The impact of selected front-end hotel managerial competencies on employee engagement: An exploratory study

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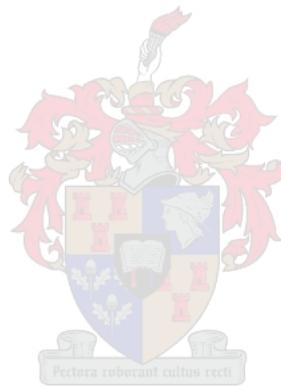
Thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Commerce in the Faculty of Economic and Management Sciences at Stellenbosch University

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DECLARATION

ii

I herewith declare this work to be my own, and that I have acknowledged all the sources I have consulted by providing the necessary recognition. In addition, I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted the thesis for obtaining any qualification at any other university.

Signed: Elizabeth Reeves   **Date: December 2020**

ABSTRACT

This study explored the mechanisms that drive employee engagement in the South African hotel industry. The aim of the study was to determine the precursors or predictors of customer-contact employee engagement. Specifically, the aim was to determine the impact of selected front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement.

The research objectives were to: (1) develop an explanatory structural model that explains the variance in employee engagement, and the nature and strength of the relationships between the selected front-end managerial competencies and employee engagement, and (2) make recommendations regarding practical interventions based on the research findings.

Customer-contact employees were the units of observation (participants). The participants completed an online survey in which they reported on their own level of engagement and rated the degree to which their manager displays *task-oriented behaviours*, *empowering leadership behaviours*, *social-emotional competency* and *work design competency*. A total of 106 surveys were collected (n = 106).

Item analysis, regression and redundancy analysis were performed as preliminary statistical analyses. Thereafter, partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used to assess the relationship between the manifest and latent variables, as well as the main effects between the latent variables.

The item analysis results indicate that the items of the various indicators do measure the same underlying construct, as intended, with the exception of the *work design competency* scale. Upon further investigation, the researcher decided to divide *work design competency* into two independent and theoretically distinct constructs, namely: *work design task characteristics* and *work design social characteristics*. By implication, the number of exogenous latent variables in the model increased to five. Furthermore, the redundancy analysis indicated a severe degree of collinearity between two of the variables (*task-oriented behaviours* and *empowering leadership behaviours*). Consequently, three different PLS-SEM models were run – one model that comprised all variables (five exogenous and one endogenous latent variable), and two models where one of the collinear variables was removed, to determine the impact this would have on the predictive accuracy of the exogenous latent variables of the latent construct.

The findings show that the degree to which the manager designs task characteristics (such as task identity, task significance, task variety, autonomy and feedback) has an impact on

employee engagement. Also, the degree to which the manager displays social emotional competency (emotion regulation, self-awareness, stress management, empathy, optimism etc.) has a positive impact on employee engagement. A limitation of the current study is the uncritical adherence to the theoretical misconception to calculate a composite score for the work design competency scale that comprises of *work design: task characteristics* and *work design: social characteristics* scales. The researcher recommends that future studies assess a model in which the 12 diagnostic subscales of the work design competency scale are fitted as exogenous latent variables. In addition, the researcher recommends that future studies assess the possible moderating impact of structural and psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership behaviours and employee engagement. Lastly, the practical implications of the findings suggests that managers should consider contextual and individual factors carefully before changing task characteristics by implementing job redesign interventions, since factors such as managerial style, technology, ability and preferences can have an impact on the effectiveness of job redesign and job crafting interventions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND CONTEXT AND RESEARCH GOALS

An organisation exists as an open system within a community, and as an entity that is part of a country and part of the global village, the world economy. In other words, an organisation as an open system exists in interdependence with the environment and community surrounding it. Consequently, one could argue that the purpose of an organisation is to be a partner that adds value to the system it belongs to, and in turn is influenced by the system surrounding it. The services delivered or products produced by organisations contribute to and enhance the quality of life of the global community. It is therefore critical for an organisation to perform successfully. A high-performing organisation is a profitable organisation that contributes to the local and global economy. One could argue that the performance of the organisation depends largely on knowledge, and that the level of existing knowledge determines profitability, which in turn contributes to the GDP of the country (Shafi & Fatima, 2019).

The people in an organisation are the fundamental role players and are directly responsible for organisational performance. Organisations vary in many ways, such as structure, size, function and culture. As a result, human resource functions are applied and adapted to meet the different needs of the organisation. Human resource functions are implemented to align with organisational goals and values. These functions are employed in order to optimise the performance of the organisation by increasing unit and individual-level productivity and performance (Institute for Employment Studies [IES], 2019).

In order for an organisation to be successful and to add value, the human capital of the organisation has to consist of competent, engaged and dedicated employees. It is the role of the industrial psychologist to investigate the variables influencing performance. Performance can be explained as a range of complex psychological processes that are dependent on person characteristics and abilities, skills, career and job competencies, and the impact of situational demands and resources. Thus, performance is part of a complex nomological framework that consists of many interrelated variables. To this end, the industrial psychologist should determine these underlying variables and their relation to performance by conducting research in a responsible and scientific manner. Research findings are used to either modify or to predict behaviour – to design and implement processes and systems that will enhance overall organisational performance (Raineri, 2016).

Specifically, due to the national and international growth of the travel and hospitality sector, and consequently the growing public profile of this sector, the impact and outcomes of travel and hospitality organisations have received more attention over the last couple of years (Chung & Parker, 2010; Mitchell, Font, & Li, 2014). Moreover, the financial, social and environmental outcomes of these organisations have become an increasing concern due to their impact on local communities, their relationships with other local businesses and governments alike, as well as the sector's significant ecological footprint (Chung & Parker, 2010; Mitchell et al. 2014). In addition, the development of strategic objectives and the successful implementation of those strategies that focus on the triple bottom line have become a competitive advantage for many large hotel groups. Since the development and implementation of those strategies depend on the human capital within the organisation, it remains an imperative to determine the required abilities, characteristics, and competencies of individuals and teams that drive organisational performance.

1.1 Travel and Tourism Sector

The World Travel and Tourism Council ([WTTC], 2019) emphasises the important impact of the tourism industry on a country's economy, the positive impact on growth and development, as well as the positive effect of tourism on foreign exchange income. Furthermore, the travel and tourism sector makes a significant contribution to a country's competitiveness and growth, as well as a significant contribution to the world economy (World Economic Forum, 2019).

1.1.1 The total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP and employment

At this stage it may be valuable to distinguish between the direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP and employment, as well as the indirect or induced impacts of the sector on GDP and employment. Firstly, industries that deal directly with tourists, including hotels, travel agents, airlines and restaurants and leisure industries, are contributing directly to the GDP. Moreover, the direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to employment refers to the number of direct jobs associated with the above-mentioned industries. Specifically, direct spending impacts are (1) visitor exports (spending within a country by international tourists for both leisure and business trips); (2) domestic travel and tourism spending (spending within a country by that country's residents for both leisure and business trips); (3) government spending (spending by government on services directly linked to visitors, such as museums and national parks); and (4) **internal tourism consumption** (total revenue generated by industries dealing directly with tourists, such as **visitor exports**, **domestic travel and tourism spending**, and **government individual spending**) (Christian, 2015).

Secondly, the indirect or induced impacts of the travel and tourism sector on GDP and employment refer to the contribution of the following four factors: (1) Capital investment (spending by all sectors involved in travel and tourism, including specific tourism assets, such as new visitor accommodation and passenger transport equipment, as well as restaurants and leisure facilities for specific tourism use); (2) Government collective spending (spending can include national, regional and local government spending on tourism promotion, visitor information services, administrative services and other public services); (3) Supply-chain effects (purchases of domestic goods and services from other sectors as input to hotels final tourism output, such as meat and furniture suppliers); and (4) **Induced contribution** (viewed as the **broader contribution to GDP and employment** of spending by those who are **directly or indirectly** employed in the travel and tourism sector) (Christian, 2015).

Therefore, the **total contribution of the travel and tourism sector to GDP** refers to the GDP generated directly by the travel and tourism sector, as well as indirectly by other industries. In the same way, the **total contribution to employment** refers the number of jobs generated directly in the travel and tourism sector, as well as the indirect and induced contributions (Christian, 2015).

To put this all into perspective, the total contribution of travel and tourism accounts for 10.4% of global GDP, with a growth rate of 3.9% – a faster growth rate than the wider global economy (3.2%). In addition, the sector supports 319 million people through employment (direct and indirect), which translated to 10% of total employment in 2018 (WTTC, 2019).

The total contribution of the travel and tourism sector in Africa amounts to 8.5% of GDP. Also, the travel and tourism sector directly and indirectly supports 24.3 million jobs – a total of 6.7% of the workforce. Employment in the travel and tourism sector is expected to rise to 32.9 million jobs of total employment by 2029 (WTTC, 2019).

The travel and tourism sector's direct contribution to GDP in countries in the South African Development Community (SADC), such as Angola, Botswana, Democratic Republic of Congo, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa, Swaziland, Tanzania, Zambia and Zimbabwe, was 2.8% of total GDP in 2017, and the total contribution of the sector in those countries was 8.2% of GDP – it is forecast to rise to 8.7% of GDP by 2028 (WTTC, 2018). In addition, the travel and tourism sector's direct contribution to employment is 2 526 000 (2.4% of the total workforce), and its total contribution to employment is 6 326 000 jobs – which translates into 6.1% of jobs in the total workforce across

SADC countries. Moreover, the travel and tourism investment in 2017 was USD9.1 billion, or 6.2% of total investment (WTTC, 2018).

Finally, the direct contribution of the travel and tourism sector to South Africa's GDP was 2.9% of total GDP (ZAR136.1 billion) in 2017, which is forecast to rise to 3.3% of total GDP in 2028 (WTTC, 2018). In addition, the total contribution of travel and tourism was 8.6% of GDP (ZAR425.8 billion) in 2017 and it is expected to rise to 10.1% of GDP (ZAR598.6 billion) by 2028 (WTTC, 2018). According to the WTTC (2018), the travel and tourism sector directly supported 726 500 jobs in 2017 (4.5% of the workforce) and its total contribution to employment (including jobs indirectly supported by the sector) was 1 530 000 jobs in 2018. By extension, the sector's contribution to employment is expected to rise to 11.1% of total employment (2 082 000 jobs) by 2028 (WTTC, 2018).

Visitor exports generated ZAR126.7 billion (9.2% of total exports) in 2017 and is forecasted to grow to ZAR219.6 billion by 2028 (WTTC, 2018). Lastly, travel and tourism investment in 2017 was ZAR71 billion (8.2% of total investment) and is expected to rise to ZAR112.7 billion by 2028 (10.1% of total investment) (WTTC, 2018). The table below provides a summary of the impact of the travel and tourism industry on GDP, and its contribution to employment.

Table 1.1

The impact of the travel and tourism industry on GDP and employment

	Direct contribution to GDP	Total contribution to GDP (including direct and indirect contributions)	Direct contribution to employment	Total contribution to employment (including direct and indirect contributions)
World economy		10.4%		319 million jobs
Africa		8.5%		24.3 million jobs
SADC	2.8%	8.2%	2.5 million jobs	6.3 million jobs
South Africa	2.9%	8.6%	726,500 jobs	1.5 million jobs

Note: Please take cognisance that the direct contribution to GDP and employment involves all travel and tourism businesses that deal directly with international and local tourists, while the total contribution of travel and tourism to GDP and employment also includes all those industries and businesses that indirectly contribute to the sector (e.g., supply-chain effects and government collective spending). Adapted from "The Economic Impact of Travel and Tourism," by World Travel and Tourism Council (2018). Copyright 2018 by World Travel and Tourism Council Org.

South Africa ranked 61st amongst 140 countries on the global competitiveness travel and tourism index (moving down 13 places since 2015, when it ranked 48th amongst 141 countries in the world). Also, South Africa ranked 2nd in the Sub-Saharan region (moving down one place

since 2015, when it ranked 1st in the sub-Saharan region) – Mauritius now ranks number one in the Sub-Saharan region. This ranking depends on the policies, productivity and performance of institutions operating within the industry, and the ability of these organisations to contribute to the development of the local community, which in turn contributes to the development of the country (World Economic Forum, 2015, 2019). The Travel and Tourism Competitiveness index (World Economic Forum, 2015, 2019) evaluates countries on 14 pillars that can be divided into four subcategories. Refer to Table 1.2 below for a more detailed breakdown of the various subcategories and pillars:

Table 1.2

A comparison between South Africa's 2015 and 2019 rankings on the Travel and Tourism Competitiveness Index

Subcategories	14 Pillars	2015	2019
Enabling environment	Business environment	15	57
	Safety and security	119	132
	Health and hygiene	114	113
	Human resources and labour market	105	81
	ICT readiness	62	75
Travel and tourism policy	Prioritisation of travel and tourism	46	83
	International openness	102	109
	Price competitiveness	42	53
	Environmental sustainability	56	124
Infrastructure	Air transport infrastructure	48	53
	Ground and port infrastructure	63	58
	Tourist service infrastructure	40	64
Natural and cultural resources (based on the principle "reasons to travel")	Natural resources	22	15
	Cultural resources	20	23

Note: Adapted from "The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2015: Growth through Shocks", and, "The Travel & Tourism Competitiveness Report 2019: Travel and Tourism at a Tipping Point", by the World Economic Forum, 2015, 2019. Copyright by the World Economic Forum.

In comparison to previous years, it is evident that South Africa is currently ranking lower on most pillars. The World Economic Forum (2019) found a significant relationship between a country's competitiveness (and the strength of the travel and tourism industry), and the number of international and domestic visitors. Clearly, the challenges that we recently experienced in South Africa, such as the water crisis in the Western Cape, as well as the corruption exposed on the level of the government, could contribute to the decrease in the number of international and domestic visitors. What is more, the mismanagement of funds in state-owned enterprises could have led to the stagnation/decline in infrastructure development and our poor quality of electricity supply – these are all contributory factors that have had an

impact on the regression of our travel and tourism industry. To illustrate, in 2015, the direct contribution of travel and tourism to total GDP was 3.3%, while it declined to 2.9% of total GDP in 2018 (WTTC, 2016, 2018). Moreover, the World Economic Forum (2019) warns that the travel and tourism industry is growing too fast compared to the slower improvement of infrastructure and sustainable tourism management practices. Thus, the travel and tourism industry can be a powerful economic driver, but it can also become a risk to ongoing development of the industry if the appropriate measures are not in place, and if people are not leveraged to their full potential by sophisticated HR practices.

1.1.2 Traveller and tourist accommodation in South Africa

In June 2019, 3 355 904 travellers (arrivals, departures and transits) passed through South Africa's ports of entry, of which 1 080 305 were South African residents and 2 227 599 were foreign travellers (Statistics South Africa, 2019b). Interestingly, overseas tourists dropped by -0.2% from June 2018 to June 2019. Moreover, the top three largest groups of overseas visitors were from the United States of America (23.6%), the United Kingdom (12.8%) and Germany (6.3%). In addition, 97% of tourists from Africa were from SADC (South African Development Community) countries. Also, 97% of these visitors visited South Africa for holiday purposes, 2.5% for business, 0.5% for study purposes, and 1% for medical treatment (Statistics South Africa, 2019b).

The total income from the tourist accommodation industry in South Africa increased by 8.2% in June 2019 compared with June 2018. The types of accommodation that made the largest contributions to the increase were hotels and other accommodation (excluding caravan parks and camping sites, guesthouses and guest farms) (Statistics South Africa, 2019a).

1.1.3 Travellers and tourist accommodation in Cape Town

Cape Town Tourism and Horwath HTL (2018) provide a visitor profile of 41% domestic visitors, 52% international visitors and 7% regional visitors during the month of December 2018. In addition, the top-source international markets are visitors to Cape Town from Germany, the UK, France, USA and Brazil. Moreover, 86% of all visitors visited Cape Town for holiday purposes, 9% for business reasons, 2% visited friends and relatives, and 2% visited for other reasons (study, medical, etc.). The most common duration of stay was 3 to 4 nights (30% of visitors), 23% of visitors stayed for 9 nights or more, 22% of visitors stayed for 1 to 2 nights, 15% of visitors stayed for 5 to 6 nights, and 10% of visitors stayed for 7 to 8 nights. Excluding accommodation, the average daily budget for 68% of visitors was between ZAR501 and

ZAR1 000. The three main activities visitors participated in were nature and outdoors, sightseeing, and food and wine (Cape Town Tourism & Horwath HTL, 2018).

Cape Town Tourism and Horwath HTL (2018) indicate the following regarding occupancy rates per accommodation type: (1) Backpackers had the highest occupancy rate of all accommodation types, with 77% in December 2018 in comparison with 77.1% in December 2017; (2) Bed-and-breakfast accommodation had an occupancy rate of 76.4% in 2018 in comparison with 72.9% in 2017; (3) Self-catering units had an occupancy rate of 72.6% in 2018 in comparison with 71.5% in December 2017; also, hotels had an occupancy rate of 69.6% in December 2018 in comparison with 69.1% in December 2017; and (4) Guesthouses had an occupancy rate of 63.6% in comparison with 67.9% in December 2017. In addition, hotels indicated the highest average room rate, with ZAR2 340 in 2018 (compared to ZAR2 319 in 2017). Also, a source market analysis (proportion of the particular market that stayed at a certain accommodation type) indicated that 35.1% of domestic visitors in 2018 stayed at hotels, along with 9.8% of regional visitors, and 55.1% of international visitors (Cape Town Tourism and Horwath HTL, 2018).

In brief, it is evident that the travel and tourism industry has a great impact on a country's economy (GDP and employment), and competitiveness and growth. Furthermore, hotels as accommodation type (with the highest average room rate) are making the largest contribution to the total income of the tourist accommodation industry. Thus, one can argue that the optimal performance of these organisations within the South African travel and tourism industry will have a positive effect on the country.

1.2 Challenges and Issues in the Hotel Industry

It seems evident that the impact of the travel and tourism sector, and specifically the growth and impact of the hotel industry in South Africa, warrant further investigation of the performance dimensions within this industry. Moreover, if one wishes to explain the process that drives the performance of hotels, it is necessary to first develop an understanding of the various challenges the industry currently faces.

Guy Langford, Vice-Chairman of Travel, Hospitality and Leisure at Deloitte (2016), summarises the key challenges and issues that have an impact on overall hotel performance as follows: Firstly, customer needs and expectations are changing due to the increase in millennials, who influence the consumption and travel behaviours of both older and younger generations. Millennials typically harbour expectations, such as customised travel and service experiences, personalised communication, and flawless service execution. Thus, the

challenge is for hotels to understand and respond to the continuously changing and evolving customer needs and expectations.

In correspondence with the first challenge, the second challenge involves the collection of data, the analysis and interpretation thereof, as well as the distribution of information to internal and external stakeholders. Deloitte (2016) argues that travel and hospitality organisations are "data-rich, but insight poor", and calls for the development of analytical capabilities amongst managerial employees to translate data into insights and innovations.

Thirdly, sophisticated human resource practices, such as recruitment and selection, as well as the retention of valuable skills within these organisations, is a challenge. Deloitte (2016) argues that jobs within the industry are becoming more specialised, and the industry needs to attract employees with the necessary technical and interpersonal skills. Ihtiyar et al. (2014) further advocate that the hotel industry is a fast-paced industry that consists of demanding employer and customer expectations. Therefore, the nature of the job requires individuals with exceptional interpersonal skills, intercultural competence, time-management skills, leadership skills, decision-making and problem-solving abilities, as well as the ability to adapt (Ihtiyar et al., 2014). In a similar vein, the WTTC (2019) reports that the travel and tourism sector is one of the world's largest employers, and that growth in this sector depends on the right people with the right skills to meet the demands for human capital. Since the sector employs a higher proportion of women and younger individuals, the travel and tourism sector offers real opportunities for job creation to address youth unemployment, and for women to be self-employed (WTTC, 2019). Consequently, proper skill development and more sophisticated human resource practices within the industry will lead to increased productivity, increased service quality, and customer loyalty – which in turn will lead to sector growth and address workforce issues such as youth unemployment and gender inequality.

High staff turnover rates are further among the top five of the industry's concerns (Deloitte, 2016). The hotel industry shows significantly higher staff turnover rates than many other industries (AlBattat, Puad Mat Som, & Helalat, 2014). Some of the reasons underlying high staff turnover rates are the seasonal requirements of the industry, as well as the perception amongst younger employees that travel and hospitality organisations do not offer long-term career opportunities and advancement. As a result, AlBattat et al. (2014) advocate the implementation of human resource practices that reduce turnover and lengthen tenure in hospitality organisations, such as an equitable and fair renumeration system, the number of hours worked, the amount of time and effort invested in training, job security and promotion opportunities, and increased discretion at work. Employers perceive no purpose in developing

skills in sectors with a high staff turnover; however, failure to implement high-performance systems, such as sophisticated selection and recruitment, as well as training and development opportunities, may contribute to higher labour turnover (Selden, Schimmoeller, & Thompson, 2013).

The fourth and final key challenge the hotel industry faces is the trend that the competitive dynamics are changing. New strategies, such as the increasing consolidation among hotels, or consolidation between other travel and hospitality organisations, originate from the objective to gain market share and integrate their product platform. Thus, the dynamics of competitive advantage are changing due to the increased popularity of the shared-economy model. For instance, virtual organisations are entering niche markets, such as Airbnb, that does not own a single hotel room; Uber, that does not own a single car; and OpenTable, that does not own a single restaurant. Due to the nature of these organisations in the shared-economy and their emphasis on convenience, gaining and maintaining a competitive advantage is becoming a lot more difficult (Deloitte, 2016).

It is evident that the neglect of human resource practices affects the performance of hotel establishments. High turnover rates and low levels of tenure further lead to higher recruitment and training costs, lower productivity and poorer service quality – which in turn negatively affect customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention (AlBattat et al., 2014). Taking into account the important contribution of the travel and tourism sector to the GDP, its role in job creation and its impact on addressing challenges, such as youth unemployment, the productivity, service quality and overall organisational performance in South African hotels require urgent attention. To this end, the necessary competencies, skills and abilities of individuals need to be identified and developed to ensure effective performance. Specifically, the industry should focus on the development of managerial competencies involved in individual- and team-level performance. Once these competencies and their relation to performance outcomes have been established, the focus should be upon the implementation of proper human resource practices in order to sustain continuous innovation and performance.

1.3 Competitive Advantage in Hotel Organisations

Deloitte (2016) states that travel and hospitality "companies operate in a world where change is the only constant". In an environment in which change is the only constant, it becomes increasingly more challenging to obtain or maintain a competitive advantage. Kim and Oh (2004) propose that, in order for management to identify the sources of competitive advantage in the hotel industry and to understand the strategic management process, management should integrate three conceptual models. The first conceptual model (Porter's five-forces

approach) focuses more on external forces, such as the threat of new market entries, the threat of substitute products or services, the bargaining power of buyers and suppliers, customers, and the competitive intensity among industry incumbents (Kim & Oh, 2004; Tavitiyaman, Hailin, & Hanqin, 2011)

The second model – the resource-based approach – considers the organisation's internal resources as sources of competitive advantage. The model proposes that the heterogeneity of internal resources between organisations account for the observed variation in performance (Cohen & Olsen, 2013). The heterogeneity of competencies, capabilities, assets, information and knowledge therefore provides the opportunity for the organisation to further develop innovative and unique strategies, products and services (Kim & Oh, 2004). Cohen and Olsen (2013), for instance, researched the importance of information technology (IT) resources in contributing to the competitive performance of hospitality firms in South Africa. The researchers made use of the resource-based approach (in which tangible and intangible IT resources necessary for innovative strategy formation and implementation were identified. Cohen and Olsen (2013) investigated the impact of information technology resources on an organisation's competitive performance, as mediated by the service profit chain framework – the service profit chain describes the financial performance of service organisations largely driven by service outcomes, such as customer satisfaction and customer loyalty, which in turn depend on satisfied, competent and committed employees. The finding indicates that complementary systems of IT resources have a significantly direct effect on a hotel's competitive performance, while the effect of IT resources on customer service is fully mediated by employee outcomes, as indicated by the service profit chain (Cohen & Olsen, 2013).

The third conceptual model is the relational approach, which theorises that competitive performance can be achieved by developing linkages such as strategic alliances, joint ventures and trust-based relationships. A competitive advantage can therefore be obtained through exchange relationships that otherwise cannot be generated by an organisation in isolation or through the joint contributions of the specific partners (Kim & Oh, 2004). Along the same lines, Nieves and Segarra-Cipres (2015) distinguish between internal and external antecedents of management innovation in the hospitality industry. The internal antecedents of managerial innovation refer to employees' knowledge and skills, as well as the manner in which knowledge, skills and actions are allowed to interrelate to meet changing conditions. On the other hand, external antecedents of innovation refer to the relationships that are formed with stakeholders or other industry competitors – both internal and external antecedents determine the introduction of management innovation (innovative strategies, such as the introduction of new methods, new quality management practices, new information-and

11

knowledge-management systems, and the introduction of changes to improve the division of the responsibilities of decision-making) (Nieves & Segarra-Cipres, 2015).

