor, a storekeeper, and a receptionist and these are the key people I use in carrying out my duties daily, because you don’t have to be there always for things to happen but rather put systems in place”.

Khadija also sees it as an avenue to spot competence lapses and stated:

“I delegate a lot, and if I delegate to you, I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn’t keep quiet. I will prove to you to know where you fell short”.

Fida-ah uses it as an avenue to support sectional heads which trickles down to lower staff. He reiterated,

“If there is a problem in the restaurant for example, as the manager the best is to look for the restaurant manager instead of going straight to correct the problem. That alone will keep him on his toes to do his work well because under normal circumstances, I shouldn’t come to your department to find fault with your work but if I do, then I should ask you why there is a fault”.

Delegation allows Fareeda to concentrate on other important managerial duties whilst still supporting the competence of the delegatee. She stated,

“I have one or two people here that I can boast of to delegate to with confidence and when I am not around, I know they can take things on board.”

Alhassan also made similar comments relative to delegation:

“I always appoint someone say, in my absence let XYZ who is the head of restaurant act as the manager of the hotel so, anything that has to do with the manager, refer it to him or her”.

4.3.1.3. Face-to-face talks or meetings

Face-to-face talks or meetings is another leadership approach adopted by 7 out of the 10 hotel managers interviewed to support the competence development of their staff. Fawaz noted,

“If you do something wrong, I will call you and explain to you how it should have been done, so that you don’t repeat it next time”.

Similarly, Firdaus stated,

“Just like I am speaking to you now, that’s the way I speak to them and try to pick on areas where I think they are lacking, and I try something critical for them”.

Khadija also submitted,

“I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn’t keep quiet. I will call you and prove to you to know where you fell short. With this, they correct their mistakes and do the right thing the next time”.

Consistent with the views of the other managers, Fareeda, Alhassan, Latif, and Ruhiya all expounded:

“We relay in the meeting of what you have learnt back to them, so they get what’s going on, how to relate to customers, if there is a situation how you should handle it, who you should relay it to before it gets to the chief executive officer (CEO)”.

Alhassan stated,

“When someone does something, I don’t correct him or her in front of everybody, I will call the person aside and speak to him or her. This makes them feel valued and would not want to repeat the same mistake due to the respect and discretion shown to them”.

Latif stated,

“You can’t reprimand them although they are your employees because most of them will either be your parents age or your brothers and sisters age mates. So, you hold a meeting to correct the lapses and mistakes in their roles.

Ruhiya also stated:

“We organise meetings every Monday and Friday to let them know what they are doing and to encourage them that they can do better”.

4.3.1.4 Social and financial support

Social and financial support is another leadership approach used by 8 out of the 10 managers interviewed. Ghanaian SME hotel managers use social and financial support to support the competence development of staff. Common responses from the hotel managers were that this makes employees feel comfortable to discuss their problems with management as they know management will support them.

Employees as a result also put in their best in their roles to reward the support of management.

Fawaz stated,

“As-and-when anyone of them needs financial assistance, they come up to me and I will meet the owner to see how best we can support the person and they know that they can always fall on us”.

Firdaus had a similar view and mentioned that:

“Sometimes you will see an employee being grumpy and it’s to do with finances so you will dip your hand into your pocket to help just to give the employees the peace of mind to work”.

Khadija also drew a similar picture relative to the use of financial assistance to support employees competence development. She said:

“Whenever the need arises, I support them financially for example I want to travel, minor accidents or when they are on maternity leave”.

Na-eem reiterated that urgent financial needs of employees are taken up whenever the need arises. This put their minds at rest to put in their best in their role instead of sharing their thoughts between their urgent financial need and the job role. He stated,

“What influences them is, I treat them well, I also pay them good and then I help sort out their problems too”.

Fareeda also uses it to support the competence development of her employees, subject to approval by the CEO by taking up their tuition fees or allowing employees flexible working hours within their roles. She stated:

“He doesn’t turn his back on them. He helps them by paying their tuition fees or allow them to come back to do a bit of hours to save money and go back to school”.

This makes them feel the hotel is willing to support them when in need. Alhassan intimated,

“The CEO increases salaries every year based on hard work and competence. So, your salary can be increased twice in one year depending on how you work. As part of the support to staff, for example if you want a loan to buy a motor bike

or do something, director granted interest-free loans to staff, and the employees chooses how much to be deducted from their salaries until the loan is paid off”.

Ruhiya also indicated,

“... Educationally, those who have a little background, and they still want to be educated we push them by supporting them. For example, I have two ladies I just made to rewrite their exams because I realised, they have the potential, but they have failed in some papers, so they decided to just give up. But no, I encourage them”.

Luqman also summed up:

“We support employees with furniture and fittings and other beddings that have been replaced by the hotel. Example TV, bedsheets, used towels etc. We use what I call middle of month incentive in the form of travel and transport to motivate them as well as pulling of tips. Tips are pulled and shared by both waiters and cashiers even though cashiers do not serve, but they support, and they are the eyes of the waiters when they are busy”.

4.3.1.5 Taking of own initiatives.

Firdaus and Fareeda categorically allow their employees to take their own initiatives within their roles to support their competence development. Firdaus stated,

“For example, for my breakfast service, all the waitresses know how to prepare the breakfast dishes, but ideally someone from the kitchen should be doing that. I encourage them to take their own initiative which is part of the ways I empower them to learn”.

Fareeda also commented:

“Most of the time they call on me but, when I am not around, they try their best and I am ok with it if it’s handled and no party is hurt or insulted, I think it’s ok for me”.

The other managers although do not expressly state that employees can take their own initiatives within their roles but also do not reprimand them when they do but rather feels happy and appreciative if the right thing was done. Comments from some of the senior and junior staff revealed. Yussif stated,

“I have been given the authority to take my own initiative and if I make a mistake, regarding my manager, she will just say you should have done it this way or that way, as it would have been best. So next time, try to do this way”.

Rashad also stated,

“Manager is always happy when you take you own initiative but may get sad if the wrong decision was taken but will advise you on how to do it next time”.

Munira also commented,

“Manager is always happy when I take my own initiative. For example, just yesterday, a customer spoke highly of me to my manager. This together with their encouragement motivates us to learn on the job”.

Nabila also stated when asked whether they are allowed to take their own initiative.

“Yes, and my boss was ok with it because it was the right call. If it was the wrong call, he would have corrected me”.

4.3.1.6 Aligning employees passion and interest to job roles.

Aligning the passion and interest of employees to roles within the hotel is another leadership practice used to support employees competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels.

Khadija uses this approach and she mentioned,

“I have an employee who is as old as the hotel, but he just doesn’t want to be technical apart from taking supervisory roles. Tell him to start a generator, he just doesn’t want to do it, but ask him to conduct stock-taking, purchasing function or send him on an errand, he is always happy and takes his time to do it well”.

4.3.1.7. Use of SCRUM system

Another practice used by Luqman is what he termed the scrum system, which he uses to support staff competence development and to improve hotel service lapses.

The Scrum system is a holistic leadership practice used to support employees competence development by concentrating to improve services delivery on areas where the hotel records more complaints from its customers. This indicates that, employees are not competent in those areas. The manager therefore encourages employees to concentrate more on areas where more customer complaints are recorded. Employees competences are therefore developed along these complaints and their attention is drawn particularly to the new ways of delivering improved and effective services in those areas.

The manager who tend to have more power, uses his experience in the industry to improve those areas (high complaints areas) by coaching employees and expects employees to individually or collectively follow these procedures to achieve the objectives of the new procedures, by providing the means to achieve them, as well as the implementation processes.

To improve service delivery in the high complaint areas, the manager, with inputs from staff assesses the efficiency and effectiveness of task in those areas, the deficiencies in those tasks, review customer complaints and provide corrective action in line with those complaints.

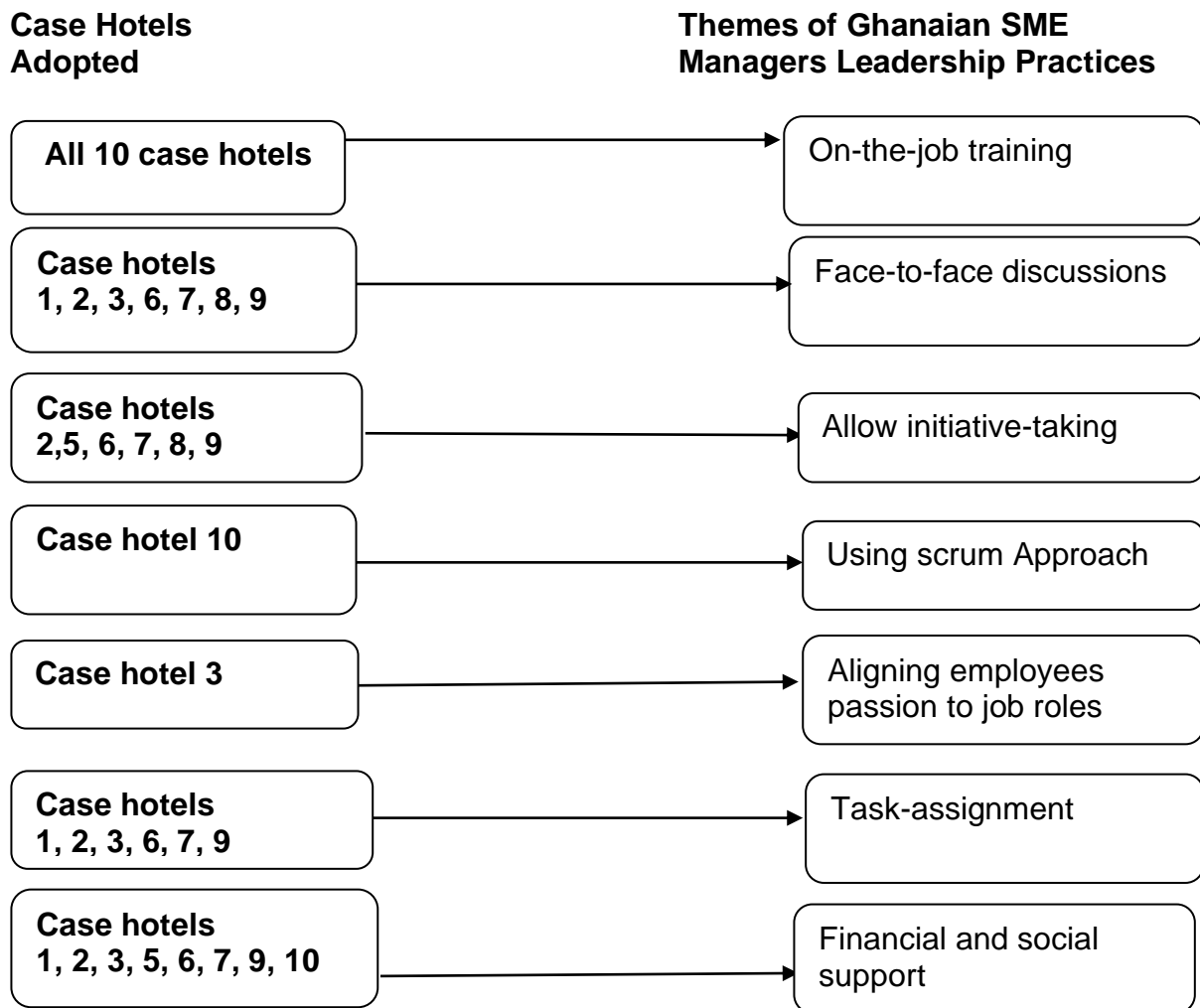
These corrective actions then spells out to employees at the various development levels, what to do, where to do it, when to do it and how to do it, and then closely supervises performance and providing feedback on its implementation to staff.

Luqman stated,

“We tackle what we are doing well a little bit, but put more effort and emphasis on other areas to aid in improving their experience and competence”.

In conclusion, there were seven types of leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers identified from the analysis. These included task assignment, on-the-job training, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, allowing employees initiative-taking, aligning employees interest to job roles and the use of SCRUM system. Figure 4.2 highlight the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff.

Figure 4.2. Leadership practices Applied by Ghanaian SME Hotel Managers to Support Employee’s Competence Development



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

The above Gioia diagram in Figure 4.2 highlights the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff. The results of the analysis showcased seven practices applied by Ghanaian SME managers to support their employees competence development. These include on-the-job training, face-to-face discussion, employees initiative-taking, use of the SCRUM system, aligning employees interest to job roles, task assignment and social and financial support. This addresses research objective one and provides an answer to research question one.

As highlighted above, the findings from the analysis indicates that orientation and on-the-job training, face-to-face discussions, aligning employees interest to job roles, task assignment, allowing employees to take their own initiative, social and financial support and scrum system are the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff.

The result from the analysis indicates orientation and on-the-job training are the first competence development practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers. This is not limited to only newly employed employees but extends to existing employees too, as they move from one role to the other within the hotel. Ghanaian SME hotel managers engages in one-way communication by orientating staff, nurturing staff, directing staff, and giving instructions to staff and expect staff to comply with their directives as they tend to have more power in a high-power distance environment. Orientation and on-the-job training fits in with a leader's directive behaviour, which SLT explains as the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication, spells out the follower's role and tells the followers what to do, where to do it, when to do it and how to do it: and then closely supervises performance (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This result builds on Otoo & Mishra (2018) who found a positive significant relationship between training and development and employee competencies. Similarly, Manoj (2013), support the view that training and development strategically harnesses the skills and competencies of employees. Appiah (2010) and Harrison (2000) also contend that training and development practices positively enhance employee expertise and competencies. The results furthers our understanding of

T&D of these studies. However, these studies has failed to align T&D fit with the two leader behaviours under SLT.

T&D which can improve the overall competence and performance of employees in an organisation has also been supported by Nadarajah et al. (2012) and hence this result furthers our understanding of their findings. Nadarajah et al. (2012) however examined the relationship between human resource practices that affects academicians' job performance towards career development in Malaysian educational institutions. The results of this research was showcased from the hotel industry of Ghana and hence industry differences may have an impact on the results, but it does show the importance of training and development in enhancing the performance and competence in difference context. Due to the proximity of SME hotel managers to their operating personnel, the results of this research will present a more significant impact on employees competence development.

Within the Ghanaian hotel industry, this result develops our understanding and builds on the work of Opoku (2020) who stressed the need for managers in the Ghanaian hotel industry to continuously employ strategic human resource practices such as training and development activities to achieve organisational goals. This research hold the view that leadership intervention relative to the T&D of employees within Ghanaian SME hotels is likely to be more effective especially if undertaken by the owner-manager because of their proximity to the employees and knowledge of the type of training needed as SMEs need trainings that are much more specific to their business needs and problems, especially due to their limited resources in terms of time, money and personnel. This view also furthers our understanding of the views of Peel (2004) and Hulla et al. (2021). However, these studies have failed to showcase how T&D fits in with the two leader behaviours under SLT.

The results also showcased that SME managers use task assignment to delegate roles and power within the hotel to employees to represent them and take charge in their absence. As managers tend to have more power in an environment characterised with high-power distance, this is used as an avenue to share responsibilities, offer corrective action, and keep employees focused on the task assigned to them.

The confidence of the manager in the employee plays a key role in delegating a task to an employee. Ghanaian SME hotel managers adopts an open-door policy, listens, and engage in a two-way communication with employees, assesses employees capabilities, task effectiveness, relinquishing authority, assign responsibility, allowing initiative-taking and observing employees behaviour.

Task-assignment fits in with supportive behaviour under SLT, which is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This result furthers our understanding of the impact of delegation on staff competence development and job satisfaction and builds on the work of Xue et al. (2022), who examined the role of effective employee training in the sustainable growth and corporate social responsibility of hotels during the post-pandemic period in Chinese hotels. Their results showed that the level of delegation, allowing employees to choose their work methods to perform tasks significantly correlated with job satisfaction with more development opportunities. This results significantly correlates with the results of this research.

However, their study failed to showcase how task-assignment which they termed delegation, fits in with the two leader behaviours under SLT. Again, their research used a single approach, questionnaires and statistical analysis of their results which could not bring out the feelings of the staff. This is a departure from the methodology of this research and hence their findings accepted one of their alternative hypotheses that the hotels could not foster employee enthusiasm and fulfil its corporate social responsibilities during the post pandemic period due to deficiencies in its human resources training, employee benefit, job rotation, and incentive systems.

However, the result of this research showcases that hotel employees places more importance to delegated task as it enables hotel employees to solve problems and opens more developmental opportunities. This result also builds on the view that workplace learning is highly appreciated by SME employees as it builds their confidence and job satisfaction (Tam & Gray, 2016).

Again, this result builds on the viewpoint of Pansiri (2008) who reiterates that skilled SME manager's or owner's conceptual and creative contributions will not be misplaced if routine task are delegated and used as an avenue to train, motivate and tap into employee strength. It also contextualises our understanding of the findings of Jennings & Beaver (1997) who found that financial success significantly correlates with the SME owner's delegation of lower-level tasks to subordinates and concentrate on more critical activities to prevent SME managers from drowning in a pool of routine activities. However, employees passion for the job, his commitment and the manager's confidence in the ability of the employees are factors the manager considers before delegating responsibilities.

Face-to-face discussions and meetings was another leadership practice showcased by the results and used as an avenue to discuss and understand employees challenges. As employees are diverse with varied competence levels within these hotels, face-to-face meetings are held discretely to address employees competence lapses within their roles without having to let employees feel demoralised, hence, which encourages employees to do more.

Ghanaian SME hotel managers adopt an open-door policy, listens to staff, and engages in a two-way communication with employees using a friendly approach. Managers also discuss proposed tasks and decisions, competence lapses, training needs, task procedures, etc. with employees and the opinions of employees are carefully considered with feedback provided after the discussion.

Face-to-face discussion therefore fits in with supportive behaviour under SLT, which is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson and Glaso, 2018).

The result furthers our understanding of Sproull & Kiesler, (1991) who asserted that face-to-face communication tend to help leaders to understand the challenges that their employees members are experiencing and help to increase team members' comfort in interacting with their leaders. The results also showcased the significance of face-to-face discussions in managing multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and diverse teams, which further develops our understanding of the findings of Zimmermann, Wit & Gill (2008).

Zimmermann, Wit & Gill (2008) explored the challenges of leadership communication in rapidly globalizing organizations as a basis for developing virtual leadership

programmes, at Shell Global Solutions International [GSI] and more generally in other companies using questionnaires to collect data from engineering employees technical expertise and high levels of virtualness. Their results showcased that face-to-face is preferred when managing multi-ethnic or multi-cultural teams or communicating new goals as it prevents misunderstandings. The result of this research builds on this viewpoint. However, the results of this research showed an even significant preference to face-to-face discussion in managing multi-ethnic, multi-cultural with varied competence levels due to the lack of multidisciplinary competent employees with limited use of virtual systems among Ghanaian SME hotels. Their results also failed to showcase how face-to-face discussions with employees fits in with the two leader behaviours under SLT.

Social and financial support is another leadership practice showcased by the results of this research used by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support employee's competence development. It is used by managers as an avenue to inform employees that management values their contribution, show a sense of belongingness, and willing to support them in times of need.

This is done through financial assistance for urgent financial needs of staff, such as school fees, funerals expenses, outdooing expenses, distribution of used and replaced hotel resources to staff, and attending employees social and family functions. This creates a conducive hotel environment for staff, enables employees to have the peace of mind to work and motivates employees both intrinsically and extrinsically to commit to the hotel and feel that the hotel can help them when they are in need.

Social and financial support also fits in with supportive behaviour under SLT, which is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides

support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This result furthers our understanding of the contentions of Osei & Ackah (2015), Vargas-Halabí et al. (2017), Elbaz et al. (2018), and Zarefard & Jeong (2019) who all stated that organisational and environmental factors such as management support, availability of resources, reward and motivation, and organisational structure can leverage employees' critical attributes. This result contextualises the viewpoint that perceived organizational support (POS) has the tendency of inducing an intellect of commitment among employees to repay the organisation's care by acquiring skills, behaviour, and attitudes (Tripathi et al., 2021) and tend to be involved in active learning (Maan et al., 2020) which can profit an organization. However, findings also revealed that the skills acquired through active learning because of social and financial support is only as good as they are within the hotel, as most of them leave when the right job relative to their qualification comes along.

Padi, Ansah & Mahmoud (2022) investigated the influence of antecedents of corporate entrepreneurship (CE) on competencies of employees of SMEs in Ghana, Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly, considering the respective mediating and moderating roles of employees' perceived feasibility and desirability. Their results showed that environmental and organizational factors for example intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, have a significant influence on the competence development of SME employees.

The result of this research contextually furthers our understanding of the results of Padi, Ansah & Mahmoud (2022) as it showed geographical similarities but in

different industries. Hence, their results may have implications for industry specific context which is different from the results of this research.

Findings from the analysis also highlighted that SME hotel managers allow employees some latitude to be able to take their own initiatives within their roles and during service delivery for customer satisfaction. Managers use this as an avenue to motivate employees by appreciating the employee's efforts and offering corrections to some of the decisions taken by the employee during the process later.

This result shows that allowing employees to take their own initiative is a way of offering corrective action when mistakes are made in the process, makes employees feel appreciated and hence motivates them to put in their best in their assigned task.

Ghanaian SME managers adopts an adopts-door policy for employees to come in and offer suggestions, engages in two-way communication, allowing employees to take their own initiatives when necessary and by adapting to changes proposed by staff, praises employees initiatives, takes corrective actions on initiative lapses and fostering employees confidence through praise, encouragements, and rewards.

Allowing initiative-taking therefore fits in with supportive behaviour under SLT, which is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction, and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This furthers our understanding of the viewpoint that when employees in an organisation feels psychologically empowered by managers or leaders, they develop a sense of identity, connect with the organisation's values, and get involved further at work (Joo et al., 2019). This result also extends the support for the positive relationship between psychological empowerment, psychological capital and

employee job satisfaction, organisational commitment and reduced turnover intention (Larson & Luthans, 2006; Luthans et al., 2007; Youssef & Luthans, 2007; Luthans et al., 2008; Avey et al., 2010; Avey et al., 2012).

Again, this result furthers our understanding of the conclusion of Shah et al. (2019) who examined the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationship between perceived psychological empowerment and employee satisfaction, normative organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in the telecommunications industry of Pakistan. They concluded that resources generated from psychological empowerment, work as a motivating force behind the advantageous effects of psychological capital across various employee attitudes and behaviours. However, the high virtualness that characterises the telecommunications industry may have implications for their results in the hotel industry which is characterised by limited virtualness as showcased by the results of this research.

Views expressed by Ghanaian SME hotel managers also showcased that allowing staff to take their own initiative in their job roles does not still stop most of the employees from leaving after getting competent due to the lack of contractual relationship binding the two parties. This is because, employees place more value to remuneration packages hence managers hire as-and-when they need, and employees also leave as-and-when they want of get a better offer.

Aligning employees interest and competence to job roles brings out the best in employees and equally offer employees intrinsic job satisfaction according to the results. This leads to better productivity and reduces employee turnover intentions. Ghanaian SME hotel managers listens and engages in a two-way communication with employees, assesses employees capabilities, their situation, behaviour and uses their power to assign roles based on employees ability, interest, and passion.

Aligning employees interest to job roles therefore fits in with supportive behaviour, which is the extent to which a leader engages in two-way communication, listens, provides support and encouragement, facilitates interaction and involves the followers in decision-making (Blanchard, 1985, 1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This result furthers our understanding of the conclusions of Škrinjarić (2022) and Allen & Van der Velden (2001) who concluded that competence mismatch impacts individual job satisfaction, wages, dampens productivity and turnover growth at the firm level. Škrinjarić (2022) reviewed competence-based approaches in individual and organisational contexts to list the most important milestones in its development and highlight the important difficulties when defining competences and delineating differences between competences, skills, and abilities.

To avoid the impact of competence mismatch, the results of this research which has found on-the-job training as a key employee competence development practice align with the recommendation of Škrinjarić (2022), who stated that work-based training, and training in the context of active labour market policies for the unemployed are important to prevent competence obsolescence.

Results also showcased that the Scrum system is a holistic leadership practice used to support employees competence development by concentrating to improve services on areas where the hotel records more complaints from customers. Employees competences are developed along these complaints and their attention is drawn particularly to the new ways of delivering improved services in these areas. Ghanaian SME managers who tend to have more power in a high-power distance environment, uses their industry experience to coach employees and expects employees to individually or collectively follow his procedures to achieve the

objectives of their activities by providing the means to achieve them, as well as the implementation process. They assess the efficiency and effectiveness of task, assess the deficiencies in tasks, review customer complaints and provide corrective action.

This therefore fits in with directive behaviour under SLT, which is the extent to which a leader engages in one-way communication, spell out the follower's role and tell the followers what to do, where to do it, when to do it and how to do it: and then closely supervises performance (Blanchard, 1985,1997, 2000; Howell, 2012; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Thompson & Glaso, 2018).

This result furthers our understanding of the meaningfulness dimension of task-assessment in psychological empowerment explained by Thomas & Velthouse (1990), as concerning the value of a task goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual's own ideals or standards or the individual's intrinsic caring about the given task.