Molina-Azorin et al. (2015) report that quality management and environmental management permit the improvement of competitive advantage in terms of costs and differentiation. In fact, hotels that implement quality programmes find fewer obstacles to implement environmental management, which in turn leads to increased financial performance. Similarly, Llach et al. (2013) report that quality management practices (QMP), in combination with environmental management practices (EMP), lead to market success and financial performance for businesses in the service industry. Thus, integrating social and environmental objectives into broader financial and operational strategy assists with regulatory compliance and serves as a competitive advantage. Examples of social and environmental strategies are the quantification of environmental costs and savings (environmental audits), environmental training programmes, green purchasing policies, energy- and water-saving actions, and recycling. Specifically, the Mandarin Oriental hotel in Bangkok uses an email network called GREEN (Group Real-time Environmental Exchange Network) to share employee-generated issues and concerns. So too, the Saunders Group in Boston used its SHINE (Saunders Hotel Initiative to Nurture the Environment) campaign to solicit employee input. Another environmental strategy that has gained popularity amongst big hotel groups is the design of energy-efficient building programmes. Thus, if social and environmental targets are implemented alongside financial indicators and associated controls, they contribute to the organisation's competitiveness and overall performance (Chung & Parker, 2010).

It appears that, for organisations to have a competitive advantage, innovative strategies, such as strategic alliances and the unique utilisation of internal resources, as well as the implementation of social and environmental practices, are essential for success in an ever-changing environment. In addition, the implementation of sophisticated human resource practices, based on empirical research that provides evidence in terms of the psychological mechanisms that drives performance in the hotel industry, will enhance individual and team performance. Thus, innovative managerial strategies have an impact on customer satisfaction and retention, mediated by individual- and team-level performance.

In conclusion, innovative managerial strategies that contribute to competitive performance in hotel organisations are (1) the encouragement of guest connections and the inclusion of customer input in the design of their own service experience, with a specific focus on convenience; (2) the use of technology and social media as marketing tools; (3) data collection for strategic planning and the sharing of information; (4) improved risk management initiatives;

(5) the recognition of the value of strategic affiliations and alliances (for example, the alliance between the Hilton Hotel Group and Uber, as well between KLM Airlines and Airbnb); and finally, (6) the empowerment of employees to deliver personalised customer experiences, as well as the facilitation of employee engagement and a sense of psychological ownership to ensure a motivated and committed workforce, and ultimately organisational performance (Deloitte, 2016).

In the end, the performance of customer-contact employees, and especially unit effectiveness, are dependent on front-end managerial competencies. The degree to which the manager displays certain behaviours will have a significant impact on employee engagement, which in turn will affect service quality, customer satisfaction and customer retention.

1.4 Research-Initiating Question and Research Objectives

The research-initiating question for this study is, "*What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?*" The research-initiating question culminates in the following research objectives:

- To develop a reduced explanatory structural model that explains the variance in front-end employee engagement as a result of front-end managerial competencies;
- To evaluate the path coefficients of the hypothesised relationships in the proposed structural model; and
- To make recommendations to the hotel industry in terms of the possible precursors that have an impact on employee engagement.

In the chapters to follow the researcher will reveal the theorising, analysis and results that meet the objectives of the study. Specifically, Chapter 2, the literature review, draws from scientific research that follows a systematic argument that culminates in the four research hypotheses. In addition, the methodology chapter (Chapter 3) provides a rationale for the selected data analysis techniques and methods, while Chapter 4 engages the reader in an in-depth discussion of the data analysis results. Lastly, Chapter 5, addresses the study limitations, recommendations for future studies and practical applications.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, an overview of the literature is presented in order to address the challenges identified in the introductory chapter. The research objective was to determine what the precursors are of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry and, more specifically, what the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies are on the level of subordinate employee engagement. The following discussion is a systematic argument that explains the logic underlying the proposed frontline employee engagement model and its underlying latent variables – beginning with a discussion of the various outcome variables that explain performance in the hotel industry.

2.1 Overall Team Effectiveness

The travel and tourism sector contributes a significantly large proportion to the world gross domestic product (GDP). Specifically, the hospitality industry is one of the fastest growing industries in the world. Like other service industries, it is subjected to similar global trends, such as changing customer needs due to the impact of millennials as the fastest growing customer segment in the hospitality industry, political tensions and terrorism, deepening income inequality, sustainability and resource constraints, disruption and the sharing economy, and emerging growth markets. To address these challenges, one has to identify what strategies need to be implemented in order to provide hotels with a competitive advantage. The question is, what performance aspects will distinguish one hotel from the other in this increasingly competitive environment? At the heart of any hospitality business lies the people – therefore, creating relevant, engaging and innovative customer experiences is central to the survival of any hotel – the competitive advantage. To this end, the effectiveness of the frontline team will create better customer experiences – specifically, team effectiveness will affect service quality, productivity and customer retention rates.

2.1.1 Productivity and efficiency

Productivity refers to the correlation of the utilisation of resources (inputs) for production procedures and the end products (outputs) created in the procedure. Thus, productivity can be expressed as a function of the ratio of output to input (Holjevac, 2010). Productivity therefore measures the efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are used in economic activity (Li & Prescott, 2009). In terms of the service industry, efficiency refers to the ability of the organisation to maximise outputs from a given set of inputs, and effectiveness refers to service quality. Therefore, service productivity can be defined as a function of internal efficiency (the cost effectiveness of input utilisation and the ability to generate revenue),

14

external efficiency (the customer's perception of quality), and capacity efficiency (the equilibrium between demand and supply) (Holjevac, 2010). Both efficiency and effectiveness are important components of productivity. If there is low demand, but a high input of resources, productivity (efficiency) will typically be lower. However, if there is high demand and a low input of resources, it will lead to a higher productivity (efficiency). For example, if there is a high demand for services required, but the department is understaffed, it will lead to high productivity levels because of low utilisation of resources but high quantity output. However, the perception of service quality could be affected negatively, and consequently an organisation will not be productive if it is only efficient but not effective (Holjevac, 2010).

Li and Prescott (2009) maintain that productivity measurement problems are more serious in the services than in the goods industry, and that the conventional definition of productivity that pertains to the manufacturing era are too narrow to encompass productivity in the services industry (Holjevac, 2010). The aforementioned authors further argue that disagreement on the concept and definition of service productivity hampers productivity measurement, and consequently, growth in the service sector. In addition, the intangible and inconsistent nature of services causes complexity in its quantification and control (Holjevac, 2010). The service industry is much more labour-intensive compared to the manufacturing industry, and this poses certain measurement challenges in order to standardise inputs and outputs that are heterogeneous. Therefore, in measuring service productivity, the quantity aspect is similar to that in manufacturing organisations and include labour, capital and material. However, the volume of operations is determined by the variation of demand over time – the productivity ratio therefore may vary greatly over time if measured as a quantity ratio. The effectiveness (quality) of service productivity needs to be measured in terms of goals and objectives (Li & Prescott, 2009).

The customer's perception of quality encompasses the totality of the experience of staying in the hotel (Holjevac, 2010). Customer evaluations of service quality are based on three dimensions, namely interaction quality, physical environment and outcome quality (Nurul & Faizurrahman, 2013). Thus, service quality is an essential component of productivity measurement. Quality or effectiveness in the service sector is considered more important than quantity units, and increased productivity would usually mean providing higher quality services to customers in order to ensure customer satisfaction (Li & Prescott, 2009). Productivity and efficiency (which encompasses service quality) relate to other short-term performance measures, such as customer satisfaction, loyalty and retention.

There is a strong relationship between employee satisfaction and overall productivity – implying that a satisfied employee is a more productive employee who provides better-quality service. Moreover, employee satisfaction is a driver of customer satisfaction (Holjevac, 2010). Satisfied frontline employees will typically exert more effort and commitment to exceed customer expectations, and the smaller the discrepancy between customer expectations and actual service performance, the greater customer satisfaction (Holjevac, 2010). Perceptions of service quality are further based on the interaction between frontline employees and customers – customer perception and situational variables affect the degree of service quality (Holjevac, 2010).

2.1.2 Service quality

Service can be defined as a process that consists of more or less intangible activities that involves interaction between the customer and service provider, and interaction between the customer and physical resources or goods, and/or systems of the service provider (Tajeddini, 2011). In addition, a key characteristic of service is the inseparability of production and consumption and therefore services are regarded as activities, deeds, or processes and interaction (Tajeddini, 2011). Similarly, Yee et al. (2015) state that the key feature of services is customer contact and that service operations involve simultaneous participation by employees and customers. The better the quality of the interaction between customers and service providers and the more customer-contact time, the better the perceived service quality. Furthermore, high or superior quality services are challenging to achieve in high customer-contact service sectors due to different customer preferences. High customer-contact service sectors are characterised by uncertainty and complexity due to varying customer needs and expectations (Yee et al., 2015). In order to address these challenges, service organisations can ensure that employees are empowered to make independent decisions and display extra-role behaviours – rather than trying to address challenges by following operating routine (Yee et al., 2015).

The measurement of service quality is much fuzzier than measuring product quality because of its intangible nature. Specifically, the hotel industry provides goods to facilitate services and it is difficult to separate goods from services, as the supply chain is more integrated (Adetunji et al., 2013). Service quality or service performance can be measured by determining if the service organisation achieved or exceeded its service delivery goals and objectives. These goals and objectives are organisation specific and depend on overall organisational strategy. However, service quality goals and objectives should be aimed at creating satisfied customers who are committed to the organisation, and display repurchase intentions. Therefore, service quality, as a performance dimension, is often measured from the consumer's perspective in

order to determine quality standards and future service development. AbuKhalifeh and Som (2012) emphasise that many researchers view service quality in relation to the concept of consumer-perceived quality, and service quality is considered as an antecedent of perceived service quality and customer loyalty. To this end, Terblanche (2006) argues that the definition of perceived quality from a customer's viewpoint results from service performance and the degree of customisation and freedom from deficiencies, or how reliably the product or service meets customer specifications.

In the literature there are various definitions of what constitutes perceived service quality. These inconsistencies in definition have led to differences amongst researchers in the operationalisation and measurement of perceived service quality and have led to mixed findings in regard to the relationship between quality and satisfaction (Terblanche, 2006). Some researchers argue that perceived service quality is a multidimensional concept and can be viewed as the extent and direction of the discrepancy between consumers' perceptions and expectations (Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Perceived service quality therefore refers to the discrepancy between what the consumer feels the organisation should offer in comparison to what it does offer. This particular view of perceived service quality is based on the disconfirmation paradigm and suggests that the discrepancy between expectation and perception of performance determines a customer's service quality evaluation. However, in the literature, customer satisfaction relates to the size and direction of disconfirmation of a person's experience versus their expectations (Radder, Han, & Hou, 2011). Thus, following a disconfirmation approach to define service quality can be problematic, since it conceptually resembles customer satisfaction.

In contrast, other researchers define perceived service quality as the consumer's global evaluation or judgement about the overall services provided, based on the service performance they encounter (Clemes et al., 2011; Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Perceived service quality is subjective in nature and is viewed as an attitude – it involves evaluative judgement by consumers (Clemes et al., 2011). Thus, service quality is directly influenced only by perceptions of performance – in fact, very little theoretical and empirical evidence exists that supports the relevance of the expectations-performance gap as the basis for measuring service quality. Furthermore, Rao, and Sahu (2013) advocate that service quality and satisfaction are related but distinct constructs, where customer satisfaction implies a post-consumption experience that compares perceived quality with expected quality, and service quality refers to the global evaluation of an organisation's system of service delivery (Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Service quality perceptions therefore reflect an evaluative perception of a service encounter at a specific point in time; in contrast, consumer

satisfaction judgements are experiential in nature, involving both an end state and a process and reflecting both emotional and cognitive elements – consumer satisfaction evolves into overall service quality judgements over time (Clemes et al., 2011; Rao & Sahu, 2013).

2.1.2.1 Service quality questionnaire versus service performance questionnaire

Despite the conceptual definition and measurement of perceived service quality that remained a contentious issue in marketing literature for many years, the service quality questionnaire (SERVQUAL) is one of the most popular and frequently used perceived service quality questionnaires and is applied across various sectors and industries. The SERVQUAL questionnaire is based on the disconfirmation model, in which perceived service quality is viewed as a consumer's evaluation of functional quality (service processes) and results from the subjective comparison of expectations with perceptions of performance (Parasuraman et al., 1988). After in-depth focus groups and a review of the literature, Parasuraman et al. identified and illuminated the dimensions along which consumers perceive and evaluate service quality.

To begin with, the five dimensions of SERVQUAL are: (1) *Reliability* (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately); (2) *Assurance* (knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence); (3) *Tangibles* (physical facilities, equipment and appearance of personnel); (4) *Empathy* (caring, individualised attention); and (5) *Responsiveness* (willingness to help customers and provide prompt service) (AbuKhalifeh & Som, 2012; Adetunji et al., 2013; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010; Jia-Yuan et al., 2013). Parasuraman et al. (1988) suggest that SERVQUAL can be adapted to the characteristics of specific research needs and that it should be used concurrently with other service quality measurements. Some studies have shown that SERVQUAL can be used as a diagnostic tool and is applicable to managerial interventions (Ahmad, Ahmad, & Papastathopoulos, 2019).

Regardless, critics of SERVQUAL report that the instrument has poor discriminant validity and that there is a significant overlap between Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy (Adetunji et al., 2013). Moreover, researchers suggested that Empathy and Assurance should be combined into a new dimension (Credibility), and have proposed an additional dimension called Accessibility (refers to how easily customers can contact or get in touch with staff and obtain timely information to fulfil demand for service) (Jia-Yuan et al., 2013). The major criticism of SERVQUAL is its definition and measurement of expectations that create confusion with service satisfaction (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Therefore, critics argue that the expectation component can be disregarded, and that the performance component can be used where a higher perceived performance score implies higher service quality (Ladhari,

2009). In accordance with the performance-based approach to perceived service quality, Cronin and Taylor (1992) developed the service performance questionnaire (SERVPERF). SERVPERF measures the exact same five dimensions and 22-item structure, excluding the expectation component. No expectation-perception gap scores are calculated, and consequently the administration of SERVPERF is less confusing for respondents, with fewer response errors (Adil, Odai Falah Mohammad Al Ghaswyneh, & Alaa Musallam Albkour, 2013).

Indeed, empirical evidence shows that performance-based measures of service quality perceptions are more efficient than measures of service quality expectations. In addition, the ratings of performance-based service quality measurements explain more variance in overall quality measures (Adetunji et al., 2013; Cronin & Taylor, 1992, 1994). Ultimately, service quality attributes are not hypothesised to be the same across different types of services and service customers, and therefore the SERVQUAL questionnaire includes the importance of dimension weights. However, the importance of dimension weights does not enhance predictive validity, and the unweighted SERVPERF explains more variance in global measures of service quality (Cronin & Taylor, 1992). Also, when using a measure that focuses on service processes and service outcomes, related attitudes and intentions to purchase can be predicted with increased accuracy (Adetunji et al., 2013).

Consequently, SERVPERF is the more parsimonious and psychometrically sound instrument to measure perceived service quality compared to SERVQUAL (Adil et al., 2013). SERVQUAL fails to draw on established economic, statistical, and psychological theory, and there is very little evidence that customers assess service quality in terms of perception-expectation gaps. In addition, some dimensionality issues are evident where there are exceptionally high intercorrelations between factors, and items do not always load onto the relevant factors (Adil et al., 2013). Thus, SERVPERF predicts customer responses with greater accuracy. Lastly, several authors suggest perceived service quality as a formative construct because the dimensions are viewed as antecedents of service quality, and changes in the indicators cause changes (variation) in the construct (Clemes et al., 2011).

In conclusion, for the purposes of this study, service quality is viewed as a multidimensional construct and consists of three dimensions: (1) customer-employee interaction (functional or process quality); (2) service environment (tangible quality such as ambient conditions, facility design and social factors); and (3) the outcome dimension (technical quality) (Ali, Hussain, Konar, & Jeon, 2017). Service quality is viewed as a formative construct where the level of perceived service quality depends on the holistic evaluation of all three service quality dimensions.

2.1.2.2 Service quality dimensions in the hotel industry

Brady and Cronin (2001) identified three primary service dimensions in the hotel industry, namely (1) *interaction quality*; (2) *physical environment quality;* (3) and *outcome quality*. It is hypothesised that consumers form overall quality perceptions based on service attributes from these three dimensions. Equally, Wilkins et al. (2007) found that leisure, business and conventional travellers see service quality as a holistic experience rather than as separate dimensions – total service quality is the sum of all components. In order to assess the relationship between service quality and other constructs, Clemes et al. (2011) conducted research combining Brady and Cronin's (2001) model of service quality with Clemes et al.'s (2007) behavioural intentions model. The combined model includes constructs such as price, image, satisfaction and behavioural intentions. Clemes et al.'s (2011) model is considered sufficiently robust and statistically verifiable.

The first-, second- and third-order factors in this model are supported by empirical evidence and the service quality literature. Firstly, *interaction quality* is the people component and entails the establishment of a relationship with the customer that manages to satisfy customer needs (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004). This dimension includes service attributes such as interpersonal skills (understanding the specific needs of guests and being able to provide flexibility in services and individualised attention (Akbaba, 2005)); helpfulness; friendliness (Wilkens et al., 2007); knowledge (Akbaba, 2005); prompt problem solving, conflict resolution and service (Akbaba, 2005; Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004); service performance and consistency in service (Akbaba, 2005; Wilkens et al., 2007); and accuracy of reservations (Clemes et al., 2011).

Secondly, *physical environment quality* is an important, but often neglected, factor in determining customer satisfaction and retention. Specifically, research has shown that, irrespective of nationality, geographical area and type of hotel, ambiance has a significant impact on customer expectations and attitudes. Ambiance is also considered a determinant of employee satisfaction (Nurul & Faizurrahman, 2013). Research furthermore has found that over 90% of business travellers ranked cleanliness as the most important physical aspect. Other highly ranked aspects were comfortable beds and spatial room design, including good towel quality (Wilkens et al., 2007). *Physical environment quality* includes service attributes such as ambiance (temperature, lighting, noise level); security; parking; appealing interior and exterior décor (materials associated with services are adequate and sufficient (Akbaba, 2005); adequate capacity and ease of access to hotel facilities (Akbaba, 2005); cleanliness and comfort of bed, mattress, pillow, bed sheets and covers; high standard of housekeeping, room technology facility (equipment working properly) (Akbaba, 2005); bath facility; a variety of

basic products and services offered (toothpaste, soap, etc); and added value extras such as floor concierge and valet parking (Clemes et al., 2011; Nurul & Faizurrahman, 2013; Wilkens et al., 2007).

Thirdly, *outcome quality* refers to the degree to which the guest had a pleasant stay, experienced convenience, efficient check-out procedures, experienced good sleep, and the accuracy of billing (Clemes et al., 2011).

Wilkens et al. (2007) assessed service quality attributes according to the hypothesised SERVQUAL dimensions. The authors found that the five-factor SERVQUAL model was not transferable to the hotel industry and identified a simpler three-component structure. Similarly to Clemes et al. (2011), Wilkens et al. (2007) identified *service experience* and *physical product* as first-order factors – *service experience* (quality staff, personalisation and speedy service) relates to *interaction quality*, and *physical product* (stylish comfort, room quality and added extras) relates to *physical environment quality.* In contrast, Wilkens et al. (2007) consider the third dimension or antecedent of service quality to be *quality food and beverage* – claiming that this dimension is sufficiently separated from other dimensions based on the literature and one's conceptual understanding of hotels.

2.1.2.3 Service quality and related variables

Perceived service quality is embedded in an interrelated network of variables. The following section describes the relationships between leadership, service quality, value perceptions, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions.

2.1.2.3.1 Value perceptions, customer satisfaction and behavioural intentions

Customer satisfaction is viewed as a result of a customer's perception of the value received (Cronin et al., 2000). A value perception can be described as perceived service quality relative to price. Perceived value is a multifaceted and abstract concept comprising a combination of utilitarian and hedonic components, and can be defined as a customer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on the perception of what is received and what is given (Clemes et al., 2011; Terblanche, 2006). Value can be seen as a price-quality trade-off. Many researchers found that perceived quality had a significant effect on perceived value (Terblanche, 2006). Clemes et al. (2011) identify service quality as having a positive effect on customer satisfaction, and that satisfaction has a direct and significant impact on behavioural intentions, such as repeat purchase and positive word of mouth – the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction is moderated by value (price).

By extension, Cronin et al. (2000) suggest that the first determinant of customer satisfaction is perceived quality, and the second determinant of overall customer satisfaction is perceived value. Therefore, customer satisfaction is based on the amalgamation of service quality attributes, including price. Furthermore, various studies have specified relationships between service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction and consequences, such as customer loyalty, positive word of mouth, price premiums and repurchase intentions (Chih-Hsing Sam Liu & Tingko Lee, 2016; Tabaku & Kushi, 2013). It is evident that there is a significant bivariate relationship between all three variables and behavioural intentions. In addition, empirical evidence supports the notion that service quality, value and customer satisfaction are all directly related to behavioural intentions – even when all three constructs are considered simultaneously. Service quality does not only affect purchase intentions indirectly, mediated by value and/or satisfaction, but service quality also has a direct influence on customer retention intentions (Chih-Hsing Sam Liu & Tingko Lee, 2016; Tabaku & Kushi, 2013).

In brief, customer satisfaction is a behavioural consequence of quality – favourable customer evaluations of goods and services lead to customer satisfaction (Terblanche, 2006). Besides the significant effect of service quality on customer satisfaction, customer satisfaction is also found to have a significant effect on repurchase intentions (Clemes et al., 2011; Chih-Hsing Sam Liu & Tingko Lee, 2016; Tabaku & Kushi, 2013). Likewise, Parasuraman et al. and Shamdasani et al. (cited in Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010) found a positive and significant relationship between customers' perceptions of service quality and their willingness to recommend the service to others – confirming that service quality is an antecedent of customer loyalty and retention.

2.1.2.3.2 Leadership and service quality

Yee et al. (2015) propose that a quality relationship between the leader and the member has an influence on how well employees perform tasks involving high levels of customer contact. If leader-member exchange is characterised by mutual dependence and influence, the quality of the relationship will affect the performance of service delivery. What is more, leadership empowerment behaviours are a critical prerequisite for ensuring that customer-contact employees deliver excellent service. Empowering leadership behaviours ensure flexibility while making decisions related to job tasks, such as the ability and autonomy to customise services in response to individual customer needs. In addition, research has shown that the empowerment of boundary-spanning employees is particularly effective in creating conditions of employee ,motivation and that empowerment has positive effects on employee's work-related attitudes, such as self-efficacy and job satisfaction (Yee et al., 2015).

Yee et al. (2015) further suggest that an employee will be more motivated and willing to display extra-role behaviours and to go beyond contractual obligations if the leader allows for a reciprocal exchange that facilitates trust. Thus, empowering leadership behaviours and the quality of exchange between the leader and the member have a positive effect on employee job satisfaction, and a positive relationship exists between job satisfaction and service performance – and service performance is related to overall organisational performance.

2.1.3 Customer retention

As one participant stated in a study conducted by Hansemark and Albinsson (2004, p. 46): "If we have no customers, we have no business." Therefore, the implementation of customer-retention strategies should be regarded as a core objective of service organisations. There is an abundance of evidence for a strong causal link between customer retention, profitability, and market share. Besides the observation that customer-retention strategies with a complete customer-oriented focus are an imperative for the survival of hospitality organisations, effective customer-retention management is the competitive advantage (Petzer et al., 2009). Thus, customer retention ensures sustainability and growth, and is the minimum expectation for customer success (Nurul & Faizurrahman, 2013).

According to Nurul and Faizurrahman (2013), retention refers to the propensity of the customer to stay with their service provider and have a deeply held commitment to repurchase – despite situational influences and marketing behaviour that can cause switching behaviour. Moreover, retention occurs when customers continue to purchase a product or service over an extended period of time (Petzer, 2005). In addition, the customer retention rate can be defined as the percentage of customers at the beginning of a period that still remain customers at the end of that period (Petzer et al., 2009). A crude retention rate represents the total percentage of customers retained based on the decline or escalation of customers over a specified period, while a weighted customer retention rate includes the weighting of customers according to the volume of their purchases, in other words their wallet share (Petzer, 2005). However, in the hotel industry, determining customer retention is more complex in instances where customers make use of more than one business simultaneously. In other words, guests may stay at any number of hotels regularly. Therefore, in order to effectively manage and assess customer retention, an amalgamation of factors need to be taken into account, such as customer retention rate by market segment in terms of different services and products (business versus leisure visitors), customer retention over time, and a customer's wallet share earned (Petzer, 2005; Petzer et al., 2009).

Admittedly, everyone knows it costs less to retain an existing customer than to recruit a new one (Terblanche, 2006). Therefore, the implementation of customer retention strategies is an important contributor to profitability and sustainability. However, the definition of retention varies conceptually and empirically, and varies in the way in which customer retention is distinguished from related constructs, such as customer loyalty, satisfaction and customer commitment. Customer retention can be broken down into the following six dimensions: (a) customer's liking, (b) identification and association with the establishment, (c) commitment, (d) trust, (e) willingness to recommend (positive word of mouth), and (f) repurchase intentions. The first four dimensions relate to the attitudinal aspect of retention, while willingness to recommend and repurchase intentions refer to the behavioural component of customer retention (Moghadam, 2013).

Regardless, the three related concepts – customer loyalty, customer satisfaction and customer commitment – have received much attention and, in some cases, retention has been conceptualised and operationalised as a dimension of loyalty (Terblanche, 2006). In addition, in the American Customer Satisfaction Index (ACSI), customer loyalty is the ultimate dependent variable because of its value as an approximation of customer retention (Terblanche & Boshoff, 2010). On the other hand, Petzer et al. (2009) assert that customer loyalty is related to customer retention and profitability – in fact, the authors consider customer loyalty as a dimension of customer retention. Furthermore, Petzer et al. (2009) emphasise that organisations are no longer only exerting an effort to change attitudes, such as creating customer satisfaction, but are focusing more on a behaviour-changing approach that seeks to create loyal customers who can be retained and will make referrals. Thus, loyalty refers to the customer's dedication (commitment) to deal with a particular business, to purchase from the business repetitively, and to recommend the business and its offerings to others. Customer satisfaction also has a positive impact on customer commitment and loyalty, but loyalty focuses more on how likely a customer is to purchase again and how likely the customer is to get involved in the relationship, rather than merely on an attitudinal change (Petzer, 2005; Petzer et al., 2009).

Correspondingly, Clemes et al. (2011) confirm that behavioural intention indicators signal whether a customer will remain with or defect from the organisation – behavioural intentions are associated with customer loyalty and customer retention. Moreover, behavioural intentions can affect brand loyalty, reduce marketing costs and encourage favourable word of mouth, while unfavourable word-of-mouth communication includes negative customer responses, such as switching, and complaint behaviour. To this end, Clemes et al. (2011) measure customer loyalty as five behavioural intentions, namely (1) saying good things about the

company; (2) recommending the company to another person; (3) encouraging friends and relatives to do business with the company; (4) considering the company as a first choice in making the next purchase; and (5) committing to do more business with the company.

Customer retention focuses on sustaining healthy relationships. In order to sustain customer relationships, the organisation (managers and frontline employees) has to provide exceptional service that reflects a complete customer-oriented approach, with genuine concern for the wellbeing of the customer, dedication (commitment to fulfil customer needs and wants), and the ability to inspire trust (Petzer, 2005). In brief, customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction is an antecedent of intentions, and the more positive a customer perceives the quality of service, the more likely the customer is to form favourable behavioural intentions, such as customer loyalty and retention (Clemes et al., 2011).

2.1.3.1 Customer retention and related variables

Customer satisfaction is merely a starting point in creating loyal and committed customers. In fact, customer retention strategies are a much more elaborative process employed by organisations to create loyal and repeat customers that can provide the organisation with a competitive advantage.

2.1.3.1.1 The impact of customer satisfaction on customer retention

Customer satisfaction can be defined as the individual's perception of the performance of the product and service in relation to his or her expectations (Nurul & Faizurrahman, 2013). Moreover, customer satisfaction is based on a customer's estimated experience of the extent to which a provider's services fulfil or exceed his or her expectations (Li, Ye, & Law, 2013). Thus, customer satisfaction refers to an evaluative judgement based on the perceived discrepancy between prior expectation and actual performance. Based on the disconfirmation model, customer satisfaction involves both a cognitive (evaluative) and affective (emotional response) component (Clemes et al., 2011). In addition, customer satisfaction is considered a major contributor to long-term profitability, customer retention and loyalty. In order to retain a customer, the customer has to be satisfied – not retained simply out of habit, inertia or indifference (Clemes et al., 2011; Petzer, 2005).

Evidently, customer satisfaction and retention are causally interlinked and, in some cases, satisfaction is considered the leading driver in customer repurchase intentions (Spangenberg & Theron, 2004). Indeed, some studies have found positive associations between customer satisfaction and customer retention, as well as between customer satisfaction and financial

performance. In contrast, various empirical studies have indicated that higher customer satisfaction levels are not necessarily positively and directly related to customer retention rates. It is possible for customer satisfaction rates to increase but retention rates to remain constant (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004). For instance, a satisfied customer may not return but decide to switch service providers due to the variety of providers available. Moreover, Spangenberg and Theron (2004) suggest that the relatively weak association between customer satisfaction and financial performance (dependent on repurchase behaviour) is an indication of an indirect relationship that is moderated by other variables.

Satisfaction does not necessarily lead to repurchase intentions; instead, satisfaction is merely a step towards customer retention (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004). Similarly, Terblanche (2006) stresses that satisfied customers are not always loyal customers, and that loyalty requires more commitment than mere satisfaction can bring. Therefore, Terblanche (2006) advocates that satisfaction measures need to be supplemented by customer loyalty measures and urges organisations not only to focus on those elements of quality that create customer satisfaction, but to focus on those elements and strategies that encourage loyalty.

2.1.3.1.2 Customer retention management

It is important to go beyond customer satisfaction and to maintain a relationship with customers that will lead to customer loyalty and retention (Petzer et al., 2009). Although customer satisfaction and customer retention are hypothesised to share similar performance outcomes, such as greater profits and customers who are less price sensitive, Petzer et al. (2009) argue that organisations that implement retention strategies are more successful than organisations that only focus on implementing customer satisfaction strategies. Customer retention should thus be at the heart of relationship marketing.

According to Petzer et al. (2009) relationship marketing can be defined as the process of building and maintaining long-term value by focusing on customer retention and the management of customer relations over the lifetime of the customer – thus, stronger relationships result in a competitive advantage over competitors. The components of relationship marketing are (1) a focus on customer retention; (2) a long-term orientation; (3) tracing identifiable buyers; (4) distinguishing different levels of relationships between the buyer and the seller; (5) high levels of customer dedication; and (6) service quality being the responsibility of everyone. Loyalty programmes as relationship-marketing interventions include frequent-user programmes, customer clubs, gifts for repeat customers, and free stays for meeting planners to encourage them to use the hotel and its facilities. Despite the impact of loyalty programmes on customer retention, organisations should not underestimate the

26

impact of the reliability of service delivery in creating loyalty, since high-quality, reliable service delivery can provide hospitality organisations with the competitive advantage they so desperately need (Petzer, 2005; Petzer et al., 2009). In brief, if the organisation is constantly developing new strategies to provide for changing customer needs and expectations, while following a reliable high-quality service approach, one can assume that a retained customer will exhibit increased relationship satisfaction (Santouridis & Veraki, 2017).

Besides relationship marketing as an organisational strategy, retention management is the managerial competency that facilitates a complete customer-oriented approach amongst subordinates. Customer-retention management-competency components are to build relationships with customers, manage customer-to-customer interactions to reduce dissatisfaction (compatibility management), reduce potential defections, and manage service failures and service recovery (Petzer, 2005; Petzer et al., 2009). When a manager displays behaviours that relate to these dimensions, and when frontline employees are empowered to display these behaviours themselves, it should lead to a positive increase in the customer's liking, identification and association with the hotel, increase customer commitment, loyalty and trust, and increase a customer's willingness to recommend (positive word of mouth) and repurchase intentions. Thus, service quality, customer satisfaction, customer value and customer loyalty can be considered the antecedents of customer retention, and the relationship between the antecedents and customer retention is mediated by customer-retention management performance (Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010).

2.1.3.2 The impact of customer retention on overall organisational performance

Customer retention in service firms is regarded as a competitive advantage, as customer retention contributes significantly to profitability and is also considered an important determinant of market share (Hansemark & Albinsson, 2004). Similarly, Petzer (2005) advocates that the profitability perceptions of a customer grow throughout the duration of the business relationship. Business can increase its profits by almost 100% if it is able to retain 5% more customers than it did before. Researchers have also demonstrated that a 2% increase in retention has the same effect on profits as cutting costs by 10%. In addition, it costs 5 to 10 times more to attract a new customer compared to keeping a current customer satisfied (Nyadzayo & Roberts-Lombard, 2010). Returning customers do not involve any set-up costs, are educated in the offerings of the organisation and are less price sensitive. Regular customers are strategic marketing assets through positive word-of-mouth advertising to their associates and friends with similar likes, needs and interests (Petzer, 2005). Along the same lines, Terblanche (2006) emphasises that retention leads to reduced sales and marketing

costs, increased long-term profitability, an increase in the opportunities for cross-selling of products and services, and positive word of mouth by customers (Terblanche, 2006).

2.2 Employee Engagement

Kahn (1990, p. 964) defined engagement as "… a harnessing of organisation members' selves to their work roles: in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances". Kahn's definition implies a dynamic relationship between one's personal resources (physical, cognitive, emotional, and mental) and the work role. Conversely, disengagement manifests itself in the form of withdrawal behaviours, in other words, when people withdraw themselves physically, cognitively or emotionally during role performances (Kahn, 1990). Engagement is characterised by people who are focused, attentive and connected in their role performance (Bakker et al., 2008). Inspired by the work of Hackman and Oldham, Kahn (1990) proposed that aspects such as work characteristics can affect the level of engagement and disengagement. Work characteristics have an impact on the level of engagement, and the degree to which an employee is engaged has an impact on the fulfilment of three psychological states, namely meaningfulness, psychological safety, and availability. Psychological meaningfulness refers to the degree to which an employee feels that their efforts are adding value, which in return energises the employee cognitively, physically and emotionally. Secondly, psychological safety refers to the degree to which an employee feels safe to exert him/herself without negative consequences to their self-image or career journey. Lastly, availability refers to the degree to which an employee perceives him/herself to have the personal capacity and capability to engage in the task or role (Kahn, 1990).

Generally, there are two approaches to engagement. Firstly, engagement can be viewed from the perspective of burnout, where engagement is viewed as the opposite of burnout; secondly, engagement can be viewed as part of positive organisation behaviour that can be developed to improve performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008). Engagement is characterised by energy, involvement and efficacy – the direct opposites of the three burnout dimensions, namely exhaustion, cynicism and ineffectiveness (Bakker et al., 2008). The core burnout and engagement dimensions are seen as opposites of each other along two bipolar dimensions. Specifically, the first dimension is labelled *Energy* and is manifested in *exhaustion* and *energy* on opposite ends of the continuum. The second dimension is labelled *Identification* and is manifested in *cynicism* and *involvement* on opposite ends. Many empirical studies have verified the nature and magnitude of the relationship between engagement and burnout dimensions (Bakker et al., 2008; Gonzalez-Roma et al., 2006).

Likewise, Alarcon and Edwards (2010) state that job engagement as a construct was created as part of a process that explains burnout. However, in their study. the authors found that, when controlling for burnout, all three scales of job engagement made significant contributions to job satisfaction and turnover intentions. Besides the various approaches to engagement, most scholars agree that engagement includes an energy and identification component (Bakker et al., 2008). In fact, engagement is a specific, well-defined and properly operationalised psychological state, and defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 209).

Vigour is a positive emotional state that includes high energy levels, mental resilience and persistence despite difficulties. Dedication is marked by a sense of meaning and significance and includes enthusiasm, challenge, pride and inspiration. Finally, absorption refers to being fully immersed in one's work and involves focused attention, a clear mind, intrinsic enjoyment, loss of self-consciousness, distortion of time, sense of complete control and effortless concentration (Alarcon & Edwards, 2010; Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013; Hakanen et al., 2006; Salanova et al., 2005).

2.2.1 Engagement and related variables

The following section explains the relationship between employee engagement and other job attitudes, as well as the impact of job demands and leadership on employee engagement. In addition, engagement as a personal resource is investigated.

2.2.1.1 Job Demands Resource Model

The Job Demands Resource Model explains the antecedents (job demands and job resources) and consequences of work engagement. In addition, the model explains two underlying processes. Firstly, the model explains an energetic process in which high job demands exhaust employees' mental and physical resources, and consequently lead to burnout and ill health. Burnout can be defined as a syndrome of *exhaustion*, in which one experiences feelings of strain and chronic fatigue, displays *cynicism* and has a distant attitude towards work and fellow colleagues, and also has a reduced sense of professional efficacy, characterised by feelings of incompetence and a lack of accomplishment in one's job and the organisation. Secondly, the model explains a motivational process in which job resources foster engagement and consequently lead to organisational commitment and satisfaction (Hakanen et al., 2006).

When job demands are high and resources are low, job demands can lead to burnout, which causes ill-health. Conversely, if job and personal resources are high, the employee exhibits higher levels of engagement, which in turn lead to positive outcome dimensions such as organisational commitment. Job resources become salient and gain motivational potential as the employee is confronted by high job demands. Employees with an abundance of personal resources, such as psychological capital (i.e., hope, resilience, self-efficacy and optimism) can mobilise their own resources and create their own positive feedback (appreciation, recognition and success) (Luthans & Youssef-Morgan, 2017). Thus, mobilising your own personal and job resources facilitates future engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). Evidently, job and personal resources are negatively related to burnout, and burnout is negatively related to organisational commitment (Hakanen et al., 2006).

2.2.1.1.1 Job demands

Job demands refer to physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that require sustained psychological or physical effort and are associated with certain physiological and psychological costs (Hakanen et al., 2006). Job demands can become job stressors if they continuously elicit negative responses from employees. The most cited job demand characteristics across various studies are work overload and a poor physical environment (Hakanen et al., 2006).

One cannot emphasise the important impact of work environments on employee engagement and performance outcomes enough. Bakker et al. (2008) maintain that, if a work environment facilitates growth and development, it fosters employees who are promotion focused and who prefer gain over the avoidance of loss. Conversely, if a work environment is characterised by an emphasis on duties and demands, individuals develop a prevention focus, in which they become responsive to job demands and not proactive. In addition, such employees prefer the avoidance of loss to gains. Therefore, engagement is higher when employees encounter an optimal level of fit between their preferred focus and the focus endorsed by the environment (Bakker et al., 2008).

2.2.1.1.2 Job resources

Job resources refer to the physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that reduce job demands and the associated physiological and psychological costs. In addition, job resources are functional in the sense that they enable employees to achieve work goals. Also, the intrinsic motivational potential of job resources is recognised by job characteristics theory, as it stimulates personal growth, learning and development. In other

words, job resources fulfil basic human needs for autonomy, relatedness and competence. There clearly is a positive relationship between job resources and job engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008; Hakanen et al., 2006). On the other hand, the lack of job resources has negative consequences, such as burnout and turnover intentions. Job resources, such as performance feedback, social support, supervisory coaching and support, co-worker support, autonomy and role clarity, are significantly correlated with engagement dimensions, while engagement mediates the relationship between job resources and turnover intentions (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013).

Bakker and Demerouti (2008), as well as Bakker et al. (2008), identify aspects such as job control, sharing information, supervisory support, innovative climate, social climate, rewards, recognition, and value fit between employee and organisation to be significant predictors of job engagement. Equally, Hakanen et al. (2006) provide empirical evidence that job control, access to information, supervisory support, innovative climate and social climate are job resources that are positively related to job engagement.

To summarise, job resources become salient and have motivational potential in the face of high job demands (Bakker et al., 2008). Job resources acts as 'buffers' against negative inputs and influence the level of job engagement when confronted with high job demands. Bakker and Demerouti (2008) identify certain job resources that especially reduce the associated physiological and psychological costs associated with job demands. Supervisory support, innovativeness, appreciation and organisational climate all enable employees to apply active coping skills to manage high job demands. In addition, another study reported that variability in the professional skills required and peer contacts mitigated the negative effect of a high workload on the level of engagement (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008).

2.2.1.1.3 Personal resources

Positive self-evaluation is a personal disposition that enables the individual to successfully control and have an impact on their environment. In addition, individuals with positive self-evaluations are also inclined to exhibit goal self-concordance – implying that such individuals are more intrinsically motivated to pursue goals. Therefore, a positive self-evaluation is an indicator of goal setting, motivation, performance, job and life satisfaction, and career ambition (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008). In brief, personal resources are personal dispositions that have a significant positive impact on engagement – specifically, a positive self-evaluation is related to goal-concordance and subsequently to various wellbeing outcomes.

Positive self-evaluation is related to the well-known construct, psychological capital. Psychological capital has four dimensions, namely self-efficacy, resilience, optimism and hope. Importantly, three of the four psychological capital dimensions are related to work engagement. Firstly, self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in his/her own abilities and that they are able to meet the demands. Secondly, optimism is a tendency to believe one will experience good outcomes, and thirdly, resilience refers to the ability to adapt to changing environments and to bounce back from disappointments (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008). Besides the three psychological capital dimensions, organisational-based self-esteem refers to one's belief that one will be satisfied when participating in roles within the organisation and is related to the level of engagement one displays. In conclusion, these personal resources (self-efficacy, optimism, resilience and organisational-based self-esteem) make a unique contribution to explaining variance in work engagement – over and above the impact of job resources on levels of work engagement. The more engaged an employee, the more he/she makes use of an active coping style, where steps are taken to solve problems and stressors are rearranged. Engaged employees are highly self-efficacious and believe they will meet demands in a broad array of contexts (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008).

2.2.2 The impact of employee engagement on performance

Engaged employees perform better because they display more positive emotions, they experience better psychological and physical health, they create their own job and personal resources, and they transfer engagement to others and consequently increase team performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008; Bakker et al., 2008). More specifically, various studies provide evidence that engaged employees receive higher in-role and extra-role performance ratings from their peers, and that engagement is related to positive outcomes, such as satisfaction, low absenteeism, low turnover, high organisational commitment and consequently overall unit or organisational performance (Alarcon & Edwards, 2010; Bakker et al., 2008; Bothma & Roodt, 2013; Salanova et al., 2005). Sehunoe et al. (2015) report that the majority of their findings suggest significant correlations between job satisfaction, job commitment and selected components of work engagement. Specifically, engagement mediates the relationship between work characteristics, organisational systems, managerial practices, commitment and satisfaction, while satisfaction is negatively related to turnover intentions and high levels of engagement are positively related to greater organisational attachment (commitment) and extra-role behaviours (Sehunoe et al., 2015). Lastly, Karatepe (2013) gathered data from full-time frontline employee-supervisor dyads and reports that work engagement effectively mediates the impact of perceptions of organisational politics on affective commitment, extra-role performance and turnover intentions.

Harter et al. (2013) found a substantial relationship between engagement and performance at work-unit level and argue that the results are generalisable across situations. They conducted a large meta-analytic study that included findings from 263 research studies across 192 organisations in 49 industries and 34 countries. Harter et al. (2013) found that employee engagement is related to each of the nine performance outcomes. The authors report that the more engaged business units indicate some striking median differences with less-engaged units. For instance, they report that more engaged business units surpass less-engaged units by 10% in customer ratings, 22% in profitability, 21% in productivity (25 % in high-turnover organisations and 65% in low-turnover organisations), 48% in safety incidents, 28% in shrinkage, 37% in absenteeism, 41% in patient safety incidents and 41% in quality (defects). Correspondingly, Salanova et al. (2005) assert that organisational resources and work engagement predict service climate, which in turn predicts employee performance and customer loyalty – ultimately, the service climate mediates the relationship between employee performance and customer loyalty. Service climate refers to employees' shared perceptions of practices, procedures, and behaviours that are rewarded, supported and expected by the organisation with regard to customer service quality (Salanova et al., 2005). Interestingly, customer reactions also have an influence on employee morale over time. Thus, customer perceptions influence employee attitudes, and consequently a reciprocal relationship exists between customer loyalty and service climate (Salanova et al., 2005). Despite the fact that engagement predicts service climate, organisational resources such as HR practices that stimulate growth and development (training, autonomy and technology) are shown to predict service climate and subsequently influence customers' perceptions of unit performance and customer loyalty (Bakker et al., 2008).

Furthermore, Karatepe (2013) found that work engagement fully mediates performance in high-performance work systems (HPWSs) and extra-role customer service behaviours in the hotel industry. Specifically, training, empowerment, and rewards have been shown to be the most critical indicators of management commitment to service quality, and these HPWSs enhance work engagement, which in turn triggers extra-role customer service behaviours (Karatepe, 2013). Ultimately, it appears that one can argue that work engagement is related to extra-role customer service behaviours, and that extra-role customer service behaviours have a positive impact on customer loyalty (Kandampully et al., 2014).

Menguc et al. (2013) examined the main effect of autonomy, feedback and support on engagement, and the mediating role of employee engagement on the relationships between job resources and customers' perceived level of service quality. They found that higher levels of engagement are related to higher customer ratings of service quality. Interestingly, when

employees perceived their environment as autonomous, supervisory support had a positive effect on engagement, while supervisory feedback had a negative effect on engagement. Thus, the manner in which feedback is provided has an impact on engagement. Moreover, recognition as a form of feedback has a positive impact on the level of engagement (Menguc et al., 2013).

In conclusion, an abundance of job and personal resources lead to higher levels of engagement. For example, Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) studied engagement and various performance outcomes in fast-food restaurants and found that daily levels of optimism, self-efficacy and organisation-based self-esteem were positively related to levels of daily engagement. Xanthopoulou et al. (2009) found that higher levels of daily engagement are related to higher daily financial returns. Day-level resources such as autonomy, coaching and team climate had an effect on work engagement after controlling for levels of personal resources, while the relationship between coaching and financial returns was mediated by the daily level of optimism (Xanthopoulou et al., 2009).

2.2.3 Employee engagement as a proxy for team effectiveness

From the above-mentioned arguments (and inferred from the literature), it appears that the level of employee engagement could serve as a proxy for unit performance, as the latter poses various measurement challenges. Thus, one can hypothesise that the level of employee engagement is positively related to unit performance – specifically team effectiveness, namely productivity, service quality and customer retention, in the hotel industry. In addition, one can also hypothesise that there may be a direct positive relationship between the four managerial competencies (task-oriented behaviours, empowering leadership behaviours, social-emotional competency and work-design competency) and team effectiveness. Team performance was not added as a variable in this study, since the context and scope of the study did not allow the researcher to link individual customer-contact employee responses to the teams to which they belong, that is., the current design did not make provision for calculating composite team performance scores based on the perceived level of team performance by the manager, by individual team members or by members of the public (e.g., consumer feedback).

2.3 Task-Oriented Behaviours

An important distinction can be made between task and contextual performance dimensions (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). Task performance can be described as the proficiency with which managers perform activities that are formally part of their job, and contribute to the

organisation's technical core – either directly, by implementing part of its technical processes, or indirectly, by providing it with needed materials or services (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011). On the other hand, contextual performance also contributes to the organisation's core technical functions, but through different means – by activities that enhance the social and psychological climate of the organisation. For example, the degree to which a manager displays cooperation and supportive behaviours towards others will contribute to contextual performance dimensions, such as employee engagement, which in turn increases service quality and productivity. Thus, contextual performance creates the environment necessary for effective task performance (Christian, Garza, & Slaughter, 2011).

Motowidlo et al. (1997) developed a model that further differentiates between contextual and task performance. Task performance can be divided into two dimensions, namely task knowledge and task skill. Firstly, technical task knowledge can be defined as the degree to which the manager displays knowledge of relevant facts, principles and procedures that contribute to the organisation's technical core. Along the same lines, Sandwith (1993) argues that a manager's technical competence requires knowledge and experience regarding work processes, methods, and technologies. Specifically, it entails knowledge regarding the planning and structuring of work processes, and knowledge regarding applicable financial management systems and procedures. In addition, Sandwith (1993) emphasises that managerial task knowledge includes the knowledge of and adherence to legislative or collective agreements that govern the employer-employee relationship. Secondly, task skills (business and industry expertise) refer to technical skills that are task specific and enable the manager to solve problems and make decisions in applying technical knowledge to ensure performance (Motowidlo et al., 1997). For instance, a manager's knowledge of personnel and financial activities will enable the manager to implement functions that monitor and control the measures of success within the organisation, and that contribute to the organisation's technical core.

Besides the distinction between task and contextual performance, Yukl (2013) categorises leadership and managerial competencies into three broad behavioural categories, namely task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented behaviours. Task-oriented behaviours are associated with technical job knowledge and skill and have an impact on task performance dimensions such as improved productivity and service quality. Task-oriented behaviours are used to improve or maintain internal efficiency and coordination in a team by assigning tasks, determining resource requirements, and coordinating interrelated activities. Also, it requires the planning and scheduling of work activities in a way that make better use of people, resources, information and equipment (Yukl, 2013). In addition, a manager's task-oriented

behaviours include the clarification of objectives, priorities, and standards for evaluating results – managers monitor the internal operations of a group to assess performance and detect problems to be resolved. Thus, similarly to Motowidlo et al. (1997) and Sandwith (1993), Yukl (2013) proposes that technical skills require knowledge about methods, processes, procedures, legal or contractual requirements, techniques for conducting activities, and the ability to use tools and equipment relevant to the activity.

The other two competency categories identified by Yukl (2013) are relationship-oriented and change-oriented behaviours – where the former relates to interpersonal and the latter to conceptual skills. Relationship-oriented behaviours serve to build commitment, mutual trust and cooperation to achieve shared work objectives, and specifically to empower employees to provide better service to customers and clients. As a result, managerial competencies that require a great deal of interpersonal skill, such as leadership empowerment behaviours and emotional intelligence, are associated with increased service quality and customer retention, which in turn lead to greater financial sustainability for the organisation. Change-oriented managerial behaviours serve to modify objectives, strategies and work processes, and to facilitate adaptation to the external environment. Change-oriented behaviours require conceptual skills, such as proficiency in concept formation and the conceptualisation of complex and ambiguous relationships (Yukl, 2013). The degree to which a manager displays behaviours pertaining to these three broad competency categories depends largely on the situation. Consequently, the importance of the three broad competency categories may vary depending on the managerial level. First-line or lower level managerial jobs compel the manager to display a higher frequency of technical skill that pertains to task-oriented behaviours and, to a lesser degree, interpersonal and conceptual skills. However, as the environment becomes more ambiguous, interpersonal and conceptual skills become more prominent requirements in middle- to senior managerial jobs. First-line front-office supervisors (or rooms-division managers that are directly responsible for front-office staff) and first-line supervisors of serving workers (or food and beverage manager directly responsible bar and service staff) may be required to display more technical skills (technical job knowledge) than those in middle- or senior managerial roles. The size and the hierarchical structure within the hotel will, however, determine the degree of importance attached to these three skills. To this end, greater emphasis is placed on competencies that pertain to managerial task-oriented (*technical job knowledge and skill* as well as *work design competency*) and relationship-oriented behaviours (*empowering leadership behaviours* and *emotional intelligence*).