4.3.1.8 Novelty of the Findings of Research Question One

The literature has highlighted evidence of limited research exploring the SME context and SME articles published in human resource (HR) journals (Gilman & Edwards, 2008; Cooke et al., 2020). Cautions have also emerged in the literature, directed at SME owner-managers or leaders to mould their leadership style towards enriching followers to obtain better work performance. In the Ghanaian hotel industry, research exploring how Ghanaian SME hotel managers support the competence development of their staff using different human resource management practices for effective service delivery is also lacking.

The results of this research have showcased seven different leadership practices that managers or leaders can apply to support the competence development of their staff for effective service delivery within Ghanaian SME hotels.

These practices are on-the-job training, SCRUM system, task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning employees interest to job roles have been found to be the leadership practices used by managers to support the competence development of employees within Ghanaian SME hotels.

This result broadens the literature in the SME context relating to leadership or managerial practices, especially among SME hotels, and begin to address the limited research exploring the different human resource management practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their staff for effective service delivery. The results also minimizes the debate on the mechanisms through which leadership supports SME employee's behaviour, development, and performance, especially in the hotel industry, which has been deemed to be inconclusive.

This research, which is underpinned by SLT, has criticised SLT for failing to showcase the practices that leaders or managers can apply in their exhibition of either directive behaviour or supportive behaviours when dealing with their employees. The results of this research have showcased that, the application of on-the-job training and the SCRUM system fit in with directive leader behaviour whilst task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning employees interest to job roles have also fit in with supportive leader behaviour.

4.3.2 How the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employee's competence development align with situational leadership styles?

The second research question explored how the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employees competence development align with situational leadership styles?

The extant literature in competence development according to Alberton et al. (2020) has emphasized the necessity to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out relative to how the individual competencies of their employees are supported within their organizations.

On-the-job training, task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative, aligning employees interest to job roles and the SCRUM system have been found to be the leadership practices used by managers to influence the competence development of employees within Ghanaian SME hotels.

This section discusses how the seven leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers are used and how they align with the four SLT leadership styles according to Blanchard (1997, 2000).

4.3.2.1 Recruitment, orientation, and on-the-job training

The recruitment process of new employees tells the owner or manager or leader what approaches are needed to support their competence. When managers are desperately in need of staff, anyone in need of a job will be given a chance.

Recruitment however is mostly by recommendations, referrals, walk-ins and via radio advertisement.

Fareeda summed it up by stating:

“I think I have three ways, either by word of mouth, recommendations from the employees themselves or other people around, sometimes too, through advertisements on the FM stations we have and sometimes through walk-in, people can a get a job if they are lucky”.

The reason for the adoption of these modes of recruitment is that Ghanaian SME hotels do not normally get job applications from professionally qualified staff.

Firdaus stated,

“We normally receive application letters and with me, I always make sure whoever is coming have at least senior high certificate, because, we don’t usually get applications from people who have been formally trained in the hospitality industry. So, I believe someone who has that basic level of education is trainable. So, we bring them on board and train them to the standards we want”.

The difficulty in finding professionally trained hotel employees has necessitated the use of orientation and on-the-job training as a first step towards influencing the competence of staff. Employees are taken round the various department of the hotel, and they spend time learning the protocols of each department and relative to their role, attaching newly employed employees to existing employees to be trained on the job, shadowed for a while before being allowed to serve customers. This is augmented with occasional in-house and outside training workshops.

For example, Fawaz summed up,

“It is difficult to find a trained receptionist, waitress or cleaner in Ghana, and these are the people who run the hotel. You can always get a trained chef and a trained caterer but all other sectors, you never get somebody who is already trained, but they come through to the job straight from school. They all must be trained. So, you

have to take them through training to guide them before they can do the job and you come in as and when they need your help”.

Similarly, Firdaus detailed that,

“I do things on my own and because of the culture of this region, they don’t want to sit down and see an elderly person or their manager doing something. So, once they see me doing certain things, often after a few times with them, you will see that they will begin doing it themselves. Example, for my breakfast service, all the waitresses know how to prepare the breakfast dishes but ideally, someone from the kitchen should be doing this”.

This furthers of understanding of Appaw-Agbola (2016) assertion of the inability of Ghanaian SME hotels to attract suitably qualified, skilled, and professional employees (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

The views of employees relative to the use of training in developing their competence aligned with the views of the managers. For example

Mubarak narrated,

“Sometimes, it comes from personal attitude and because I go for workshops and training, it has impacted on my skills and we also receive formal training from NGOs, Food and Drugs Authority, Ghana National Fire Service and Ghana Tourism Authority”.

Fariz also said,

“When you are employed here, they take you through training and through the training, it will guide you on what to do on your role. They do conduct periodic training to remind us about the ethics of the role, organisation, and the industry. So, with training when you listen very well and put them into practice, it will help you to develop your competence and I think it is one of the factors that is helping me going”.

Sadia highlighted that,

“Your boss is there to guide you through the job and learning on your own too”.

Similar views were also expressed by the junior employees of the hotels analysed so far, on how training has helped in influencing their competence.

Faiza expressed that,

“We the new ones when we come here, they let our colleague’s employees to train us on how to do the work”.

Results from the analysis showcased the use orientation and on-the-job training for newly employed staff. Employees are also nurtured with specific instructions from their managers relating to their roles. The results showcased the practical actions adopted by SME managers to develop their employees competence and hence builds on the emphasis of Alberton et al. (2020) to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out relative to how the individual competencies of their employees are supported within their organisations.

An important factor here is the expectation of the manager regarding the need for their employees to comply with instructions they have been given. However, this is not limited to only newly employed employees but extends to existing employees as well as they move from one role to the other within the hotel.

This practice aligns with Blanchard (2000) directing style (S1) under SLT, which is suitable for D1 employees and composed of a high directive and low supportive behaviour from leaders to employees by giving detailed guidelines to followers, what, how, when, and where to do something and additionally, monitor the follower's effects to both receive and give feedback on the performed tasks.

4.3.2.2. Face-to-face discussion or meetings

After the orientation and during the training period, managers use face-to-face talks or meetings to further enhance their competence. Consistent with the features of D1 followers according to Cvijanovic et al. (2018) in Figure 2.2, managers have observed that employees at this point are very enthusiastic, excited, optimistic, and willing to learn.

The manager observes the performance of the employees and then calls the employees for a face-to-face discussion relative to their competence lapses. The employees are also given an opportunity to voice out their competent lapses. An appropriate competence development training needs is developed out of the discussion for the employees to undergo either in-house or outside the hotel through workshops.

Firdaus explained that,

“Just like I am speaking to you now, that’s the way I speak to them, and I try to pick on areas where I think they are lacking, to try something critical for them”.

Khadija had a similar view and stated,

“I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn’t keep quiet. I will call you and prove to you to know where you fell short. With this, they correct their mistakes and do the right thing the next time you delegate a role or duty to them”.

Noticing these lapses affords the managers to call employees either discretely or in a group to point these lapses out and offer corrections. This practice has been noticed and well documented in the minds of employees as a way of supporting their competence. Common responses from employees vouching for the use of this approach included:

Faris noted,

“With me, he has called on me one-on-one to speak to me from his experience within the industry and this has motivated me to work even harder”.

Fadil also stated,

“If you do something wrong, he will always call you and explain to you how it should have been done, with that you don’t repeat the mistake again”.

Faiza said,

“Manager will call you and speak to you on how you should do your job”.

Even though this practice tends to be unstructured, it does support the competence of employees as the managers, who tend to have more power can call on any employee at any time for a discussion due to their closeness and proximity with them.

Managers use face-to-face discussions and meetings as an avenue to discuss and understand employees challenges at each stage of their competence development process through engaged listening with staff, two-way communication with staff, acting on employees views, giving feedback and instructions.

This result furthers our understanding of the view of Agyapong et al. (2016) and Pansiri & Temtime (2006) that Ghanaian SME hotels tend to use unstructured approaches to achieve superior organisational outcomes due to the lack of multidisciplinary competent employees. The result also contextualises the view that SME managers or leaders have an extraordinary opportunity to support their employees directly due to their closeness with their operating personnel (Pansiri & Temtime, 2006).

This result aligns with all the four SLT leadership styles of directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3) and delegating (S4) according to Blanchard (2000) as

managers hold discussions at the various development levels (D1, D2, D3 and D4) in each of the four quadrants of situational leadership model.

4.3.2.3 Aligning employees interest to job roles.

Within the training period, managers align employees interest to job roles by placing employees under roles which aligns with their interest and passion within the hotel where possible. This makes them more enthusiastic, efficient, and competent in that role. Khadija mentioned,

“I have an employee who is as old as the hotel, but he just doesn’t want to be technical apart from taking supervisory roles. Tell him to start a generator, he just doesn’t want to do it, but ask him to conduct stock-taking, purchasing function or send him on an errand, he is always happy”.

Results from the discussion indicates that Ghanaian SME hotel managers align employee’s interest and competence to job roles to bring out the best in their employees, which gives them intrinsic job satisfaction and reduce employee turnover intentions. This is done through the assessment of employees capabilities through face-to-face discussions, assessing employees situation and observing employees behaviour and assigning roles based on employees ability and interest.

This aligns with the delegating style and suitable for D4 employees under situational leadership defined by Blanchard (2000) as, a leader adopting (low-supportive behaviour in combination with low-directive behaviour) that displays the leader’s confidence in the ability of the employee.

4.3.2.4. The use of task assignment to support employee's competence development.

Responsibilities are then assigned to those employees who are proactive, take initiative, think independently, and will want to be given an opportunity to practice their own ideas to further enhance their competence.

The managers before assigning task need to be confident in the employees ability which serves as an important basis to assign task to the staff. After the training, shadowing and the corrective actions using face-to-face discussions, meetings, and the evaluation of employees interest, two categories of employees with different competence levels emerges likened to D1 and D2 followers in Figure 2.2. The leadership and supervisory skills of the manager is put to test here as the manager must be able to distinguish between these categories to decide which employees can be place under D3 and D4 followers so that tasks can be assigned to them.

Fareeda commented,

“I have one or two people here that I can boast of to delegate to with confidence and when I am not around, I know they can take things on board.

The manager then shares responsibilities whilst still performing a supervisory role to support employees competence development.

Fawaz mentioned,

“I delegate a lot to enable me share responsibilities across board. I have a supervisor, a storekeeper, and a receptionist and these are the key people I use in carrying out my duties daily, because you don't have to be there always for things to happen, but rather put systems in place so that they learn”.

Haven assigned the task, the manager still performs a supervisory role and guiding the employees to stick to the protocols of the delegated task.

Khadija stated,

“I delegate a lot, and if I delegate to you, I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn't keep quiet. I will prove to you to know where you fell short”.

Ghanaian SME managers use task assignment to assign roles and relinquish a certain level of power within the hotel to employees to represent them and take charge in their absence. This is used as an avenue to share responsibilities, offer corrective action, and keep employees focused on the task assigned to them. This is done through assessing or observing employees capabilities, assessing employees task effectiveness, relinquishing authority, assigning responsibility, and observing employees behaviour under situational dilemmas and based on employees abilities and interests.

The use of task-assignment as a leadership practice by Ghanaian SME hotel managers does not only apply to employees who are highly competent with the manager adopting a low supportive and a low directive behaviour according to Blanchard (2000) but rather all employees are qualified to be delegated a certain responsibility based on their competence level whilst the manager adopts appropriate supportive and directive behaviour to support their development in the role.

This result aligns with Blanchard (2000) delegating style under situational leadership which is defined as adopting (low-supportive behaviour in combination with low-directive behaviour) that displays the leader's confidence in the ability of the employee which is suitable for D4 staff.

4.3.2.5 Taking of own initiative.

Allowing employees to take their own initiative is also a leadership practice used to support the competence development of staff. This is done by empowering employees to make decisions within their delegated task that benefits both the customer and the organization when the manager is not immediately available to decide. Managers encourage employees to take their own initiatives when they are confronted with a situation alone to learn. Firdaus stated,

“I tell them the advantages, especially because you have not been fully trained, so when you take the advantage to learn new things by taking your own initiative, you are equipping yourself and a lot of them do that as it makes them feel valued”.

Common responses from employees that vouched for the managers also brought out how being allowed to take their own initiatives makes them feel.

Mubarak stated,

“I do take my own initiative most of the time without even consulting manager and when he comes, he feels ok with it”.

Faris also observed that,

“When it comes to taking of own initiative, she trusts that I will do it the way it is supposed to be done and this makes me feel empowered”.

Comments from Mu-aisin also revealed,

“They always feel ok when we take our own initiative by looking at the situation and this motivates us to put in our best”.

Similarly, Fauzia intimated,

“Whenever there is a situation, I will always reach him on phone, but if I can't get him, then I am allowed to make my own decision because our director

trained us which makes us feel he wants us to be in the job and it makes me feel even if I am no longer here, I can work elsewhere”.

Results from the analysis showcased that SME hotel managers allow their employees some latitude to be able to take their own initiatives within their roles and during service delivery for customer satisfaction. Managers use this as an avenue to motivate employees by appreciating employees efforts and offering corrections to some of the decisions taken by the employees during the process through adapting to changes, praising initiatives, taking corrective actions, and fostering employees confidence.

The results also showcased that the culture of Ghanaian SME hotel managers allowing employees to take their own initiative make employees feel engaged and empowered. This furthers our understanding of the work of Singh (2017) who considers work culture as one of the variables that foster employee engagement, which according to Seibert et al. (2011), mirrors and reflects as a source of power and authority presented and opened to employees in the hotel to reduce negative energy and generate a positive attitude among employees.

This result aligns with the supportive style under situational leadership defined as (high-supportive behaviour in combination with low-directive behaviour) through active listening, facilitating problem-solving with tasks or decisions made by followers and motivating followers which may be valuable for employees (Blanchard, 2000) which is suitable for D3 staff.

4.3.2.6 Social and Financial support

Social, financial and employee bonuses are motivational practices used in supporting the competence development of their staff. Managers humble themselves and provide avenues for employees to be able to openly discuss their urgent

financial and other social problems with them. For example, end of year parties, recognition of performance, festive bonuses and financial needs like funeral, sicknesses, and maternal leave. This is due to the collectivist culture that tend to characterise most Ghanaian societies. This gives employees the peace of mind to concentrate on their role instead of requesting time-off work to solve those problems which tend to affect their output and competence. This makes employees feel they belong to a family and not just in employment.

Luqman summed up,

“We support employees with furniture and fittings and other beddings that have been replaced by the hotel. Example televisions, bedsheets, used towels etc. We use what I call middle of month incentive in the form of travel and transport to motivate them as well as pulling of tips. Tips are pulled and shared by both waiters and cashiers even though cashiers do not serve, but they support, and they are the eyes of the waiters when they are busy”.

Other common views from the managers and employees revealed,

Ruhiya stated,

“Educationally, those who have a little background, and they still want to be educated we push them with our support. For example, I have two ladies I just made to resit their exams because, I realised they have the potential, but they have failed in some papers, so they decided to just give up. But no, I encourage them”.

Fawaz stated,

“We pay their social security and national insurance trust (SSNIT) out of their salaries and as and when anyone of them need financial assistance. They come up

to me and I will meet the owner to see how we can support the person and they know that they can always fall on us”.

Similar, Firdaus stated,

“Sometimes I see an employee being moody or sad and it’s to do with money. So, you dip your hand into your packet to help just to give the employee the peace of mind to work. It makes them feel the organisation has them at heart and they can be supported in times of need”.

Khadija also stated,

“I support the employees to pay their rent through I owe you (IOU’s) and spread the cost. And whenever the need arises, I support them financially for example I want to travel, minor accidents or when they are on maternity leave, this makes them feel a part of the hotel and try to put in their best”.

Faiza stated,

“The Manager organises transport to take us home and bring us to work, so there is no reason for you not to come to work on time”.

This result showcased that social and financial support to employees is used by managers as an avenue to inform employees that management value their contribution and are also willing to support them in times of need. This is shrouded in the collectivist culture that tend to characterise most Ghanaian societies.

This is done through financial assistance for urgent financial needs such as payment of employees school fees, employees relative’s funerals cost and outdooing, distribution of used and replaced hotel resources to staff, attending employees social and family functions to show sympathy and empathy. This creates a sense of belongingness and employees commitment to the hotel as it makes employees feel that the hotel can support them when they are in need.

This result furthers our understanding of Maan et al. (2020) suggestion that an employee's observation of perceive organizational support (POS) tend to be involved in active learning, exhibit supportive behaviour, get engaged in work, and display commitment towards their organisation. It is however worthy to note that this support is because of the power, ability and willingness vested in the hands of the hotel managers or the owner-managers.

This result aligns with all the four situational leadership styles of directing (S1), coaching (S2), supporting (S3) and delegating (S4) according to Blanchard (2000) as managers provide financial and social support to employees at the various development levels (D1, D2, D3 and D4) in each of the quadrants of situational leadership model.

4.3.2.7 Use of the SCRUM system

The use of the scrum system is more targeted at effective hotel service delivery. A holistic assessment is made of the various areas within the hotel. Managers directs and encourages employees to concentrate more on areas where service delivery is poor and less on areas where there are no service delivery lapses. The tree structure approach is used by managers to identify, and place committed and passionate employees in the various areas where service delivery is poor. Even though seldom used, employees competence is enhanced because of the changes made. Luqman intimated,

“We tackle what we are doing well a little bit but put more effort and emphasis on our weak areas to aid in improving their experience and competence. The strategy is, I come into the system I just don't touch anything. Rather, I stand aside and watch how they do their things and stay behind to see what I can add, what I must take away, if it doesn't work, I cut down the tree and allow the tree to regrow again. My

style is equally to draw a structure of a tree and put some people on the leaves, branches, stem, and the roots. The roots are people I can count on, morning, evening, and night. I don't joke with them, and I give allowances and flexibility when dealing with them. But when it come to the leaves, I don't put too much emphasis on you because you easily fall, time can take you away and the wind can take you away. I concentrate on people who are ready, and when you are ready and the system changes, no matter what, you will abide by the system".

The results showcased that the Scrum system is a holistic leadership practice used by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support employees competence development by concentrating to improve services on areas where the hotel receives and records more complaints from customers. This is done through reviewing efficiency and effectiveness of task, assessing deficiencies in tasks, reviewing customer complaints, and devising new ways of delivering improved and effective services in those areas.

The results align with the coaching style under situational leadership defined as managers adopting (high-supportive behaviour in combination with high-directive behaviour) whilst maintaining control over decision-making, detailed directions regarding tasks but equally maintaining and increasing a two-way communication by listening to followers and exchanging ideas (Blanchard, 2000) which is suitable for D2 staff.

In conclusion, these results showcased how Ghanaian SME hotel managers uses their leadership practices and the approaches adopted within these practices to support the competence development of their staff.

The results shows that Ghanaian SME hotel managers mode of application for recruitment to address employees vacancies are through referrals from family

and friends, walk-ins, through existing employees and through advertisement in radio stations. This tend to mostly attract non-professionals or those with academic qualifications or training not related to the hotel industry. Key is the use of orientation and on-the-job training to start with, to support employees competence.

Other practices include aligning employees interest to job roles within the hotel, task assignment, allowing employees to take their own initiative, financial and social support, and the use of the scrum system. The results showcased that these practices are not use in isolation but rather, concurrently and holistically with orientation and on-the-job training being explored initially.

The use of on-the-job training allows managers to engage in a two-way communication by orientating staff, nurturing staff, directing staff, giving instructions on the job with staff. Managers also expect compliance with policies from staff. They also coordinate work, helps in performing duties and analyses the achieved results with staff.

Face-to-face interaction and discussions become an integral part of this practice with the manager's behaviour characterized by an open-door policy, listening and engaging in a two-way communication between themselves and the employees with a friendly attitude. The managers discuss proposed tasks and decisions, competence lapses, training needs, task procedures, etc with the staff. Employees are consulted, and their opinions carefully considered, and feedback provided on assigned task.

Whilst under the training, the managers preform a supervisory role and align employees interest to job roles within the hotel. The behaviour of the manager is characterized by employees observation, assessment of employees capabilities, assessment of employees situation and behaviour. The managers then uses their

power to assign roles based on employees ability, interest and passion whilst maintaining an open-door policy, listening, and engaging in a two-way communication between themselves and the employees with a friendly attitude.

As employees begin to serve guest whilst still being observed by the manager, the managers use their power to assign appropriate responsibilities to employees after they have convinced themselves relative to the competence level of the staff. Task assignment is used after the manager feels confident about the competence of the staff. Within the assigned task, the manager allows the employees to take his or her initiative relative to service delivery with the manager offering corrective actions.

Allowing initiative-taking affords the manager to adjust his or her behaviour to adapt to changes proposed by the staff, praise employees initiatives that have been taken properly, take corrective actions on initiative lapses and fostering employees confidence through praise, encouragements, and rewards.

The behaviour of the manager during the assignment of task is characterized by assessing employees capabilities, assessing employees task effectiveness, relinquishing authority, assigning responsibility, allowing initiative-taking, employees team focus whilst still maintaining an open-door policy, listening, and engaging in a two-way communication between themselves and the employees with a friendly attitude.

The results also revealed that employees when they begin to get competent, starts to look for better employment conditions elsewhere. Hence, managers use social, financial and recognition to motivate employees to get them to commit to the hotel. This showcases the collectivist culture that tend to characterise most Ghanaian societies. Managers use their power when required to support employees

urgent financial and social needs, attend employees social events to build relationship and trust, supporting employees academic needs, showing sympathy, empathy, and a sense of belongingness.

The scrum system is used at the latter stages to offer corrective actions to hotel service delivery process by encouraging employees to concentrate more on areas of the hotel where service delivery is poor and less on areas where they are doing better. Managers use their power to assign a significant level of freedom to staff, to perform their duties, but expect employees to individually or collectively follow procedures to achieve the objectives of their activities by providing the means to achieve them, as well as the implementation process.

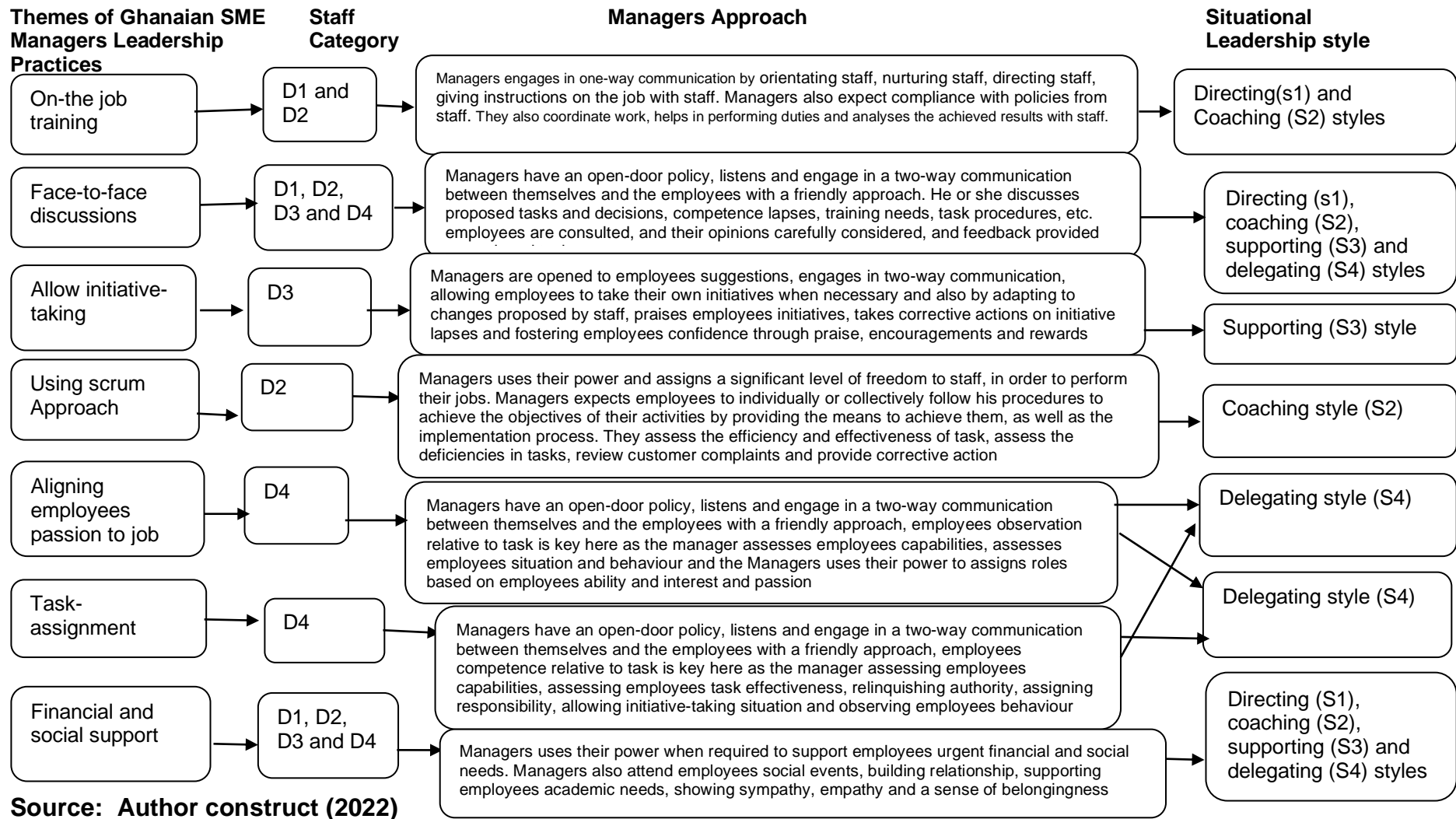
They assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the task, the deficiencies in the tasks, review customer complaints and provide corrective action, employees are also encouraged to concentrate more on aspects of their task they are more deficient in performing.