In this study, the researcher aimed to investigate the relationship between a manager's task-oriented behaviours (technical job knowledge and expertise) and employee engagement.

Specifically, the researcher aimed to assess the degree to which the rooms divisions and food and beverage managerial hotel employees displayed technical knowledge and expertise, and its impact on employee engagement. This study was aimed at managerial employees directly responsible for frontline employees – consequently, depending on the size and hierarchical structure within the hotel, first-line front-office and service supervisors were assessed. Specific technical job knowledge and expertise associated with both managerial roles are (1) the planning and scheduling of work, team coordination by assigning tasks and the coordination of interrelated activities; (2) the clarification of objectives, priorities and procedures (O*Net Online, 2016a; Yukl, 2013); (3) the setting of standards and the monitoring of the internal operations of the team to assess performance and detect problems to resolve; (4) the administration and management of resource requirements and allocation to maintain internal efficiency (O*Net Online, 2016b; Yukl, 2013); (5) customer and personal services that include behaviours such as customer needs assessment, meeting quality standards for services, and the evaluation of customer satisfaction/retention; resolving customer complaints or answering customer's questions regarding policies and procedures; and providing employees with guidance in handling difficult or complex problems or in resolving escalated complaints and disputes (O*Net Online, 2016c); and lastly, (6) knowledge of and adherence to legislative or collective agreements that govern the employer-employee relationship (Sandwith, 1993).

2.3.1 Task-oriented behaviours and related variables

The following section explains how a manager's task-oriented behaviours impact on the level of employee engagement. Specifically, the degree to which the manager competently displays task-oriented behaviours has an impact on the perceived psychological contract, and its association with employee engagement.

The degree to which an employee is engaged has an impact on the fulfilment of three psychological states, namely psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability (Kahn, 1990). Therefore, managers can increase employee engagement by ensuring the fulfilment of these three psychological states (please refer to paragraph 2.2 for a detailed description of engagement and the three psychological states). Managers can control factors such as task and role characteristics, as well as work interactions, to have an influence on psychological meaningfulness, while factors such as interpersonal relationships, group and intergroup dynamics, managerial style and norms have an impact on psychological safety. Lastly, factors such as the depletion of physical and emotional energy have an influence on psychological availability (Gruman & Saks, 2011).

The perceived psychological contract between the employee and the employer is associated with employee engagement by fulfilment of the three psychological states (Gruman & Saks, 2011). Gruman and Saks (2011) argue that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours can lead to the fulfilment of these three psychological states, which in turn has an impact on the perceived fulfilment of the psychological contract. Specifically, clear benefits and the allocation of rewards influence psychological meaningfulness, and protective guarantees such as policies and adherence to legislation influence psychological safety. Also, the planning and scheduling of work and the coordination of interrelated activities influence psychological availability. Above all, the degree to which the manager clarifies objectives and procedures impacts on the employee's understanding of organisational goals and creates the context for the employee to set their own goals that align with those of the organisation. Clearly defined goals and objectives stimulate energy, focus and intensity (Gruman & Saks, 2011) – and are associated with engagement as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 209)

Hypothesis 1: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours will be positively related to employee engagement.*

2.3.2 The impact of task-oriented behaviours on performance

Besides the fact that managerial task-oriented behaviours influence employee engagement, the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviour also impacts on team effectiveness. For instance, the degree to which the manager plans and schedules activities in a way that makes better use of people, resources, information and equipment, as well as the degree to which the manager clarifies objectives, priorities and standards for evaluating results, are likely to be associated with increased team efficiency and service quality. Specifically, the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours will ensure that: (a) the unit reaches service goals on time or exceeds them, (b) the unit consistently exceeds quality standards, (c) the unit exceeds the amount of work required and does more than expected, (d) the cost effectiveness of core unit processes is significantly better than budgeted for, and (e) individual employees in the team show high levels of task performance (Spangenberg & Theron, 2004). In addition, the degree to which the manager displays customer management behaviours, such as customer needs assessment and an evaluation of customer satisfaction/retention, as well as resolves customer complaints and provides employees with guidance in handling difficult or complex problems (O*Net Online, 2016), is bound to increase customer satisfaction with service recovery and, as a result, affect impact retention rates. These task-oriented behaviours are likely to influence the customer's

association and identification with the organisation, which ultimately results in repurchase intentions (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010).

2.4 Empowering Leadership Behaviours

At its core, empowering leadership involves behaviours that enhance autonomy and motivation by delegating the leader's responsibilities and authorities to employees. Empowering leadership behaviours include participative decision-making, coaching subordinates, informing, and showing real personal concern (Lee et al., 2016). Therefore, leadership empowerment behaviour is "characterised by the redistribution, or devolution of decision-making power to those who do not currently have it and gives employees the power to do the job their positions demand" (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010, p. 2). Above all, empowering leadership behaviours create an environment that fosters success, in which the employees are empowered by greater responsibility, decision-making authority, information and feedback, as well as motivation, support and encouragement. Konczak et al. (2000) identified six dimensions of leadership empowerment behaviours, namely (1) the delegation of authority; (2) accountability for outcomes (performance management systems are structured in such a way that individuals and teams have control over performance); (3) self-directed decision-making (followers are motivated to take the initiative in identifying problems in work processes; this entails the improvement of processes by developing and implementing plans, goals and procedures); (4) information sharing (the leader actively provides followers with all relevant information in order to perform their responsibilities competently – typically the leader fulfils a more facilitative role); (5) skill development (the leader provides guidance and prioritises frequent learning opportunities to develop new skills); and (6) coaching for innovative performance (leader encourages calculated risk taking and new ideas, provides performance feedback, and treats mistakes and setbacks as opportunities to learn) (Konczak et al., 2000).

Even though leader actions and decision processes are important determinants of empowerment, leader behaviours alone do not explain when and why employees feel empowered. Additional insights can be gained by examining follower perceptions, needs and values (Yukl, 2013). In other words, empowerment is a motivational process whereby individuals' power needs are met when they perceive they have power or can adequately cope with events and situations, in contrast to feelings of powerlessness (when employees believe they are unable to cope). Therefore, feeling empowered in a motivational sense refers to an intrinsic need for self-determination or a belief in personal self-efficacy (Fong & Snape, 2015). Ultimately, managerial strategies that weaken self-determination or self-efficacy will increase a sense of powerlessness. To this end, Conger and Kanungo (as cited in Jose & Mampilly, 2014) argue that empowerment is more than the mere delegation of responsibilities, but rather

a "process of enhancing feelings of self-efficacy among organisational members through the identification of conditions that foster powerlessness and through their removal by formal organisational practices and informal techniques of providing efficacy information" (p. 474).

2.4.1 Empowering leadership behaviours and related variables

The following section explores the complex network or relationships between leadership empowerment behaviours and other constructs. Specifically, the section explores the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviours and the degree to which subordinates experience psychological empowerment, engagement, job satisfaction, commitment and/or the intention to quit.

2.4.1.1 Psychological empowerment as mediating variable

Psychological empowerment is the intrinsic motivation manifested in four cognitions (meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) that reflect an individual's orientation to his or her work role (Spreitzer, as cited in Stander & Rothmann, 2010). In addition, empowering leadership behaviours precede psychological empowerment, and empowered employees who believe in themselves and the work they do are more engaged. Thus, psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement (Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

Furthermore, Konczak et al. (2000) report that the psychological experience of empowerment mediates the relationship between leader behaviours and subordinate job attitudes. The authors report that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between the six empowering leadership dimensions – delegation of authority, accountability for performance, self-directed decision-making, information sharing, skill development and coaching for innovative performance – and job satisfaction and organisational commitment. Stander and Rothmann (2010) found statically significant relationships between psychological empowerment, job insecurity and employee engagement. They observed that affective job insecurity (fear of job loss) had a main effect on employee engagement and three dimensions of psychological empowerment – competence, meaning and impact. Admittedly, this finding emphasises the importance of empowerment interventions in the face of high levels of job insecurity – thus, empowering leadership behaviours can increase the level of vigour, dedication and absorption (engagement) (Stander & Rothmann, 2010).

At the individual and unit level of analysis, Fong and Snape (2015) found that psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and

customer service and individual outcomes. Fong and Snape (2015) argue that followers do not only assess leader behaviour according to how the leader treats them personally, but also assess the leader's behaviour towards the group. Moreover, members of the same group tend to share and develop similar perceptions and attitudes – thus, there is a relationship between the level of individual psychological empowerment and group-level empowerment. Specifically, at the individual level, psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction, organisational commitment, in-role performance and OCB-I (OCB-I refers to organisational citizenship behaviours, such as altruism, directed towards other individuals). At the unit level of analysis, psychological empowerment mediates the relationship between leadership and job satisfaction, as well as in-role performance (Fong & Snape, 2015).

2.4.1.2 Empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement

Rothmann et al. (2006) evaluated the psychometric properties of the Job Demands-Job Resources (JD-JR) scale in various South African organisations. By using principle component analysis, the authors identified the five most prominent job demands/job resources factors. G*rowth opportunities* refer to the opportunity to learn, and to develop a variety of skills and independence. *Organisational support* refers to one's relationships with the supervisor, the availability of information, communication, participation, social support from colleagues, and regular contact opportunities with the organisation other than during office hours. *Advancement* refers to the ability to move forward in an organisation, career opportunities, remuneration and training. *Work overload* simply refers to job demands that exceed the available resources and, finally, *job insecurity* refers to the feelings of insecurity and the future thereof (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010; Rothmann et al., 2006). Consequently, these factors play either an intrinsic motivational role, where it satisfies basic needs such as autonomy, competence and relatedness, or an extrinsic motivational role, where an employee exerts more effort with respect to a task in order to attain a goal. What is more, is that intrinsic motivation (and the degree to which the follower experiences psychological empowerment) is related to employee engagement. Kruja et al. (2016) argue that employee turnover has for long been a challenge in the hospitality industry due to low compensation, inadequate benefits, poor working conditions and poor worker morale. The authors emphasise the need for career advancement opportunities and development in hospitality organisations that will satisfy employees' needs for achievement, responsibility and esteem, and subsequently increase the level of empowerment and engagement amongst employees (Kruja et al., 2016).

The level of employee engagement has an impact on the experience of psychological conditions, such as *psychological meaningfulness* (the degree of congruence between the

value of work goals and individual ideals, whereas a lack of meaning in work leads to apathy and disengagement); *psychological availability* (a sense of having physical, emotional or psychological resources to engage in a particular activity); and *psychological safety* (cooperative and supportive relationships at work) (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010. Work-role fit and good co-worker relationships have been shown to be predictors of psychological meaningfulness and employee engagement, while job resources such as organisational support and growth opportunities are the best predictors of vigour, dedication and absorption (engagement). Also, supportive supervisor relationships and rewarding co-worker relationships are related to psychological safety (Rothmann & Rothmann, 2010). Accordingly, empowering leadership behaviours are related to employee engagement (the degree to which the leader ensures work-role fit and creates an environment with good co-worker relationships and supervisor support) and an emphasis on employee development should result in employees who are more engaged and whose psychological needs are met.

2.4.1.3 Empowering leadership behaviours and satisfaction, commitment and intention to quit

Social support, especially supervisory support, reduces symptoms of depersonalisation and emotional exhaustion. Supervisory support is associated with low levels of job stressors and low feelings of stress, reduces the levels of burnout and plays an important part in mitigating employees' intention to quit. Conversely, a lack of supervisory support is the best predictor of job dissatisfaction and intention to leave (Ramamurthi, Vakilbashi, Rashid, Mokhber, & Basiruddin, 2016). Thus, the greater the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviours, with a specific focus on employee support and development, the more satisfied employees are (Ramamurthi et al., 2016).

Indeed, Stander and Rothmann (n.d.) report that specific dimensions of the empowering leadership behaviour questionnaire (ELBQ) show significant correlations with employee satisfaction and organisational commitment. Specifically, the researchers found correlation coefficients with medium effect sizes between empowering leadership and affective and normative commitment. Also, the degree to which the leader displays empowering leadership behaviours predicted employee job satisfaction, which in turn predicted employee organisational commitment.

Correspondingly, Van Schalkwyk et al. (2010) found a relationship between the lack of leadership empowerment behaviour and employees' intention to quit. Thus, the degree to which the leader displays empowerment behaviours could affect a subordinate's perception of organisational support, which in turn has an impact on employee commitment and the

intention to quit. In fact, employees who are not committed to the organisation are more likely to engage in withdrawal behaviour, such as turnover and absenteeism (Kalidass & Bahron, 2015). Similarly, Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute (2011) states that the more management shows commitment to and support for employees, the more motivated the employees will be to stay with the organisation. In addition, if managers act more like coaches and delegate decisions and responsibilities to subordinates, the more satisfied employees will be with their leaders, and in turn subordinate performance will meet the leader's expectations (Savaneviciene & Stankeviciute, 2011).

2.4.2 Empowered teams and related outcomes

The dimensions of team empowerment resemble those of individual psychological empowerment, namely (1) team potency (collective competence or self-efficacy); (2) meaningfulness (shared meaningfulness of tasks); (3) autonomy (choice, freedom, independence and discretion in work); and (4) impact (gather information on unit performance from customers or other stakeholders to determine the improvement in processes and procedures) (Berberoğlugil, 2020; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999). Kirkman and Rosen (1999) identify certain antecedents of empowered teams. Leader behaviours, such as the delegation of responsibility, encouraging team goal setting, and the inspiration and communication of high-performance expectations, will increase team empowerment. Secondly, teams will be more empowered if they are encouraged to participate in decisions regarding the scheduling of production and service assignments and encouraged to handle customer complaints and issues. Thirdly, in order to increase team empowerment, team members should be encouraged to participate in human resources practices concerning the team, such as selection and training initiatives. And finally, if there is a high degree of intra-team communication and coordination, and if they have access to the necessary strategic information and work unit resources, the level of team empowerment will be higher (Berberoğlugil, 2020; Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Research has shown that team empowerment is related to various performance outcomes. For instance, higher levels of productivity are associated with team potency and participative decision-making. In addition, the quality of decisions improves when team members have complete knowledge of their jobs (impact) and determine their own outcomes (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Kruja et al., 2016). Empowered team members also display a higher frequency of proactive behaviours than disempowered teams. After all, teams that have the tendency to think and behave proactively, persistently seek innovative solutions to problems and new opportunities to improve systems in response to changing environments. Empowered teams tend to provide better customer service. Teams that are empowered to take responsibility for

handling customer complaints and diagnose their own quality issues display higher levels of internal and external customer service (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999; Kruja et al., 2016). Furthermore, the high level of support and trust in empowered team systems will lead to higher levels of team commitment and team job satisfaction (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

2.4.3 The impact of empowering leadership behaviours on performance

It is evident from the above that empowering leadership is motivational in nature and is likely to be associated with performance. At the individual level, empowering leadership is associated with increased managerial effectiveness, employee creativity, engagement, job satisfaction and commitment, and lower turnover intentions (Fong & Snape, 2015; Lee et al., 2016; Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). At the team level, empowering leadership behaviour is associated with higher levels of team empowerment, and consequently leads to higher levels of overall team performance (Fong & Snape, 2015), increased productivity, proactive team behaviours and increased customer service (Kirkman & Rosen, 1999).

Except for the direct relationships between empowering leadership behaviours and follower job attitudes and objective performance dimensions, the underlying psychological process that results from 'being empowered' is psychological empowerment. Therefore, when subordinates perceive their job to have meaning and recognise the impact it has on others, they are motivated to perform well. In addition, when subordinates experience a sense of self-determination, they can respond well to situational demands and can handle customer requests better, without waiting for approval or feeling helpless. Indeed, when subordinates experience a sense of self-worth and competence, it leads to increased performance (Kundu, Kumar, & Gahlawat, 2019). In brief, psychological empowerment at the team and individual level plays a mediating role between empowering leadership behaviours and affective commitment, OCB (Fong & Snape, 2015), and task characteristics (Kundu et al., 2019).

Martin and Bush (2009) examined the antecedents and performance-related consequences of customer-oriented selling. The authors report that leadership behaviours, such as individualised consideration and intellectual stimulation (also associated with empowering leadership behaviours), play a significant role in creating a climate that increases customer-oriented selling (Martin & Bush, 2009). Thus, empowering leadership behaviours create a climate of support, recognition, fairness, innovation, autonomy, trust, and cohesiveness, while these factors enable the employee to display an array of customer-oriented behaviours. In conclusion, empowered employees are more attentive to customers, more creative in ensuring customer satisfaction, display higher levels of service quality, obtain increased customer

ratings and customer loyalty, and experience decreased job stress and increased engagement, satisfaction and commitment (Kruja et al., 2016).

Hypothesis 2: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviour is positively related to employee engagement.*

From the above-mentioned arguments (and inferred from the literature), one can consider empowering leadership behaviour as a proxy for team effectiveness. Thus, one can hypothesise that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviour will be related positively to team effectiveness – productivity, service quality and customer retention. Team performance was not added as a variable in this study, since the context and scope of the study do not allow the researcher to link individual customer-contact employee responses to the teams to which they belong, that is., the current design does not make provision to calculate composite team performance scores based on the perceived level of team performance by the manager, by individual team members or by members of the public (e.g., consumer feedback).

2.5 Social-Emotional Competency

The concept of emotional intelligence first appeared in the psychiatry literature as a secondary construct in the 1960s, and in 1986 it appeared in a doctoral dissertation. However, it was only in the 1990s that Mayer and Salovey proposed a systematic theoretical account of the construct (Mayer et al., 2004; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Today, emotional intelligence is probably one of the most contested constructs in psychology, and many diverse opinions exist regarding its scientific viability (Cherniss, 2010). These diverse opinions and approaches have led to various theories, although four models have dominated the field of emotional intelligence. These are (1) the Bar-On model (1988); (2) the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model (1997); (3) the Boyatzis and Goleman model (1996); and (4) the Petrides and Furnham model (2000). Despite these diverse approaches, O'Boyle et al. (2011) argue that, at the core of the different constitutive definitions, emotional intelligence encompasses an individual's capacity to recognise his/her own emotions and those of others, and then to regulate and manage those emotions to ensure effective social interaction. Thus, the four prominent models of emotional intelligence (EI) can be classified into three broad streams – ability EI, behavioural/competency EI and self-perception/trait EI (also referred to as mixed models of EI).

Bar-On's (1988) mixed-model approach to EI views emotional social intelligence as "an array of non-cognitive capabilities, competencies and skills that influence one's ability to succeed in coping with environmental demands and pressures" (Bar-On, as cited in Petrides & Furnham, 2001, p. 428). Being emotionally and socially intelligent is to display intrapersonal and interpersonal competencies that reflect one's capability to effectively understand and express oneself, to understand and relate well to others, and to successfully cope with daily demands, challenges and pressures. Specifically, an emotional-socially intelligent individual will "effectively manage personal, social and environmental change by realistically and flexibly coping with the immediate situation, solving problems and making decisions" (Bar-On, 2006, p. 14). Furthermore, in order to measure his definition of emotional social intelligence, Bar-On developed the EQ-I, which is available as a multi-rater and self-report assessment. The EQ-i consist of five overarching factors, namely: (a) **Intrapersonal skills**, which include *emotional awareness*, *assertiveness*, *self-regard*, *self-actualisation* and *independence*); (b) **Interpersonal skills**, which include *empathy*, *interpersonal relationship* and *social responsibility*; (c) **Adaptability**, which includes *problem-solving capacity, reality testing* and *flexibility*; (d) **Stress management**, which includes *stress tolerance* and *impulse control*; and (d) **General mood**, which refers to happiness and optimism (Bar-On, 2006; Petrides & Furnham, 2001).

The second model is the four-branch model of Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model (1997), also known as the ability model of EI. Mayer and Salovey view emotional intelligence as a mental ability and a type of intelligence. Thus, the model explains emotional intelligence in cognitive-emotional terms and follows an information-processing approach (Boyatzis, 2009; Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Mayer et al. (2004, p. 197) claim that emotional intelligence is "the capacity to reason about emotions, and of emotions to enhance thinking. It includes the ability to accurately perceive emotions, to access and generate emotions to assist thought, to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and to reflectively regulate emotions so as to promote emotional and intellectual growth". Cognitive-emotive abilities and skills can be divided into four areas: (a) to **perceive emotion,** which refers to the recognition of emotions in oneself and others; (b) to **use emotion to facilitate thought**, which refers specifically to the capacity of emotions to assist thinking and problem-solving; (c) to **understand emotions**, which refers to the capacity to analyse emotions and understand their related outcomes and impact on others; and (d) the ability to **manage emotions** in the context of individual goals, self-knowledge and social awareness. Accordingly, the four branches represent the developmental progression of skills from the more basic to the more complex, where the first two branches are more experiential in nature (experiential EI) and the last two branches are more strategic in nature (strategic EI) (Mayer et al., 2004).

In order to strengthen their argument that emotional intelligence is in fact a type of intelligence, Mayer et al. (2004) argue that the processing of emotional information is a cooperative combination of intelligence and emotion, and that these cognitions deal with matters of personal emotional importance to the individual. Specifically, just as different intelligences can be distinguished by the forms of information on which they operate, such as verbal-propositional, spatial-visual, perceptual-organisational, so too can emotional intelligence be distinguished by the form of information on which it operates (Mayer et al., 2004). Consequently, if one claims that emotional intelligence is a type of intelligence, then one should be able to use objective measures with right and wrong answers to calculate an individual's emotion quotient (EQ). However, the most frequently used objective EI measure, the MSCEIT, which was developed by Salovey and Mayer, has items that were operationalised in more-or-less correct answers (where the optimal answer is based on consensus) (Mayer et al., 2004). As a result, objective emotional intelligence measures have low reliability coefficients. Despite the fact that the measurement of ability EI remains problematic, the MSCEIT correlates more highly with other cognitive ability tests than other EI assessments (Cherniss, 2010). Yet many critics argue that the cognitive processes of emotional intelligence actually refer to one's ability to carry out abstract thought, as well as to learn and adapt to the environment, and therefore cannot be recognised as a unique type of intelligence (Mayer et al., 2004).

The third model, that of Boyatzis and Goleman, is inspired by the Mayer, Salovey and Caruso model of emotional intelligence, but is designed specifically to encompass social and emotional competencies that are linked to performance in the workplace (Cherniss, 2010). A competency is a set of behavioural repertoires that is associated with the intent of recognising, understanding, and using emotional information about oneself or others that leads or causes effective performance (Boyatzis et al., 2012). The emotional and social competency model complement the ability and trait theories of EI; however, emotional social intelligence (ESI) is demonstrated in behaviours that can be observed by others and is most likely to relate to job performance and outcomes (Boyatzis et al., 2012). The emotional social competency model of Boyatzis and Goleman consist of a number of specific competencies organised into three basic clusters: (a) emotional intelligence competencies, (b) social intelligence competencies, and (c) cognitive competencies (Boyatzis, 2009; Cherniss, 2010).

The aim of these authors was to emphasise the importance of EI in leadership effectiveness (Boyatzis et al., 2012). By analysing competency models designed by psychologists from 188 organisations, Goleman found that the more senior the leadership position, the more variance emotional intelligence explained in leadership effectiveness and performance outcomes

(Goleman, 2004). Hence, Goleman (2004) argued that general intelligence and technical skills are the entry-level requirements for executive positions, but that emotional intelligence is the definitive skill necessary to be a great leader. Along the same lines, Boyatzis (2009) emphasises that there are three clusters of competencies that differentiate between outstanding and average performers. The first competency cluster is Emotional Intelligence Competencies and refers to self-awareness and self-management. The second cluster is Social Intelligence Competencies and refers to social awareness and relationship management, while the third cluster is Cognitive Competencies, which refer to the degree to which the leader displays systems thinking and the recognition of patterns. To this end, Boyatzis and Goleman (as cited in Boyatzis, 2009) developed a multi-rater assessment called the Emotional and Social Competence Inventory (ESCI and the ESCI-U). The table below provides a more detailed description of the competency clusters and definitions (Boyatzis, 2009):

Table 2.1

Social and Emotional Competencies

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES

- ***Self-Awareness*** cluster concerns knowing one's internal states, preferences, resources, and intuitions. The self-awareness cluster contains, in relation to competency:
  - *Emotional self-awareness*: recognising one's emotions and their effects

- ***Self-Management*** cluster refers to managing one's internal states, impulses and resources. The self-management cluster contains four competencies:
  - *Emotional self-control*: keeping disruptive emotions and impulses in check
  - *Adaptability*: flexibility in handling change
  - *Achievement orientation*: striving to improve or meeting a standard of excellence
  - *Positive outlook*: the positive aspects of things and the future

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES

- ***Social Awareness*** cluster refers to how people handle relationships and awareness of others' feelings, needs and concerns. The social awareness cluster contains two competencies:
  - *Empathy*: sensing others' feelings and perspectives, taking an active interest in their concerns
  - *Organisational awareness*: reading a group's emotional currents and power relationships

- ***Relationship Management*** cluster contains the skill or adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others. The cluster contains five competencies:
  - *Coach and Mentor*: sensing others' development needs and bolstering their abilities
  - *Inspirational Leadership*: inspiring and guiding individuals and groups
  - *Influence:* wielding effective tactics for persuasion
  - *Conflict Management*: negotiating and resolving disagreements
  - *Teamwork:* working with others toward shared goals; creating group synergy in pursuing collective goals

COGNITIVE INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCIES

- ***Systems Thinking*** - perceiving multiple causal relationship in understanding phenomena or events
- ***Pattern Recognition*** - perceiving themes or patterns in seemingly random items, events, or phenomena

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Note: Adapted from "Competencies as emotional approach to behavioural intelligence" by R. E. Boyatzis, 2009, *Journal of Management Development, 28*(9), pp. 754-755. Copyright by Emerald Insight.

Finally, the last of the four most prominent emotional intelligence models, known as trait EI, is the model of Petrides and Furnham. These authors hypothesise that emotional intelligence can be viewed as a constellation of traits, behavioural tendencies and self-perceived abilities (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Measures of trait EI, such as the Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), correlate significantly with strong affective personality traits, such as

extraversion and neuroticism. However, according to Petrides and Furnham (2001), a multitude of evidence exists that also proves trait EI as an incremental predictor of multiple psychological variables beyond higher-order personality traits. In addition, trait EI (TEIQue) predicts 94% of the criteria related to individuals' emotional experience (Andrei et al., 2016). To this end, emotional intelligence is viewed as personality facets that specifically relate to affect. The four components of the trait EI model are (1) **well-being** (which includes trait optimism, trait happiness and self-efficacy); (2) **sociability** (which includes emotion management of others, assertiveness and social awareness); (3) **emotionality** (which includes trait empathy, emotion perception of self and others, emotion expression and relationships); and (4) **self-control** (which includes emotion regulation, low impulsiveness and stress management) (Andrei et al., 2016; Cherniss, 2010).

2.5.1 Criticism of emotional intelligence as a construct

There is a great deal of criticism regarding the construct validity, incremental and predictive validity of EI. Some researchers report that the correlation between the two most common models of EI are so modest (r = .21) that they only share 4% of variance. Consequently, these researchers claim that the models do not really measure the same construct, and that EI as concept should rather be rejected (Landy, 2005; Locke, as cited in Cherniss, 2010). Similarly, Joseph et al. (2015) argue that the measures of mixed EI strongly overlap with a set of well-known psychological constructs, such as positive self-appraisals (self-efficacy), conscientiousness (industriousness and self-control), emotional stability (optimism and stress tolerance), extraversion (gregariousness and assertiveness), and general mental ability. These well-known psychological constructs have long been known to predict job performance. For example, emotional stability, extroversion and conscientiousness explain why mixed EI models predict job satisfaction and leadership. Consequently, due to the heterogeneous sampling domain of emotional intelligence, the construct validity of EI appears questionable, considering the lack of evidence regarding the distinction between EI and other constructs to which it is theoretically related (Joseph et al., 2015).

Research has established that personality measures are excellent predictors of leadership performance. Also, personality factors are related to emotional tasks that require emotional labour and emotion regulation, while cognitive ability is a strong predictor of work-related outcomes and the single best predictor of overall job performance. To this end, researchers question the incremental validity of EI measures in work-related outcomes when other constructs are taken into consideration (Harms & Crede, 2010; O'Boyle et al., 2011). For instance, Cavazotte et al. (2012) found that EI (WLEIS – self-perception model of EI) is moderately significantly related to transformational leadership and indirectly related to

leadership effectiveness, but, when general cognitive ability and personality factors were controlled for, the relationship between EI and leadership effectiveness was non-significant (Cavazotte et al., 2012).

Nonetheless, Cherniss (2010) proposes that researchers should distinguish between these various models and definitions of EI and adopt a single definition that most researchers agree on. In addition, she proposes a clearer distinction between EI and emotional and social intelligence or competencies. Cherniss (2010) argues that the strength of the mixed models is that they combine many emotional and social competencies that are related to success. Therefore, emotional social competencies are likely to be stronger predictors of performance than emotional intelligence (Cherniss, 2010). In similar vein, Joseph et al. (2015) suggest that the term "emotional intelligence" should rather be changed to "emotional competence" that "describes individuals who are emotionally stable, outgoing, and conscientious, with a high estimation of their own past and future performance and to a lesser extent emotionally intelligent" (p. 316).

2.5.2 Emotional intelligence, prosocial behaviour and self-actualisation

The following section describes the relationship between emotional intelligence and other life and career outcomes, such as pro-social behaviour, self-actualisation and well-being.

Mayer et al. (2004) claim that an individual with higher emotional intelligence tends to solve emotional problems better, is more open and agreeable and is drawn to occupations that involve more social interaction. In addition, these individuals also tend to have more positive interactions with others and avoid self-destructive negative behaviour. Even when controlling for personality traits, Mayer et al. (2004) found that emotion regulation predicted aspects of social sensitivity and the quality of interactions. Similarly, Bar-On (2006) reports that emotional and social intelligence predict factor H of the 16PF personality questionnaire. The factor describes an individual's propensity to seek out friendly, genial and positive relationships, and provides further support that emotional intelligence relates significantly with social interaction (r = .69). Also, EI varies inversely with bullying, violence, tobacco use and drug problems (Cherniss, 2010; Mayer et al., 2004).

Research has also shown that EI as a trait predicts goal orientation, mood recovery and self-reported affect intensity (Petrides & Furnham, 2001). Equally, Bar-On (2006) argues that setting and accomplishing goals will only be possible if one has self-awareness and an understanding of who one is and what one wants. In fact, there is a significant positive

relationship between emotional social intelligence and self-actualisation – the process of striving to actualise one's potential capacity, abilities and talents (Bar-On, 2006).

2.5.3 The importance of emotionally intelligent managers in service organisations

Despite the lack of consensus on and criticism of emotional intelligence, some studies have demonstrated that EI and ESC (emotional social competence) explain incremental validity in performance outcomes when general mental ability and personality are controlled for. Although some of these results are inconsistent and the relationships modest, it seems that the impact of emotional social competencies on performance outcomes is greater when the job involves a lot of social interaction and influence. In other words, the relationship between ESC and performance outcomes is greater when the job involves teamwork, customer contact, and high levels of job stress associated with emotional labour (Cherniss, 2010).

Thus, the degree to which the leader and the subordinate display emotional social competencies becomes increasingly more important in service organisations – specifically for organisations in the hospitality industry where the job entails teamwork, constant customer contact, emotional labour and higher levels of job stress.

2.5.3.1 Emotional intelligence and emotional labour

Brotheridge (2006, p. 139) states that "the key role of emotional intelligence seemed to be as a predictor of the perceived situational demands, which in turn again predicted the nature of emotional labour performed". Along the same lines, Cherniss (2010) argues that emotional and social competencies seem to be strong predictors of performance outcomes when the job involves teamwork, customer contact, and high levels of job stress associated with emotional labour. Emotional labour occurs when it is required of the employee to alter his/her emotional expression to meet the display rules of the organisation (O'Boyle et al., 2011). In other words, altering emotional expression causes job-related stress and negatively affects job performance. However, the degree to which the leader and the employee can regulate their emotions ultimately enables them to cope with and adapt to the situation, which reduces the impact of stress caused by emotional labour.

Furthermore, a leader or manager with emotional and social competencies, such as emotional self-awareness, emotional self-control and adaptability, can regulate their own emotions and decrease stress experienced from emotional labour. More importantly, a leader who displays emotional and social competencies, such as the ability to read a group's emotional currents and empathy, can regulate emotions in others. If the manager can effectively regulate

emotions in others, the manager can buffer the impact of job demands, such as emotional labour, on individual and team performance. Ultimately, a leader who has emotional and social competencies can influence the moods, motivations, and performance of their team members (O'Boyle et al., 2011). Correspondingly, a qualitative study by Vitello-Cicciu (as cited in Mayer et al., 2004) proposes that nurse managers with high levels of emotional intelligence understand when their subordinates experience certain emotions, know what actions to take to regulate those emotions, and are sensitive to the employees' needs to create a positive team climate.

2.5.3.2 Emotionally intelligent managers and employee engagement

Besides the fact that a leader or manager's emotional and social competencies (ESC) can buffer the impact of job demands on individual and team performance, so too can a manager's ESC have a positive impact on employee engagement. As discussed previously (see paragraph 2.2), engagement can be defined as "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind that is characterised by vigour, dedication, and absorption" (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008, p. 209). Engagement involves a dynamic relationship between one's job demands and one's personal and job resources. Job resources refer to physical, psychological, social or organisational aspects of the job that reduce job demands and fulfil the need for autonomy, relatedness and competence (Bakker & Demerouti, 2008). It appears that the higher the degree to which the manager displays emotional and social competencies, the better the manager will be able to use the intrinsic motivational potential of job resources to ensure employee engagement.

Put differently, if the manager displays a high frequency of behaviours that relate to emotional and social competencies, the manager will be able to facilitate performance feedback, co-worker support within the team, supervisory coaching and support, autonomy and role clarity. As an illustration, managers who recognise their own emotions and those of others, and display emotional self-control, achievement orientation, and empathy, and who sense the development needs of others and bolster their abilities, will be able to provide job resources such as performance feedback, supervisory coaching and support. In addition, to facilitate co-worker support amongst team members, and to provide autonomy and role clarity, a manager should be able to inspire individuals and groups and be able to create group synergy in pursuing collective goals. In brief, job demands, such as environments that require constant social interaction, customer contact and emotional labour, can become job stressors and cause burnout if they continuously elicit negative responses from subordinates. However, the manager's emotional and social competencies can facilitate job resources and increase the

level of subordinate engagement. Job resources tend to become salient and gain motivational potential when the employee is confronted by high job demands.

Hypothesis 3: *In the proposed frontline employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays social-emotional competencies will be positively related to employee engagement.*

2.5.4 The impact of emotional intelligence on performance

McGelland (as cited in Goleman, 2004) reports that the presence of the core EI capabilities among senior management leads to their divisions outperforming yearly goals and earnings by 20%. In contrast, the visional leaders without the core EI capabilities underperformed by nearly the same percentage. These results have been replicated and confirmed across the United States, Asia, and Europe (Goleman, 2004). A longitudinal study conducted in a multinational consulting company, for instance. investigated the relationship between leaders' emotional and social competencies (as measured by the multi-rater ESCI) and financial performance (the two criteria were revenue from clients and gross margin). The researchers found that cognitive and emotional competencies predicted financial performance, with 93% of the competencies being emotional competencies (Boyatzis, 2006).

In order to investigate the claim that emotional and social intelligence (ESI) does not account for distinctive variance in leadership performance, Boyatzis et al. (2012) investigated the role of ESI competencies in sales executives' objective performance in a financial services organisation. The researchers controlled for general intelligence (measured by Raven's Progressive Matrices and the Mill Hill Vocabulary assessment) and personality (measured by NEO-PI-R), while emotional and social intelligence were measured by the multi-rater ESCI. In this particular organisation, the performance of the financial advisors is a major performance indicator for the sales executive, since the financial performance of the division is directly tied to the sales of new contracts. In addition, the sales executive is responsible for articulating a compelling vision and aligning followers in a way that motivates them, as well as for recruiting and training new financial advisors. The divisional executive's personal compensation and that of their sales staff is further based entirely on their office's financial performance (Boyatzis et al., 2012). The ESI composite did not correlate with g or any of the personality traits, and ESI competencies explained incremental and unique variance beyond any other variables. The ESI competencies were also positively and significantly related to the performance outcomes (Boyatzis et al., 2012).

Wilderdom et al. (2015) reported an indirect relationship between store managers' emotional intelligence and their objective performance. For instance, the researchers demonstrated that a manager's emotional intelligence is related to store cohesiveness, and in turn predicts the sales-directed behaviour of frontline employees. The sales-directed behaviour of frontline employees, in turn, predicts objective measures of performance. The extent to which the manager displays intra- and interpersonal skills therefore facilitates store cohesion. Specifically, the manager can induce cohesion by stimulating positive feelings of group identity, setting group norms, and by encouraging team members to engage in emotional expression. Thus, store cohesion is related to unit performance, and can be viewed as a psychological resource that stimulates sales-directed behaviour in team members, leading to increased financial performance (Wilderdom et al., 2015).

Hur et al. (2011) argue that transformational leadership co-creates outcomes such as follower job satisfaction, follower psychological climate, as well as extra-role behaviours, project team performance and customer satisfaction. The results indicate that transformational leadership partially mediates the relationship between the leaders' emotional intelligence and leader effectiveness, and also partially mediates the relationship between the leaders' emotional intelligence and service climate. Hence, the mediating role of transformational leadership adds to the theory of emotional intelligence, because emotionally intelligent leaders have a better sense of employees' reactions and are more apt to integrate emotional or individual consideration (Hur et al., 2011). Lam and Higgens (2010) also provide evidence that a manager's transformational leadership style fully mediates the relationship between the manager's emotional intelligence and employee satisfaction.

Furthermore, the leader's emotional intelligence and the degree to which the manager has a transformational style have a positive impact on the mood of employees while interacting with customers, and lead to higher customer satisfaction ratings (O'Boyle et al., 2011). Mayer et al. (2004) confirm that emotional intelligence is an essential skill for all employees who have direct customer contact and that it predicts higher customer satisfaction ratings.

In conclusion, O'Boyle et al. (2011) emphasise that emotional intelligence is of specific importance in the service sector, which requires interaction with customers (customer service, caring profession and social control). The authors argue that emotional and social competence is a particularly important requirement for individual, team and organisational performance when the service sector is growing and the manufacturing sector is declining in the global economy. In fact, a manager with emotional and social competencies can facilitate job resources that are related to employee performance. Tthe manager's emotional intelligence

appears to be associated with team cohesion, service climate and employees' sales-directed behaviour, which in turn lead to team productivity. Lastly, the emotional and social competencies of the manager are associated with constructive conflict management (Schlaerth et al., 2013) and service recovery, service quality and customer retention.

2.6 Work Design Behaviours

There are many ways in which jobs can be designed and countless studies have investigated work characteristics (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006). Rresearch has established that the manner in which work is designed has important implications for individual, group and organisational outcomes (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006).

The industrial revolution meant the birth of scientific management, with a focus on efficiency and job simplification. The aim of scientific management was to design work in such a way that it produces as much as possible, in the shortest time frame, with minimum room for failure, and at the lowest possible cost to company. In order to minimise failure and to maintain low labour costs, management designed jobs to be highly routinised, regulated and repetitive. However, the negative psychological impact of repetitive and unchallenging work eventually became evident (Oldham & Hackman, 2010), and researchers began to investigate the impact of job enrichment on internal motivation.

The first theory to address the impact of work characteristics on internal motivation was Herzberg's two-factor theory (Parker et al., 2001). Herzberg introduced the notion of 'hygiene factors' (extrinsic factors such as supervisory practices and working conditions), which are associated with the context in which the job is performed, and 'motivators' (intrinsic factors such as responsibility, achievement, growth and competence, recognition and advancement), which are associated with aspects of the job itself (Martin & Roodt, 2008; Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Herzberg argued that extrinsic factors are related to job dissatisfaction, and intrinsic factors are related to job satisfaction (Martin & Roodt, 2008) – ultimately claiming that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are two distinct constructs, and not two constructs on the opposite ends of a continuum. As early as the 1950s, attention was drawn to job enrichment and the presence of work characteristics, such as recognition, challenging and responsible work, and their relationship with job satisfaction. Thereafter, Hackman and Oldham introduced the job characteristics model (JCM) (Parker et al., 2001). In the following section, the JCM model is discussed in detail.

2.6.1 Job characteristics model

Many work design or job characteristics models have been developed over the years, but the most influential is the job characteristics model (JCM), introduced by Hackman and Oldham (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Hernaus & Milkulic, 2013). The job diagnostic survey (JDS) was developed as a measurement of the job characteristics model in order to (a) diagnose jobs considered for redesign, (b) identify job characteristics that are most in need of enrichment, and (c) assess the readiness of employees – their growth-need-strength – to determine how they will respond, and if they will benefit from the changes made to the job (Buys et al., 2007; Boonzaier et al., 2001). The basic premise of the JCM is that jobs can be enriched by changing the objective characteristics of the job, which consequently will have a positive impact on certain personal and work outcomes. Furthermore, the model explains that the relationship between the five job characteristics and the outcome variables is mediated by three psychological states (as perceived by the job incumbent), and that those relationships are moderated by certain worker and environmental characteristics (Boonzaier et al., 2001).

The five job characteristics are (1) skill variety, which refers to the degree to which the job requires a variety of different activities and skills; (2) task identity, which refers to the degree to which the job requires completion of a whole and identifiable piece of work; (3) task significance, which refers to the degree to which the job has substantial impact on the lives or work of colleagues, the organisation and the community; (4) autonomy, which refers to the extent to which the job allows the employee freedom, independence, and discretion in scheduling the work and in determining the procedures that the job provides; and (5) feedback, which refers to the extent to which the job provides information about the effectiveness of one's performance (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Buys et al., 2007; Hernaus & Milkulic, 2013; Oldham & Hackman, 2010). The model hypothesises that these five job characteristics are related to personal outcomes, such as internal work motivation, growth and job satisfaction, and also to work outcomes, such as job effectiveness, and are inversely related to absenteeism and turnover (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Hernaus & Milkulic, 2013; Pollock et al., 2000). Tthe relationship between the characteristics and the outcomes is further mediated by three psychological states, namely experienced meaningfulness, experienced responsibility, and knowledge of results.

The degree to which the job incumbent perceives the job characteristics to be present will satisfy the following psychological states: Firstly, *experienced meaningfulness* refers to the degree to which the employee perceives the job as meaningful, valuable and worthwhile. The three job characteristics, *skill variety, task identity* and *task significance*, are related to experienced meaningfulness. Secondly, *experienced responsibility for work outcomes* refers

to the degree to which an employee feels personally accountable for work results and outcomes. The job characteristic, *autonomy*, is associated with *experienced responsibility*. Thirdly, *knowledge of the results* refers to the degree to which an employee knows and understands how effectively he/she is performing. It involves the experience of positive reinforcement and personal reward and, consequently, the job characteristic *feedback* is related to the psychological state, *knowledge of the results* (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Oldham & Hackman, 2010; Patrick & Bhat, 2014). Furthermore, the relationships between job characteristics and the three psychological states, and the relationship between the psychological states and the outcome variables, are moderated by worker and environmental characteristics.

Hackman and Oldham initially hypothesised that the magnitude of the relationships between the characteristics, the states and the outcomes will depend on certain employee characteristics, such as the employees' need for personal accomplishment, for learning and development (*growth-need-strength*); and the employees' knowledge and skills that are unique to that particular job (*knowledge and skills*) (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Besides the fact that the magnitude of the relationships between the characteristics, the states and the outcomes depend on personal characteristics, the relationships are also influenced by environmental characteristics or organisational factors, such as the employees' satisfaction with basic compensation and benefits, and distributive justice (pay satisfaction); the employees' satisfaction with job security experienced, as well as future job security (security satisfaction); and the employees' satisfaction with supervisory treatment, support and guidance (supervision satisfaction) (Boonzaier et al., 2001). To this end, the degree to which the hotel manager redesigns the jobs of subordinates, and the degree to which the work characteristics of the teams are structured, will therefore be considered indicative of an important managerial competency.

2.6.1.1 Further explanation of the job characteristics model

Changes in the organisational landscape, such as globalisation and the increase in service sector work, call for new developments in work design theory (Parker et al., 2001). These changes call for a broader and more flexible approach to work design interventions, which moves from only a few universal job characteristics and outcomes to a more realistic view. Along the same lines, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) argue that work characteristic models are too restrictive, and a comprehensive set of work characteristics should be considered in order to effectively redesign jobs. As a result, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) developed a measure that assesses categories of work characteristics, such as task, knowledge, social and contextual characteristics. Some authors, however, argue that not all work characteristics

fall into these categories, and that one can further distinguish between temporal characteristics, group characteristics, organisational characteristics and occupational characteristics (Picollo et al., 2010). In addition, Parker et al. (2001) propose a theoretical framework that aims to explain the antecedents, mechanisms, contingencies and outcomes of job redesign.

Similarly, Oldham and Hackman (2010) argue that work design is embedded in a complex network of interrelated factors – some of which they neglected to elaborate on when they initially designed the job characteristics model. In addition, the nature of work today is fundamentally different from four decades ago, when organisational work was a linked set of specific jobs, done mostly independently. In today's work environment, however, there is a much stronger emphasis on relationships amongst employees. Employees are balancing different activities that are not necessarily defined as part of their core job. Even though the nature of work changed, Oldham and Hackman (2010) argue that the issues remain the same. Job dissatisfaction, low work motivation, absenteeism and turnover remain organisational challenges that affect overall performance. In addition, previous research focused on frontline employees and the provision of products and services, while research today is concerned with the work of managers and professionals (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Therefore, researchers were primarily concerned with the impact of objective job characteristics on performance outcomes, while in this study, the researcher considered the degree to which jobs are designed and enriched as a managerial competency.

2.6.1.1.1 Social characteristics

As mentioned, Oldham and Hackman (2010) stress that social interaction and the management of social relationships is much more prominent in contemporary work – especially service work. The social characteristics of the job actually can be considered as structural features that influence and emphasise interpersonal interactions and the social environment. Social characteristics are important determinants of job design because of increasing teamwork in organisations (Picollo et al., 2010), but they are also a critical determinant of employee well-being, especially in jobs that lack motivational work characteristics.

Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) describe social characteristics as the degree to which a job provides opportunities for advice and assistance from others and is associated with supervisor and co-worker social support. These authors identify three prominent social characteristics. Firstly, **interdependence** refers to the degree to which the job depends on others and others depend on it. Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) further distinguish between two forms of

interdependence: (a) initiated interdependence (work flows from one job to another); and (b) received interdependence (the extent to which the job is affected by work from other jobs). Secondly, **interaction outside the organisation** refers to the extent to which a job requires employees to interact and communicate with customers, suppliers or any other external entity. Thirdly, **feedback from others** refers to the degree to which other sources, such as co-workers or supervisors, provide feedback about performance (Humphrey et al., 2007; Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006; Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

2.6.1.1.2 Task characteristics

Parker et al. (2001) identified individual-level work characteristics and, similarly to Oldham and Hackman, suggest that task variety, job autonomy and job feedback should be considered as important work characteristics. Additional work characteristics are cognitive demands, emotional demands, social contact, the opportunity for skill acquisition, and role conflict (Parker et al., 2001). Parker et al. (2001) advocate that role conflict is especially relevant for frontline employees, who are expected to fulfil multiple roles. For example, it is expected of frontline employees to provide information to customers, to generate revenue through selling, and to make use of cognitive characteristics of work (such as problem solving). Most prominent work characteristics of frontline employees are associated with a high level of emotional demands. Emotional demands, such as emotional labour requires high levels of emotional management and are associated with burnout and anxiety. Parker et al. (2001) stress the importance of autonomy as a work characteristic in the face of high emotional demands. The authors argue that autonomy will enable the employee to control his/her exposure to emotional demands – for instance, the employee may have the freedom to defer the interaction to a more convenient time, or ask a co-worker to intervene when the employee already feels over-burdened (Parker et al., 2001).

Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) clearly distinguish between work and task characteristics. In correspondence with Oldham and Hackman, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) state that task characteristics describe how the job itself is accomplished, and the range and nature of tasks associated with a particular job (Hernaus & Mikulic, 2013; Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006). Thus, similarly to Oldham and Hackman, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) consider task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from the job itself as opposed to feedback from others, and job autonomy as valid task characteristics. In addition, job autonomy consists of three related aspects, namely (a) autonomy with work scheduling, (b) autonomy in terms of decision-making, and (c) autonomy to select work methods (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006; Picollo et al., 2010).

2.6.1.1.3 Knowledge characteristics

The knowledge characteristics of a job can be viewed as a sub-category of work characteristics. Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) explain that knowledge characteristics refer to the kinds of knowledge, skill and ability demands that are placed on an individual as a function of what is done on the job. Consequently, they identify five knowledge characteristics. Jjob complexity (as opposed to job simplicity) provides challenging and demanding work that is associated with internal motivation. Secondly, information processing requires active processing and monitoring of information, with high cognitive demands being related to positive motivational outcomes. Thirdly, problem solving requires unique ideas or solutions, and the diagnosis and prevention of problems or future failure. Fourthly, skill variety requires an employee to make use of multiple skills. It is important to draw a distinction between task variety and skill variety, where the former refers to the variety of job activities, which do not necessarily require the acquisition of additional skills. Fifthly, specialisation refers to the depth of knowledge in a particular area, in which the employee is required to perform specialised tasks or possess specialised knowledge and skills (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006; Picollo et al., 2010).

Managers may refrain from implementing job redesign interventions due to the cost of increased training and compensation requirements. Although it appears that the redesign of jobs most certainly has an impact on employees' internal motivation, many managers are reluctant to implement these changes due to increased costs. In order to provide some guidance to managers with regard to these common trade-offs, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) suggest that both task and knowledge characteristics are positively related to satisfaction, but that only knowledge characteristics are related to the increased number and level of knowledge, skills, and abilities required – thus, incurring additional costs.