Finally, the results also align with the practices and the approaches within these practices to the four situational leadership styles. The results showed that on-the-job training aligns with the directing style (S1), the use of SCRUM align with the coaching style (S2), allowing initiative-taking aligns with supporting style (S3), task-assignment and aligning employees passion to job roles aligns with the delegating styles (S4). The use of face-to-face discussion and financial and social support both align with all the four SLT leadership styles.

Figure 4.3 which has twenty-eight components, with seven components in each column showcases how the application of Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership practices identified in the previous section to support employees competence development aligns with SLT leadership styles.

The first column highlights the leadership practices, the second column highlights the employees categories those leadership practices are applied on. The third column highlights the approaches used in each practice and the last column highlights the SLT leadership styles those approaches align with.

Figure 4.3. How the application of the leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support employee's competence development align with situational leadership styles?



Source: Author construct (2022)

The above Gioia diagram in Figure 4.3 highlights how Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership practices are used to support the competence development of their employees who are at different levels using different practices and how those practices align with the four SLT leadership styles.

On-the-job training aligns with directing style (S1) and coaching style (S2), the SCRUM system also aligns with the coaching style (S2) and employees initiative-taking aligns with the supporting style. Aligning employees interest to job roles and task assignment both align with the delegating style (S4) and face-to-face discussions and financial and social support aligns with all the four styles (S1, S2, S3, S4). This addresses research objective two and provides an answer to research question two.

4.3.2.8 Novelty and extension of SLT literature with the findings of research question two

The literature review found that the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in organisational management have been mostly concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs. There is therefore lack of a clear picture on the impact of the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in the SME context to ensure the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour. The results of this research, which is underpinned by SLT has provided evidence of the application of SLT in the SME context, and this has begun to address the concentration of leadership research in large organisations.

This research also identified that SLT has failed to highlight the practices a leader can adopt under each of the four SLT leadership styles (directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating).

The practices a leader can adopt under each of the four SLT leadership styles (directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating) has also been highlighted by this research among SME hotels, which SLT has failed to explore.

The results has also provided new insight to the high need for the use of on-the-job training as Ghanaian SME rarely get applications from qualifies staff. Managers or leaders therefore rely on referrals from family and friends, walk-in enquiries, and unsolicited applications to fill vacancies.

Shortages of staff and during busy periods therefore pushes Ghanaian SME hotel managers to employ anyone who needs a job with or without the requisite qualifications or competencies but can be trained. This leads to employees treating their employment as a job and not a career. Employees therefore leave as-and-when want and managers also hire and let staff go as-and-when they want based on this premise.

4.3.3 Contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development.

The final research question sought to explore the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

This section explores the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model, from the perspective of managers, senior and junior staff.

4.3.3.1 SME Hotel managers' view on contextual factors to consider alongside employee readiness level to support employee's competence development.

Contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside employee readiness levels when deciding on a SLT leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotel staff based on managers views were analysed. Common themes and responses are discussed below:

4.3.3.1.1 Working without passion.

Staff working without passion was highlighted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to develop staff competence. Five managers (Firdaus, Khadija, Fida-ah, Ruhiya and Luqman) out of the ten managers identified staff working without passion as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support staff competence development. Common responses revealed, for example.

In Firdaus' view,

“Most employees just work to make a living without having a passion for the job, so they see no need to develop themselves. Some of them are working without passion but just wants something to do to make a living”.

Khadija had a similar view, stating,

“The lack of passion on the part of employees for either the job or certain roles within the hotel is a major factor impacting employees competence development. This makes them limited in other roles. For example, I have an employee who is as old as the hotel, but he just doesn't want to be technical apart from taking supervisory roles. Tell him to start a generator, he just doesn't want to do it, but ask him to conduct stock-taking, purchasing function or send him on an errand, he is always happy”.

Fida-ah stated the lack of passion on the part of employees for the job and using the job as a steppingstone as the factors impacting employees competence development. He stated:

“Some people work as if they have no interest in the job, and for those people no matter how you try you can’t bring them on board. Some say, I will just come and do my work and when its time I will go home and get my money at the end of the month”.

Ruhiya also stated,

“Most of them just need money for school and so, they work for six months and then leave”.

According to Luqman, the lack of passion has resulted in employee’s inability to understand their job roles and titles which also affect employees competence development and hence they do not know which direction to tailor their efforts. He stated:

“-----I am looking for someone who has the mind to truly work. So, in the kitchen, if there is no patience, the person doesn’t even want to get to pantry section to work. So, when the need comes for you to get there to support, you are not ready to do so.

So, I start my training by letting you know who you are in the establishment. For waiters, they need to understand we don’t put long hair with beads. They call it style, but HACCP doesn’t allow it. For example, last week in our training with the waitresses, I asked the question, who is a waitress, and they all said someone who serves. Meaning, if someone holds a plate at a mechanic shop, then that person is a waiter.

4.3.3.1.2 Family ties

Family ties was identified as a contextual factor that needs to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotel staff to develop their competence in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model. The extended family system, in most Ghanaian societies tend to put a traditionally overbearing form of guilt and risk associated with family feud, when family members are unable to fulfil kinship demands such as, daily household chores, and participation in the family members' rites of passage. Respecting and upholding family values are therefore mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies. The attention of employees within Ghanaian SME hotels therefore tend to be divided between the requirements of their job, the daily house chores, and family pressures within their homes. This is due to parental responsibilities and employees parent's lack of understanding of the official contractual relationship between their ward (employee) and the hotel, hence they place certain family burdens on their wards (employee) which conflicts with the requirements of their job roles.

Firdaus stated,

“Their attention is divided between the requirement of the job and what is required of them from their homes. Somebody hasn't come to work for 3 or 4 days without permission and when you ask, they say, ooh my parents sent me on an errand. The parent doesn't understand that the child has an employment contract with the institution and so you can't really blame them for placing such burdens”.

Fluctuations in the provision of certain social amenities (shortages of water supply, electricity etc) also contribute to the family problems of staff.

Na-eem stated,

“Because of the persistent water shortage situation in some Ghanaian societies, when they wake up, they must go and look for water for their families and to also take their bath before they can come to work. They try to fulfil their house chores before they come to work and end up being late for work”.

Latif also commented relative to employees challenges from home or family issues.

He stated,

“If you see somebody who is down, just ask what happened and if there is something you can do about it, then you do it”.

In Ruhiya’s view, lack of transport (personal or staff) to convey employees to and from work also affect employees competence development. She stated,

“At times, in trying to organise training, it’s difficult because employees want to rush back and pick their kids, they dropped off in the morning with either on foot or with their bicycles”.

This result showcases that, due to the extended family system in most Ghanaian societies, which tend to put the upholding of family values as mandatory responsibilities, Ghanaian SME hotel employees give more priority to the welfare of their families than their job roles. This tends to affect their commitment and competence development within their job roles. Employees however tend to work long hours with efficiency when they feel managers allows them a little latitude between job roles and family-related issues. This result furthers our understanding of Schwartz (2015) view that, the priority employees give to their families which gives them influence, recognition, enjoyment of the leisure of life, peace of the world and independence. The results contextualises the value placed on family in a collectivist

society such as Ghana and its impact on employee competence development. This furthers our understanding of the work of Akoensi (2018), who explored work-family conflict among prison officers in Ghana and found the upholding of family values as a mandatory responsibility in most Ghanaian societies.

4.3.3.1.3 Peer pressure

Peer pressure was also identified as a contextual factor that needs to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model. It facilitates poaching by other hotels leading to employee turnover. Common responses from the managers are stated below.

Fawaz stated,

“Sometimes you employ a person and by the time you organise the training, the person has left the job. Somebody might say peer pressure is not so tangible, but to me people become friends through work. So, one colleague says let's try this other hotel, maybe we might get better work conditions. They then start to misbehave and through that the employees being lured goes off and the one who lured him or her stays. Again, we are a 2-star hotel, and we cannot pay like a 3-star or 4-star hotel and some 2-star hotels even pay higher than us. So, employees look at the remuneration package and feel like they are being cheated an because of that, it affects their output”.

Ruhiya also stated,

“Unfortunately, you train some of them and within a few months, they have run away”.

This result showcase that Ghanaian SME hotel co-workers influence on each other tend to affect their competence and limit job satisfaction. Consequently, employees tend to seek better employment conditions of service in other organisations, which facilitates employee turnover. This limits employees ability to undergo proposed and the needed competence development training within their roles.

This result furthers our understanding of Bufquin et al. (2017) who examined the influence of co-workers' perceived warmth and competence on employees' job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and turnover intentions in a casual dining restaurant in the United States of America and confirmed a statistically significant relationship between hospitality co-workers' perceived warmth and job satisfaction.

4.3.3.1.4 Cultural and religious factors

Cultural and religious factors was another contextual factor identified by managers, that need to be considered, alongside staff readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotel staff to support their competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

As most Ghanaian societies have a collectivist, high power distance and high uncertainty avoidance culture, these cultural orientations tend to reflect in individual's social, religious, and working lives.

Consequently, Ghanaian SME hotel managers tend to lead employees who hold the view that their managers know everything and have all the answers to problems in the hotel due to these cultural orientations. As a result of the high-power distance and high uncertainty avoidance orientation, employees tend to revere managers, hence they (employees) do not try to resolve service issues themselves during service delivery. Instead, they mostly run to bring in the manager to resolve service

issues or consult the manager for solutions. This tend to affect their competence in problem-solving and initiative-taking.

Fareeda stated,

“Cultural and religious set-up plays a role. So, most of the of the time, they tend to run to the manager to go and confront the issue. But we have individuals from the way they were brought up who can manage the situation, so they are not timid but expressive. For example, our gardener walked up to me, and he felt each time he has an excuse to go for a funeral, he should be allowed to go”.

Luqman also pinned the cultural, religious, and social lifestyle of the people in most Ghanaian societies as a contextual factor impacting employees competence development. As most employees tend to be recruited from the inhabitants within the hotel’s location, their cultural, religious, and social lifestyle tend to affect how they behave. For example, a hotel situated in a predominantly Muslim community tend to have Muslim employees working in the hotel distancing themselves from serving alcoholic drinks or learning how to prepare pork dishes.

Again, a hotel situated in an area where traditional norms are upheld, for example the mandatory celebration of funerals on Saturdays in some Ghanaian communities and cultures, tend to have employees from those areas to avoid shifts on Saturdays, even if important competence development activities are to take place on that day.

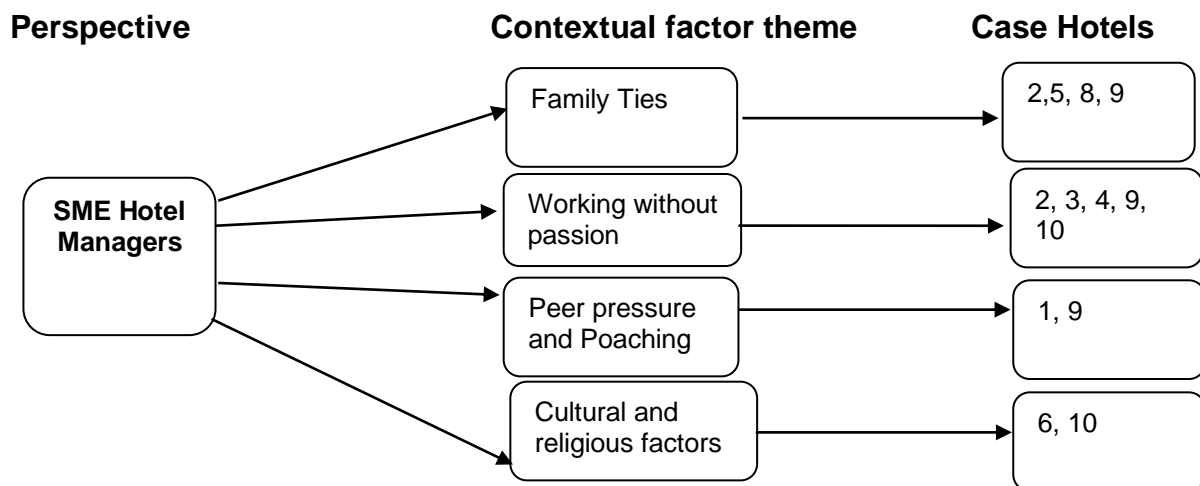
Luqman stated,

“Here the culture and lifestyle affect everything. For example, hazard analysis and critical control points (HACCP) doesn’t allow long hair and they don’t want to understand that”.

This result showcases that the diverse cultural orientation of Ghanaian SME hotel employees affect their ability to incorporate the rules and practices within the hotel

sector to develop their competence for the benefit of customers. This tend to affect their competence development. This result highlights the importance of culture and religion among Ghanaian SME hotel staff and builds on Grobelna (2015) who stressed the need for culture-oriented managerial practices to be undertaken to create competitive advantages based on diverse employees whose performance significantly impacts the guests' hospitality experience to manage a successful global hospitality business.

Figure 4.4. Contextual factors to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee's competence development. Perspective from Ghanaian SME Hotel Manager's



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

Figure 4.4 highlights the results of the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style among Ghanaian SME hotel staff to support their competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership competence development model from the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotel managers.

Managers have identified working without passion, family ties, cultural and religious factors, poaching by the big hotels as the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness when deciding on a SLT leadership style

among Ghanaian SME hotel staff to support their competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership competence development model. The results showcased that family ties and employees working without passion as the most factors that needs to be considered alongside employees readiness levels from the perspective of the hotel the managers.

4.3.3.2 Senior employees view on contextual factors to consider alongside employee readiness level to support employee's competence development.

Senior employees of the case hotels classed under D3 and D4 followers based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions. Themes and common responses relative to contextual factors to consider alongside their readiness levels to support their competence development are discussed below:

4.3.3.2.1 Family ties

Family ties have been identified by three senior staff out of the ten senior staffs as a contextual factor that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development.

Abdallah stated,

“Sometimes it is about family issues and sometimes it is about money”.

Similarly, Mariam stated,

“By the time you finish your family or residential house chores and come to work, you will be late for work, and your colleagues would have done something which you were not there to learn due to these family or residential house chores”.

In Rukaya's view, financial and family pressures also affect her ability to develop her competence.

Ghanaian SME hotel senior employees has also identified family ties as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside their readiness level to support their competence development. This result aligns with the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotel managers and showcases that Ghanaian SME hotel employees give more priority to the welfare of their families than their jobs roles, which tend to affect their commitment and competence development within their job roles.

Employees however tend to work long hours with efficiency when they feel managers allows them a little latitude between job roles and family-related issues. This result furthers our understanding of the view of Schwartz (2015) that, the priority employees give to their families gives them recognition, enjoyment of the leisure life, peace of the world and independence.

4.3.3.2.2 Management system

Difficulty in implementing training recommendations due to limited resources and customer preferences was also identified as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness to support their competence development.

Mubarak stated,

“Sometimes it is with the resource and most of the things you learn does not apply to every customer who comes in here. With a little informal interaction, you have with a customer, you will realise that if you are going to implement this training recommendation, this person might not accept it. Hence customers who are difficult or principled might not accept the implementation of the knowledge you have acquired. So, it is difficult to develop your competence out of what you have learnt if you can’t implement it”.

Fauzia also mentioned,

“Everything should be networked but in here at the front desk, I can’t check any customer bookings or email or request, except on the marketing manager’s personal computer (PC) in his office”.

Rukaya also stated,

“I have worked in a 4-star hotel previously, and I am working in a 2-star hotel now. Comparatively, you feel like things should be done this way based on your experience, but nobody is giving you a chance to explain it”.

This result showcases that the limited human resource management systems instituted by Ghanaian SME hotels do not allow or motivate their employees to be proactive which limits their innovativeness and competence development.

Employees tend to find it difficult to incorporate previous experience into their current job roles for proper service delivery. This result extends our understanding of the findings of Lee et al. (2019) who found evidence of an association between human resource management (HRM) systems and employee proactivity and as a key driver (HRM system) of employee proactivity.

4.3.3.2.3. Timing of employees training

The time employees training is scheduled for, is another contextual factor identified, that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness to support their competence development. Training schedules tend to conflict with employees time of work and off-days. Most employees also live far from work and so they do not get the chance to participate in most trainings scheduled in the early hours of the morning.

Faris noted,

“We run a shift system here, so sometimes the time of the training might not fall on your shift”.

Na-imah made similar comments relative to her lack of transport:

“I live far from the hotel, and I have to take two different vehicles to work and, on some occasions, it take about 30 minutes or more to get means to get to work on time”.

This result showcases that employees shift pattern and their lack of transport to get to work as they live far from work affect their ability to attend scheduled training programmes on time. Consequently, this affects the training activities put in place to support the development of their competence with scheduled training programmes at the workplace. This result extend our understanding of the findings of EL Hajjar & Alkhanaizi (2018) who found that training effectiveness is affected by training schedules and hence training schedules should be designed to address any relevant challenges and contingencies, which may occur during training.

4.3.3.2.4. Working with different type of staff

Hotel-3-senior identified working with different type of employees with different development levels as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. She stated:

“Employees are not really on the same mind set so, sometimes it becomes really difficult because you try to impart certain knowledge to them, and they are not getting it, and so it makes it so difficult to reach certain goals”.

This result indicates that scheduling group training for employees with varied competence levels affects Ghanaian SME senior employees ability to further develop their competence. As a result, training programmes do not tend to meet the expectations and needs of employees which affects their competence development. This result extends our understanding of the findings of EL Hajjar & Alkhanaizi (2018) who found that training effectiveness is affected by training schedules and

hence training schedule should be designed to address any relevant challenges and contingencies, which may occur during training.

4.3.3.2.5. Religious and cultural factors

Religious and cultural beliefs is another contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level, as it limits employees ability to develop their competence identified by Fauzia. She stated,

“I don’t feel learning alcoholic beverage names or even serve it because I am a Muslim”.

This result suggest that Ghanaian SME hotel employees are reluctant to learn practices within the hotel which conflicts with their religious and cultural beliefs. For example, a Muslim employee who is tasked to serve alcohol or prepare a dish with pork or bacon. This tend to limit their competence in those areas, resulting in customer dissatisfaction. This result furthers our understanding of the results of Manoharan (2021) who found that culturally and linguistically diverse workforce spirituality and faith affect their career optimism in the hotel industry.

4.3.3.2.6. Qualification-job-role mismatch

Qualification-job-role-mismatch was also identified as a contextual factor identified, that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. Thus, what is studied at school is not in line with the job role assigned to them.

Na-imah mentioned,

“My qualification is not in line with my job role. I studied accounting and now I am working as a front desk supervisor, but with training, I can pick up”.

This result suggests that Ghanaian SME hotels employ and places employees on job roles whose qualifications and competences do not match those job roles. Training is

then used to support the competence development of these employees. This tend to affect their commitment and satisfaction within the role. This result extends our understanding of the conclusion of Škrinjarić (2022), who concluded that misalignment of qualification and competence requirement to job roles has adverse effects not only on the employee, but also on the organisation and on society.

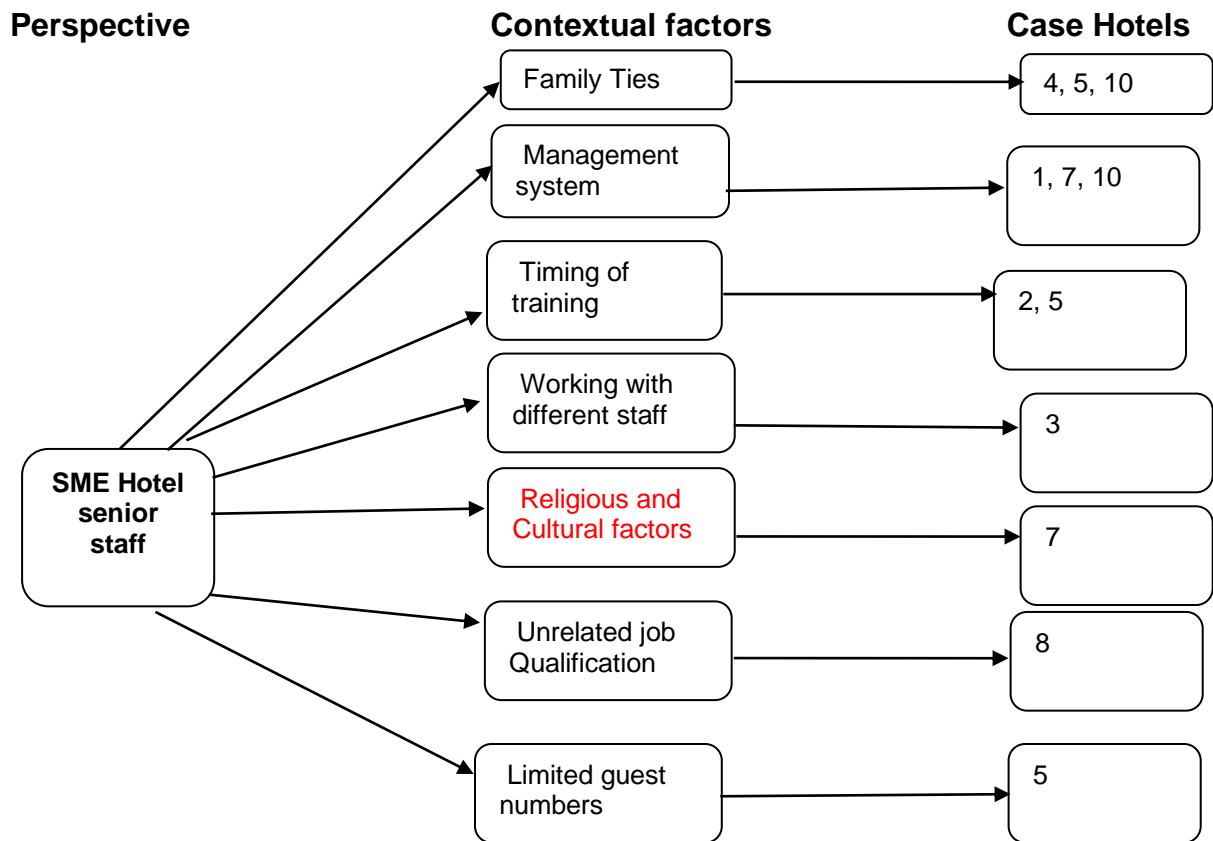
4.3.3.2.7. Limited guest numbers

Limited guest numbers has also been identified by Mariam as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. She stated,

“Right now, we have only 3 guest and no conference and it is through the guest and conferences that we learn. We can have only one conference in say 5 months”.

Ghanaian SME hotel staff uses the frequent visits of guest, their demands, and the provision of conference services as avenues to learning and building their competence. The fulfilment of guests demands, and conferencing requirement brings out most of the hotel services to bear. This improves employees competence as they get involved in the activities within these services. Limited guest numbers therefore do not enable employees to take advantage of these opportunities to learn.

Figure 4.5. Contextual factors to consider alongside employee readiness level to support Ghanaian SME hotel senior employees competence development.



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

Figure 4.5 highlights the results of the contextual factors that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness levels to support senior employees competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels.

Senior employees identified family ties, management system, means of transport, limited guest numbers, religious and cultural factors, qualification-job-role mismatch and working with different type of employees as the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside their readiness levels to support their competence development. Results also revealed family ties, management system and means of transport as the most commonly cited.

4.3.3.3 Junior employees views on contextual factors to consider alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development.

Themes and common responses from Juniors employees, who are classed under this research as D1 and D2 based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions relating to contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development are discussed below:

4.3.3.3.1. Cultural and Family ties

The extended family system, in most Ghanaian societies makes it collectivist and respecting and upholding family values are therefore mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies, which is characterised with high power distance orientation.

Family household chores has been identified by Faiza. She noted that:

“Because of our culture, sometimes you will do your family and residential chores at night an get tired and you will oversleep or have something doing at home”.

Ghanaian SME hotel junior employees has also identified family ties, which is embedded in their cultural values as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness to support their competence development. This aligns with the perspective of both Ghanaian SME hotel managers and senior employees showcasing that Ghanaian SME hotel employees give more priority to the welfare of their families than their jobs roles, which tend to affect their commitment and competence development within their job roles.

The result also showcases that Ghanaian SME hotel employees competence development is affected by their inability to create a balance between family and work. The requirement of family responsibilities sometimes surpasses their interest

to commit to their jobs and develop their competence. The requirement of their job roles to a larger extent do not allow for flexible work-life balance.

Ghanaian SME hotel employees however tend to work long hours with efficiency when they feel managers allows them a little latitude between job roles and family-related issues. This result furthers our understanding of the conclusion and suggestions of Mohanty & Mohanty (2014) that, to obtain optimal return on employees, it is important to understand the interplay between work and family as flexible working arrangements are becoming important aspect of quality of working life for many employees.

4.3.3.3.2. Lack of motivation

Lack of motivation has been identified by Hikima and Rashad as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development.

Rashad mentioned customer harassment and inadequate financial reward as the contextual factors impacting his inability to develop his competence.

Hikima also stated,

“Honestly there is no motivation, and they don’t motivate us in anyway. Sometimes you realise you have done a lot and you need to be motivated but no, and this makes me feel bad. It seems like I am just building my competence for future roles in different hotels”.