The redesign of task characteristics will not necessarily require more skill from the employee, whereas knowledge characteristics are related to mental demands and associated with increased training costs. Consequently, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) recommend that, if the goal of job redesign is internal motivation, then management should focus on the redesign of task characteristics that have the lowest cognitive ability requirements. Indeed, in some situations, task characteristics cannot be changed, but it may be possible to modify the social context. Research has shown that social support incrementally predicts satisfaction beyond traditional motivational work characteristics (includes both task and knowledge characteristics), as well as that it has a positive relationship with social learning (Humphrey et al., 2007). In order to change task or knowledge characteristics, management should consider

61

the modification of the social environment in terms of interdependence, interaction outside the organisation, and feedback from others.

2.6.1.1.4 Contextual work characteristics

When considering the modification of work characteristics, Parker et al. (2001) urge management to be cognisant of internal and external organisational factors, as well as individual differences. Thus, the authors argue that these antecedents will determine the choice of work design, since all systems and structures within the organisation are interrelated and regularly exchange feedback with the external environment. For instance, a directive managerial style, the use of assembly-line technology, or intensive performance monitoring may constrain employee autonomy, while collective agreements that enforce certain pay schemes may allow for more autonomy, or an individual with a proactive personality may display initiative and craft their own jobs (Parker et al., 2001). Similarly, Oldham and Hackman (2010) argue that contextual factors such as centralisation, formalisation, and technology moderate the relationship between work characteristics and performance outcomes. For instance, if frontline employees and their managers collectively came up with innovative ways to serve customers, the implementation of improvements will be constrained by certain organisational systems and structures, such as centralisation and formalisation. Lastly, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) argue that contextual factors, such as ergonomics (the degree to which the job allows correct or appropriate posture and movement), physical demands (level of physical strength, endurance, effort, and activity aspects of the job), work conditions (noise levels, temperature, and cleanliness of the working environment), and the type of equipment (variety and complexity of technology used) have an impact on performance outcomes.

2.6.1.1.5 Group-level work characteristics (work design for teams)

Oldham and Hackman (2010) state that the use of teams has dramatically increased over the last couple of years. Indeed, teamwork becomes necessary when the task itself is larger in scope, which requires whole pieces of work to be completed from beginning to end. Moreover, the type of team depends on the task at hand. Specifically, face-to-face teams are typically used in the hotel industry, where members share a physical location and work together interdependently in real time to generate a service or product for which they are collectively accountable (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Team members typically perform a wide variety of tasks in order to produce one whole identifiable piece of work. For instance, the front-desk team is responsible for customer reservations and assisting customers by providing information, as well as sharing necessary information with other hotel functions, in order to ensure that customer needs are met. So, not only is there strong interdependence between

members of the front-desk team, but also between the front-desk team and other teams (such as the food and beverage team) in order to provide quality service – quality service is perceived by the customer as a holistic experience of all service encounters at the hotel.

To this end, Parker et al. (2001) identified five group-level work characteristics that affect the performance outcomes of teams, depending on the nature of their tasks and the functional purpose of the team. For example, Parker et al. (2001) argue that factors such as team autonomy, team cohesion, team composition, group norms, and interdependence and shared knowledge structures focus on a broader range of team effectiveness predictors than just the nature of tasks, organisational context, and group diversity. Interestingly, some research indicates that team autonomy over planning processes reduces the levels of team motivation when levels of task interdependence increase amongst knowledge workers, but that team autonomy over people aspects was positively associated with job motivation, regardless of the level of interdependence amongst group members (Parker et al., 2001). Thus, one can expect that multi-rater performance feedback amongst team members and leaders, as well as the autonomy to select team members and leaders, has a positive impact on the internal motivation of team members. In addition, Parker et al. (2001) report that team autonomy is positively related to team effectiveness when teams are composed of functionally similar roles.

2.6.2 Work design and related variables

The following section emphasises the impact of work design on employee attitudes, such as motivation, satisfaction and engagement. Psychological states moderate the relationship between work characteristics and employee attitudes.

2.6.2.1 Internal motivation, satisfaction, job-related stress and turnover intentions

Research has indicated a strong association between the manner in which jobs are designed (according to social, task and knowledge characteristics) and the extent to which the employee is self-motivated to perform effectively on the job (Rai & Maheshwari, 2020). In addition, work design is associated with the degree to which the employee is happy and satisfied with the job and satisfied with growth opportunities in the job. Indeed, the most notable situational influence on job satisfaction is intrinsic job characteristics, and various studies confirm that work characteristics have a main effect on job satisfaction (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Judge et al., 1998; Martin & Roodt, 2008; Pollock et al., 2000; Rai & Maheshwari, 2020). For instance, Zhao et al. (2016) investigated the effects of the five task characteristics on job satisfaction, job stress and life satisfaction amongst frontline hospitality employees in the hotel industry in China. The results indicated that autonomy, task identity, and task significance reduce job

stress, that feedback increased job satisfaction, and task significance enhanced life satisfaction. Interestingly, task variety was negatively associated with job satisfaction, but positively associated with job stress (Zhao et al., 2016). Task variety is sometimes associated with more duties and responsibilities that may be perceived by the job holder as more job demands without an increase in job or personal resources. Similarly, Morgenson and Humphrey (2006) report that both task complexity and task variety are strongly related to perceived work overload. So too, feedback did not reduce job-related stress – it is important here to consider the nature of feedback, its frequency and intensity (Zhao et al., 2016).

Characteristics of the psychosocial work environment all play a contributory part in the employees' intention to quit. Demands at work (quantitative demands, emotional demands); work organisation and job systems (influence, possibilities for development, degree of freedom at work, meaning of work, commitment to the workplace); and interpersonal relations and leadership (predictability, quality of leadership, social support, feedback, social community at work) are all psychosocial work characteristics that play a contributory part in employees' intention to quit. As a result, Li et al. (2012) found that high emotional demands, low meaning of work, low predictability and low possibilities of development related most strongly to intention to quit. Equally, task characteristics have been found to be potential determinants of employees' intention to leave. The capacity of the organisation to engage, retain and optimise the value of its employees depends on the manner in which jobs are designed (Ongori, 2007), and leads to favourable outcomes, such as high levels of employee motivation, high levels of job satisfaction, higher quality performance, and lower absenteeism and turnover rates (Pollock et al., 2000).

2.6.2.2 Work design and employee engagement

Patrick and Bhat (2014) investigated the relationship between work engagement and personal outcomes moderated by the three critical psychological states amongst sales personnel in the telecom industry. The researchers state that work resources, such as autonomy and support, increase the degree to which the employee experiences meaningfulness, and that these two characteristics are important predictors of employee engagement. They found that work engagement is significantly positively related to internal work motivation and satisfaction. Specifically, the interaction effect of work engagement and the three critical psychological states significantly influences personal outcomes – thus, the effect of engagement on personal outcomes increases in the presence of the three critical psychological states (*experienced meaningfulness*, *experienced responsibility* and *knowledge of results*) The strongest relationships were between vigour and experienced responsibility, as well as between

absorption and experienced responsibility for work, which in turn had a significant impact on personal outcomes (Patrick & Bhat, 2014).

2.6.3 The impact of work design on performance

The degree to which the manager thus designs task, social and knowledge characteristics in the workplace has a positive impact on team effectiveness. The subsequent discussion explains the nature of the relationship between work characteristics and outcome dimensions, such as service quality, productivity and customer retention.

2.6.3.1 Work design, service quality and productivity

Piccolo and Colquitt (2006) investigated the mediating role of perceived task characteristics between transformational leadership and performance. The results of the study indicate that transformational leadership is significantly related to perceived core job characteristics, and that job characteristics are significantly related to intrinsic motivation and goal commitment. Specifically, intrinsic motivation was significantly related to task performance and OCB, while goal commitment was only significantly related to task performance. Moreover, the effect of transformational leadership on performance was much stronger when employees perceived a quality leader-member exchange relationship. Along the same lines, Piccolo et al. (2010) examined the relationship between ethical leadership, task significance, job autonomy, effort and job performance. The researchers hypothesised that leaders who display frequent ethical normative behaviour have an impact on employees' perceptions of task significance and autonomy. Task significance and autonomy are further related to effort (the motivation or willingness to exert effort), which in turn is related to task performance and OCB. The results indicate that task significance and effort fully mediate the relationships between ethical leadership and task performance, and between ethical leadership and OCB (Piccolo et al., 2010). Piccolo et al. (2010) argue that task significance and autonomy are the empowering aspects of ethical leadership. Also, the more the leader displays behaviours that increase the employees' perceptions of autonomy and task significance, the more willing the team members will be to exert effort that consequently will lead to increased task performance dimensions, such as sales objectives, technical job knowledge and administrative performance.

The way in which work is designed in terms of task, social and knowledge characteristics has a significant impact on task and contextual performance dimensions. Work design and the enrichment of work characteristics can be considered as a managerial competency. It could be hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs task, social and knowledge

characteristics (at the individual and group level) has a main effect on frontline hotel employee engagement.

2.6.3.2 Work design and customer retention

Even though multiple studies have examined the relationship between work characteristics and the quantity and quality of products or services, Parker et al. (2001) emphasise the importance of work design on contextual performance dimensions. Work design, for instance, affects the degree to which employees display proactive behaviour and use initiative, which in turn impact on customer satisfaction and retention. Similarly, Oldham and Hackman (2010) suggest that social work characteristics lead to other positive social outcomes, such as altruistic behaviour, team cohesiveness and the acquisition of knowledge and skills. For instance, learning requires interaction between the employee and the customer, which will lead to the development of customer relationship management skills (CRM) (Oldham & Hackman, 2010).

Specifically, autonomy and self-management comprise the 'first design principle' for an innovative and collaborative organisation. Parker et al. (2001) argue that frontline employees with greater job autonomy, who are exposed to knowledge sharing and collaborative decision-making, develop an integrated understanding of the organisation. In addition, when these work characteristics are enriched, frontline employees develop flexible role orientations that enable them to better manage relationships with clients and customers. Lastly, frontline employees to cope with the emotional demands of the hotel industry, management should ensure that team members are intrinsically motivated, engaged and empowered by enriching work characteristics. To this end, research has shown that frontline employees with customer relationship management skills are associated with increased service quality, customer satisfaction and more supportive customers. This reduces emotional demands by facilitating the development of customer relationship management skills, while work characteristics such as task and skill variety, task significance, task identity and feedback are enriched (Parker et al., 2001).

Petzer (2005) emphasises that relationship marketing, and specifically customer-retention management, are the responsibility of all employees. The components of customer-retention management in the hospitality industry are to build relationships with customers, manage customer-to-customer interactions to reduce dissatisfaction (compatibility management), reduce potential defections, and manage service failures and service recovery (Petzer, 2005; Petzer et al., 2009). Specifically, service failures occur when customers' expectations are not being met, which leads to dissatisfaction. Frontline employees evidently fulfil a pivotal role by

ensuring service quality and customer satisfaction. In fact, management should share strategic information with frontline employees and facilitate collaborative problem-solving and decision-making in order to identify possible failure points in the service delivery process and methods to prevent failures from occurring again (Petzer et al., 2009). The degree to which management enriches certain work characteristics may empower employees to resolve complaints, which in turn will have a positive impact on overall customer satisfaction, loyalty and customer retention.

Customer-retention management training typically involves the enrichment of knowledge characteristics, such as information processing, task complexity (Petzer et al., 2009), problem-solving and skill variety. By facilitating the development of customer-retention management skills, social characteristics such as interdependence (extent to which the job is affected by the work of others), interaction outside the organisation (customer interaction) and feedback from others are enriched (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006).

Hypothesis 4: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs task and social work characteristics (i.e., the way in which the manager displays work design competence) is positively related to employee engagement.*

From the above-mentioned arguments (and inferred from the literature), one can consider the manner in which the manager designs task, social and knowledge work characteristics as a predictor of employee engagement.

2.7 Summary

Sustainable business practices in today's volatile environment require of organisations to remain competitive. Specifically, the changing nature of customer expectations and needs requires of hotels to be innovative in terms of services offered, and to consistently provide good quality service and effective customer-retention strategies. Certain managerial competencies are essential to ensure the implementation of strategy but, more importantly, certain managerial competencies are essential to facilitate the performance of customer-contact employees in order to ensure service quality, productivity and customer retention. Thus, the managerial competencies that drive the effectiveness of customer-contact teams are central to overall hotel performance. In addition, employee engagement can be viewed as a proxy for team effectiveness. Thus, it can be hypothesised that the degree to which customer-contact employees display vigour, energy and dedication is positively related to team effectiveness – specifically productivity, service quality and customer retention.

However, team effectiveness was not added as a variable, since the context and scope of this study did not allow the researcher to link individual customer-contact employee responses to the teams to which they belong. The current design did not make provision for the calculation of composite team performance scores based on the perceived level of team performance by the manager, by individual team members or by members of the public (e.g., consumer feedback).

The literature study presented a theoretical argument in an attempt to answer the research-initiating question: "*What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?*" The literature review can be summarised in the form of a structural model and portrayed as a path diagram. The proposed structural model is presented in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1

Proposed Frontline Employee Engagement Model: The Relationship Between Selected Managerial Competencies and Employee Engagement
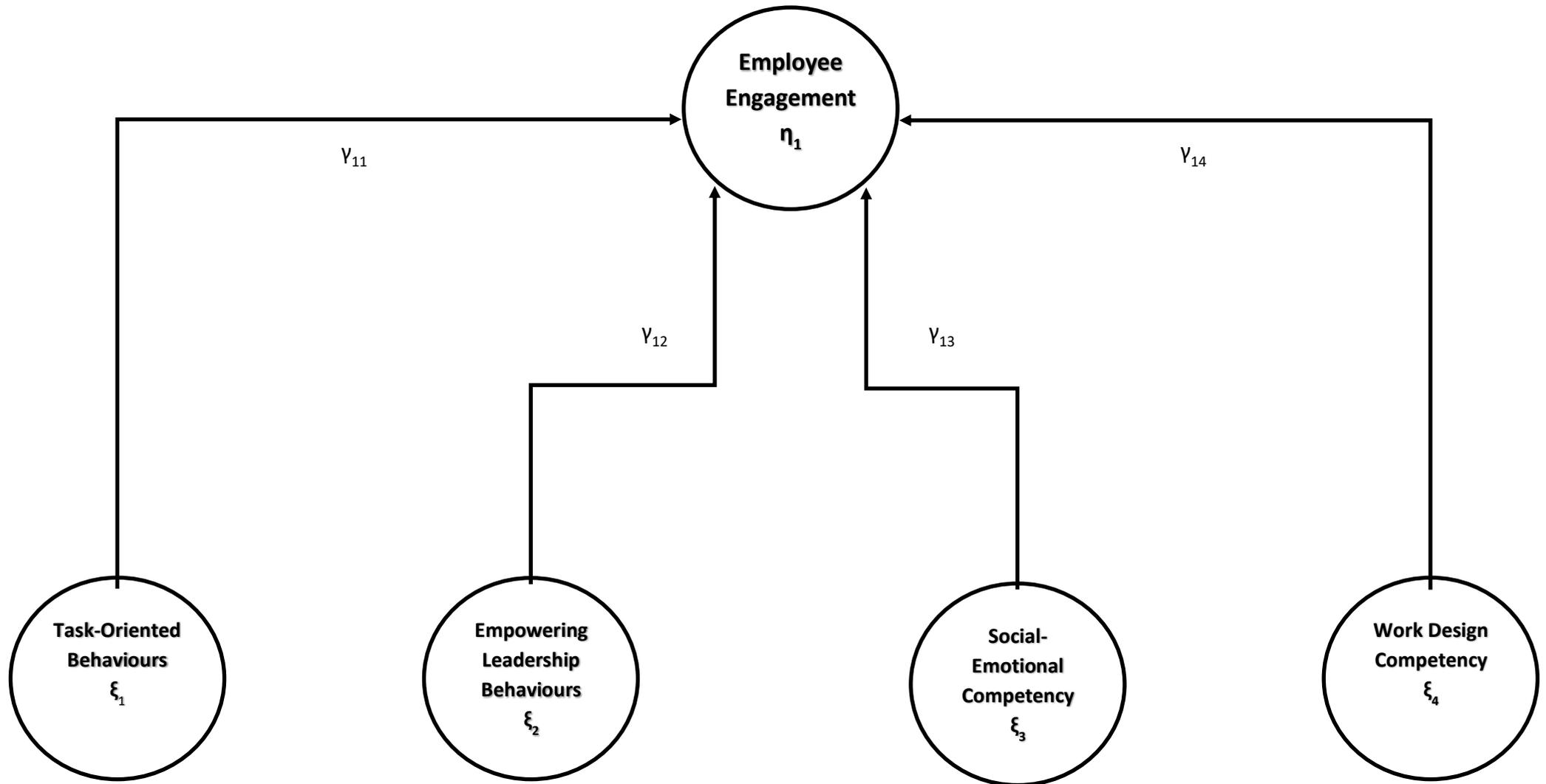
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

On the basis of theorising, a structural model was developed that identified core front-end managerial competencies that affect subordinate performance outcomes or dimensions. Thus, the aim of the study was to test an exploratory structural model that seeks to explain the relationship between selected managerial competencies and employee engagement in the hotel industry in South Africa (Western and Northern Cape provinces). This chapter sets out the research plan and structure in order to empirically test the structural model, which will provide an answer to the research-initiating question: "*What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?*"

In order to evaluate the hypothesised model and subsequent research claims, the methodology used should serve the epistemic ideal of science. Babbie and Mouton (2001) argue that, if the findings were to be considered as scientific knowledge, the methodology used to investigate the claims should lend itself to rationality and objectivity. The ideal of rationality can be achieved when the reasons for believing one claim as opposed to another are scrutinised by the scientific community. The ideal of objectivity can be achieved when the evidence is derived from rigorous methods and techniques (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). Therefore, the methodology chapter strives to illustrate in detail what methods and techniques were used to obtain and analyse the data, so that expert members of the scientific community can evaluate the methodology and the validity of the claims accordingly.

3.1 Research Hypotheses

These are the following frontline employee engagement path-specific research hypotheses (Figure 3.1.):

Hypothesis 1: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours will be positively related to employee engagement.*

Hypothesis 2: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviour is positively related to employee engagement.*

Hypothesis 3: *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays social-emotional competencies will be positively related to employee engagement.*

Hypothesis 4: *In the proposed employee engagement model, it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs task and social work characteristics (i.e., the way in which the manager displays the work design competency) is positively related to employee engagement.*

Please see Figure 3.1 below for the hypothesised paths between the latent variables:

Figure 3.1

Proposed Frontline Employee Engagement Model: The Relationship Between Selected Managerial Competencies and Employee Engagement
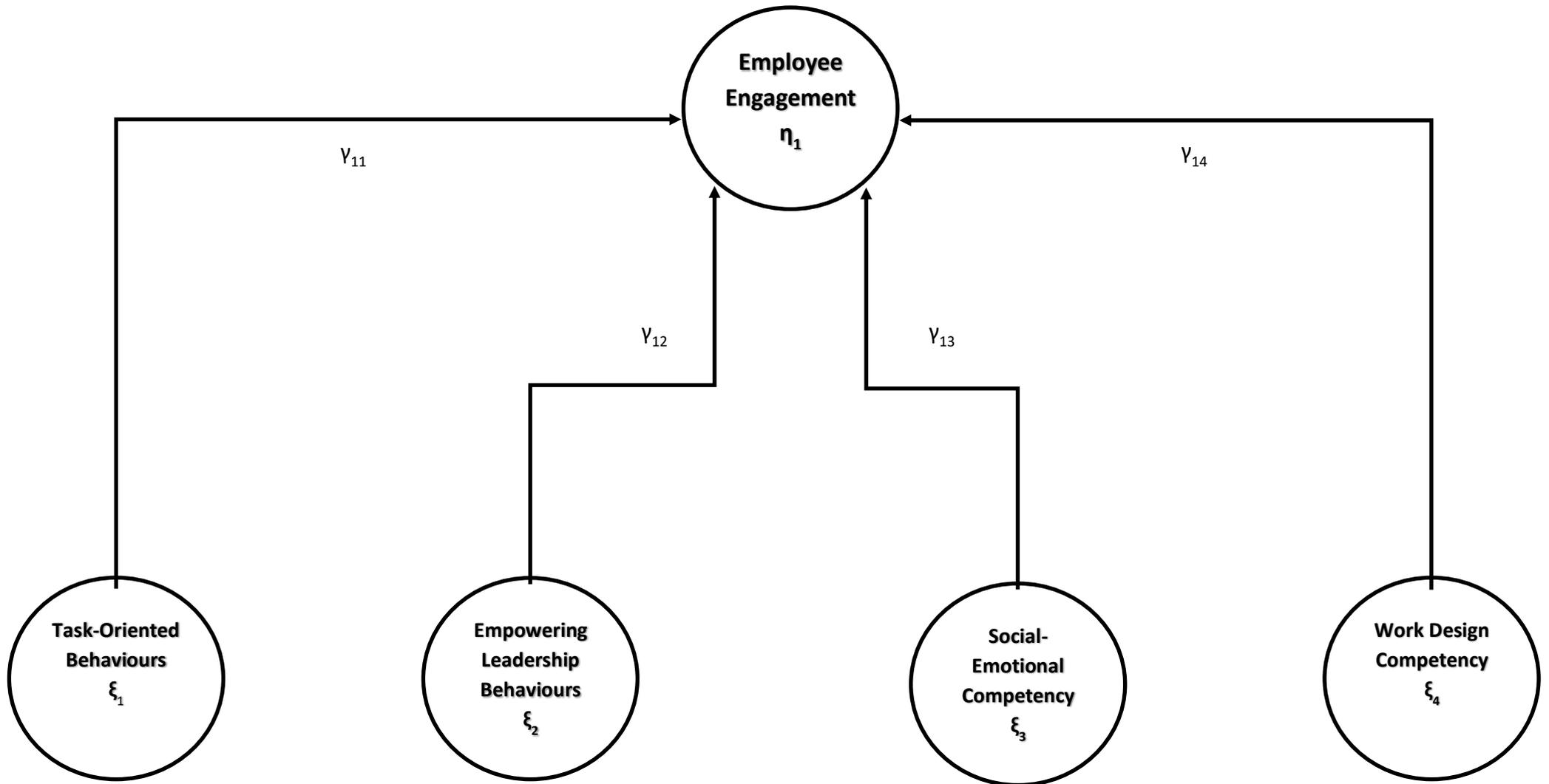
3.2 Research Design

The research design, which is the plan and structure of the strategy to obtain answers to the research questions, provides an outline of what the researcher does – from writing the hypotheses to doing the analysis (Kerlinger, 1973). The frontline employee engagement structural model hypothesises specific structural relations between employee engagement and selected managerial competencies. In order to test the validity of the various path-specific hypotheses, the scientific method of inquiry requires empirical evidence to support the claim that is made. Thus, the strategy or plan that is used to obtain empirical support is called the research design (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

The purpose of the research design is twofold: Firstly, to provide answers to the research questions, and secondly, to control for experimental, extraneous and error variances. Thus, the function of the research design is to try to ensure that the evidence can be interpreted unambiguously, and that the answers to the research questions are as valid, objective, and accurate as possible – an adequate research design suggests how many observations should be made and which statistical analysis methods to use (Kerlinger, 1973; Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). The aim of the research design is to maximise experimental/ between-group/systematic variance, to minimise error/with-in group variance, and to control extraneous variance (Theron, 2014).

There are two broad taxonomies of quantitative research designs, namely experimental and *ex post facto* designs. Experimental research designs are characterised by the researcher's ability to manipulate and control one or more independent variables, and to observe the dependent variable for any variations due to the experimental manipulation of the independent variable (Kerlinger, 1973). The *ex post facto* correlational design is different from the pure experimental design in the sense that the researcher uses neither random assignment nor manipulation. In other words, the researcher does not have direct control over the independent variables, either because the nature of the independent variables does not allow for manipulation, or because the observable expressions of the independent variables already occurred (after the fact) (Theron, 2014). Thus, when making use of an *ex post facto* correlational design, the researcher measures (observes) both dependent and independent variables across individuals to establish the extent to which the latent variables relate to one another (Theron, 2014).

> *Ex post facto* correlational design is a systematic empirical inquiry in which the scientist does not have direct control of independent variables – because their manifestations

have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulable – and inferences about the relations among variables are made without direct intervention from concomitant variation of independent and dependent variables (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000, p. 558).

The current study makes use of an *ex post facto* correlational design in which the latent variables are measured by indicators called manifest variables. Manifest variables are measures operationalised in terms of the constitutive definitions of the latent variables that they represent. Thus, in the current study, the aim was to determine the nature and magnitude of the relationships between manifest variables, and between their respective latent variables. Specifically, it was to determine the predictive potency of the identified managerial competencies (exogenous latent variables) on employee engagement (endogenous latent variable). Also, exogenous and endogenous latent variables are measured by multiple manifest indicators, and typically require techniques such as linear structural relations (LISREL) and partial least squares (PLS), which can estimate models with multiple indicators per latent variable (Diamantopolous & Siguaw, 2000).