Munira mentioned the inability to visit the other departments to learn what they do as she is always at the reception area. She mentioned,

“Being at the reception area alone limits me from learning what happens in the other department. In case we are busy, I can go and help them especially during conferences. This doesn’t motivate me”.

4.3.3.3.3. Long hours

Long hours have been identified by Malak and Seidu as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness to support their competence development.

Malak stated,

“Working overtime for example, during a conference, you work more than you should because you come in the morning, and you close around 10pm or 11pm and the next day you have to come again as early as 5am”.

Seidu also mentioned long hours as a contextual factor. He stated:

“Because we work long hours, you might not get the time to do a course outside to build your own competence”.

This result showcases that Ghanaian SME hotel employees spend longer hours at work attending to customer demands and service delivery. As a result, emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, and mood swings sets in which affects their ability to further develop their competence. This broadens our understanding of the work of Mohanty & Mohanty (2014) and Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs (2016) who content that due to most hotel employees constant and frequent interaction with customers, they get emotionally exhausted, stressed with mood swings due to the long hours of work.

4.3.3.3.4. Timing and relevance of training

The timing and relevance of training was also identified by employees as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development.

Hikima expressed,

“The training we are going for tomorrow is about digital marketing and here we don’t do digital”.

Faiza had a similar view,

“We run a shift system here, and you will not be on duty and the training will be organised. As we live far from the hotel, you may make it, but you are most likely to be late for the training”.

Rashad also mentioned timing of training as a contextual factor. He stated:

“My major problem is the transportation as I stay far from the hotel”.

This result which aligns with the views of Ghanaian SME hotel senior employees showcases that employees shift pattern and their lack of transport to get to work on time, as they live far from work affect their ability to attend scheduled training programmes on time. Consequently, this affects the development of their competence with scheduled training programmes at the workplace.

The relevance of training programmes which are sometimes misaligned to services provided by Ghanaian SME hotels also demotivates Ghanaian SME hotel employees to develop their competence in those areas. This result contextualises our understanding of the findings of EL Hajjar & Alkhanaizi (2018) who found that training effectiveness can be affected by training schedules and hence training schedules should be designed to address any relevant challenges and contingencies, which may occur during training.

4.3.3.3.5 Limited resources to implement training recommendations.

Limited resources to implement training recommendations is another contextual factor identified, that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee’s competence development.

Hikima stated,

“The training we are going for tomorrow is about digital marketing and here we don’t do digital”.

Nabila also stated,

“I actually don’t know much about the computer and besides, I don’t like typing so, it limits my ability to learn most of the things we use the computer to do”.

This result showcases that the limited resources of Ghanaian SME hotel limits the ability of Ghanaian SME hotel managers, leaders, or owners to implement training recommendations which could have aided the development of staff competence.

This result builds on the views of Parida et al. (2012) and Nwosu & Ward (2016) who reiterate that SMEs are constraint by liability of smallness and limited financial resource capabilities and opportunities at the disposal.

4.3.3.3.6. Inability to take own initiative.

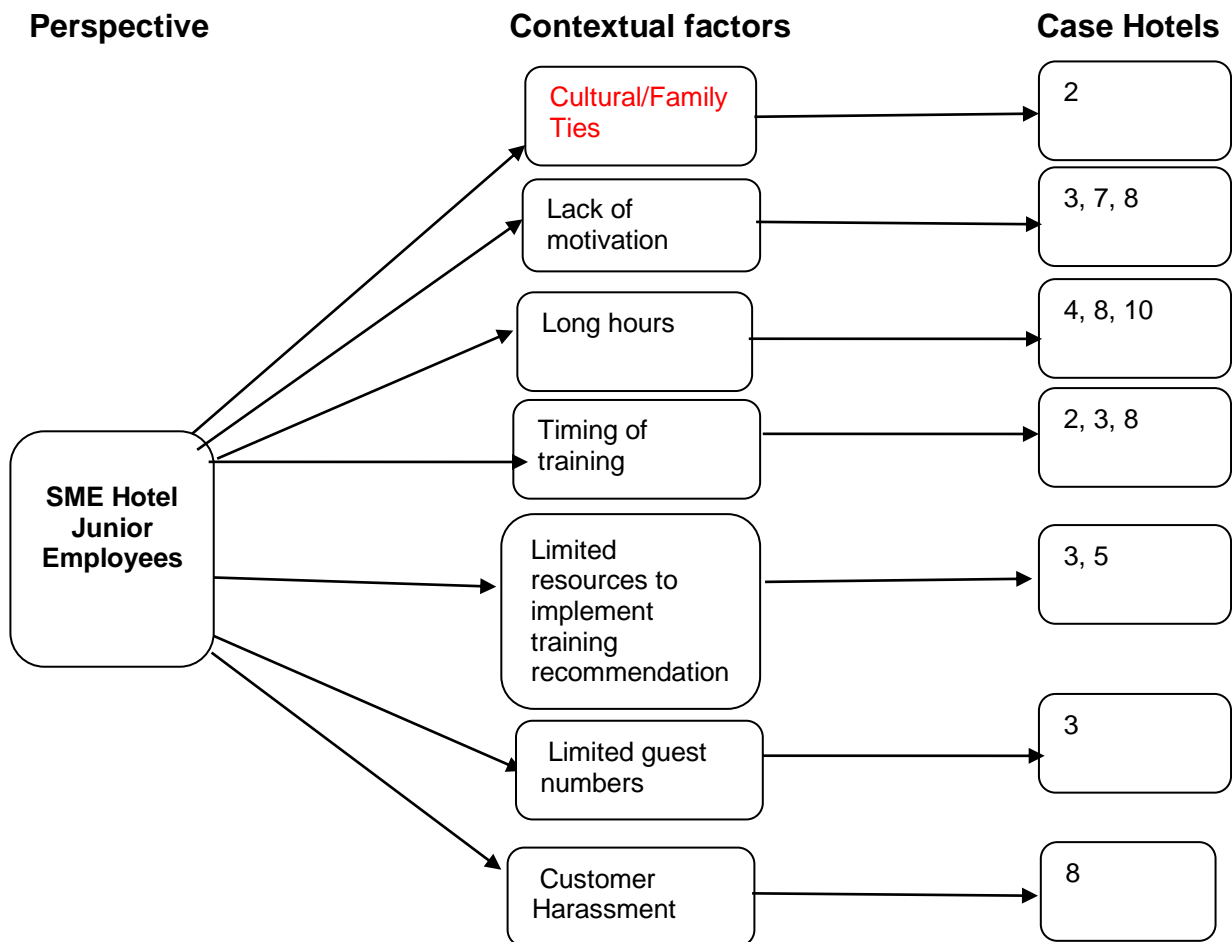
The inability of some employees to take their own initiative within Ghanaian SME has been identified as a contextual factor that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. Hikima lamented:

“We are not allowed to take our own initiative and even if you bring it to them, let’s do this or let’s do that, it doesn’t go anywhere. Whatever they say is final. It looks like they know more than you do”.

This result showcases that the limited human resource management systems instituted by Ghanaian SME hotels do not motivate their employees to take their own initiatives during service delivery to customers. This tend to limit their proactive development, competence, and confidence. This result furthers our understanding of

the findings of Lee et al. (2019) who found evidence of an association between human resource management (HRM) systems and employee proactivity and as a key driver (HRM system) of employee proactivity.

Figure 4.6. Contextual factors to consider alongside employee readiness level to support Ghanaian SME hotel Junior employees competence development.



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

Figure 4.6 highlights the results of the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee’s competence within Ghanaian SME hotels.

Junior employees identified cultural and family ties, lack of motivation, long hours, timing of training, customer harassment, inability to take own initiative and limited resources to implement training recommendations as the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside their readiness to support their competence

development. Timing of training, lack of motivation, and long hours were the most cited but the ratio of the most cited and the less cited including cultural and family ties was 2:1.

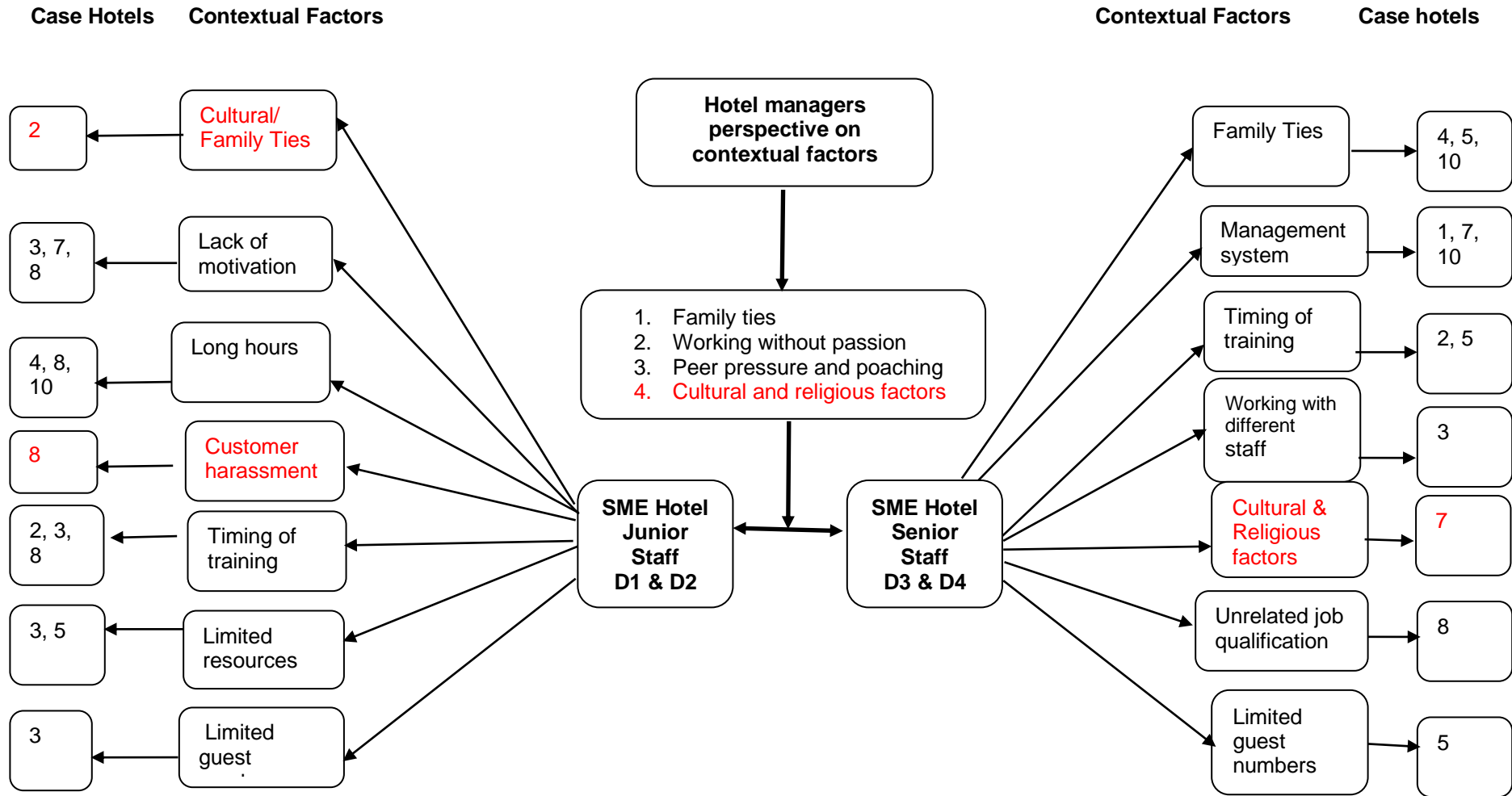
Figure 4.7 shows the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel employees in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model from the perspective of managers, senior and junior staff.

The figure is composed of thirty-two components. The four components at the centre of the diagram highlights the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development of all SME hotel employees (D1, D2, D3 and D4) from the perspective of hotel managers.

The fourteen components at the right-hand side of the figure adjacent the centre highlights the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of senior employees (D3 and D4) from the perspective of SME hotel senior employees.

The other fourteen components on the left-hand side of the diagram adjacent the centre highlights the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness to support the competence development of junior employees (D1 and D2) from the perspective of SME hotel junior staff.

Figure 4.7. Contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of Ghanaian SME Hotel employees.



Source: Author construct from interview data (2022)

The Gioia diagram in Figure 4.7 shows the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel employees in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

From the perspective of hotel managers, results indicate that cultural and family ties and working without passion on the part of employees were the most commonly cited contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee competence.

Senior employees also identified family ties, management system and means of transport as the most cited contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. Even though cultural and family ties were not part of the most commonly cited from the perspective of the Junior staff, it was still one of the factors identified by junior employees that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support their competence development. This addresses research objective three and provides an answer to research question three.

The result relative to cultural and religious factors build our understanding of the results of Manoharan (2021) who found that culturally and linguistically diverse workforce spirituality and faith affect their career optimism in the hotel industry. Long and unbalanced working hours as a contextual factor also furthers our understanding of the results of (Shani et al., 2014; Lun & Huang, 2007; Pizam & Shani, 2009) who all highlighted that long and unbalanced work hours affect hotel employees greatly. Shani et al. (2014) examined the contextual factors (situational and organisational) that affect the emotional labour strategy undertaken by hospitality employees in Israel and illustrated the physical hardship that hospitality employees are put

through. The result of this study also illustrated similar trend, but geographical factors may tend to induce the severity of this hardship more in Israel as opposed to Ghana or vice versa.

4.3.3.4 Novelty and extension of SLT literature with the findings of research question three

The literature has revealed that, SLT has placed more significance on employee development or readiness levels when deciding on a leadership style to support employee competence development. This emphasis has side-lined the study of contextual (Munchiri, 2011) and other organisational factors such as culture (Hartnell et al., 2016) in the leadership process, which can support the relationship between leaders and followers, and hence may force the leader to adopt a specific leadership style. This has led to the adjustment of leadership and management practices, especially in Africa, to accommodate contextual factors (Gray, Shrestha, & Nkansah, 2008).

This finding has brought out contextual factors such as culture, religion, and family, which has been given limited attention in the leadership process and SME context.

This has begun to provide a guide on how to incorporate contextual factors such as culture, family, and religion into the leadership process.

The findings have also provided evidence that, contextual factors should be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model.

This research has found culture as an additional variable in SLT, which is embedded in the use of social and financial support by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in each

of the four quadrants of situational leadership styles to support the competence development of their employees.

Contributing and extending the literature on SLT, this research has found that, the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of junior employees who are classed under this research as D1 and D2 followers and supported using directing style (S1) and coaching style (S2) under SLT include cultural and family ties, lack of motivation, long hours, timing of training, customer harassment, inability to take own initiative and limited resources to implement training recommendations.

Contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of senior employees who are classed under this research as D3 and D4 followers and supported using supporting style (S3) and delegating style (S4) under SLT also include family ties, management system, means of transport, limited guest numbers, cultural and religious factors, qualification-job-role mismatch and working with different type of employees as the contextual factors impacting their competence development.

4.3.4 Alhassan's Model of Situational Leadership Support and Impact on Employee Competence Development.

The results of this research highlighted the use of on-the-job training, face-to-face discussions, allowing employees to take their own initiatives, aligning employees passion to job roles, use of scrum (section 4.3.1.7), task assignment and the use of financial and social support as the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employees competence development, as highlighted in figure 4.2. Analysis of the approaches used within these practices to support employees (D1, D2, D3 and D4) competence development identified in the previous

sections and how they are aligned to the four situational leadership styles (directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating) as highlighted in Figure 4.3.

The discussions in the previous chapters and sections have also highlighted the extension of Winston & Patterson (2006) definition of leadership in the context of this research in Section 2.4.1, the development levels of employees and the type of power that is appropriate to support those development levels in Figure 2.3. The application of cultural dimension and orientation at the various development levels in Figure 2.4, the level of training and development (T&D) required in Figure 2.5, psychological empowerment (PE) in Figure 2.6, perceived organisational support (POS) in Figure 2.7, and employee engagement (EE) in Figure 2.8.

Section 4.3.1.7 also highlighted the use of the Scrum system whilst Figure 4.7 highlighted the contextual factors that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness levels to support the competence development of the various categories of employees.

A final model (Figure 4.8) relative to the discussion of situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development within Ghanaian SME hotels have been developed. This Figure (4.8) combines Section 2.4.1, Figure 2.3, Figure 2.4, Figure 2.5, Figure 2.6, Figure 2.7, Figure 2.8, Figure 4.2, Figure 4.3, Section 4.3.1.7, Figure 4.4, and Figure 4.7.

However, this model does not include the time dimension within which employees can be supported to develop their competence due to differences in employees personalities. The model also do not highlight the transitioning of employees between the different situational leadership quadrants as employees competence improves.

The model which is sectioned into three has a right section, a central area and a left section.

Firstly, the left section adjacent to the central area of the model highlights what a leader or manager needs to consider when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development. This includes the development levels of the various categories of employees (Figure 2.3), the contextual factors at the various development levels (Figure 4.7) and the cultural dimensions and orientation of employees at the various development levels (Figure 2.4).

At the centre of the model highlights the leadership support given by leaders or managers to employees at the various development levels to support their competence development by adopting several leadership practices (Figure 4.2) and leadership approaches which have been found to align with SLT leadership styles (Figure 4.3). These are combined with the appropriate use of the leader's or manager's power (Figure 2.3) to support employees using training and development (Figure 2.5), use of the SCRUM system (section 4.3.1.7), Psychological empowerment (Figure 2.6), Perceived organisational support (Figure 2.7) to engage employees through employee engagement (Figure 2.8).

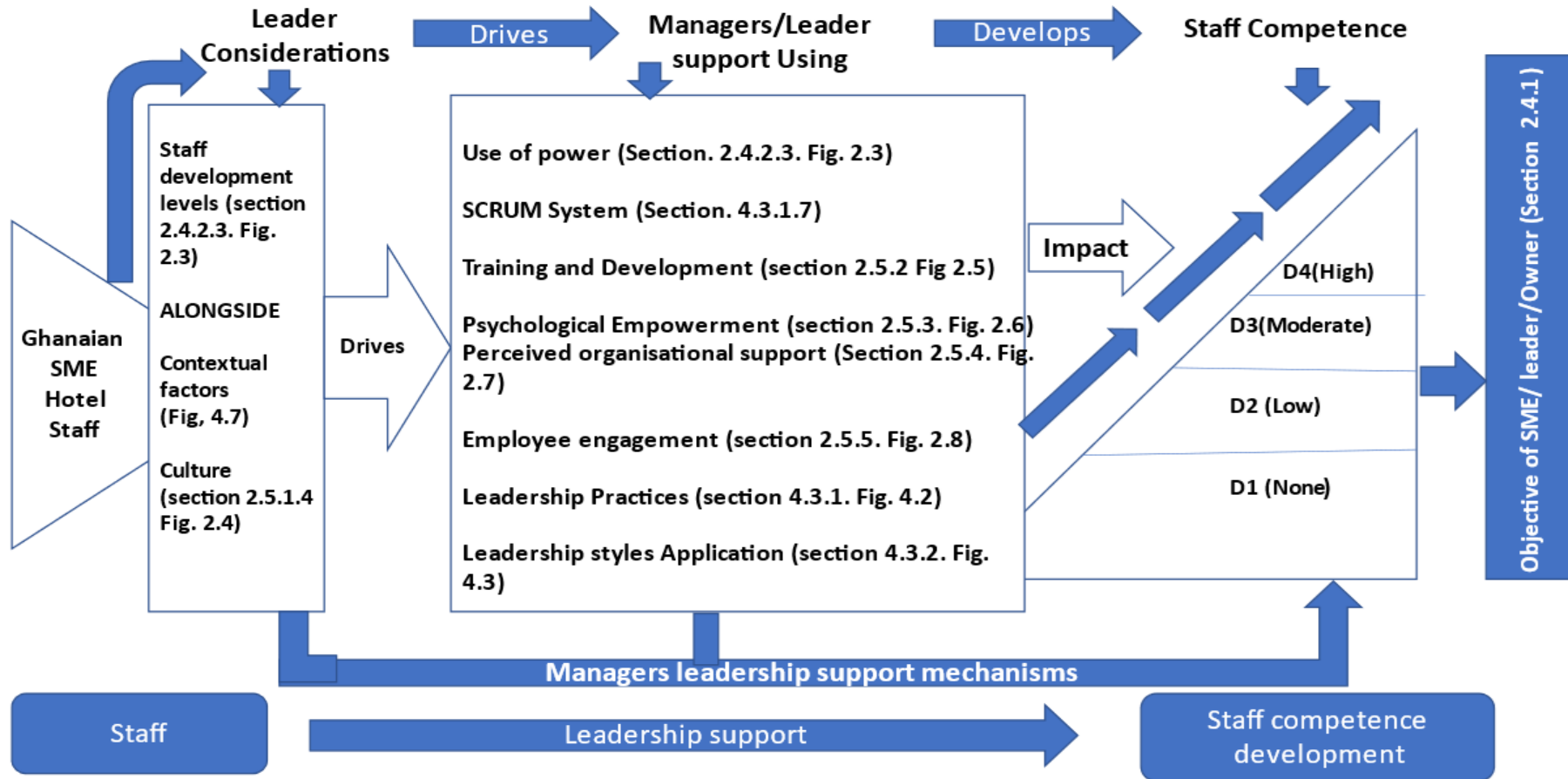
The right section adjacent to the central area of the model highlight a competence development curve showcasing the impact of the leadership practices, approaches and other support adopted and applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers has on the competence development of the various categories of employees in Figure 2.3.

The result which is depicted in section 2.4.1 showcases that, the development of employee competence using the leadership practices, approaches, and other support leads to the realisation of the SME objective, which is the same as the

personal objective of the SME owner, as highlighted in the leadership definition in the context of this research.

This process keeps repeating and supports situational leadership impact on employee's competence development. Using situational leadership, the outcome of this research has contributed to the situational leadership literature by addressing research gaps in the existing leadership literature, particularly in the Ghanaian hotel industry called by Otoo & Mishra's (2018) and Opoku (2020) to examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry. The outcome has provided a viable model of the leadership practices of hotel managers, how they align with situational leadership styles and how they support and impact the varied competence development levels of employees in the hotel sector of the Ghanaian hotel industry, taken into account contextual factors.

Figure 4.8. Alhassan’s Model of Situational Leadership Support and Impact on Employee’s Competence Development



To sum up, key findings were discovered out of this research which contributes to the situational leadership literature from the data collected through semi-structured interviews within Ghanaian SME hotels in this research to address the research objectives and answer the research questions. They are divided into three groups, namely: (1) the leadership practices applied to support the competence development of employees (2) how the use of the approaches within those leadership practices align with situational leadership styles used to support employee's competence development (3) and the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development.

First, the Gioia diagram in Figure 4.2 highlights the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support the competence development of their employees. The results of the analysis showcased seven practices applied by Ghanaian SME managers to support their employees competence development. These include on-the-job training, face-to-face discussion, employees initiative-taking, use of the SCRUM system, aligning employees interest to job roles, task assignment and social and financial support.

The application of on-the-job training and the SCRUM system has been found to fit in with directive leader behaviour, whilst task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning employees interest to job roles have also been found to fit in with supportive leader behaviour. These extend the literature in SLT.

Secondly, the Gioia diagram in Figure 4.3 highlights how the application of Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership practices used to support the competence development of their employees who are at different development levels

align with the four SLT leadership styles. It was revealed that, on-the-job training aligns with the directing style (S1) and coaching style (S2), the SCRUM system aligns with the coaching style (S2) and employees initiative-taking aligns with the supporting style. Aligning employees interest to job roles and task assignment both align with the delegating style (S4) and face-to-face discussions and financial and social support aligns with all the four styles (D1, D2, D3, D4).

This research also revealed culture as an additional variable in SLT, which is embedded in the use of social and financial support by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in each of the four situational leadership styles to support the competence development of their employees. The practices a leader can adopt under each of the four SLT leadership styles (directing, coaching, supporting, and delegating) has also been highlighted by this research among SME hotels, which situational STL failed to explore.

The findings also revealed that the high need for the use of on-the-job training as Ghanaian SME rarely get applications from qualified staff. Managers or leaders therefore rely on referrals from family and friends, walk-in enquiries, and unsolicited applications to fill vacancies. Shortages of staff and during busy periods also pushes Ghanaian SME hotel managers to employ anyone who needs a job with or without the requisite qualifications or competencies but can be trained. This leads to employees treating their employment as a job and not a career. Employees therefore leave as-and-when want and managers also hire and let staff go as-and-when they want based on this premise.

Finally, the Gioia diagram in Figure 4.7 shows the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence

development of Ghanaian SME hotel employees in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model.

The findings extend the literature in SLT, by showcasing that, the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of junior employees who are classed under this research as D1 and D2 followers and supported using directing style (S1) and coaching style (S2) under SLT include cultural and family ties, lack of motivation, long hours, timing of training, customer harassment, inability to take own initiative and limited resources to implement training recommendations.

Contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support the competence development of senior employees who are classed under this research as D3 and D4 followers and supported using supporting style (S3) and delegating style (S4) under SLT also include family ties, management system, means of transport, limited guest numbers, cultural and religious factors, qualification-job-role mismatch and working with different type of employees.

Culture, religious factors, and family ties has been found to be key contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support the competence development of all employees at the various development levels, as they were the only contextual factors identified by managers, senior staff, and junior staff.

The next section will summarise how the research objectives were achieved, the contribution to knowledge and practice, research limitations, transferability of the research findings and suggestions for future research, together with a personal reflection.

Chapter Five

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 Introduction

The literature has revealed that, the Ghanaian hotel industry is dominated by SMEs (Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017) who are mostly registered under the sole tradership form of business (Cochran, 1981). Due to the use of the private resources of SME owners to finance its operations, they tend to have more power as there is mostly no separation of powers between leadership, management, and control. Consequently, management and leadership are interwoven with more power vested into the hands of SME Ghanaian hotel owners, who mostly double as managers and leaders (Nwosu & Ward, 2016). Leadership practices therefore tend to be synonymous with managerial practices within Ghanaian SME hotels.

However, due to the seldom receipt of job applications from qualified jobseekers, vocational, and senior high school graduates who lack multidisciplinary competence and possibly taking their first employment in the hotel industry represent the largest segment of employees working within Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016). This has prompted the need to use different managerial and leadership practices, which are mostly unstructured, to support their competence development for effective service delivery.

Research exploring how Ghanaian SME hotel managers support the competence development of their employees using different human resource management practices for effective service delivery is therefore lacking.

The application of leadership theories including situational leadership in organisational management has also been found to be mostly concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs (Beavers & Hitchings, 2005). There is

therefore lack of a clear picture on the impact of the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in the SME context to ensure the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour. SLT has also placed more significance on employee development or readiness levels when deciding on a leadership style to support employee competence development. This emphasis has side-lined the study of contextual and other organisational factors such as culture, in the leadership process, which can support the relationship between leaders and followers, and hence may force the leader to adopt a specific leadership style. This has led to the adjustment of leadership and management practices, especially in Africa, to accommodate contextual factors.

There is therefore a gap in the literature exploring the different managerial or leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers or leaders to support the competence development of their employees, how their application align with SLT and the contextual factors, that needs to be considered alongside employee readiness levels when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support employees competence development.

Consequently, the aim of this research was to explore situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development and identify the contextual factors, that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the various quadrants of situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels.

This research contributed to the managerial, leadership, and employees competence development literature by addressing the call for further research by Opoku (2020) to

examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry using situational leadership theory.

The presentation of the results of this research in the previous chapters employed the use of case study strategy to explore the views, perceptions, and feelings from the perspective of hotel managers and their employees by collecting data from ten 2-star Ghanaian SME hotels through 30 separate semi-structured interviews of 10 hotel managers, 10 senior staff and 10 junior staff in the Ghanaian hotel industry. Therefore, this chapter will discuss the role of this research's findings in addressing the aim and objectives of the research. The next sections will discuss the findings related to the following objectives:

- I. To identify the different leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process to support employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives.
- II. To explore how the application of leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process, to support employee's competence development, align with situational leadership styles.
- III. To develop a model to show the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a situational leadership theory (SLT) leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model?

In the remaining part of this section, the findings relative to the results will be discussed in sections 5.2 to 5.4. Section 5.5 will discuss the contribution to knowledge, 5.6 discusses the contribution to practice and recommendations, transferability of the research results and findings will be discussed in 5.7, personal

reflection of the researcher relative to what the researcher has learnt personally on his PhD journey and the thesis is discussed under 5.8. Finally, the research limitations and the suggestion for future research is discussed under 5.9.

5.2. Conclusion on research objective to identify the different leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process to support employee's competence development to achieve organisational objectives.

Four different categories of employees aligned to D1, D2, D3 and D4 followers with varying competence levels and experiences based on scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions have been identified among Ghanaian SME hotel employees in the previous sections.

The difficulty in selecting the best leadership style for effective leadership (Thompson & Glaso, 2015) for the different categories has overwhelmed researchers. This has led Ghanaian SME hotel leaders and managers to use less structured leadership styles to support the competence development of their employees for effective service delivery to achieve organisational outcomes (Agyapong et al., 2016), to guaranteeing the survival and growth of their businesses (Dias et al., 2017).

From the perspective of SME staff, adaptable leadership style is needed for effective leadership (Putra & Cho, 2019) as a leader should not apply the same leadership style for all situations but needs to adapt his or her leadership style to the given situation (Day & Antonakis, 2012).

However, limited research has demonstrated the different leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotel leaders to support the competence development of their employees who are characterised as first-time employees, SHS or vocational

school leavers with no or limited experience or competence and placed in an industry characterised by high levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long working hours, and mood swings to achieve organisational objectives.

Otoo & Mishra's (2018) and Opoku (2020) have therefore called for research to examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry.

This research concludes that on-the-job training, face-to-face discussion, employees initiative-taking, use of the SCRUM system, aligning employees interest to job roles, task assignment and social and financial support are the leadership practices applied by Ghanaian SME hotels to support employee's competence development.

How the second research objective has been achieved and the conclusion reached is discussed next.

5.3. Conclusion on research objective to explore how the application of leadership practices adopted by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in the leadership process, to support employee's competence development, align with situational leadership styles.

The extant literature has revealed the lack of professionally and multidisciplinary competent employees among Ghanaian SME hotels (Appaw-Agbola, 2016) with researchers emphasizing the need to explore how the practical actions of managers or leaders are carried out relative to how the individual competence of their employees are supported within their organizations (Alberton et al., 2020).

The review also found that the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in organisational management have been mostly concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs (Beavers & Hitchings, 2005). There is therefore lack of a clear picture on how the application of Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership or managerial practices adopted to support employees

competence at various staff development levels showcases leaders supportive and directive behaviours and align with situational leadership styles. Liu et al. (2020) therefore called for research to study the mechanisms for ensuring the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour in particular contexts.

The lack of multidisciplinary competent employees stems from the limited number of hospitality industry training institutions in Ghana. The few qualified employees are enticed with better working conditions in the big hotels leaving SME hotels with nothing due to their limited financial resources. This forces SMEs hotels to adopt less formal employee recruitment modes (recommendations and referrals from friends, colleagues and family members, walk-ins, through existing employees and through advertisement on radio stations). This induces or necessitate the development of employees competence as most of the applicants are mostly non-professionals, SHS graduates looking for an opportunity before they progress to the academic institution or with academic qualifications or training not related to the hotel industry. Professionally trained waiters and waitresses, receptionist, and cleaners specific to the hotel industry are therefore non-existent or difficult to find.

Hotel managers and their employees need diverse skills set that comes primarily from exposure over time with a developmental process that involves hands-on and situational learning found within the hotel environment. On-the-job training, face-to-face discussions and social and financial support are the key practices applied through the four situational leadership styles used by Ghanaian SME hotel managers to support their employees competence development. Managers engage in a two-way communication with all employee categories at the various development levels through orientation or on-the-job training (Hulla et al., 2021) to nurture staff, direct and coordinate work with all staff. Face-to-face interaction and

discussions become an integral part of this practice due to manager's proximity with employees (Agyapong et al., 2016).

The manager's behaviour is characterized by an open-door policy with a friendly approach to be able to assess employees capabilities and behaviour to assign responsibilities to employees to build employees confidence, provide corrective action and the use of social, financial and recognition to leverage employees at the various development levels to motivate and induce commitment as employees build continue to build their competence. This is done using appropriate organisational support given to employees to make them feel comfortable to learn and get more committed to their roles in line with Maan et al. (2020) based on the work culture relative to the findings of Singh (2017) and the support of hotel management in line with Kuzma et al. (2017).

This research concludes that, the application of on-the-job training and the SCRUM system fit in with directive leader behaviour whilst task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning employees interest to job roles also fit in with supportive leader behaviour in SLT. Ghanaian SME hotel managers leadership practices also align with the four situational leadership styles with on-the-job training aligning with directing and coaching styles, face-to-face discussions aligning with all the four situational leadership styles, initiative-taking aligning with supportive style, use of scrum system aligning with coaching style, task assignment and aligning employees passion to job roles aligning with delegating style and financial and social support also aligning with all the four situational leadership styles.

This research also concludes that culture, which is embedded in the use of social and financial support is considered a key variable in the leadership process as it is

used in each of the four situational leadership styles to support the competence development of their employees.

Further, on-the-job training is a key and necessary first step to supporting the competence development of Ghanaian SME hotel staff as Ghanaian SME hotels rarely get applications from qualified staff, shortages of staff and during busy periods pushes Ghanaian SME hotel managers to employ anyone who needs a job with or without the requisite qualifications or competencies but can be trained. This leads to employees treating their employment as a job and not a career path. Employees therefore leave as-and-when they want, and managers also hire and let staff go as-and-when they want based on this premise. This has addressed the second research objective and has answered the second research question.

This research has also highlighted that employee turnover among Ghanaian SME hotels seem to be a recurring phenomenon due to contextual factors after employees have attained sufficient level of competence. Consequently, SLT competence development model has failed to consider contextual factors when deciding to adopt a leadership style to support employee's competence development at the various development levels.

How the third and final research objective have been achieved and the conclusion reached is discussed next.

5.4. Conclusion on research objective to develop a model to show the contextual factors that need to be considered, alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a situational leadership theory leadership style to support Ghanaian SME hotel employee's competence development?

The literature has revealed that respecting and upholding family values, religious, and cultural beliefs are mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies, as it is

a predominantly collectivist society with a very high-power distance culture (Akoensi, 2018). This makes family, religion, and culture important factors to be considered in the leadership process in the Ghanaian context, as the views of leaders and employees would be affected by these factors. As leadership within this research has been contextually defined, an understanding of the potential impact of context on leadership is therefore vital to lead small groups in relation to their surroundings. However, SLT emphasis on employee development or readiness levels when deciding on a leadership style to support employee's competence development has side-lined the potential impact of context and other organisational factors in the leadership process, which can support the relationship between leaders and followers, and hence may force the leader to adopt a specific leadership style. This research has also revealed that employee turnover among Ghanaian SME hotels seem to be a recurring phenomenon due to contextual factors and situational variables after employees have attained sufficient level of competence. Research exploring contextual factors and (or) situational variables that needs to be considered alongside employee development or readiness level, which can affect how situational leadership support employees competence development is therefore limited. Munchiri (2011) has therefore called for research to examine the impact contextual factors may have on followership constructions and behaviour in the follower role, and Hughes et al. (2018) to examine how within-context variables influences leadership styles in different employee roles.

5.4.1 Conclusion on contextual factors from the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotel managers

From the perspective of SME hotel managers, who tend to have more power in the leadership process within Ghanaian SME hotels, based on the leadership definition

in this research, shared a wholistic view of the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee's competence development.

Based on the analysis and results, this research concludes that, working without passion, family ties, cultural and religious factors, poaching by the big hotels are the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level (D1, D2, D3 and D4) using the four SLT leaderships styles (Directing, coaching, supporting and delegation) under SLT. Cultural, religious factors, family ties and working without passion are the key contextual factors Ghanaian SME hotel managers find very difficult to manage.

5.4.2 Conclusion on contextual factors from the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotel senior employees (D3 and D4)

Based on the analysis and results, this research concludes that contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level of senior employees who are classed under this research as D3 and D4 followers and supported using supporting style (S3) and delegating style (S4) under SLT include family ties, management system, means of transport, limited guest numbers, cultural and religious factors, qualification-job-role mismatch and working with different type of employees.

Family ties, cultural and religious factors, management system and means of transport are the key contextual factors needing more consideration.

5.4.3 Conclusion on contextual factors from the perspective of Ghanaian SME hotel junior employees (D1 and D2)

Based on the analysis and results, this research concludes that the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level of junior

employees who are classed under this research as D1 and D2 followers and supported using directing style (S1) and coaching style (S2) under SLT include cultural and family ties, lack of motivation, long hours, timing of training, customer harassment, inability to take own initiative and limited resources to implement training recommendations among Ghanaian SME hotels.

Within the Ghanaian context, family is an important tie that binds and influence almost every facet of every individual's social, moral, religious, and working life. Therefore, the identification of cultural, religious, and family ties as contextual factors from the perspective of managers, senior and junior staff showcases they should be given more consideration alongside employee readiness level, when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development at the various development levels.

5.5 Research Contribution to Knowledge

The previous sections have highlighted several research gaps in the leadership literature which have been explored by this research. The results of this research have therefore contributed to knowledge in the leadership literature in the SME context relating to situational leadership impact in the leadership process on employee's competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels. This section highlights how the results of this research have begun to address these gaps and contributed to existing knowledge.

Firstly, leadership has been acknowledged in the literature to be a complex phenomenon hence there has not been scholarly consensus on the definition of leadership. Differences between large and small organisations with respect to decision making processes, ownership structure, organisational objectives as well as

contextual and situational variations have played a major part in this dilemma. Consequently, leadership literature have failed to incorporate the task-readiness level of employees and the objectives of business owners in the context of SMEs who tend to have more power and may influence SME leadership in the leadership process.

Contributing to the leadership literature, this research has defined leadership in the context of Ghanaian SME hotels by expanding on Winston & Patterson (2006, p.7) definition and adding power, employees task-readiness and owner objectives as ‘an influential process where one or more people, usually, with more power, selects, equips, trains and influence one or more followers who have diverse gifts, abilities and skills and focuses the followers to the owner’s and organisation’s mission and objectives, by assessing the task-readiness level of followers and causing the follower to willingly and enthusiastically expend spiritual, emotional and physical energy in a concerted coordinated effort to achieve both the owner and the organisational mission or objective’.

Secondly, in the Ghanaian hotel industry, research exploring how Ghanaian SME hotel managers support the competence development of their employees using different human resource management practices for effective service delivery is also lacking. Contributing to knowledge in the leadership literature in the SME context relating to leadership or managerial practices, especially among SME hotels, this research showcased seven different leadership practices that managers or leaders can apply to support the competence development of their employees for effective service delivery within Ghanaian SME hotels.

These includes on-the-job training, SCRUM system, task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning

employees interest to job roles have been found to be the leadership practices used by managers to support the competence development of employees within Ghanaian SME hotels. These practices will begin to minimize the inconclusive debate on the mechanisms through which leadership supports SME employee's behaviour, development, and performance.

Thirdly, the research has found that the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in organisational management have been mostly concentrated on large organisations to the detriment of SMEs. There is therefore lack of a clear picture on the impact of the application of leadership theories including situational leadership in the SME context to ensure the effectiveness of leader empowerment behaviour.

Contributing to knowledge, this research has bridged this gap and showcased that, the application of on-the-job training and the SCRUM system by SME hotel managers or leaders is their way of showing directive leader behaviour under SLT whilst applying task assignment, face-to-face discussions, social and financial support, taking of own initiative and aligning employees interest to job roles is their way of showing supportive leader behaviour under SLT. On-the-job training can be used to support D1 employees as it aligns with SLT directing style (S1). The SCRUM system can be used to support D2 employees as it also aligns with the coaching style (S2) in SLT. Employees initiative-taking can be used to support D3 employees as it aligns with the supporting style (S3), whilst aligning employees interest to job roles and task assignment used to support D4 employees as they both align with SLT delegating style (S4). Face-to-face discussions and financial and social support can however be used to support all employees (D1, D2, D3, D4) as they align with all the four SLT leadership styles (S1, S2, S3, S4).

Again, this research has contributed to knowledge by showcasing the application of the SCRUM system, which can be wholistically applied by SME hotel managers to develop the competence of their employees by assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of task in high complaint areas, the deficiencies in those tasks, review customer complaints and provide corrective action in line with those complaints to improve service delivery. The manager who tend to have more power, provides the means, and spells out to employees at the various development levels, what to do, where to do it, when to do it and how to do it, and then closely supervises performance and providing feedback on its implementation to staff.

Finally, the research has revealed that, SLT has placed more significance on employee development or readiness levels when deciding on a leadership style to support employee competence development. This emphasis has side-lined the study of contextual and other organisational factors such as culture, in the leadership process, which can support the relationship between leaders and followers, and hence may force the leader to adopt a specific leadership style. This has led to the adjustment of leadership and management practices, especially in Africa, to accommodate contextual factors.

This research has contributed to knowledge by developing a novel model (Alhassan's Situational Leadership Competence Development Model) to provide a guide on how to incorporate contextual factors such as culture, family, and religious beliefs into the leadership process to support employee's competence development. Due to the collectivist culture within most Ghanaian societies, the model has included culture, family, and religious beliefs, which are embedded in the use of social and financial support by Ghanaian SME hotel managers in each of the four

quadrants of situational leadership styles to support the competence development of their employees as an important variable in SLT.

5.6 Research Contribution to Practice

The results of this research offer benefits and recommendations for Ghanaian SME hotels and their leaders or managers seeking to support the competence development of their employees for effective service delivery.

Firstly, understanding and informing what influences effective leadership in SMEs in the leadership process in the context of this research, will help Ghanaian SME hotel leaders, managers, and practitioners to recognise that, they tend to have more power, and an extraordinary opportunity to support their employees competence development directly due to the level of proximity and limited number of employees without bureaucracies. The use of face-to-face discussions and social and financial support as leadership practices identified in the results will increase Ghanaian SME hotel leaders or managers aptitude to provide emotional and social support to employees by showing trust and respond positively when they experience setbacks, provide help and assistance, offer factual advice to overcome setbacks to help employees solve problems within their roles.

Secondly, the results of this research have showcased how SME leaders or managers leadership practices adopted and applied to support the competence development of their staff align with a leader's supportive and directive behaviours and to the four SLT leadership styles. This has provided a clear picture and a guide to SME hotel leaders, managers, and practitioners on what practices they can adopt to exhibit supportive and directive behaviour to support their employees competence development at various development levels.

Thirdly, the high-power distance and high uncertainty avoidance orientation among Ghanaian SME hotel employees tend to make them keep customer request on hold, whilst they run to their managers to seek advice. This dissatisfies hotel guest and prevents repeat business, which tend to affect business profits. The application of the SCRUM system can provide a guide to SME hotel leaders, managers, and practitioners to support the competence development of their staff to be able to resolve guest complaints and improve service lapses in deficient service areas to satisfy guest demands and increase repeat business.

Again, the literature has found that respecting and upholding family values, religious, and cultural beliefs are mandatory responsibilities in most Ghanaian societies (Akoensi, 2018), as it is a predominantly collectivist society with a very high-power distance (Danquah, 2018; Ansah, 2015). This makes family, religion, and culture important factors to be considered in the leadership process in the Ghanaian context. However, SLT has placed more significance on employee development or readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development, hence, has side-lined the study of contextual and situational variables in the leadership process.

The result of this research provides a guide in the Alhassan's model to help Ghanaian SME hotel leaders, managers, and practitioners to understand that contextual factors such as culture, family ties and religious beliefs are necessary to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development.

The incorporation of contextual factors will help leaders, managers, and practitioners to deal with them appropriately when they surface in the leadership process. For example, it will help SME hotel leaders, managers, and practitioners to create a

work-life balance for employees based on their cultural, family, and religious circumstances.

Finally, the research has highlighted the lack of and the difficulty in finding professionally trained receptionists, waitresses or cleaners in Ghana specific to the hotel industry resulting in competence mismatch. This has provided a preamble for SME leaders, managers, and practitioners in collaboration with the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Ghana Hotels Association in collaboration with the Hotel, Tourism, and Institutional management departments of Technical Universities in Ghana with approval from the Ghana Tertiary Education Commission (GTEC) to develop tailor-made programmes that equips students and prospective employees with competences required in the hotel sector. This will reduce the degree of competence mismatch between employers' requirements and employee's acquisition of needed competences.

5.7 Transferability of research results and findings

Transferability refers to 'how well the study conclusions can be applied to other similar settings' (Mabuza et al., 2014, p. 3). It refers to the ability of others to judge independently, whether the research findings can be transferred based on a detailed description of the study. This section describes the study setting, the selection of participants, methods, and the findings to facilitate the transferability of the research findings and conclusions.

This research explored situational leadership support and impact on employee's competence development in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model among Ghanaian SME hotels. The topic is considered vital as called for by Opoku (2020) and Otoo & Mishra (2018) as it has provoked

transformation, revealed an aspect of life that has been overlooked, misunderstood, taken for granted and challenges well-accepted ideas (Tracy, 2019). The research was conducted in the Ghanaian hotel industry which is categorized under the tertiary sector of Ghana (Aduhene & Osei-Assibey, 2021) and dominated by SMEs (Chung & D'Annunzio-Green, 2018; Spio-Kwofie et al., 2017; Peacock & Ladkin, 2002). The industry accounts for more than half of tourist accommodation in Ghana (Ghana Tourism report, 2019) and hence contributes more to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Ghana than the other sectors (World Bank, 2019a: Aduhene & Osei-Assibey, 2021).

Blanchard (1997, 2000) situational leadership and follower development levels underpinned this research. To gain a detailed account of the situational leadership practices of Ghanaian SME hotel managers and the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level, this investigative case study research adopted a qualitative inductive style, using 10 case units, with each case (SME hotel) as a single unit of analysis (Yin, 2013) and managers and employees as units of inquiry with two data points (primary data from semi-structured interviews and secondary data from hotel records). This allowed the selection of more informative case units with similar features to be explored in detail.

Purposive sampling which supports case study research (Saunders et al., 2019) and enable access to reliable data (Creswell, 2013b) was used to randomly select ten 2-star (homogenous) Ghanaian SME hotels in line with Saunders et al. (2019) and Campbell (2015) and SME definition within this research from the Ghana Tourist Board's list of Ghanaian SME hotels.

Ghanaian SME hotels who were the focus of this research are characterised with employees who has never been previously employed, SHS or vocational school

leavers with no or limited experience (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), lack professional and multidisciplinary competence (Appaw-Agbola, 2016), labour intensive (Marneros et al., 2021) high levels of emotional exhaustion, occupational stress, long working hours, and mood swings (Tongchaiprasit & Ariyabuddhiphongs, 2016). Hence, they requires constant supervision (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019) from their leaders (Appaw-Agbola, 2016).

They are also characterised by diverse cultural, religious, and social differences among employees with ownership, management and leadership mostly vested into the hands of the SME owners, who tend to have more power and incorporate their personal objectives into the operation of the SME hotel. SMEs in the industry also lack separation between ownership and control and hence responsibility for the direction and development of their businesses are in the hands of the SME hotel owners (Thompson Agyapong, Mmieh & Mordi, 2018). Sole proprietorship form of businesses dominates the hotel industry of Ghana (Cochran, 1981) accounting for their liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012).

The industry is deemed as an employer's market due to the prevalence of unemployed graduates, vocational and SHS school leavers seeking employment. Consequently, SME hotel managers are overwhelmed with the number of job applications from these groups. Due to the labour-intensive nature of the hotel industry, the limited number of employed employees operating among Ghanaian SME hotels are always in the frontline playing a crucial role in service delivery (Terjav et al., 2016) with constant and frequent interaction with customers (Standstrom & Reynolds, 2019).

There is also high prevalence of informal relationship between employees and their managers, limited formal employment contracts, managers have proximity with their

operating staff, and owners, leaders or managers tend to use unstructured approaches to achieve organisational goals due to the use of their private resources to finance the operation of the SME hotel. Operations within these SME hotels are more manual as opposed to digital and there is more face-to-face contact between staff, managers and customers as opposed to virtual contacts.

To ensure the credibility of this research, the researcher adopted an appropriate methodology (Yin, 2018), an appropriate sample of participants (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2016; Campbell, 2015) with an appropriate procedure for recording and transcribing semi-structured interviews (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) using multiple sources of data (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008).

Consequently, the researcher spent some time with the managers and employees in the hotel premises of the sampled SME hotels to interact with staff, observe their operations and to collect primary data through semi-structured interviews to ensure rich rigor, resonance, and transferability (Tracy, 2019) of this research. The sample used for the collection of data from the ten Ghanaian SME hotels was in line with Campbell (2015) by spending time with participants during official working hours at their various offices for the collection of data through an audio-recorded semi-structured interviews and analysis of organisational documents. This enabled the researcher to explore an existing theory (Situational Leadership Theory) in its real-life context to significantly support the research results and findings.

For the purposes of translating the prescriptions of SLT in a real-life context, employees working in the sampled SME hotels were categorised into junior employees and senior employees based on SME managers assessment of their competence development levels.

Junior employees were categorised as employees who had not previously worked, started their employment without any hotel industry experience or with low experience and probably taking their first employment after school whilst senior employees were employees with moderate to professional experience in the hotel industry. In the context of this research, the researcher aligned the descriptions of junior employees with D1 and D2 followers whilst senior employees were aligned with D3 and D4 followers in line with scholars such as Cvijanovic et al. (2018), Thompson & Vecchio (2009), and Thompson & Glaso (2015, 2018) descriptions of D1 to D4 followers.

D1 and D2 (junior employees) accept a role orientation that aligns with the view that they are passive recipients of a leader's influence and that their role is best enacted by remaining silent and deferent to the leader's directives (Carsten et al., 2010).

Consequently, D1 and D2 employees tend to exhibit high power distance, high uncertainty avoidance, a collectivist, and feminine orientations. Whilst the leader's coercive power motivate D1, legitimate power tend to motivate D2 employees.

D3 and D4 (senior employees) also accepts a role orientation that it is their job to associate with leaders by articulating ideas and opinions, taking initiative to identify and solve problems, and seeking ways to help the work unit more effectively achieve its goals hence feels that they should avoid domination by a leader and combat the leader's authority or desire to control them. They tend to ignore directives or avoiding opportunities to work with the leader to solve problems to avoid it being misconstrued as giving in to the leader's authority (Carsten et al., 2013).