When deciding upon a specific research design, one should consider the limitations associated with such a design. According to Kerlinger and Lee (2000), an *ex post facto* correlational design has three major limitations. To begin with, the researcher lacks the power to randomise (the lack of random assignment causes participants to self-select themselves into groups and contributes to systematic error variance). Secondly, the researcher has the inability to manipulate or control variables (which contributes to extraneous error variance in the dependent variables) and lastly, there is a risk of improper interpretations (Kerlinger, 1973). Thus, an *ex post facto* design can only provide a plausible explanation for the psychological process or mechanism in question. However, despite these limitations, most of the variables in Industrial Psychology and other social sciences cannot be manipulated, but simply observed – making an *ex post facto* design the appropriate choice (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

3.3 Statistical Hypotheses

As mentioned above, the proposed frontline employee-engagement model consists of an endogenous latent variable and several exogenous latent variables, and with causal paths between the variables. These various path-specific research hypotheses translate into the path coefficient statistical hypotheses (H_{O1} to H_{O4}). PLS-SEM was used as statistical analysis technique to test the path coefficients between variables, and the statistical notation that is

used in PLS equation modelling is associated with SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2014a). Table 3.1 specifies the statistical hypotheses:

Table 3.1

Path coefficient statistical hypotheses

Hypothesis 1	Hypothesis 2
Ho_3: $\gamma_{11} = 0$	Ho_5: $\gamma_{12} = 0$
Ha_3: $\gamma_{11} \neq 0$	Ha_5: $\gamma_{12} \neq 0$
Hypothesis 3	Hypothesis 4
Ho_7: $\gamma_{13} = 0$	Ho_9: $\gamma_{14} = 0$
Ha_7: $\gamma_{13} \neq 0$	Ha_9: $\gamma_{14} \neq 0$

3.4 Sampling

The research problem and the statistical hypotheses are all formulated with reference to a specific target population or cases of observation. The methodological ideal will be to include the entire target population in the study; however, this is hardly ever feasible. Rather, a sample is selected that is representative of the population in which the hypotheses would occur logically. The **sampling population** (or study population) is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is selected (Babbie & Mouton, 2001). In the current study, the sampling population was the subordinates of the rooms division and food and beverage manager (or subordinates of the first-line front-desk office and service supervisors). To put it differently, *the subordinates or team members of the front-end hotel managers* were the units of data collection and self-reported on engagement levels. In addition, the subordinates completed an other-report measure in which they rated the extent to which their managers displayed certain competencies.

The objective of the sampling method is to try to minimise the gap between the target and sampling populations (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Consequently, the degree to which the sample is representative of the population increases the generalisability of the findings and the accuracy of the inferences made.

The researcher initially proposed to make use of multi-stage cluster sampling in order to achieve the greatest representativeness of the sample population so as to ensure the generalisability of the findings and to increase the accuracy of inferences made. However, due to various ethical best practice considerations and the personal preferences of various

stakeholders, multi-stage cluster sampling was not implemented. To this end, the researcher made use of convenience sampling, for which the hotel organisation and customer contact employees were either approached by the researcher in person, or they received an email or WhatsApp message with the link to the survey embedded in it.

3.4.1 Convenience sampling

Two broad types of sampling procedures can be distinguished, namely probability sampling and non-probability sampling. Probability sampling is where each element in the sampling population has a known and positive probability to be selected – but not necessarily an equal opportunity (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000; Theron, 2014). Typical examples of probability sampling are simple random selection, stratified sampling, cluster sampling, two-stage cluster sampling, and systematic sampling (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). Babbie and Mouton (2001) emphasise that random selection is the key to probability sampling and stress that the ultimate purpose of sampling "is to select a set of elements from a population in such a way that descriptions of those elements (statistics) accurately portray the parameters of the total population" (p. 175). On the other hand, non-probability sampling procedures refer to cases where the probability of selection is unknown for each element of the sampling population (Theron, 2014). For instance, quota sampling, convenience and judgement/purposive sampling are examples of non-probability sampling (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

Convenience or accidental sampling is a non-probability sampling procedure in which population elements that happen to be available are included in the sample (Theron, 2014). For this study, it meant that the hotel organisations forwarded an invitation email or WhatsApp to all the units of observation (all customer contact employees) to participate in the study. In other words, all the population elements that happened to be available were included in the sample. The main reasons for applying convenience sampling were (1) to protect the personal information of the customer-contact employees by ensuring that no person needs to assign numbers to a list of individual customer-contact employee names in order to apply random selection, (2) the practical benefits of minimising the complexity for various stakeholders, and (3) to increase survey participation and completion rates.

It is important to emphasise that non-probability sampling techniques, such as quota sampling, convenience and judgement/purposive sampling procedures, are sampling procedures in which the probability of selection is unknown for each element of the sampling population (Theron, 2014). To this end, when making use of non-probability sampling procedures, sampling and systematic errors are more prevalent and difficult to avoid or minimise. In contrast to non-probability sampling procedures, probability sampling techniques refer to

procedures in which each element in the sampling population has a known and positive probability of being selected. Thus, by definition, probability sampling procedures offer the researcher greater control over the units of observation that are selected to participate in the study. Furthermore, the researcher can consciously and systematically minimise the gap between the target and sampling populations when making use of probability sampling procedures (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000).

However, this is not the case with non-probability sampling procedures, such as convenience sampling. When making use of convenience sampling, the researcher needs to be cognisant that sampling and systematic errors can affect confidence in the data, that is., the accuracy of inferences made. Moreover, the reader needs to be made aware that the use of convenience sampling may constrain the representativeness of the sample and have an impact on the generalisability of the findings (i.e., caution should be applied when generalising the findings).

3.4.2 Statistical power

Random sampling error can be defined as a statistical fluctuation that occurs because of chance factors in the elements selected for a sample (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Specifically, if the sample size is small (e.g., < 500), then it is possible to encounter some differences or change factors amongst elements that are not a reflection of, nor present in the target population, and can lead to the inaccurate estimation of population parameters (Foxcroft & Roodt, 2013). Thus, the larger the sample, the smaller the sampling error and the smaller the deviation between the sample and the population (Kerlinger & Lee, 2000). To this end, statistical power refers to the appropriate sample size as a function of model parameters that address the issue of generalisability and ensure greater accuracy of the inferences made (Kerlinger, 1973).

Thus, when making use of PLS-SEM, the researcher can calculate the required sample size by making use of the statistical power considerations of Cohen. Cohen's rule of thumb states that one should select the endogenous latent variable in the path model that has the most arrows pointing towards it – providing that the measurement model has an acceptable quality of outer loadings, which is < .70 (Cohen, as cited in Hair et al., 2014a). The table below indicates the minimum sample size requirements necessary to detect the minimum R^2 values of 0.10, 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 in any of the endogenous latent variables in the structural model for significance levels of 1%, 5% and 10%. In the current study, the endogenous latent variable with the most arrows pointing towards it, or the endogenous variable with the largest number of constructs hypothesised to be significantly related to it – was employee engagement (η_1).

Thus, according to Cohen, when the maximum number of arrows that point to an endogenous latent variable is four, then one will need 65 observations to achieve statistical power of 80% for detecting R^2 values of at least 0.25 (with a 5% probability error)/

Table 3.2

Table for Statistical Power Analysis for Multiple Regression Models

Maximum number of arrows pointing at a construct	Significance level											
	1%				5%				10%			
	Minimum R^2				Minimum R^2				Minimum R^2			
	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75	0.10	0.25	0.50	0.75
2	158	75	47	38	110	52	33	26	88	41	26	21
3	176	84	53	42	124	59	38	30	100	48	30	25
4	191	91	58	46	137	65	42	33	111	53	34	27
5	205	98	62	50	147	70	45	36	120	58	37	30
6	217	103	66	53	157	75	48	39	128	62	40	32
7	228	109	69	56	166	80	51	41	136	66	42	35
8	238	114	73	59	174	84	54	44	143	69	45	37
9	247	119	76	62	181	88	57	46	150	73	47	39
10	256	123	79	64	189	91	59	48	156	76	49	41

Note: Adapted from "A primer on partial least squares structural equation modelling," by J. F. Hair, G. T. M. Hult, C. M. Ringle, & M. Sarstedt, 2014, p. 21. Copyright 2014 by Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

Alternatively, in order to calculate the statistical power of a PLS-SEM model, one can also make use of programmes such as G*Power (available free of charge at https://www.psychologie.hhu.de/arbeitsgruppen/allgemeine-psychologie-und-arbeitspsychologie/gpower.html). In the current study, a total of 106 complete datasets were obtained.

3.5 Data Collection

Due to difficulty in obtaining sufficient responses, the researcher had to adapt the initial data collection procedure. Initially, an invitation email was sent out to all hotels affiliated with the Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa (FEDHASA). All hotels situated in the Western and Northern Cape of South Africa received an invitation email from FEDHASA. Once the hotel organisation consented to participate, the researcher was put in contact with a contact person at that particular organisation, who then extended the invitation email to all customer-contact employees.

As mentioned above, due to the lack of participation, the researcher adapted the data collection procedure to meet with hotel organisations and their customer-contact employees

in person. Iin addition to FEDHASA sending an invitation email to all hotel affiliates, the researcher also contacted and approached hotels in the Western Cape in her researcher capacity. At these hotels, the researcher conducted a short meeting with the customer-contact employees in person to explain the purpose of the study, to emphasise voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, and to inform possible participants about the lucky draw prize. If customer-contact employees were interested in participating, he/she had to provide the researcher with their contact numbers so that she could provide them with a link to the survey. If it was not possible to meet with customer-contact employees in person due to operational requirements, the organisation sent the invitation to participate containing the link to the survey to all customer-contact employees via email or WhatsApp.

Customer-contact employees in the hospitality industry were invited as study participants because they are in a position to reflect on how engaged they are in their jobs, and what causes them to be this engaged. Thus, customer-contact employees were invited to complete a survey in which they rated (1) their own individual level of work engagement, and (2) the degree to which their manager/supervisor displayed various managerial behaviours. The survey took approximately 30 to 35 minutes to complete (112 survey items). It was not expected of the participants to complete the survey in one sitting; instead, they could save their progress and continue at a later stage by just clicking on the URL link in the email or WhatsApp message.

Lastly, Stellenbosch University's survey platform, Sun Surveys, allowed the participants to remain anonymous, as all submissions via it remain anonymous. If the participant wanted to participate in the lucky draw to stand a chance to win a cash prize, it was necessary to provide the researcher with his/her phone number so that she could contact him/her to deliver the prize. However, the researcher (or no one else for that matter) could link the phone numbers to the raw scores. If the participants wished to be eligible for the lucky draw, they clicked on a button that redirected them to a short survey in which they provided the researcher with a contact number. This could only take place once they had given consent and completed the survey. This short, one-question survey was separate from the actual survey, thus making it impossible for anyone to link personal details (contact numbers) to raw datasets. In essence, the scores remained anonymous and confidential and the participants remained anonymous.

In brief, FEDHASA Cape sent out an invitation email to their contact persons at the affiliated hotels to participate in the study. If the hotel consented to participate, the contact person at the hotel distributed the invitation email to all customer-contact employees. In addition to FEDHASA sending an invitation email to all hotel affiliates, the researcher also approached

hotel organisations in her own capacity. At these hotels, the researcher conducted a short meeting with the customer-contact employees in person. If customer-contact employees were interested to participate, they provided the researcher with their contact numbers, so that the researcher could provide them with a link to the survey available to them. Importantly, no customer-contact employee was coerced to partake in the study – it was completely voluntary. If the customer-contact employee wished to stand a chance to win the lucky draw, then he/she had to provide the researcher with their contact numbers (in a separate survey) for the purpose of obtaining the prize (the researcher personally notified the winner and ensured that the prize was delivered). The winner of the lucky draw was randomly selected from participants that wished to be eligible. Consequently, participants remained anonymous.

3.6 Measuring Instruments/Operationalisation

The structural model that is derived from theorising should be tested empirically to determine the validity of the theoretical claims. Consequently, the substantive hypotheses were formulated so that η is a linear function of ξ and provides an answer to the research problem. However, the latent variables are abstract constructs and cannot be observed directly. Therefore, by operationalising the latent variables, observed or indicator variables were created that represent the latent variables. The indicator variables that were used in this study were a combination of already existing standardised measures, as well as self-developed measures based on theoretical constitutive definitions. Specifically, the indicator variable for the managerial competency, *task-oriented behaviours*, was a self-developed measure based on an amalgamation of the constitutive definitions that pertain to task performance/technical job knowledge and expertise.

Interval and ratio scales (continuous data) can always be used with multivariate analysis, such as PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2014a). However, all the scales in this constructed survey made use of a seven-point Likert scale – **except** for the *Utrecht Work Engagement Survey.* Even though a Likert scale is considered to yield ordinal scale data (Field, 2009), researchers need to pre-code the measure in such a manner that it fulfils the requirement of equidistance and acts more like an interval scale (Hair et al., 2014a). Therefore, the survey makes use of a seven-point Likert scale where the numbers assigned to response categories are in symmetry around the middle point and perceived as equidistant. Hence, the Likert scale approximates an interval-level measurement and can be used in SEM (Hair et al., 2014a). To this end, a seven-point Likert scale with the categories (1) "strongly disagree", (2) "disagree", (3) "somewhat disagree" (4) "neither agree nor disagree", (5) "somewhat agree", (6) "agree", and (7) "strongly agree" were utilised – implying that the scales from the measures of which the items were adapted were transformed to a seven-point Likert scale (a seven-point Likert scale was

selected because a general assumption exists that the more response categories the Likert scale has, the more variation in the data).

Moreover, the survey comprised two sections. The first section required participants to complete standard demographical questions (to determine the composition of the convenience sample to which the inferences apply), while the second section required participants to self-report on individual-level engagement; and finally to rate the degree to which their managers displayed behaviours that pertained to the *task-oriented competency*, *empowering leadership competency*, *social-emotional competency*, and *work design competency*.

The subsequent discussion focuses on the psychometric properties of the various measures that were adapted for the purpose of this study. Each measure is evaluated in terms of its reliability and validity with respect to the latent variable in question and serves as the constitutive definition that explains the latent variable.

3.6.1 Employee engagement

Admasachew and Dawson (n.d.) state that researchers measure employee engagement using three different approaches, namely (1) engagement as a description of conditions under which people work; (2) engagement as a behavioural outcome; and (3) engagement as a psychological presence. For example: firstly, the Q^{12} questionnaire (developed by the Gallup organisation) typically measures engagement by assessing the conditions that provide for engagement – thus, engagement is inferred based on the prevalence of certain organisational conditions. Secondly, engagement as a behavioural outcome includes role expansion and related constructs such as OCB. And thirdly, engagement in a role refers to one's psychological presence (Admasachew & Dawson, n.d.). Psychological presence can be defined as an experiential state that accompanies personally engaging behaviours, such as being physically involved in tasks, cognitively vigilant and empathetically connected to others in ways that display what one thinks and feels, and one's creativity and values (Kahn, 1992). To this end, Kahn (1990) first defined engagement as "… a harnessing of organisation member's selves to their work roles – in engagement, people employ and express themselves physically, cognitively, emotionally and mentally during role performances" (p. 694). Kahn's definition implies a dynamic relationship between one's personal resources (physical, cognitive, emotional and mental) and the work role. Moreover, Kahn views personal engagement as the simultaneous self-employment (effort) and self-expression (creativity) of a person's "preferred self" in full role performances (Kahn, 1990).

Kahn's definition of engagement focuses on role activities that may be important indicators of job performance. He argues that employees are engaged when they know what is expected of them; if they have what they need to do their job; if they are able to perceive the impact and significance of their work; if they have opportunities to develop and grow;, and if they experience fulfilment (Admasachew & Dawson, n.d.). According to Kahn, role engagement comprises two components, namely attention and absorption. Attention refers to cognitive availability and the amount of time one spends thinking about a role – attention is also an invisible, material resource that a person can allocate in multiple ways. And secondly, absorption refers to being engrossed in a role and the intensity of one's focus on a role; absorption also refers to intrinsic motivation (Rothbard, 2001). Admasachew and Dawson (n.d.) claim that researchers have conceptualised Kahn's ideas regarding employee engagement, and use mainly three scales, namely the Maslach Burnout Inventory General Survey (MBI-GS), the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES), and the Job Demand-Resources (JD-R) scale. In addition to the three above-mentioned scales, Rothbard (2001) developed a two-dimensional engagement measure that more closely reflects Kahn's two critical components. The table below illustrates Rothbard's two-dimensional work engagement measure and related items (Admasachew & Dawson, n.d.).

Table 3.3

Rothbard's Work Engagement Measure

Attention

I spend a lot of time thinking about my work.
I focus a great deal of attention on my work.
I concentrate a lot on my work.
I pay a lot of attention to my work.

Absorption

When I am working, I often lose track of time.
I often get carried away by what I am working on.
When I am working, I am completely engrossed by my work.
When I am working, I am totally absorbed by it.
Nothing can distract me when I am working.

Note. Adapted from "Enriching or depleting? The dynamics of engagement in work and family roles," by N. P Rothbard, 2001, *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *46*, 655-684. http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/3094827

In the current study, the researcher considered both Rothbard's work engagement measure (that more closely resembles Kahn's original constitutive definition of work engagement) and the UWES (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). Since both measures are effective measures of work engagement, the researcher decided to utilise the more recently developed UWES-9 engagement measure.

Work engagement is defined by Schaufeli and Bakker (2004) as "a positive work-related state of fulfilment that is characterised by vigour, dedication and absorption" (p. 701). Thus, the UWES-9 is a self-report measure that includes the three constituting dimensions of work engagement, namely (1) vigour, (2) dedication, and (3) absorption. All items are scored on a seven-point rating scale ranging from (0) "never" to (6) "always". Data was collected in 10 different countries and the sample size was N = 14 521.

In order to develop the shortened version of the UWES, items that relate most strongly to each dimension were selected based on the content validity of the items. Thereafter, the researchers conducted a range of regression analyses, in which the remaining items (those not selected on the basis of face validity but pertaining to the particular dimension – vigour, dedication or absorption) were regressed on the selected item in order to determine the next or following item with the highest regression coefficient belonging to that particular dimension. Subsequent to this, the sum of those two items was then regressed on the remaining items of that particular scale, and so the process repeated itself until the inclusion of a further item did not contribute significantly to the proportion of variance explained (Schaufeli & Bakker, 2006). Schaufeli & Bakker (2006) report that the Cronbach's alpha varied between $.85 \leq \alpha \geq .92$ across all 10 countries. In addition, the test-retest reliability was determined in Australia and Norway, where the stability coefficients were .64 and .73 respectively. Also, the UWES-9 shares more than 80% of variance with the longer UWES-17 scale. By means of confirmatory factor analysis, the authors then fitted two models. The first model assumes that all engagement items weight on one single factor, and the second model assumes three correlated factors – vigour, dedication, and absorption. Indeed, the confirmatory factor analysis verified that the second model fits the data best, and the fit indices indicates good model fit [χ^2 = 3227.29; df = 240; RMSEA = .03; GFI = .95; AGFI = .90; CFI = .96; NFI = .95; NNFI = .93]. As a result, the UWES-9 was utilised in the current study to assess work engagement.

3.6.2 Managerial competencies

In the following section, the measures that were used to assess managerial competencies are discussed. The managerial competencies were derived from a review of the literature and are: (1) *Task-oriented behaviours*, (2) *Empowering leadership behaviours*, (3) *Social-emotional competency*, and (4) *Work design competency*.

3.6.2.1 Task-oriented behaviours

The measure to assess task-oriented behaviours is a self-developed measure and pertains specifically to the technical and job-related knowledge of the hotel manager. The items of the measure were derived from constitutive definitions that relate to task performance, technical job knowledge and expertise. In addition, the items were adapted to accommodate job responsibilities and duties from job descriptions derived from the O*Net (2016) database, which specifically relates to the rooms division and food and beverage managers, or to the first-line front-office and service supervisors of each hotel (job title depends on the size of the hotel).

Yukl (2013) defines task-oriented behaviours as managerial behaviours that are used to improve or maintain internal efficiency, and to coordinate a team by assigning tasks, determining resource requirements, and coordinating interrelated activities. It also requires the planning and scheduling of work activities in a way that makes better use of people, resources, information and equipment. In addition, a manager's task-oriented behaviours include the clarification of objectives, priorities, and standards for evaluating results. Sandwith (1993) similarly argues that a manager's technical competence requires knowledge and expertise regarding work processes, methods, and technologies. Specifically, it entails knowledge regarding the planning and structuring of work processes, and knowledge regarding applicable financial management systems and procedures. Finally, a manager's task knowledge includes the knowledge and adherence to legislative or collective agreements that govern the employer-employee relationship (Sandwith, 1993) (for a further explanation and discussion of task-oriented behaviours, see paragraph 2.3).

In the current study, the *Task-oriented behavioural* scale asked respondents to rate their manager's behaviour on a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagrees" to (7) "strongly agrees". Two examples of items that were developed based on the previously discussed definitions, and guided by O*Net (2016) job descriptions, are: (a) "My manager assigns tasks to each team member and coordinates team activities", and (b) "My manager does a good job at managing the budget of our department".

3.6.2.2 Empowering leadership behaviours

Arnold et al. (2000) developed the Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ). The ELQ is a 38-item scale that measures empowering leadership behaviours along five dimensions, namely (1) leading by example, (2) participative decision-making, (3) coaching, (4) informing, and (5) showing concern/interacting with the team. The initial aim for developing the ELQ was to provide a measure that assesses effective team leadership in empowered environments.

The first study in the development of the scale entailed in-depth interviews with team members and leaders in empowered organisations. The type of teams that were interviewed varied in function, size, purpose, and level of autonomy given to workers (Arnold et al., 2000). After conducting the interviews, the researchers identified eight behavioural categories that explained empowering leadership behaviour. The second study involved the administration of the leadership questionnaire, comprising the eight sub-dimensions. The data obtained from the questionnaires was analysed, and items with low inter-item and item-total correlations were deleted. After considering a number of alternative factor models, the results from the confirmatory factor analyses using LISREL indicated that a five-factor model fitted the data best. In study three, the scale was cross-validated making use of a larger sample size (team members and leaders from five organisations). The findings provided support for the five-factor structure, and the goodness-of-fit statistics indicated good to moderate model fit [χ^2 = 344.3; df = 142; RMSEA = .04; GFI = .91; AGFI = .87]. Arnold et al. (2000) report strong factor loadings, ranging between .77 $\leq \lambda \geq$ .92(p = .01), and the intercorrelations between the five factors range between .70 $\leq r \geq$ .91. Lastly, Arnold et al. (2000) wanted to determine the overlap between the ELQ and behaviours identified by two well-established measures, viz., the Managerial Practices Survey (MPS) developed by Yukl (2013), and the consideration and initiating structure subscales of the LBDQ XII. They found that, of the ELQ scales, participative decision-making and showing concern/interacting with the team showed the strongest relation to the LBDQ and MPS.

In the current study, the original five-point Likert scale from the ELQ was adapted to a seven-point Likert scale, with (1) "never true", (2) "rarely true", (3) "sometimes true", (4) "neutral", (5) "somewhat true", (6) "true", and (7) "always true". The number of items was further reduced from 38 items to a 17-item measure. Items that bear a great resemblance to other items – in other words, the items that overlapped greatly in terms of meaning and content, were disregarded. The rationale for shortening the ELQ stemmed from the aim to keep the length of the entire assessment session as convenient as possible for the respondents. Consequently, shortening the questionnaire reduced the likelihood of non-response errors (to minimise the probability of missing values) and decreased the likelihood of response biases. An example of an adapted item from the ELQ is, "My manager uses my work group's suggestions to make decisions that affect us".

3.6.2.3 Social-emotional competency

When assessing the Emotional Intelligence Competency, the aim is to identify the observable behaviour displayed by the manager that serves as a reflection of the manager's level of

emotional intelligence. As mentioned in the literature study, emotional intelligence is a contentious construct, and there are various approaches to its measurement. Nevertheless, at the core of all the diverse models and theories, is the idea that emotional intelligence encompasses an individual's capacity to recognise his/her own emotions and those of others, and then to regulate and manage those emotions to ensure effective social interaction (O'Boyle et al., 2011).

The *Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire* (TEIQue) of Petrides and Furnham (2001) was used to assess emotional intelligence. Petrides and Furnham (2001) state that trait emotional intelligence, or trait self-efficacy, can be viewed as a constellation of traits, behavioural tendencies and self-perceived abilities located at the lower levels of personality hierarchies. The TEIQue was based on a content analysis of the three most prominent models of EI theory, namely (1) Bar-On's (1988) mixed-model approach to EI; (2) the ability model of EI (Mayer et al., 2004); and (3) the social-emotional competencies model of Boyatzis and Goleman (1996). The test developers state that "the rationale was to include core elements common to more than a single model, but exclude marginal elements appearing in only one specific conceptualisation" (Petrides, 2009, p. 90).

The TEIQue comprises 15 facets, four factors and the global factor – trait EI. The following table indicates the sampling domain of the TEIQue.