Consequently, D3 and D4 tend to exhibit low power distance, low uncertainty avoidance, an individualists orientation, and a masculine orientation. Whilst the

leader's referent power motivates D3 employees, expert power tend to motivate D4 employees.

Data were collected from analysis of the company history and in-depth interviews that lasted, on average, an hour, with the conclusions fed back to the interviewees through a member-checking process to support the credibility and transferability of the research (Creswell, 2013). Shorter follow up interviews were also held to help clarify and answer questions arising. The interviewees were all managers or leaders with absolute authority to decide and manage the day-to-day operations of the sampled SME hotels.

This meant that the interviewees could discuss all the leadership practices used in developing employees competence. This criterion was chosen to ensure interviewees could provide insight to employee's competence development practices. Junior and senior employees were also interviewed to explore their perspective relating to the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside their development or readiness levels. The researcher conducted the interviews in English, recorded and later transcribed it with additional notes taken during the discussions.

Questions explored the history of the company, the calibre of employees and the services provided. Key questions focused on how the different calibre of employees are supported to develop their competence based on the four constructs of situational leadership as highlighted in the literature review. A semi-structured interview style was adopted to give the interviewees the freedom to answer and to allow the interviewer to delve more into the discussion to gain deeper insights which more structured interview would not have allowed.

Data was collected over a three-month period from December 2021 to February 2022. The features within the hotel industry and jobseekers as described above is an on-going phenomenon in the Ghanaian SMEs industry hence the data collected for this research will tend to be stable over time.

Thematic Analysis (TA) was used to analyse emerged themes (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019) using the Gioia approach as an analytical path (Reay et al., 2019) in presenting the summary of the research results. The feelings, tones and emotions of both managers and employees relating to employees competence development and the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level were also conveyed through raw quotes from the interview data. The interpretation and presentation of the findings was also guided by two senior lecturers with expertise in entrepreneurship and qualitative research to make sure the research results and findings reflects the data.

The outcome of this research has begun to address research gaps in the existing SMEs and leadership literature, particularly in the Ghanaian hotel industry called by Otoo & Mishra's (2018) and Opoku (2020) to examine the effect of managerial practices on employee competence in the Ghanaian hotel industry and has showcased the application of different leadership practices available to Ghanaian SME hotel leaders, managers and practitioners used to support the competence development of their employees in a manner applicable to their circumstances as a one-size-fit-all to leadership construction seemingly does not work well for all situations.

The outcome of the research has also provided a viable model of the leadership practices of SME hotel managers, how their application align with SLT leadership styles, how they support the competence development of employees and the

contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding on a SLT leadership style to support employee's competence development in the Ghanaian hotel sector of the hospitality industry.

5.8 Personal Reflection

My interest and perspective on small business growth, its leadership and employee competence development originated in my youth, working as an Accounts officer for a non-governmental organization in Ghana giving micro credit to women groups to start small businesses in 2001. My involvement in two world Bank funded projects implemented by the Council for Vocational and Technical Education and Training (COTVET) under the Skills development fund (SDF) and Technoserv Ghana project entitled "Enhancing Growth in New Enterprises" between 2012 and 2015 further aroused my interest in small enterprises. As I watched men, women and businesses struggle with limited resources, technical deficiencies, lack of knowledge, government intrusion, and succeed with unconventional business and leadership practices not found in the educational curriculum.

This doctoral research process was an exciting journey for the Author as it presented great opportunities for further learning, job prospects and not forgetting its accompanying challenges. The exploration of this journey brought to light the leadership efforts, behaviours exhibited, and the frustrations Ghanaian SME hotel managers go through to support the competence development of their employees for effective service delivery in the hotel sector of the tourism industry of Ghana. This would not have been possible for the Author to learn without this research.

The knowledge and first-hand experience that the author has gained from this research coupled with his previous experience as a lecturer will further enable him,

to deliver academic and practical modules relating to managerial leadership and employee competence development to students, managers, and practitioners especially in the among SMEs in the hospitality industry as a future Lecturer.

Consequently, there are some practical knowledge that the author can share and apply in the classroom, to hotel businesses and workshops. Through this study, the researcher recognized that the leadership practices exhibited by hotel managers and leaders impacts greatly in supporting the competence development and commitments of their employees.

Again, the researcher has been made aware of the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level to support employee's competence development, which are key in creating work-life balance and employee commitment.

In addition, this research journey has pushed the researcher to improve his abilities in creative problem-solving, research writing, communication and presentation skills, analytical and critical thinking skills, time management and the organization and management of research interview process. Of particular importance to the researcher is the reshaping of the researcher's personality, which is now characterized by more initiative, and more passionate with the ability to compose himself psychologically under pressure and within timelines as compared to himself at the beginning of the PhD programme.

5.9 Research Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The results from this research are associated with certain limitations relative to the methodology, the data analysis process, and the interpretation of the findings.

In relation to the methodology, the research employed the use of qualitative cross-sectional design, using semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, and hence all the research data were collected at a particular point in time with a retrospective recall of participants feelings and experiences from their memory, which had the tendency to be affected by recall lapses. The credibility and reliability of this research which are likely to be affected by this can be mitigated in future research by using a mixed method or employing a longitudinal study.

Secondly, the focus of this research was to explore in depth rather than to generalize and this had implications for the sample size used. This study was conducted with ten Ghanaian SME hotels, which is considered representative in line with Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2016) and Campbell (2015) and hence can however be generalized across 2-star SME hotels in other countries with similar social and legal features. Future research can however expand this research by using quantitative methods to collect more data.

The prevalence of these limitations has not marred the overall impact of this research as this research provides the first step for further research about situational leadership support and impact on employees competence development among Ghanaian SME hotels and the first of its kind in the Ghanaian context. Future research could therefore be tailored towards these avenues:

- I. Results from the research indicates that within the Ghanaian context, family is an important tie that binds and affects almost every facet of every individual social, moral, religious, and working life. Family ties has been identified as a key contextual factor that needs further consideration alongside employee readiness level from the perspective of managers, senior and junior employees. The use of SME hotel work culture has also been identified to

mitigate this factor. However, how the work culture is used to mitigate this factor has not been explored by this research. Future research can explore how work culture within SME hotels creates a balance between family ties and work requirement.

- II. The result of the research also indicates that professionally trained waiters and waitresses, receptionist, and cleaners specific to the hotel industry are non-existent or difficult to find due to the limited number hospitality training institutions in Ghana, necessitating the use of less competent employees within the hotel industry. Future research could explore avenues for SME hotel employees competence development training collaborations and challenges and its impact on service delivery.
- III. Results from the research also indicate that the attitude of some hotel customers or clients do not make delegating style worthwhile because Ghanaian hotel guest tend to be more satisfied, feels valued, dignified, and respected when the manager him or herself intervenes in a situation rather than employees using their initiatives to solve customer services issue. Customer perceptions and preferences therefore limits the impact of some of these styles. Future research could explore how customer perceptions are mitigated related to service delivery in the hotel industry among SME hotels.
- IV. Results of the research did not showcase Ghanaian SME hotel employees transitioning procedures, protocols, and challenges, as employees develop their competence in the different quadrants of the situational leadership model. Future research should therefore explore SME hotel policies on staff transitioning between the different quadrants of situational leadership model as their competence improves.

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Appendixes

Appendix one. Gatekeeper Access Letter



University of Worcester Business School
University of Worcester
Henwick Grove. Worcester WR2 6AJ

Date: -----

The Manager

Dear Sir/Manager,

Request for Access for the Collection of Data for PhD Research

My name is **Nurideen Alhassan** and I am currently at the data collection phase of a research project for my PhD at the University of Worcester, in the United Kingdom.

The University of Worcester Research Ethics Committee has approved the ethical guidelines to be followed for this project which will be the conduct of semi structured interviews and access to hotel records to explore situational leadership support and its impact in employee's competence development, and the contextual factors that need to be considered alongside employee readiness level when deciding to adopt a situational leadership style in different quadrants of situational leadership model among SME Ghanaian.

I am writing to seek your approval to access your hotel documents and to interview three employees of the hotel (Manager, one senior staff and one junior staff). This should take approximately between 45 to 60 minutes per employees making a total of three hours for the entire exercise. This can be conducted at a convenient time and date to be arranged within the hotel premises. All answers and results from the research will be kept strictly confidential and the results will be reported in a PhD thesis and research papers available to all participants on completion.

If this is possible, could you sign and date below to confirm that you are willing to allow access to your company documents and employees providing they agree and are happy to take part.

Thank you for your time and I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours sincerely

Signature -----

Name: Nurideen Alhassan
(Researcher)

Date:-----

Signature-----

Name:-----
(Hotel Manager)

Date:-----

Appendix Two. Consent Form



INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Project: An exploration of situational leadership support and impact on Ghanaian SME hotels

Participant identification number for this study: XXX

Name of Researcher: Nurideen Alhassan

I, the undersigned, confirm that (please initial boxes as appropriate):

1.	I have read and understood the information about the project, as provided in the Information Sheet.	
2.	I have been able to ask questions about the project and my participation and my questions have been answered to my satisfaction.	
3.	I understand that taking part in this study involves the collection of primary unstructured data collected through face-to-face semi-structured interviews using a voice recorder and a predesigned form to help capture the data for the research. Data storage will include all the semi-structured interviews, field notes and interview transcriptions. These will all be safely stored electronically on multiple hard drives and also backed-up on the researcher's USB.	
4.	I understand that taking part in the study has the potential risk (psychological, emotional and reputational)	
5.	I understand that granting a face-to-face interview for this is contingent on accepting and observing all covid-19 protocols before, during and after the interview	
6.	I understand I can withdraw at any time during data collection or two weeks following the collection of data without giving reasons and that I will not be penalized for withdrawing nor will I be questioned on why I have withdrawn.	
7.	I understand that the information I provide will be used for Final PhD thesis, publications and seminar presentations	
8.	I agree that my information can be quoted in research outputs	
9.	I understand that my real name will not be revealed, and pseudonyms will be used for quotes.	
10.	The procedures regarding confidentiality have been clearly explained (e.g. use of names, pseudonyms, anonymization of data, etc.) to me.	
11.	I understand that personal information collected about me that can identify me, such as my name, or where I live, will not be shared beyond the study team.	
12.	I consent to the audio recording of semi-structured interview	
13.	I understand that other researchers will have access to this data only if they agree to preserve the confidentiality of the data and if they agree to the terms I have specified in this form.	
14.	I give permission for the anonymized transcribed data that I provide to be deposited in the UK data service archive so that it can be used for future research and learning but exclusive of commercial use.	
15.	I voluntarily agreed to participate in this project.	
16.	I know who to contact if I have any concerns about this research	

.....
Name of Participant

.....
Signature

.....
Date

.....
Name of Researcher

.....
Signature

.....
Date

Appendix three. Semi-structured Interview Guide



Semi-structured Interview Guide

1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. I am a PhD student at the University of Worcester Business school in the United Kingdom and I am interviewing you to better understand how leadership within your hotel supports your competence development for effective service delivery. What leadership practices they use, how they use it and what contextual factors need to be considered alongside the use of those practices. So, there are no right or wrong answers to any of our questions, I am interested in your own experiences.

Participation in this study is voluntary and your decision to participate, or not participate, will not affect your employment or role within the hotel. The interview should take approximately 45 to 60 minutes depending on how much information you would like to share. With your permission, I would like to audio record the interview because I don't want to miss any of your comments. All responses will be kept confidential. This means that your de-identified interview responses will only be shared with research team members, and I will ensure that any information I include in my report does not identify you as the respondent. You may decline to answer any question or stop the interview at any time and for any reason. Are there any questions about what I have just explained?

May I turn on the digital recorder?

Interview phase	Research questions to explore	Questions for Managers	Questions for Senior and Junior staff
Introductory Phase	Demographics	Age bracket: Sex: How long have been the manager for this hotel or working in the hotel industry Highest educational or vocational credential?	Age bracket: Sex: How long have been a senior/junior employees in this hotel or working in the hotel industry What is your Highest educational or vocational credential?

	<p>Organisational profile</p>	<p>What is the name of this hotel? When was it formed? How long has it been in operation? What is the legal status of the hotel? Which departments is it registered with? What is the hotel's form of business ownership? How many employees does the hotel have? What is the capacity of the hotel? that is number of rooms</p>	
<p>Opening questions</p>		<p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me more about what your job role involves on a day-to-day basis As a manager, can you tell me how you recruit you employees for service delivery. Tel me more me more about the development or competence levels of employees you currently have for service delivery. As a manager, can you tell me more about the development or competence levels of employees you currently have for service delivery.</p>	<p>As a senior or junior staff, can you tell me more about what your job role involves on a day-to-day basis As a worker, in your own view can you describe how you have been able to develop your competence. As a worker can you tell me more about the support you have received from your manager or leader that has helped to develop your competence for this job</p>

<p>Key questions</p>	<p>Research Q1</p> <p>Research Q2</p> <p>Research Q3</p>	<p>As a manager, how are you able to tell the different competence levels of employees within the organization.</p> <p>As a manager, what leadership practices do you use to support the competence development of the different type of employees within the organization for service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager, how do you apply those leadership practices to support the development or competence of different type of employees within the organization for service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager, what do you think are the factors or circumstances that affect employees competence development even when the needed support is given to them?</p>	<p>As a worker, can you tell me some of the factors or circumstance that affect your ability to develop your competence even when you are supported by your manager or colleagues.</p>
<p>Closing questions</p>	<p>Research Q1</p> <p>Research Q2</p> <p>Research Q2</p> <p>Research Q3</p>	<p>As a manager or leader, can you describe the competence levels of the employees you currently have for service delivery.</p>	<p>As a worker, how would you describe the leadership style of your manager.</p> <p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager reacts when you use your own initiative.</p>

		<p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me how you allow employees to take their own initiative during service delivery.</p> <p>As a manager or leader, can you tell me how you support your employees to develop their competence for effective service delivery.</p> <p>Based on you experience as a manager, what can you share relative to how contextual factors impacting employees competence levels can be supported to develop their competence for service delivery.</p> <p>Are there any lessons you can equally share?</p>	<p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager reacts when you make a mistake and his/her reaction makes you feel</p> <p>As a worker, can you tell me how your manager motivates you to want to make you develop your competence.</p> <p>Based on you experience as a worker, what suggestions can you share relative to how your manager or leader can support the development of your competence for service delivery</p>
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Thank you very much for your time and the information you shared today

Appendix Four. Case Contextualisation

Case Hotel-1

Ghanaian SME case Hotel-1 is a two-star hotel located in Ghana. It was established in 2002 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur and registered as a sole proprietorship form of business. It has a capacity of 42 rooms with 2 conference halls and a restaurant. It is managed by 20 staff, which places the hotel under the definition of an SME, defined in chapter two. It provides accommodation, restaurant, bar and conferencing services to individuals, organizations, and corporate bodies. The hotel, which is at its growth stage, targets individuals, tourist and most importantly organizations. The preference for organizations gives the employees an opportunity to exhibit more of their competence to satisfy their guest and for the hotel to recoup its cost. Service demand has pushed the hotel to expand by completing another block of rooms and conference hall as service demands in the area is spontaneous according to the manager (hereafter referred to as Fawaz). Fawaz stated that;

“You don’t know when guest might come in and you might be empty in one minute and the next twenty-five minutes, somebody calls you and you are full. So, it’s not constant but it can happen at any time”.

Fawaz who is a male, in his late 30’s holds an MSc in strategic management and planning and has been managing the hotel for the last 15 years. His style of getting thing done is to rely on the daily report of selected key employees (supervisor, the storekeeper and the receptionist) and key works men (electricians and plumbers) in order to run the hotel. Because of the workload, Fawaz has learnt to use his level of education to delegate, share responsibilities and to seek feedback from key people and staff, thus the supervisor, the storekeeper, and the receptionist to take care of other employees for him when he is not around. He commented that:

“I delegate a lot to enable me share responsibilities across board. I have a supervisor, a storekeeper, and a receptionist and these are the key people I use in carrying out my duties on a daily basis, because you don’t have to be there always for things to happen but rather put systems in place”.

The decision and reason behind putting systems in place is to make sure that delegated responsibilities are carried out effectively and to re-strategize through feedback from customers which is used to develop appropriate training for staff.

Fawaz stated:

‘I try to establish a friendly relationship with my regular customers and so they are not afraid to give me feedback good or bad on the professionalism of my employees and see how we can re-strategize to move the hotel forward’.

Being the hotel manager for the last 15 years has taught and revealed to Fawaz that, one major problem he has faced in the industry is the human personnel who are mostly employed on familiarity basis without any experience and those employed just come hoping to get paid. This tends to have serious consequences on the commitment of the employees to develop their competence to fit into the system and take up service responsibilities.

The attitude and commitment of employees towards work complimented by their educational orientation informs the manager’s delegation decisions and how delegated responsibilities are carried out by staff. This stems from the personal experience of Fawaz as a manager as he started his hotel management career as an employee without any experience or management skills after graduating from the University for Development Studies (UDS) but with his commitment and support from the chief executive officer (CEO), he has been able to carry out the delegated responsibilities of the CEO successfully. This in part has shaped the leadership

styles of the manager with employees having conflicting views regarding his leadership style used to support their competence development.

The senior employee of hotel-1 (hereafter referred to as Mubarak) who is a male, holds both Diploma and an undergraduate degree and has served the hotel for eleven (11) years. Based on his daily contact with customers, he describes the leadership approach of the hotel manager as:

“Not very consistent when it comes to managerial duties. Sometimes he is ok, at times very strict, sometimes very principles and sometimes very lenient”.

The Hotel-1-junior employee (hereafter referred to as Fadil) who is a male employee in his early thirties with a Senior High school certificate have been an employee of the hotel for the last 7 years views his manager’s overall leadership style as being autocratic. He stated:

“If an employee proposes something that will help improve the operations of the hotel, he will say no, but turns round and say I gave you a command to this so you do it. However, in the end he will not be around when you are receiving insults from customers for his wrong decisions”.

Because of the difficulty is finding trained professionals and the inability to pay employees appropriately due to liability of smallness (Parida et al., 2012), this leadership approach is supplemented with training and other financial and psychological assistance to support the competence of both new and existing before responsibilities are assigned or delegated to employees to deliver services to customers for customer satisfaction and for repeat business. Fawaz stated:

“It is difficult to find a trained hotel receptionist, waitress or cleaner in Ghana, and these are the people who run the hotel. You can always get a trained chef and a trained caterer but all other sectors, you never get

somebody who is trained, and they come through to the job straight from school. They all must be trained. So, you have to take them through training to guide them before they can do the job and you come in as and when they need your help”.

Apart from the training, Mubarak (Senior Staff) summarised Passion for the job, customer demands, colleagues support, employees meetings and workshops as other factors that has influence his competence development. He stated that:

“Sometimes, it comes from personal attitude. Because I go for workshops and training, it has also impacted on my skills. We receive formal training from NGOs, FDA, GNFS and GTA. I do take my own initiative most of the time without even consulting manager and when he come, he feels ok with it. I don’t feel motivated because when I come out with new ideologies, he turns them down and he feels like you can’t contribute anything”.

Fadil (junior staff) also underscored the impact of training in influencing his competence development but also highlighted other factors such as continues employment and organizational support such as manager’s correction and being allowed to take his own initiative. He stated.

“When you are found of doing something and you are there always, no matter what you will be gaining knowledge about what you are into and if you do something wrong, manager will always call you and explain to you how it should have been done, with that you don’t repeat the mistake again. Manager is also always happy when you take your own initiative but when the initiative doesn’t go well, you will receive a lot of insults”.

Contextually, peer pressure and poaching of employees by rivalry hotels has been identified as the factors that affect the manager's efforts to influence employees competence development. The manager laments:

“Sometimes you employ a person and by the time you organise the training, the person has left the job. Somebody might say peer pressure is not so tangible, but to me people become friends through work so, one colleague says let's try this other hotel, maybe we might get better conditions. They then start to misbehave and through that the employees being lured goes off and the one who lured him or her stays. When they begin to pick-up and know something small about the job they leave, you get another person, and it becomes another problem and so you are back to the same soup. So, we hire as-and-when we need, and they leave as-and-when they want. We are a 2-star hotel, and we cannot pay like a 3-star or 4-star hotel and some 2-star hotels even pay higher than us. So, employees look at the remuneration package and feel like they are being cheated an because of that, it affects their output”.

My interaction with the employees revealed more contextual factors and more impact on them than the manager revealed due to the employees frequent interaction with guest daily. Mubarak stated:

“Sometimes it is to do with the resource and most of the things you learn does not apply to every customer who comes in here. With a little informal interaction, you have with a customer, you will realise that if you are going to implement this training recommendation, this person might not accept it and hence customers who are difficult or principled might not accept the implementation of the knowledge you have acquired”.

To curtail the effects of these contextual factors which includes employees turnover, financial loss, dissatisfied customers, and loss of repeat business uses financial support as a motivational tool to influence his staff. Fawaz stated;

“Because of the economic hardship, for me finance is the main source of motivation. So, we pay their social security and national insurance trust (SSNIT) out of their salaries and as and when anyone of them need financial assistance, they come up to me and I will meet the owner to see how we can support the person and they know that they can always fall on us”.

Employees however also think Incentives, bonuses and rewards will also help to motivate them to do their best for the hotel. Faisal lamented:

“You work for a long time, say you receive Ghc500 per month and 5 to 6 years later, you are still receiving the same salary”.

The absence of the manager within the hotel premises most of the time has some psychological effect on employees performance and has implications supervisors and employees within the hotel. I personally chased the manager for three days with appointment upon appointment and finally had to meet him at a different business office to conduct the interview whilst workshops were being held at the hotel. Faisal stated, *“When employees don’t see him around, they tend to misbehave, so his presence most of the time will help as everyone will do what he or she is expected to do, and this will help in building our competence as we do that repeatedly”.*

Case Hotel-2

This two-star hotel was established in 2017 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur and registered as a sole proprietorship form of business owned by a marriage couple. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority and the Food and Drugs

Authority. It currently has a capacity of 11 rooms which is managed by 40 to 45 staff. It provides accommodation, restaurant, bar, laundry, swimming, and conferencing services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies.

Its location, serene environment, tasty meals, courteous employees with security protocols has earned it a reputation for a get-away destination for tourist, romantic dates for singles, couples, and birthday parties.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Firdaus) who is a male in his early 60's, holds a Master's degree in food and beverage service with over 30 years of experience in the hospitality industry. He has been serving in his current role for nearly a year. In his experience as the manager and approach in recruiting employees and influencing their competence is to bring in employees who have the basics and train them to the standards of the hotel to serve their customers appropriately. This is because the hotel sector do not often receive applications from people who have been formally trained in the hospitality industry. Firdaus stated:

“I believe that somebody who has those basics is trainable, so I bring them in and we do induction training, we do periodic training to bring them on board to adapt to the standards that we want to give to our guest”.

The senior employee (hereafter referred to as Faris) who is a male in his late 30's and have served in this role for the last 2 years. He also holds a Higher National Diploma (HND) certificate in Hotel Catering and Institutional Management (HCIM). He reiterated how training is a key approach used to influence employees competence development within the hotel. He stated

“When you are employed here, they take you through training and through the training, it will guide you on what to do on your role and they do conduct periodic training to remind us about the ethics of the role, organisation and the

industry as a whole. So, with the training, when you listen very well and put them into practice, it will help you to develop your competence and I think is one of the factors that is helping me going”.

The junior employee (hereafter referred to as Fa-iza) who is a female in her early 20's, holds a senior high school (SHS) certificate, is only two months old in the hotel. She was employed without any formal hotel industry qualification or experience but based on her ability to grasp training and the hotel's service protocols. She stated;

“We the new ones when we come here, they train us on how to do the work”.

One leadership approach Firdaus has adopted within the hotel based on his experience to support the competence development of the employees is the hands-on approach which is shrouded in the Ghanaian culture. This approach is preceded with a face-to-face discussion with employees to pick up their training needs. He stated:

“Just like I am speaking to you now, that's the way I speak to them, and I try to pick on areas where I think they are lacking, and I try something critical for them”.

The training needs of employees are captured during the discussion, and this is used to highlight appropriate training needs to be developed for the staff.

The manager stated;

“Your training needs are captured and once the training is completed, I expect you to sign and confirm that you have understood it. So, if I see you doing something contrary, quite obviously the issue of discipline will come in”.

Both the theoretical and practical training will be based on the individual training needs. Firdaus aligns what needs to be done on the theoretical aspects whilst how it should be done is aligned to the practical aspects using the hands-on approach.

With the hands-on approach, manager does the things that have been highlighted in the training needs together with the employees for a few times and this is replicated by employees later, when they are left alone. He detailed that:

“I do things on my own and because of the culture of this region, they don’t want to sit down and see an elderly person doing something. So, once they see me doing certain things, often after a few times with them, you will see that they will begin doing it themselves. Example, for my breakfast service, all the waitresses know how to prepare the breakfast dishes but ideally, someone from the kitchen should be doing this”.

This approach has allowed employees to feel comfortable to discussed both job and social problems with the manager. Fa-iza stated:

“I will describe my manager as being democratic because he is a kind person who gives us chances to do things and do them well”.

Whilst Faris also stated:

“I will describe my manager as being liberal because he is the kind of person who wants to do things at the right time and do them well, but other times too, he will act some way that we are not always happy with”.

The training and the hand-on approach adopted by the manager are affected by certain factors within the hotel and employees personal circumstances which inhibits employees ability to develop their competence. The hotel organises training whose time seems to coincide with the busy times of employees or at times when employees cannot get to the training venue before the start of the training because they live far and do not have means of transport. Both Faris and Fa-iza expressed these factors affected them during training.

However, based on the Firdaus' experience and within this role, certain factors have manifested with seemingly greater effect on employee's competence development than revealed by the staff. Accordingly, most employees just work to make living without having a passion for the job, so they see no need to develop themselves.

Firdaus stated:

“Some of them are working without passion but just wants something to do to make a living”.

Faris summed it up to buttress the manager's assertion. He stated;

“I started here with so many people and it is not all of us who have gotten to this level. So, my attitude and how I go about doing my things may be what has led me to develop my competence and have risen to this level”.

Family ties is another factor that affect the manager's ability to support employees competence, as employees especially female employees are thorn between the requirement of the job and the daily house chores. In a typical Ghanaian family home, the girl-child is branded as lazy and may not be able to manage her matrimonial home if she does not pay attention to house chores. Some parents do not also understand there are legal and organisational requirements relative to their ward's job. So, the parents places certain family burdens on the child which conflicts with the job role. The manager stated;

“They are thorn between the job knowing that they are working and what is required of them from their homes. Somebody hasn't come to work for 3 or 4 days without permission and when you want to find out, ooh my parents sent me on an errand. The parent does not understand that the child or ward working has an employment contract with the institution and so you cannot really blame them for placing such burdens”.

Curtailing these factors to protect the investment already made on the employees and for proper service delivery requires certain level of empowerment and organisational support. This psychologically brings out the commitment in employees and hence try to adjust themselves to fit into the requirement of the job and the family requirements.

Allowing employees to take their own initiative within their roles is part of the managers psychological tools used to curtail contextual factors. Firdaus does this by encouraging employees to take their own initiative when they are working alone to learn.

“I tell them the advantages especially because you have not been fully trained, so when you take the advantage to learn new things by taking your initiative, you are equipping yourself and a lot of them do that as It makes them feel valued”.

The manager’s readiness in allowing employees to take their own initiative makes employees happy, feel valued and ready to develop their competence by doing their best for the hotel. Faris, the senior employees stated:

“Yeah, because when he is not there and I make a decision, he is always happy, and he has given me so many chances to make my own decisions and that is making me happy”.

When employees make mistakes from the initiatives taken, the manager speaks to them and corrects them courteously. This is to avoid employees becoming afraid of taking their own initiative for fear of being rebuked by the manager. Faris intimated that;

“With me, he has called on me one-on-one to speak to me from his experience within the industry and this has motivated to work even harder”.

Supporting employees financially is another psychological tool used by manager to support the competence development of his staff. Urgent financial needs of employees are taken up whenever the need arises. This put their minds at rest to put in their best in their role instead sharing their thoughts between their urgent financial need and the job role. The manager stated;

“Sometimes I see employees being grumpy or sad and it’s to do with money. So, you dip your hand into your packet to help just to give the employees the peace of mind to work. It makes them feel the organisation has them at heart and they can be supported in time of need”.

The hotel being at the growth stage of its life cycle and jockeying for a position in the market, the manager wants to maintain the standards set and the impressions left in the minds of customers has gone out his own way to provide transport for those employees who live far from work and he is prepared to meet and explain to the understanding of employees parents relative to employment contracts and to help diffuse the stigma attached to female employees referring to them as being ‘bad’ hence they do not want to develop their competence.

Case Hotel-3

SME Hotel-3 which is two-star hotel is registered as a company limited by share. It was established in 1984 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur as an entertainment centre with a restaurant attached and was later converted into hotel. Built in phases, it is now registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and the Ghana Revenue Authority. With a current capacity of 22 rooms which is managed by 24 staff, it initially started with 4 rooms, expanded to 11 rooms and 18 rooms. Owners of the hotel now feel the hotel has reached its peak in terms of room capacity and will be able to accommodate the

growing population and compete with its competitors in the market. It provides accommodation, restaurant, bar, and conferencing services to individual, organizations and corporate bodies.

The hotel has also earned a reputation for hosting most musical concerts, internal political party elections, birthdays, and wedding ceremonies.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter Khadija) who is a female in her mid-60's has been doubling as a co-owner and manager since its inception. Because of the hotel's reputation and the type of customers it serves, Khadija have developed a principle based on past experience to only employ professionals as they tend to stay longer than those who are not professionals. She stated

“In my hotel, I now deal with only professionals because they stay longer but the others come and use it as a steppingstone”.

This notwithstanding, Khadija's approach in supporting the competence development of her employees is based on aligning employees interest and passion to roles, offer training and delegate responsibilities based on it, after assessing employees in a face-to-face discussion. She mentioned;

“I have an employee who is as old as the hotel, but he just doesn't want to be technical apart from taking supervisory roles. Tell him to start a generator, he just doesn't want to do it, but ask him to conduct stock-taking, purchasing function or send him on an errand, he is always happy”.

Khadija has recognised that the more passionate an employee is in his or her role, the more committed they are and willing to learn. She therefore offer on-the-job training to employees and then delegate responsibilities to them based on the roles they feel passionate about within the hotel. She stated:

“In Ghana we don’t have many training centres for the hotel industry even though the Polytechnics are, I don’t think they are producing that much. So, we normally depend on school leavers. Formally, we were depending on JHS but now we are depending on SHS leavers and those qualified as professionals. We train them and through the training if you are the listening type by the time you realised, you have become a very good worker. Example, I have a worker here who came here on attachment, and she is still with me for more than 15 years as the head chef of the kitchen”.

Responsibilities are delegated to employees within their assigned roles with the manager performing a supervisory role. This brings out the lapses in the performance of the employees for corrective actions to be taken. She stated:

“I delegate a lot, and if I delegate to you, I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn’t keep quiet. I will call you and prove to you to know where you fell short. I always keep an eye on you and every mistake you make, I am someone who doesn’t keep quiet. With this, they correct their mistakes and do the right thing the next time you delegate a role or duty to them”.

The reputation of the hotel has made the manager to adopt a leadership style which seems to be uncomfortable for employees but works well in terms satisfying its customers. The senior employee of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Sadia) who is a female in her Mid-30’s, with an undergraduate degree and a daughter to the Co-owner and manager has been in her current role for the last 5 years. Her relationship with the manager allows her to get through to her and hence described the manager’s overall leadership style from the perspective of other employees as either to do with fear or lack of confidence. She stated;

“Sometimes employees are not even confident enough to approach her and they are like, I am scared. Is she going to yell at me, is she going to scream at me. So, sometimes they come to me to be the sheep to be sacrificed”.

The junior employee (hereafter referred to as Hikima) who is a female in her mid-30's, with an undergraduate degree from the university of Cape Coast, Ghana has been in her current role for the last 5 years. Her level of education and her interaction with customers of the hotel makes her feel she can contribute to re-strategizing the operations of the hotel, but management do not want to jeopardize the reputation and standards built by the hotel over the last 38 years. She stated *“Because everything comes from above. If you want to do something, you have to seek their consent and whatever they say is final and it looks like they know more than you”.*

Employees within the hotel acknowledged the impact of on-the-job training on their competence development within their respective roles, with the manager playing a key role in guiding the process. Employees supplement their training by also reading books and conducting personal research to keep themselves abreast with current developments within their roles and within the hotel industry in order to satisfy the needs of their employer and customers. Sadia stated;

“I got my experience on the job and obviously your boss is there to guide you through the job and learning on your own too”.

Previous experience, customer complaints and demands according to employees has also played a part in influencing and developing their competence.

Consequently, Hikima added:

“Your experience will help you to understand your new role in the new hotel much easier as the job requirement are almost the same from one hotel to the

next. Again, based on our experience with the customers and with the work, that is how we have been able to deal with them and that's where we get our experience from and sometimes".

The major factor impacting how employees competence development is supported is the lack of passion on the part of employees for either the job or certain job roles within the hotel. This makes them limited in other roles according to the manager. Working with different type of employees with different development levels also had the tendency of impacting employees competence development. Sadia lamented;

"We are not really on the same mind set so sometimes it becomes really difficult because you try to impart certain knowledge in them, and they are not getting it and so it makes it so difficult to reach certain goals".

Even though the management of the hotel feels it has reached its peak in terms of room capacity, employees feel the systems are still more manual than digital. This makes the implementation certain training recommendations difficult. Hikima stated;

"The training we are going for tomorrow is about digital marketing and here we don't do digital".

Employee engagement which describes the psychological state in a work environment and motivates employees to commit seem to have been relaxed and employees feel they are not motivated enough and are given little or no leverage to take their own initiative. This tends to affect their commitments. Hikima noted:

"Honestly there is no motivation, and they don't motivate us in anyway. Sometimes you realise you have done a lot and you need to be motivated but no, and this makes me feel bad and it seems like I am just building my competence for future roles in different hotels, and we are not allowed to take

our own initiative and even if you bring it to them, let's do this let's do that, it doesn't go anywhere".

Curtailing these factors that has the tendency of impacting how employees competence are supported puts management between relaxing the leadership style and satisfying the interest of employees that might have negative effect on service delivery.

Khadija, who is the manager uses her compassion routed in organisational support theory (Gokul, Sridevi, & Srinivasan, 2012: Yuan et al., 2018) to curtail these factors by supporting employees financially, emotionally, and socially to support their competence development. She mentioned:

"I support employees to pay their rent through I owe you (IOU's) and spread the cost. And whenever the need arises, I support them financially. For example, if an employee wants to travel, has a minor accident or when they are on maternity leave, this makes them feel a part of the hotel and try to put in their best".

At some level, employees feelings, based on my interaction with them, psychological empowerment could also play a role in curtailing these factors and influencing their competence and commitment. The senior employee, Sadia stated:

"What they need is the psychological empowerment, a tap on the back, oh you have done well, you are good, that was awesome. If management works on that I think it will help".

Case Hotel-4

SME Hotel-4 is a two-star hotel in Ghana. It was established in 2004 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur and initially registered as a sole proprietorship form of business. It was later upgraded to a private limited liability company with the Registrar Generals

Department of Ghana. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association, and the Ghana Revenue Authority. With only 7 rooms to start with, it has increased its room capacity by over 700% in 18 years to a current capacity of 62 rooms with 2 big conference halls for workshops, weddings, receptions and parties. More rooms have been completed within the hotel awaiting interior designers to furnish them before they are operationalized. A night club has also been completed waiting to be commissioned by management. The hotel, which is managed by 62 staff, provides accommodation, restaurant, bar, conferencing, laundry, swimming services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies. Their target customers are mainly corporate bodies and organizations who they provide credit services to and managed based on the hotel's credit policy. The African cup of nations football tournament which was held in Ghana in 2007 with some football teams hosted in the hotel also placed it on the map and hence tourist and business customers also patronize their services but on a cash basis. Regular customers seldom patronize their services due to its high cost of services and its reputation as being classy or meant for the affluent.

Departmental supervisors have been put in charge of the various departments within the hotel thus, the kitchen which prepares the food and the restaurant that serves are under the food and beverage manager, front office manager manages the sale of rooms so does housekeeping prepares the rooms, security, support service and technical unit having their respective managers or supervisors.

The Manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Fida-ah) who is a male, in his mid-40's, has been in his current role for just over 6 months but has risen through the ranks in the hotel from a pantry staff, waiter, bar attendant to a cost controller for over 5 years.

Distributed leadership, which distributes leadership positions among organization's members (García Torres, 2019; Goksoy, 2016; Berjaoui & Karami-Akkary, 2020; Mohd Ali & Yangaiya, 2015) is used by Fida-ah because of the departmentation of the hotel to delegate responsibilities to the departmental heads in order to influence their competence. He delegates most of the roles to departmental heads and tackle problems from departmental heads who are the delegateses whilst performing a supervisory role. He reiterated

“If there is a problem in the restaurant for example, as the manager the best is to look for the restaurant manager instead of going straight to correct the problem. That alone will keep him on his toes to do his work well because under normal circumstances, I shouldn't come to your department to find fault with your work but if I do, then I should ask you why there is a fault”.

The senior employee of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Abdallah) who is a male in his late-40's with a Higher National Diploma (HND) in hotel, catering and institutional management has been working in the hotel for the last 11 years. Prior to his employment, he had previously worked with another hotel for 4 years. Based on His experience with different managers of the hotel over the last 11 years, has described his manager's leadership approach as being democratic. He stated

“We work as a team and when there is an issue the manager will call the various sectional heads and we will discuss it, so it is not autocratic but democratic”.

Rising from a pantry employee to a manager with training being a key part of his development, Fida-ah also uses the same training approach his manager used on him to influence the competence development of his staff. Newly employed employees undergo a three-month training and orientation whilst departmental

heads go through refresher training before delegated responsibilities are assigned.

He mentioned,

“When they employed us here, we went through three months training. You had to study the menu, how to lay the table, the type of glasses and the type of drinks. We went through some thorough training, and we had to even go to the kitchen to see how the dishes are prepared. The training alone was a form of building our competence”.

Employees have bought into the training approach as they feel it supports their competence development. Abdallah, the senior employee stated,

“Learning on the job and whenever there is a training workshop, it is through the hotel that I will get to attend it to upgrade myself in the work”.

Being her first job after school and in the hotel industry, the junior employee (hereafter referred to as Malak) who is a female in her early-20's and have just completed SHS certificate is only 6 months into her new role, and she has also underscored the importance of the training approach as she thinks it has supported her competence development and to bring out how passionate you are about the job. She stated that:

“Here before you start, you go through training for 2 to 3 months to build your competence and for them to see how willing you are to do the work”.

Just as the different departments have different functions and different type of staff, the manager has a principle of applying a certain level of latitude in his leadership approach based on the competence level of staff. Fida-ah stated:

“I handle the different levels of employees based on the situation at hand. Sometimes you have to be democratic and sometimes you have to behave like a tyrant”.

The approach to the leadership style adopted by Fida-ah manager is however marred by the lack of passion on the part of employees for the job and using the job as a steppingstone to earn a living until the right jobs comes or until they leave for further studies. This is particularly usual with SHS graduates. He stated:

“Some people work as if they have no interest in the job, and for those people no matter how you try you can’t bring them on board. Some say, I will just come and do my work and when its time I will go home and get my money at the end of the month”.

Family issues, financial difficulties, and long hours at work account for the lack of passion most employees especially SHS graduates exhibit when they are employed. Abdallah stated:

“Sometimes, it is about family issues and sometimes it is about money”.

One factor that has help alleviate the effect of these factors according to the manager based on his long service in the hotel is to address employees vacancies in the hotel in-house as this motivates and boost employees competence.

Support from management boosts employees commitment and motivates them to put in their best for the hotel. Being allowed to take own initiative empowers them.

Abdallah stated:

“To a certain level, I can take my own initiative and management is always happy with it as long as it is in the interest of the hotel. This motivates me even though in terms of motivation employees always find it difficult because there are no jobs so, you are forced to take what you are supposed to take. So generally, motivation is not good. However, there are times the manager tells us his own story about how he became a manager, and they don’t speak

harshly to us and the stories makes you feel enlightened so you want to build your competence to get there”.

Case Hotel-5

SME case Hotel-5 is a two-star hotel in Ghana. It was established in 2006 to take advantage of the African Cup of Nations (Can2007) hosted by Ghana in 2007. It is registered as a sole proprietorship form of business. The Hotel went into family and financing difficulties after the demise of the owner and the management had to suspend its operation. It was reopened in 2013 after the restructuring process. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and Ghana Revenue Authority. It currently has a capacity of 55 rooms with only 30 rooms fully functioning and it's managed by 10 staff. It provides accommodation, restaurant, swimming, and conferencing services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies.

With so many other budget hotels, guest houses, one to three-star hotels around it, guest numbers in the hotel is not encouraging as it is a little difficult to attract customers.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter Na-eem) who is a male and has just turned 40 years, has been in his current role for the last three and half years. He is a forensic anthropologist with a degree in communication and a Master of Arts (MA) in Mechanical Engineering. He is equally into the cultivation of rice and corn to support the operations of the hotel. Apart from the usual guest who can afford to pay for their services, the owner-manager also has a strategy of allowing guests who are stranded or short of cash and approaches the hotel management to stay the night either for free or for a little fee. This has given the hotel a reputation as a hotel for all and sundry.

The senior employee (hereafter referred to as Mariam) and junior employees (hereafter referred to as Nabila) who are both females and in their early-20's with SHS certificates have worked in their current roles for 9 months and 2 months respectively. They have both been affected by the overall leadership style and approach used by the Manager, which seems to motivate them. As if they both rehearsed their comments, by stating:

“I will say he is democratic because he is passionate about his work (Mariam). I will describe my manager as being democratic because he is a kind person who gives us chances to do things and do them well (Nabila)”.

The hotel's sales revenue is stagnated as the hotel is still juggling between the introductory and growth stage of its life cycle with operational cost seemingly on the rise. To minimise the cost of operation, most amenities are turned off when there are no guest and in order to reduce employees cost, employees vacancies are therefore addressed by SHS and diploma students who are fresh from school with no experience. Orientation and on-the-job training have helped the manager to support the competence of these first-time employment staff. Na-eem, the manager stated:

“We always go through training and it's like a reminder and others that have just joined us also pick up fast from the training”.

The essence of the training is well appreciated by the employees as they also feel it helps in influencing their competence. Mariam mentioned:

“When I came here for the interview, Manager asked me if I have knowledge about computer? I said if he can get someone to train me then I can be able to work and so he told me he will get someone to train me and actually did after the orientation by inviting an ICT man to come and take you through problem areas so that you can learn. And the orientation, manager introduced

me to one of my seniors to take me through all the procedures about how to check-in guest, how to approach a guest and all the steps”.

The employees of the hotel who are mostly fresh from school, inexperience and looking forward to continuing their education are affected by lateness to due to family chores and ties and the stigma attached to female employees branded as “bad girls” simply because they work in the hotel sector. This stigma is partly due to attitude of male guest who mostly try to lure female employees to bed. Na-eem, the manager stated:

“Because of the persistent water shortage situation, when they wake up, they have to go look for water for their families and to bath before they can come to work. They try to fulfil their house chores before they come to work and end up being late for work”.

These factors observed by the manager are in fact the realities impacting how employees competence are supported. Mariam stated:

“By the time you finish your chores and come to work, you will be late, and your colleagues would have done something which you were not there to learn due to being a girl-child with responsibility of house chores but also in the hotel for example, right now we have only 3 guest and no conference and it is through the guest and conferences that we learn. We can have only one conference in 5 months”.

The circumstances of the hotel has made it imperative for the manager to adopt strategies that will motivate and support employees to build their competence and commit to the hotel. Financial and emotional support has been the two key approaches employed by Naeem to motivate his staff. Urgent financial needs of employees are taken up whenever the need arises. This put their minds at rest and

enable them to put in their best in their role instead sharing their thoughts between their urgent financial needs and the job role. He stated:

“What influences them is, I treat them well, I also pay them good and then I help sort out their problems too”.

Psychologically, Naeem allows employees to take their own initiative whenever necessary and corrects them accordingly where there are lapses. This reduces negative energy and generate a positive attitude among employees (Seibert et al., 2011), empowers them to learn things on their own to serve guest appropriately and to please Na-eem, who they see as humble, polite and respect their feelings and opinions. Nabila stated:

“Yes, and my Boss is always happy whenever I take my own initiative because it was the right call. If it was the wrong call, he will get angry but apologises later and he would correct me. That makes me happy”.

Boosting customer or guest numbers and the holding of conference and workshops is one of the top priorities of the manager as it increases the hotel revenue and supports employees competence development as they use it as an opportunity to learn.

Case Hotel-6

SME Hotel-6 is a two-star hotel located in Ghana. It is registered as a sole proprietorship form of business. It was established in 2004 modestly as a lodge and gradually upgraded to a hotel in 2008 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and the Ghana Revenue Authority. It currently has a capacity of 126 rooms which is managed by 70 staff. It provides accommodation,

restaurant, bar, laundry, swimming, gym, pool and conferencing services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies.

Due to its size, space, location, serene environment, tasty meals, courteous employees with security protocols has earned it a reputation for the hosting big conferences for governmental and non-governmental organizations. Local and international tourists, romantic dates, birthday parties, retirement and send-off parties are other events the hotel takes advantage of to boost sales revenue.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Fareeda) who is a female in her late-30s, with an MA in International Human Resource Management has served in her current role for the last four years. She believes in continuous improvement of employees competence, services, and facilities which she achieves through feedback from customers. So, she gives opportunities to prospective employees without experience or qualification but are willing to learn on the job with passion whilst maintaining service standards with existing professional employees and those who have been able to build their competence on the job. She therefore recruits her employees based on recommendations and referrals, walk-ins and through advertisements.

Employee orientation on the protocols of their roles, weekly employees meetings to review service lapses and training strategies to curtail them are key leadership practices adopted by the manager to support the competence development of both new and existing employees to maintain service standards for customer satisfaction.

Fareeda stated,

“With the new starters it is orientations and with those who have been in the job for some time, it is still day-to-day meetings, updates and trainings that we have and we relay in the meeting of what they have learnt back to them, so they get what’s going

on, how to relate to customers, if there is a situation how you should handle it, who you should relay it to before it gets to the CEO. So, I think to build up their competence level, training should be done a lot and that will help them to upgrade themselves and be more competent”.

The senior employee (hereafter referred to as Adnan) who is a male, and one of the longest serving employees in the hotel has been in his current role for the last 7 years. Adnan is in his late 30s and uses his Diploma in Business Studies (DBS) qualification couple with his experience to help in all aspects of the hotel.

“When you are employed here, they take you through training and I have worked here for seven years and this has also help in me knowing what I am supposed to be doing on the job and with the experience I have had for the last seven years, I do sometimes move in to when there is a problem with a customer to ask the customer in a very smiling and polite way, what the customer wants and it’s not there to calm the nerve of the customer and make him feel comfortable. This makes him or her to share his or her experience whether you are giving him or her a good or bad service”.

The orientation and training, which is not a one-off event is repeated every six months to refresh their knowledge and rope in new developments in the hotel industry. The Junior employee (hereafter referred to as Mu-aisin), is a male who is in his mid-30s and holds an Advance Diploma in Office Administration. Mu-aisin who has been serving in his current role for the last 18 months also underscored the support of training and the guidance of senior employees in building his competence as he works in the kitchen and restaurant section with a qualification that does not match his job role. He stated,

“I went through some training, and I also learnt from my seniors. Every six months they will organise a conference for employees to remind us of what to do and what not to do which helps to serve customers better”.

Delegation in the form of task-assignment is another leadership approach used by Fareeda to support the competence development of her employees whilst performing a supervisory role to see how employees implement training recommendations. Fareeda delegates not to all employees, but to those employees who have attained a certain level of competence in order not to jeopardize service delivery. She stated:

“I assign some responsibilities based on the training they been given and monitor them for corrective actions. I have one or two people here that I can boast of to delegate to with confidence and when I am not around, I know they can take things on board.

The essence of the training and task-assignment which is to support the competence development of employees for proper service delivery are affected by cultural, family, and religious factors. Our cultural philosophy to a large extent places power and a know-it-all or the-boss-know-it-all feeling in the hands of the manager to be able to solve all organisational problems. Invariably, employees hastens to the manager to seek redress which defeats the purpose of delegated duties. Family ties, social and religious events (example outdooing, weddings, and funerals) embedded in our culture are sometimes given priority as they define our lives. Hotel managers are therefore expected to give some latitude to these issues when they surface in order not to demotivate employees and branded as insensitive. She stated:

“Cultural and religious set-up plays a role here. So, most of the time, employees tend to run to the manager to go and confront the issue. But we have individuals

here and based on the way they were brought up can stand up to the situation, so they are not timid but expressive. For example, our gardener walked up to me, and he felt each time he has an excuse to go for a funeral, he should be allowed to go”.

Strategically allowing employees to take their own initiative within their roles, supporting employees emotionally and financially (taking up their tuition fees or allowing employees flexible hours within their roles) when they are in need is another has proven to be a managerial antidote to curtailing these factors negatively impacting employees competence development. She stated:

“Most of the time they call on me but, when I am not around, they try their best and I am ok with it if its handled and no party is hurt or insulted, I think its ok for me. In terms support, our CEO doesn’t turn his back on them. He helps them by paying their tuition fees or they come back to do a bit of hours and getting money to save and go back to school. Unfortunately, most of them upgrade and go and this has to do with the courses they go in for, for example nursing”.

These leadership practices adopted by Fareeda to support the competence development of her employees have been noted by employees to engage them (Schaufeli et al., 2002) and hence induces their desire and commitment to perform their jobs energetically, devoted, inspired, being completely focused on and immersed in their roles. Adnan, the senior employee stated:

“They are democratic because sometimes she will call me and ask What do we do. This makes me feel she values my opinion, so I try to learn more in order to contribute more whenever she ask”.

Mu-aisin wrapped up by stating his view on how he feels when he is allowed to take his own initiative:

“They always feel ok when we take our own initiative by looking at the situation and this motivates us to put in our best. They also feed us three times a day and so you don’t have to worry about what to eat no matter how long you stay on a shift and are very polite. This motivates you to put in your best and stay in the stay in the hotel as they can support you to grow”.

To further engage employees to support their competence development, the Fareeda plans to allow employees to explore other hotels using mystery guest to see how services are rendered to customers. she mentioned,

“Exposure to other organisations to see how they work and how they are managing it will be a good idea as it will shape them to understand that these excuses must calm down”.

Case Hotel-7

SME Hotel-7 is a two-star hotel located in a secluded fast developing area in Ghana. It has more than 84 rooms and suites, all designed to take advantage of the refreshing environment. The rooms are sub-categorized into standard, executive standard rooms, executive suit rooms and the super deluxe rooms to meet the needs of their varying customers. They pride themselves as offering the best accommodation expected from a property of their type as they have rooms or suits with a distinctive tradition-meets-elegance décor that provides comfort and luxury for its customers. Registered as a sole proprietorship form of business, it was established in 2004 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and Ghana Revenue Authority. Managed by 36 staff, it provides accommodation,

restaurant, terrasse bar, laundry, swimming, gym for both outsiders and guest, free Wi-Fi services to individuals, organizations, and corporate bodies. They also have 2 medium conference rooms for small workshops and conferences and an auditorium for large conferencing with a multipurpose football pitch with sections for lawn tennis, table tennis, volleyball, and soccer. The hotel which is still at the growth stage of its life cycle has become a get-away destination for government officials, politicians, dignitaries, large conferences as well as birthday and wedding parties.

Recruitment policy and procedure is via paper applications, but the model and philosophy of the hotel owner is to empower the youth within the hotel's locality to be self-reliant and hence welcomes passionate and willing prospective employees with or without experience to fill vacancies within the hotel. In terms of its corporate social responsibility, it has become a hub for the employment of the inhabitants in the area who uses it as an avenue to make a living.

The Manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Alhassan) who is a male, has been working in the hotel for the last 7 years. He started his career in the same hotel as a night receptionist in 2015 and was promoted to a restaurant manager that same year. In 2017, he was again promoted to the events and marketing manager and became the general Manager of the hotel in March 2021.

Based on his experience and long service, the Alhassan uses orientation, training, hand-on and job rotation to support the competence development of both new and existing staff. Newly employed staff are orientated and trained in the department they are assigned to with subsequent refresher trainings held for all employees both new and existing. Alhassan stated,

“The department in which they have been assigned, takes them through training frequently, and I the manager also comes in occasionally to take them through

training. Those employees who have been here for a while we include them when we are training new employees to refresh their skills too. It does not stop there, our CEO who is a lecturer also comes in to take them through refresher training in customer service occasionally”.

The senior employee (hereafter called Fauzia) who is a female, was employed as a front desk officer without any prior experience in the hotel industry. she has been in her role for the last 5 years from 2017. Her Higher National Diploma (HND) in secretaryship and management has helped her to quickly adapt to her job role. She underscored how the orientation and training has supported her competence development. Fauzia stated:

“I started here not knowing anything so my boss was taking me through so I was orientated and trained with management giving me a chance to work for them to see if I can work without supervision”.

The junior employee (hereafter called Munira) who is also a female, was also employed without any prior hotel experience. Munira is in her mid-30's with a tertiary level certificate and has been working as the receptionist for just over 12 months. Her duties include among others to relief the night auditor and ask for the number of guests in the hotel as well as conduct an audit herself before booking in new guests. She reiterated how orientation and training has helped her to develop her competence. Munira stated,

“When I came here, I met those who were already here together with my boss, and they all took me through my duties. So learnt from my seniors and through the training I was given”.

Employees are not left on their own during and after the training but are also guided by the manager on-the-jobs based on his knowledge and experience in the various

departments over the last 7 years. During busy periods, the manager goes in to help employees to deliver services to clients whilst observing how things are done.

Immediate corrections are made to employees and those that cannot be corrected immediately are taken through training. Alhassan stated,

“Because I was with the employees before I was promoted to a manager, I don’t see myself to be superior amongst them. I work with them hand-in-hand. For example, when we have a conference, I go to the restaurant to help them serve, I go to the kitchen to help them cook and I go to the front desk to help them receive guests. This gives me a chance to observe how things are done and those that needs corrections are done”.

Alhassan also bases some of the training and the hotel protocols on their competitor’s strategies and services by exploring through online research on the approaches used to support employees competence to deliver professional services to their customers and the hotel adopts a similar approach to support their employees competence. He stated,

“We go through online to check what other hotels are doing that we are not doing, and we adopt similar style to develop our staff”.

To diffuse critical situational dilemma of employees being unable to put hotel guest on hold nor approach other professionally competent employees or managers to seek help (Kang et al., 2020) during busy periods and supervisor absence, delegation is also used by Alhassan to support his employees competence development and allowing them to take their own initiative during the process as a motivational tool but backed by corrective actions. He also appoints an employee to stand in for Him and all managerial issues are directed to that person. The one

standing in for manager is also made to delegate his or her duties to other employees but still performing a supervisory role. Alhassan stated,

“I always appoint someone and say, in my absence let XYZ be the head of restaurant and act as the manager of the place. So, anything that has to do with the manger, refer it to him or her. When someone does something, I don’t correct him or her in from of everybody, I will call the person aside and speak to him or her. This makes them feel valued and would not want to repeat the same mistake due to the respect and discretion I showed to them”.

Based on these approaches adopted by the manager, employees feel comfortable to discuss issues openly with him. Fauzia, the senior employee stated,

“I feel he is democratic as he comes in to help us sometimes, interacts well with us and ask us our opinion on some issues that we need to solve”.

Munira, the Junior employee expressed similar feeling on the overall leadership style or approach used by Manager as democratic. she stated,

“I will say he is democratic because he is friendly, not harsh and corrects you politely and secretly when you do something wrong”.

Contextually however, Alhassan feels interference from the CEO affects his ability to exert the needed authority on employees to be able to support their competence as he (Alhassan) is closer to the employees than the CEO and hence know the lapses in their competence. Alhassan stated,

“I need the support of the Director of which the Director’s interference should minimize in the running of the place. Because if the director interferes more in the running of the place it makes the manager not too competent, the employees doesn’t even see the manager as a manager they just see you to be holding a position which somebody is directing you to do ABDC. So, if Director should allow

you to do things on your own, employees will obey and respect your inputs which can help to develop their competence”.

Internal controls regarding authority or access limits place within the computer systems as safeguards from the standpoint of employees are limiting employees ability to develop their competence in information technology. Fauzia mentioned,

“Everything should be networked but this front desk line, I cannot check any customers bookings or email or request except on the marketing manager’s computer”.

The locality where the hotel is situated is acknowledged to be dominated by Muslims. So, it is common to have more Muslim employees in establishments than the other religious faiths. Some of them shy away from roles that affect their faith which limits their ability to develop their competence. Munira stated,

“I don’t feel learning alcoholic beverage names or even serve it because I am a Muslim”.

Leveraging religious factors impacting employees competence is seemingly difficult due to its strict protocols. However, organisational support and allowing employees to take their own initiative motivates and leverages these factors. Alhassan stated,

“The CEO increases salaries every year based on hard work and competence. So, your salary can be increased twice in one year depending on how you work. As part of the support to staff, for example if you want a loan to buy a motor bike or do something, Director granted interest-free loans to staff, and the employees chooses how much to be deducted from their salaries until the loan is paid off”.

The support has also shaped the thinking of employees to feeling there is the need to build their competence not just for their current role but for their careers. Fauzia stated,

“If there is a problem, I will always try and reach him on phone but if I can’t get him, then I am allowed to make my own decisions because our director trained us which makes us feel he wants us to be in the job and it makes me feel even if I am no longer here, I can work elsewhere”.

The level of encouragement from management also serves as a source of motivation to staff. Munira stated,

“Manager is always happy when I take my own initiative. For example, just yesterday, a customer spoke highly of me to my manager. This together with their encouragement motivates us to learn on the job”.

Over the last two years to January 2022 and beyond, the geographical area of the hotel has undergone the creations of access roads and drainage systems to ease the flooding and limited access to the hotel. This, the hotel envisages will boost sales revenue in the coming years.

Case Hotel-8

SME Hotel-8 is a two-star hotel located in Ghana. It is established and registered in 2012 with the Registrar’s General department, Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and Ghana Revenue Authority. It currently has a room capacity of 150 which is managed by 30 staff. It provides accommodation, restaurant, and conferencing services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies. Large conferences organized by educational institutions are held in the hotel’s large conference hall. It is also used as a hub for student placements to gain experience for the job market. There is a committee in charge of recruiting employees and placement of students in the hotel whilst the manager performs a managerial and supervisory role on behalf of the university.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Latif) who is a male in his late-20's, holds an MSc in Non-governance and policy has been in his role for just under 3 months.

Apart from the training and the discrete corrections of employees competence lapses which are done face-to-face in the department they are assigned, one other approach the Latif uses to support the competence development of both new and existing employees is the what-do-you-think approach. With this approach, newly employed employees are orientated, trained and employees who fall short in their duties are discretely called by Latif and corrected without embarrassing the staff.

Latif explained,

“You can't reprimand them although they are your employees because most of them will either be your parents age or your brothers and sister's ages. So, you hold a meeting to correct the lapses and mistakes in the roles.

The senior employee of the hotel (hereafter called Na-imah) who is a female and in her mid-20's, holds an undergraduate degree in Accounting and have been in her current role for the last 13 months whilst the junior employee (hereafter referred to as Rashad), who is a male in his late-20's, holds a professional Diploma in Information Technology from one of the recognised IT training schools in Ghana and have been in his current role for the last 18 months.

The meeting approach seem to have gone down well with employees as they feel he listens, and they can all contribute to serve customers better. Na-imah summarized,

“His leadership style sort of vary. He is hard on us when the workload is much, and he supports us when there isn't much to do. So, I can't say he is autocratic because he listens to us. We hold meetings where we bring out our concerns, he listens and when he can correct us, he alerts us”.

Observation from Rashad relative to the manager's approach also surfaced. He commented:

"He calls for meetings and we discuss, and he will make a decision and ethically, he follows the rules of the industry".

Being new in his role, evidently some of the employees have been in the hotel longer than he has. To tap in and use their experience to support the competence of the junior employees is to use what Latif termed, the What-do-you-think approach. Latif questions employees to get their views relative to certain protocols and situation for deliberation and then selecting the best option to implement. He said:

"I believe in telling you let's do it like this but if you have any ideas, then let's do it. If you go my way and it doesn't work, then we go your way. As a leader, and in this part of our world almost all the employees are older than you. Some as old as your mother, senior sisters, and brothers. So, you can't go about reprimanding them. You just have to talk to them to tap into their experience, win their commitment through respect".

Despite the rapport between the employees and Latif, employees family related issues, lack of passion and the use of unrelated qualification with job roles in the hotel get in the way of the Latif's efforts to support employees competence.

Na-imah stated,

"My qualification is not in line with the job role. I studied accounting and now I am working as a front desk supervisor".

These factors demotivate employees and reduces their commitment to their roles within the hotel and hence affect the efforts they put in to develop their competence. Latif uses motivational and supportive strategies to curtail these factors. Allowing employees to take their own initiative psychologically motivates employees whilst

social and financial support makes employees feel that organization can support them when they are in need.

Na-imah also revealed,

“I am allowed to take my own initiative when manager is out, I am the in-charge and I do take my own initiative. This motivates us and they do call us and tell us we have done our best and if things go well, they will let us see the impact we have made. For example, when the year ended, they did something for us to show that our efforts was appreciated”.

Rashad also revealed,

“I live far from the hotel, and I take two different vehicles to work and in some occasions it take about 30 minutes or more to get means to get to work on time. The advice I received from Manager and supporting me with means of transport whenever I close late has also helped me a lot”.

Based on the hotel’s location, customer numbers do not seem encouraging, and most events organized in the hotel are related to educational institutions. Latif’s attempt to boost customer numbers to increase sales revenue undertake outreach days to promote the hotel as customer or guest numbers help employees to learn more about their roles.

Case Hotel-9

SME Hotel-9 which is a two-star hotel and a subsidiary of a Group of Companies in Ghana. It is registered as a sole proprietorship form of business, it was established in 2008 by a Ghanaian entrepreneur and his wife to raise the ingot for business and leisure accommodation by combining affordability, luxury, and modern facilities. It is also registered with the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and Ghana Revenue Authority. It currently has a capacity

of 102 rooms which is managed by 54 employees but was only started with 2 staff. It provides accommodation with Wi-Fi internet in all rooms, car hire, 120kva generator for 24-hour power, business centre, restaurant, bar, laundry, swimming, conferencing services and car washing services to individuals, organizations, and corporate bodies.

The hotel which is at the growth stage of its life cycle is still under the management of the owner's wife (hereafter called Ruhiya) who is a female and in her late-40's.

The hotel is acknowledged for providing guest security, privacy, custom-made services and convenience in doing business from the comfort of one's hotel room, but business is a bit slow due to the economic conditions in the area. With low staff salaries compared to other areas in Ghana, employees still accommodate these low salaries and still do their best just to maintain their jobs, make a living and look after their families. This have made commitment to their jobs to either come by need or through passion.

Ruhiya's approach to supporting the competence development of her employees for proper service delivery to maintain the image of the hotel has recognised the high illiteracy rate in the area and the lack of education among some of the employees. Orientation and training, recognition with an open-door and open-ear policy allowing employees access to her to share job, family, and social problems with her are used to support staff development. Ruhiya commented:

"People don't see the benefits in working in a hotel, so we bring in those without experience, train them and put them under areas like housekeeping that does not require technical competence like the use of computers. Within the hotel, we orientate new employees and take all the employees through training, which I must confess it's not easy. So, we bring in experts to train them. We organise

meetings every Monday and Friday to let them know what they are doing and to encourage them that they can do better. The hard work and the commitment to their job, we try to really let them know we appreciate what they are doing and their contribution in bringing the hotel to where it is today. So, at the end of the year, we recognise those who excelled in their roles by rewarding them with food stuff for their families and individually for their hard work and also throw parties for staff”.

The Junior employee (hereafter referred to as Zenabu) who is a female and in her mid-20’s, holds an undergraduate degree in Accounting from the university of professional studies. She is the Accountant of the hotel and has been in her current role for just over a year. She uses QuickBooks software for her accounting records, and she helps with front desk or kitchen and reports directly to the manageress daily. She reiterates how her competence have been supported and the factors that affected her in the process.

Personal research, delegation from her superior, training and support from management has supported her competence. She recalled:

“Being able to accept delegated task and accept corrections from your superior and colleagues is a way of building your competence. But you need to be trained. So, we had a consultant coming in to train me on the Quick Books and it made me to develop my competence. Daily, I will make sure I learn something new on the Quick Books and the consultant was impressed because there were things, I knew which he was not expecting me to know as of that time”.

Helping in the different sections within the hotel sometimes make Zenabu loose site of her own workload but she feels motivated to, as management allows her to prioritize her own workload by taking her own initiative. She stated,

“I have been given the authority to take my own initiative and if I make a mistake, my manager, will just say you should have done it this way or that way as it would have been best. So next time, try to do this way. Again, motivation from the manager and the Director has also helped me to build my competence”.

The senior employee (hereafter called Yussif) who is a male and in his late 30's and a son to the owner of the hotel, holds an HND in Accounting and has been in his current role for the last 9 years. Yussif generally supervises all the sections within the hotel including, catering and conference, housekeeping, front desk, maintenance, and security sections.

Recapping on his journey relative to how his competence development have been supported, orientation and training and support from manager have played a huge role. Yussif stated:

“I followed my immediate superior and she gave me some guidelines on what to do. And like I said, I learnt on the job. The first one or two months you must get yourself close to what they do through training. The support I also had was them being ready to listen to my initiatives. And ooh, the initiative must be very positive. Say, when it comes to staff, no problem but when it comes to structural change or you want something done which is probably correction, buying something or spending, then it's a no”.

Experience has thought Yussif that lack of employee voice has the tendency to affect employees competence development if not managed properly. Yussif stated:

“If that is not done, you can't really try a skill to see how effective it is and to be able to build upon it. Example, I want to organise a training for front desk staff, and I am disapproved or when I say, they don't heed to it because my voice is not loud, or I have not been given the needed authority. So, in my section, they say do this. And if

I say do this it means they (management) are saying do this. So that voice is what they should really look at”.

Employees turnover after being trained purposely from further education resulting in lack of passion for their roles coupled with family challenges have also been observed by Ruhiya to affect employees competence development as they seldom stay long after being trained. Ruhiya stated,

“Unfortunately, you train some of them and within a few months, they have run away as most of them just need money for school and so, they work for six months and then leave. At times, in trying to organise the training, it’s difficult because employees want to rush back and pick their children, they dropped off in the morning with either on foot or with their bicycles”.

Recognising the challenges and factors impacting the employees led to Ruhiya putting in place strategies to curtail these factors to boost employees commitment and support their competence. Supporting staff emotionally, financially and getting involved in their social lives are used to motivate staff. Ruhiya stated,

“Educationally, those who have a little background, and they still want to be educated we push them by supporting them. For example, I have two ladies I just made to rewrite their exams because I realised, they have the potential, but they have failed in some papers, so they decided to just give up. But no, I encourage them”.

Employees view these approaches as democratic, but the occasional discipline and reprimands make others view her style as dependent upon the situation. Yussif commented:

“With her, it changes. It is not dictatorship but sometimes a bit of dictatorship comes in. she gives you the freedom sometimes up to a certain limit, and sometimes she

takes it back. It varies, as she doesn't apply one leadership style. There are times she is being authoritative and there are times she will also be democratic. She will ask of our suggestions as in this and this, what do you think we should do".

Competitive hotels are springing up in the industry within the region to also have a share of the market and hence plans are far advanced to enhance the competence of employees professionally, improve services and expand to have a competitive edge over their competitors.

Case Hotel-10

SME Hotel-10 is a two-star hotel located in Ghana. It is registered as a sole proprietorship form of business with the registrar General's department, the Ghana Tourism Authority, the Food and Drugs Authority, the Ghana Hotels Association and Ghana Revenue Authority. It currently has a capacity of 30 rooms which is managed by 32 staffs. It provides accommodation, restaurant, bar, laundry, swimming and two conferencing services to individual, organizations, and corporate bodies. The first conference room which is the largest can accommodate just over 300 people whilst the small conference room can accommodate just over 70 people. For the comfort of its guest, the hotel has a year-round outdoor pool and views of the mountains where guests can sit and enjoy a meal at the restaurant with a showcase of a hot spring bath and fitness centre and a bar located near the pool. They also offer car rental and airport pick up services for guests. Being at the introductory stage of its life cycle, the hotel is still jockeying for a position with outreach and marketing campaigns targeted at individuals, organizations, and corporate bodies.

The manager of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Luqman) who is a male and in his late-30's and just a few months in his new role have been working in the hospitality

industry for the last 21 years in different roles spanning from a pantry staff, floor manager, bar manager, audit, and head chef.

The policy of Luqman is to allow those who are qualified after passing their interview to go through a month-long hands-on orientation and training in the department the employees will be assigned, to assess their readiness and passion for the job before being allowed to attend to guest. Luqman stated,

“We put you on one-month full training example, in the kitchen. You don’t attend to food, but you rather stay back and do the chopping, cutting, and washing whilst learning the techniques of the kitchen. When you get used to the system, then we can move you to a table and continue with the training to build your competence. I am not looking for someone who is too fast but someone who can do the work.

Sometimes within this training is looking for someone who has the mind to truly work.

So, in the kitchen, if there is no patience, the person doesn’t even want to get to pantry section to work. So, when the need comes for you to get there to support, you are not ready to do so. So, I start my training by letting you who you are in the establishment. For waiters, they need to understand we don’t put long hair with beads. They call it style, but HACCP doesn’t allow it. For example, last week in our training with the waitresses, I asked the question, who is a waitress, and they all said someone who serves. Meaning, if someone holds a plate at a mechanic shop, then that person is a waiter. So, to improve the competence of employees using training, again I have come out with a system for me to let them work like I want them to do. I have come out with a checklist and a job description; I have given all the employees a few days to read through it carefully and those who cannot read should get someone to guide them to understand it before signing it. Employees are therefore

assessed and judged based on that document. Let there be that agreement, so that you don't talk but your checklist will be working".

The culture and lifestyle of the area as well as employees lack of understanding of their job roles and titles have been notice by Luqman as factors impacting competence development. Competence lapses during or after training are developed with the use of the scrum system introduced by Luqman. The scrum system is a name given to a system designed by the Luqman based on his long service and experience within the hotel industry. He uses this to support employees competence and manage service lapses within the hotel. Customer complaints play a key role in the system as it informs Luqman of employees competence and service lapses within the hotel. He evaluates these lapses and take the centre stage to display how these lapses should be rectified. He then leaves employees and heads of department with a level of leverage to practice the new directives. Key to the system is to encourage employees to concentrate more on areas on services hotel staff are less competent in and less on area they are more competent in. Luqman stated, *"We tackle what we are doing well a little bit put more effort and emphasis on other areas to aid in improving their experience and competence. The strategy is, I come into the system I just don't touch anything, I stand aside and watch how they do their things and stay behind to see what I can add, what I must take away, if it doesn't work, I cut down the tree and allow the tree to regrow again".*

The tree structure is another approach to leadership style used by Luqman to support the competence development of his staff. He assimilates the commitment of employees to the roots, stem, branches and leaves of a tree and tailor efforts towards the development of competence based on these commitment levels. He

puts efforts in order of importance starting with the roots, stem, branches and lastly the leaves. He stated,

“My style is equally to draw a structure of a tree and put some people on the leaves, branches, stem, and the roots. The roots are people I can count on morning, evening, and night. I don’t joke with them, and I give allowances and flexibility when dealing with them. But when it come to the leaves, I don’t put too much emphasis on you because you easily fall, time can take you away and the wind can take you away. I concentrate on people who are ready, and when you are ready and the system changes, no matter what you will abide by the system”.

The senior employee of the hotel (hereafter referred to as Rukaya) who is a female and in her late-20’s, is the marketing officer and receptionist in charge of outreach, bookings, attending to clients, taking order from clients to the restaurant and to the bar. Rukaya holds an undergraduate degree in education and have been in her new role for just over 3 months. Rukaya, however, have some experience in working in a 4-star hotel.

The junior employee (hereafter called Seidu) who is a male and the Accountant of the hotel is in his late-20’s and has been in his role for just over a month. Seidu is in charge of bookkeeping, he reconciles the hotel’s sales with receipts as well as filing of tax returns and social security and national insurance trust (SSNIT).

Luqman, Rukaya and Seidu who are the manager, the senior and junior staff respectively are all new employees and hence have not gotten to know each other well or work together properly. Luqman tries to implement policies whilst employees think those policies are a bit strict and have therefore described the leadership approach of Luqman as a bit autocratic. Rukaya stated,

“He (the manager), whatever he says, he feels like it the best and you the employee you don’t have any say and whatever suggestions you have doesn’t make sense to him. I feel bad psychologically about this and to his side, I’d rather relax because whatever I have to contribute doesn’t make sense to him”.

Seidu also stated,

“I will say autocratic and the demanding type, which is quite stressful. Because when you are doing your best and they are still demanding it makes you feel you are not working at all”.

These approaches that led to Luqman being described as being autocratic has however supported employees competence for proper service delivery. Recounting on what has supported her competence development, Rukaya mentioned orientation and training and management support in the form of advice, being allowed to take her own initiative and seasonal social support. She said:

“When I came here too, I was taken through two weeks training and orientation about bookings and how to go about my duties in the hotel. And yes, I am allowed to take my own initiative. I have ever done something and when my boss came, I told him this was the issue and I decided to do it this way and he was happy about it. Again, once a week the managing director (MD) will take me to his office and advise me and during festive seasons, example last Christmas I was given a bag of rice, oil and other things. This makes you work because when you are appreciated by your boss it motivates you to do more”.

Apart from family and financial constraints which affects Rukaya’s ability to develop her competence, she also believes the management system is also a contributory factor. She stated,

“I have worked in a 4-star hotel before and now I am working in a 2-star hotel. You feel like things should be done this way, but nobody is giving you a chance to explain it”.

Seidu also recounted how the manager’s approaches have supported his competence development. Apart from the training which he receives and management supporting by allowing him to take his own initiative, there is also a consultant who is readily available to assist whenever there are challenges, and this also supports his competence development. He stated,

“When I came here, I was taken through some training on how to perform my role. We also have a consultant who assist us whenever we have some difficulties and it actually made me to develop my competence. And yes, I do take my own initiative and manager doesn’t react, he was ok with it. I explore whenever I have a challenge before I call for help”.

Management support and employees motivation is part of the manager’s approaches to curtail the factors that seemingly affect employees competence development. supporting employees and rewarding them financially and socially is another leadership approach used by Luqman to support the competence development of his staff. Waitressing tips are pulled and shared according to level of authority and used or replaced furniture, fittings and beddings are also distributed to employees based on hard work and their commitment levels. Luqman stated,

“We support employees with furniture and fittings and other beddings that have been replaced by the hotel. Example TV, bedsheets, used towels etc. We use what I call middle of month incentive in the form of travel and transport to motivate them as well as pulling of tips. Tips are pulled and shared by both

waiters and cashiers even though cashiers do not serve, but they support, and they are the eyes of the waiters when they are busy”.