Table 3.5

The Sampling Domain of the TEIQue

Facets	High scorers perceive themselves as …
Adaptability	… flexible and willing to adapt
Assertiveness	… forthright, frank, and willing to stand up for rights
Emotion perception	… clear about their own and other people's feelings
Emotion expression	… capable of communicating their feelings to others
Emotion management	… capable of influencing other people's feelings
Emotion regulation	… capable of controlling their emotions
Impulse control	… reflective and less likely to give in to their urges
Relationships	… capable of having fulfilling personal relationship
Self-esteem	… successful and self-confident
Self-motivation	… driven and unlikely to give up in the face of adversity
Social awareness	… accomplished networks with excellent social skills
Stress management	… capable of withstanding pressure and regulating stress
Trait empathy	… capable of taking someone else's perspective
Trait happiness	… cheerful and satisfied with their lives
Trait optimism	… confident and likely to "look on the bright side" of life

Note: Adapted from "The incremental validity of the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire (TEIQue): A systematic review and meta-analysis," by F, Andrei, A. B. Siegling, A. M. Aloe, B. Baldoro, & K. V. Petrides, 2016, *Journal of Personality Assessment*, *98*(3), p. 262. Copyright 2016 by Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

The four oblique factors that were extracted from the facet scores are (1) well-being (self-esteem, trait optimism, and trait happiness); (2) sociability (emotion management, assertiveness, and social awareness), (3) emotionality (trait empathy, emotion perception, emotion expression and relationships), (4) and self-control (emotion regulation, low impulsiveness and stress management). Two facets, adaptability and self-motivation, are not included in the four factors, but contribute directly to global EI (Siegling et al., 2015). Petrides (2009) reports that the Cronbach's alphas for the 15 facets range between $.68 \leq \alpha \geq .84$, while the Cronbach's alpha for the global EI is $\alpha = .92$ (males) and $\alpha = .89$ (females). The test-retest reliability coefficients for the four broad factors varied between $.59 \leq r \geq .86$. The facet, *relationships*, yielded the weakest reliability coefficient of all 15 facets, and across various samples. In addition, the facet *relationship* belongs to the *emotionality* factor, and the emotionality factor yielded the weakest temporal stability coefficient of $r = .58$. Exploratory factor analysis (across multiple studies) confirms the four-factor structure; however, *adaptability* and *self-motivation* have relative low loadings on *self-control* but, as mentioned before, they load directly onto global trait EI. Also, the factor loadings are moderate to strong and range between $.380 \leq \lambda \geq .923$.

Specifically, the TEIQue-SF 360-degree measure was used in the current study to assess managerial EI and to consider its impact on employee engagement. The respondents (subordinates) rated the degree to which their manager displays typical behaviour that relates to the trait EI sampling domain. In this regard, it is important to consider the convergence between self-report and other ratings of the TEIQue. The correlations between self- and other perceptions ranged between .29 $\leq r \geq$ .52, p $<$ .01; however, the attenuated correlation coefficients ranged between .47 $\leq r \geq$ .69, p $<$ .01. Also, when considering the magnitude of the correlations between self- and other-report ratings, one should consider the impact of other factors, such as context, length of acquaintance and response biases, for example the 'halo' effect (Petrides, 2009). In addition, studies report that the TEIQue-SF explains significantly more variance in construct-relevant criteria than other widely used trait EI measures. Moreover, it is well documented that TEIQue explains additional variance in construct-relevant criteria when other personality factors, such as the Big Five or Eysenck's Giant Three, are controlled for, which is viewed as evidence of incremental validity (Siegling et al., 2015).

The TEIQue-SF 360-degree is a 30-item scale that requires respondents to rate the observable manifestation of trait EI in another. The scale makes use of a seven-point Likert scale that ranges between (1) "completely disagree" and (7) "completely agree". In the current study, the items of the TEIQue-SF were rewritten in the third person with the permission of *Psychometric Lab* (London, UK). Lastly, after carefully reconsidering the content validity (as well as face validity) of the items that pertain to the *relationship*, *impulse control*, *trait happiness*, and *emotion perception* dimensions, the researcher decided to exclude those dimensions from the current survey. Despite that fact that the length and assessment time of the entire survey remained a priority, there was a likelihood that the indicator variables of those dimensions might be exposed to a significantly large proportion of noise or error variance. For example, the participants' responses to items such as, "Many times, my manager can't figure out what emotion he/she is feeling", or "My manager gets involved in things that he/she later wishes he/she could get out of", largely depends on the degree to which the respondent is acquainted with the manager. To put it another way, it might have been problematic to obtain accurate responses to these items, since the participants would perhaps only have been able to give an accurate estimation of the managers' standing on these latent variables if they were personally and intimately acquainted – a relationship dynamic not necessarily prevalent in the workplace.

3.6.2.4 Work design competency

The final managerial competency measured was work design competency. The degree to which the manager designs work to enhance motivation and increase performance was measured with the Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ), developed by Morgenson and Humphrey (2005). The scale measures four broad components of work design, with 21 underlying factors, namely (1) **task characteristics** [Autonomy (work scheduling, decision-making, and work methods autonomy), task variety, task significance, task identity, feedback from the job]; (2) **knowledge characteristics** [specialisation, job complexity, information processing, problem-solving, skill variety]; (3) **social characteristics** [social support, interdependence (initiated and received interdependence), interaction outside the organisation, feedback from others]; and (4) **work context** (ergonomics, physical demands, work conditions, equipment use). For the purposes of this study, respondents were only required to rate managers on two of the four components – task and social characteristics.

The WDQ can be viewed as an extension of Oldham and Hackman's job characteristics theory. The WDQ provides for the complexity of job design in today's world of work by not only considering task characteristics, but also social, knowledge and work context characteristics. After a thorough review of the literature on job design, the WDQ was developed on the basis of construct definitions, and the WDQ is thus a mixture of existing items (17%), adapted items (33%), and new items (50%). The measure requires respondents to rate their work characteristics on a five-point scale, ranging from (1) "strongly disagree" to (5) "strongly agree". In order to determine the factor structure, Morgenson and Humphrey (2005) made use of confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), in which they fitted and compared five different models. The results of the CFA suggest that the 21-factor model fits the data best [χ^2 = 5027; df = 2618; [χ^2/df = 1.92; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .06; CFI = .91]. In addition, the Cronbach's alphas varied between .64 $\leq \alpha \geq$ .95.

As mentioned before, only two of the four broad components with their respective underlying factors were assessed in the current study, namely task and social characteristics [reliability coefficients for those subscales vary between .80 $\leq \alpha \geq$ .95]. By utilising only two subscales, the 77-item scale was reduced to a 42-item scale. An example of an item from the *interdependence factor* is "The job depends on the work of many different people for its completion". Lastly, the five-item scale was adapted to a seven-point Likert scale.

3.7 Data Analysis

The research-initiating question determines the research design, while the research design determines the appropriate statistical analysis technique. As mentioned before, due to the

complex and exploratory nature of the hypothesised model, the statistical hypothesis was tested empirically with PLS-SEM (a multivariate statistical data analysis technique). The next section motivates why the selected analysis techniques are applicable to this study and explains the steps or sequence of data analyses to follow. Thus, the sections below explain the process that precedes PLS-SEM analysis – this included treating for missing values, item (reliability) analysis, and regression and redundancy analysis.

3.7.1 Procedures for preliminary statistical analyses

Before performing PLS-SEM, which entails the assessment of model path coefficients (as depicted in Figure 3.1), certain preceding statistical steps were addressed. Item analysis was conducted as a first assessment of internal reliability. Also, a Pearson intercorrelation matrix was generated to examine the direction of and strength between the scales and subscales. In addition, a regression and redundancy analysis was performed to differentiate between the predictive relevance of various scales as independent variables, and the dependent variable, engagement. Moreover, as part of the regression analysis, the manifest variables were treated as latent variables to serve as a first indication of possible redundancy (or multicollinearity) between the constructs. The findings of these analyses gave the researcher a preliminary idea of the results when assuming the data is normally distributed – before making use of PLS-SEM as a non-parametric data analysis tool.

3.7.1.1 Missing values

It often happens that the data contains missing values due to non-responses or absenteeism. However, Hair et al. (2014a) stress that, if the researcher makes use of an online survey, it is possible to decrease the likelihood of missing values significantly, as it is not possible to move to the next question or next section if the previous one is not answered or completed. To this end, it was not necessary to apply any technique to solve for missing values, since it was impossible for respondents to move to the next section without completing the previous one. Thus, the data gathering method made missing values impossible.

3.7.1.2 Item analysis

The various subscales were developed to measure the latent variables that represent a specific construct with a constitutive definition. The items that belong to the various subscales in the survey were developed to serve as stimuli that elicited a response from the respondent. The items were specifically designed to elicit a response from the respondent that is a behavioural manifestation of the participant's standing on the underlying latent variable or the participant's perception of managerial behaviour. Thus, the items are observable indicators of

the latent variable. To this end, **the purpose of item analysis is to determine whether the items consistently represent the latent variable across observations**, and if the items explain a significant proportion of variance in the latent variable.

When performing classical measurement theory item analysis on the items per subscale, the analysis included the estimation of item means, item standard deviation, **average inter-item correlations per subscale**, **item-total correlations**, **the standardised Cronbach's alpha per subscale**, and the **Cronbach's alpha if the item was deleted** (acceptable α = .70; and satisfactory or ideal .75 $\leq \alpha \geq$ .90) (Theron, 2014). Consequently, when examining the above-mentioned output statistics, it became evident which subscales and items were problematic.

Ordinarily, the subsequent step as part of the data analysis process would be to conduct an exploratory factor analysis (EFA). The objective of EFA is to explain the pattern of observed inter-item correlations, and the goal is to detect the smallest number of interpretable common underlying factors in the form of a factor matrix that provides a reproduction of the observed correlation matrix that is as accurate as possible (Theron, 2014). However, as explained, the researcher made use of partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) as a variance-based approached to structural equation modelling, and the algorithm of the outer model of PLS-SEM detects the smallest number of interpretable common underlying factors and evaluates the unidimensionality assumption underlying each subscale. Thus, in this case, performing an EFA was redundant.

Also, an intercorrelation matrix between the scales and subscale was generated to examine the direction and strength of the relationships (correlations) between the scales and subscales. Although correlations do not assume causality, the Pearson correlations, as seen in the inter-correlation matrix, served as precursors to the possible nature of the relationship between constructs. Thus, the inter-correlation matrix provides the researcher with a preliminary indication of the relationships between constructs, while the regression and redundancy analysis to follow explains more about the magnitude and predictive value of the relationship between the dependent (engagement) and independent variables.

3.7.1.3 Regression and redundancy analysis

Correlation allows the researcher to determine the degree of association between two variables, while regression analysis allows the researcher to determine the degree to which the independent variables predict the dependent variable. In fact, regression analysis determines how changes in the independent variables are associated with changes in the

dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Moreover, linear regression identifies the solution that produces the smallest difference between the observed values and their predicted values (Frost, n.d.), therefore regression analysis enables the researcher to obtain a more accurate estimation of the magnitude of the relationship between the dependent and independent variables than mere correlations. Multiple regression analysis was used to determine the predictive value of each independent variable in the dependent variable. In addition, the manifest variables were treated as latent variables that served as a preliminary indication of redundancy between the constructs (M. Kidd, personal communication, July 15, 2020).

When performing multiple regression analysis, the analysis includes the estimation and interpretation of the **coefficient of multiple determination (R^2)**, unstandardised and **standardised beta coefficients**, **corresponding p-values**, **standardised errors**, as well as partial and semi-partial correlations. When performing redundancy analysis, one determines the **variance inflation factor (VIF)** and **tolerance** values based on the r-square values of the independent variables to interpret the severity of collinearity.

3.7.2 Structural equation modelling

SEM is a second-generation multivariate data analysis technique that applies statistical methods that simultaneously analyse multiple variables (Hair et al., 2014a). SEM is used to explore and develop theories, as well as to confirm theories and constructs. SEM consists of two approaches, namely CB-SEM (covariance-based SEM) and PLS-SEM (partial least squares SEM). The first approach, CB-SEM, is typically the more popular approach to SEM and is known as hard-based modelling (CB-SEM makes use of LISREL with maximum likelihood estimation). The second approach, PLS-SEM, is a variance-based approach and is known as a soft-modelling technique (PLS-SEM makes use of SmartPLS 2.0 with partial least squares analysis) (Henseler et al., 2001).

The fundamental difference between the two approaches is that CB-SEM is primarily used to confirm or reject theories; a theoretical covariance matrix is developed based on a specific set of structural equations. CB-SEM focuses on estimating a set of model parameters in such a way that the difference between the theoretical and estimated covariance matrix is minimised. In addition, the CB-SEM model estimation requires a set of assumptions to be met, for example the multivariate normality of data, minimum sample size, etc. In contrast, PLS-SEM is a non-parametric structural equation technique that explains the variance in dependent

variables and is used primarily to test theories in exploratory research (Hair et al., 2011, 2014a).

3.7.2.1 Partial least squares analysis (PLS-SEM)

As mentioned above, PLS path modelling is recommended at an early stage of theoretical development in order to test and validate exploratory models. It is suitable for prediction-oriented research that assists researchers to focus on the clarification of endogenous variables (Henseler et al., 2009). Specifically, PLS path modelling is used when a proposed model consists of many latent factors and where one expects a high degree of multicollinearity between the factors (Chin, 1998). The PLS path model consists of two elements: (1) an inner model that displays the relationships between the latent variables, and (2) the outer model, which displays the relationships between the latent variables and their indicator variables (Hair et al., 2014a; Monecke & Leish, 2012).

In contrast to CB-SEM, PLS-SEM does not estimate the proposed model fit. Instead, by making use of an ordinary least squares regression-based method rather than a maximum likelihood estimation procedure, PLS-SEM uses available data to estimate the path relationships by maximising the variance explained by the endogenous variables and minimising the error terms (residual variance) (Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, by estimating path coefficients that maximise the variance explained by the endogenous variables, PLS-SEM seems like a more lenient approach to determine the prediction of the variables. Admittedly, PLS-SEM proves to have greater statistical power than CB-SEM; its efficiency in parameter estimation makes it more likely for the method to determine a statistically significant relationship between two constructs that is in fact significant in the population (Hair et al., 2011).

Bootstrapping was used during PLS-SEM hypothesis testing where parametric inference was impossible or required complicated formulas for the calculation of standard errors. Bootstrapping involves repeated random sampling with replacement from the original sample to create a bootstrap sample in order to obtain standard errors from hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2011). The bootstrap sample enables the estimated coefficients in PLS-SEM to be tested for their significance. Consequently, 1 000 bootstrap samples were created; each bootstrap sample had the same number of cases as the original sample ($n = 106$). The PLS algorithm then estimated the SEM results from each bootstrap sample. Furthermore, the path model coefficients were used to create an empirical sampling distribution for each parameter, in which the standard deviation of the empirical sampling distribution was used as a proxy for

the empirical standard error of the parameter (Hair et al., 2011). Thus, the results of all the bootstrap samples provided the standard error for each path model relationship.

When performing PLS-SEM, the analysis included the estimation and interpretation of the outer model and inner model. The outer model enabled the researcher to determine the composite reliability of the scales, the convergent validity between the indicators (items) of the scales and underlying constructs (this included the examination of the average variance extracted factor and the outer loadings), as well as discriminant validity by examining the hetrotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio.

3.7.2.1.1 Critical evaluation of PLS-SEM

PLS-SEM focuses more on predication than explanation, and therefore is particularly useful for studies on the sources of the competitive advantage of "success drivers" (Hair et al., 2014a). However, the lack of goodness-of-fit statistics (global scalar function) is seen to limit its use for theory testing and confirmation (Hair et al., 2011). The fundamental difference is that the model fit of CB-SEM indicates the discrepancy between the empirical and the theoretical model, while "PLS-SEM focusses on the discrepancy between the observed and approximated values of the dependent variables and the values predicted by the model in question" (Hair et al., 2014a, p. 78). In addition, PLS-SEM cannot be applied when models contain causal or feedback loops (Hair et al., 2011).

The benefit is that the PLS-SEM algorithm calculates the construct scores as exact linear combinations of associated observed indicator variables, and therefore uses all the variance in the indicators to help explain the endogenous variables. Researchers therefore claim that PLS-SEM provides more accurate estimates of construct scores than CB-SEM (Hair et al., 2014a). On the other hand, researchers argue that the fact that latent variables are aggregates of observed indicator variables leads to a fundamental problem, called the PLS-SEM bias. Nevertheless, all indicators have measurement error, but when the error presents itself in the latent variables (as is the case with PLS-SEM), the error induces a bias in the model estimates (Hair et al., 2014a). As a result, PLS-SEM true path model relationships are often underestimated, while the parameters of the measurement models (loadings and weights) are often overestimated. However, Hair et al. (2014a) report that consistency can make the bias "disappear". The bias only seems to have a real impact on estimates in studies with small sample sizes and a high degree of model complexity; the bias does not have such a significant impact on parameter estimates when compared to CB-SEM estimates in larger studies (Hair et al., 2014a). Consequently, it is safe to argue that, when the sample size is large and the

number of indicators per latent variable increase so that the variables approach their true values, the PLS-SEM bias has almost no impact (Hair et al., 2011).

In addition, it is true that CB-SEM is considered a more stringent method with less likelihood of method bias, PLS-SEM can be good proxy for CB-SEM, and the two methods can complement each other (Hair et al., 2011). Moreover, the outer model requirements are quite flexible and can handle reflective and formative indicators, as well as single-item measures, without additional constraints.

Despite the bias of the PLS-SEM method, PLS remains a convenient and powerful technique that can be applied in a variety of research situations with small sample sizes. It is important to take note that the researcher should still consider factors such as the distributional characteristics of the data, potential missing data, the psychometric properties of variables, and the magnitude of relationships before deciding on an appropriate sample size (Henseler et al., 2009). Therefore, the researcher should ensure that the sample size is large enough to support the conclusions.

To this end, PLS-SEM was used as a multivariate data analysis technique because there was little certainty regarding the structural relationships in the model. Finally, the decision to use PLS as a statistical technique in this study was based on the suitability of the technique to test and validate exploratory models with a strong prediction-oriented approach that serve as an explanation of endogenous latent variables. The following table summarises and compares the applicability of CB-SEM and PLS-SEM (Hair et al., 2011, 2014a).

Table 3.7

The Applicability of CB-SEM and PLS-SEM

When to use PLS-SEM

- Goal is to predict key "target" or identifying "driver" constructs.
- If research is exploratory or an extension of an existing structural theory.
- The complexity of the structural model – many constructs and many indicators
- The sample size is small or the data is not normally distributed – uncertain … therefore first propose to conduct a PLS-SEM analysis, but if sample size and distributional assumptions are met, also conduct CB-SEM.
- The need to use latent variable scores in subsequent analysis.

When to use CB-SEM

- The goal is theory testing, theory confirmation, or the comparison of alternative theories.
- Error terms require additional specification, such as covariation.
- The structural model has a non-recursive relationship.
- The research requires a global goodness-of-fit criterion.
- If the research requires a goodness-of-fit criterion.
- If there is a need to test for measurement model invariance.

Note: Adapted from "A primer on partial least squares structural equation modelling," by J. F. Hair, G. T. M. Hult, C. M. Ringle, & M. Sarstedt, 2014. Copyright 2014 by Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications.

3.8 Research Ethics

The following section addresses ethical considerations relevant to the present study.

3.8.1 Voluntary participation and withdrawal

Participation in this study was completely voluntary. Voluntary participation applied to the hotel organisation and the customer-contact employees as units of analysis. During the data collection procedure, the contact person at the hotel fulfilled an important role, since this person distributed the invitation to all customer-contact employees via email or WhatsApp message, along with a link to the survey. Some may argue that the nature of the relationship between the contact person and the customer-contact employees may be problematic, as there was a possibility that some may be coerced into participating in order to depict the manager or the hotel in a favourable light. Thus, the researcher ensured that the contact person was aware of these ethical underpinnings, and that no one was coerced into participating in the study. In the case where the researcher met with possible participants in person (regardless of their affiliation with FEDHASA), the researcher made the link to the survey available to participants in an email or WhatsApp message well after the meeting – with no obligation to participate. The researcher ensured that no participants felt coerced or obliged to participate. It was reiterated that they could withdraw from the study at any point, with the guarantee that incomplete datasets would be disregarded not analysed.

It therefore was stipulated clearly, and expressed by the researcher when meeting with possible participants, that a prerequisite of the study was voluntary participation (participants could withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind), and that no person in a position of power or otherwise could coerce a customer-contact employee to participate.

3.8.2 Anonymity and confidentiality (access to data)

Even though the initial invitation email was sent from FEDHASA Cape to all hotel affiliates, FEDHASA Cape did not have access to the raw datasets, nor did FEDHASA share a database with the researcher.

In fact, FEDHASA preferred that the hotels that wished to participate remain anonymous. FEDHASA preferred not to have any knowledge regarding (1) the identity of the organisation, and (2) the identity of the customer-contact employees (units of analysis). Thus, the identity of the organisation as well as the customer-contact employees remained anonymous to FEDHASA.

If customer-contact employees were interested in participating, they provided the researcher with their cell phone numbers (they would be able to write down their contact numbers on a piece of paper at the meeting, but their identities would remain anonymous to the researcher). Participants (customer-contact employees) who wished to stand a chance to win the lucky draw, were also required to provide the researcher with their phone numbers so that the researcher could contact them to deliver the prize. In such a case, neither the researcher, nor anyone else, was able to link the contact details to the participants' raw scores. Participants who wished to be eligible for the lucky draw, clicked on a button that redirected them to a short survey in which they provided the researcher with some personal details, including their contact number, after they had given consent and completed the survey. This one-question survey was distinct from the actual survey, thus making it impossible for anyone to link personal details (contact numbers) to raw datasets. The researcher decided to offer a prize in a lucky draw competition as an incentive due to low response rates, and a general lack of interest on behalf of respondents to participate.

Finally, the hotel organisation and the customer-contact employees who chose to participate did not have access to the raw datasets. Also, the scores and ratings were kept confidential and were not shared with the hotel organisation or the managers/contact persons. Also, the managers did not receive any form of performance feedback based on the ratings of their subordinates. Any information that was obtained in connection with this study and that could be identified with the participants and/or their company remained confidential. In addition, the

information (data) obtained is safely stored by the researcher. Thus, no parties to the research have access to the raw scores, besides the researcher. The findings of the study are only published in this manuscript as aggregate scores that will serve as explanations for the phenomena in question, and no individual names or raw scores have been made available.

3.8.3 Potential risks and discomforts

There was a possibility that the respondents might feel exposed or vulnerable when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's performance. Specifically, participants could experience emotional discomfort when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's level of emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence constitutes a psychological construct and can elicit a psychological response). The researcher, Elizabeth Reeves, is a registered psychometrist and oversaw the administration of the TEIQue emotional intelligence questionnaire (in collaboration with her supervisor, Prof Johan Malan, who is a registered psychologist). To reduce potential discomfort, participants were assured that no personal information or individual scores would be disclosed to any other party (thus, participants were assured once again of anonymity and confidentiality). Also, the participants were assured that any information shared with the researcher during consultations would not be included as research data. The participants could also contact Michèle Boonzaier, a registered counselling psychologist, if they felt the need to converse with an independent party other than the researcher.

3.9 Summary

In order to answer the research-initiating question, "*What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?*" this study made use of an *ex post facto* correlation design. Moreover, the path coefficients in the model (Figure 3.1), which depict the relationships between the managerial competencies and outcome variables, were assessed using PLS-SEM. Because of various ethical and practical implications, the most appropriate sampling method for this study was convenience sampling. Finally, participants (subordinates of front-end managers/members of customer-contact teams) completed an electronic survey to rate their own individual *work engagement* levels, as well as to rate their managers' behaviours according to the hypothesised competencies (*task-oriented behaviours*, *empowering leadership behaviours*, *social-emotional competencies* and *work design competency*). The next chapter discusses the results of the data analysis.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

While Chapter Three provided a rationale for the research methodology, Chapter Four provides a discussion of the results from the statistical analyses. Firstly, the researcher will discuss the preliminary statistical analyses, such as item analysis, the inter-correlation matrix, and regression and redundancy analysis. Secondly, the PLS-SEM results are discussed. What is more, three PLS-SEM models were run to solve observed collinearity issues between two latent constructs. The results of all three models were compared and are discussed.

4.1 Preliminary statistical analyses

The findings of the preliminary analyses provided the researcher with a glimpse of the results and the nature of the distribution, before making use of PLS-SEM as a non-parametric data analysis tool.

To begin with, as a first assessment of internal reliability, item analysis was conducted in which the standardised Cronbach's alphas and average inter-item correlations for the scales and subscale were determined. As a second preliminary assessment, a Pearson intercorrelation matrix was generated to examine the direction and strength between the variables. As a third assessment, a regression and redundancy analysis was performed to differentiate between the predictive relevance of various scales as independent variables, and the dependent variable, engagement. Moreover, as part of the regression analysis, the tolerance and variance inflation factors (VIF) were determined for all independent variables. This served as a first indication of possible redundancy (or multicollinearity) between the constructs.

4.1.1 Reliability (item) analysis

Item analysis was conducted in order to determine the internal consistency of the items and subscales of the following measuring instruments: (1) *Engagement*, (2) *Task-Oriented Behaviours*, (3) *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, (4) *Social-Emotional Competency*, and (5) *Job Design Competency*.

As mentioned in the methodology chapter (paragraph 3.7.1.2), the purpose of item analysis is to determine whether the items consistently represent the latent variables across observations. In order to determine the internal consistency of the subscales and scales, the standardised Cronbach's alphas were interpreted as a first and primary source of internal

consistency information, while the average inter-item correlations, item-total correlations per item, and Cronbach's alpha-if-item-is-removed were used as supplementary information.

The standardised Cronbach's alpha refers to the alpha coefficient of internal consistency when all scale items are standardised. The closer the Cronbach's alpha is to 1.00, the greater the internal consistency of the scale. See the table below for the rule of thumb regarding Cronbach's alpha interpretation ranges (George & Mallery, as cited in Gilem & Gilem, 2003).

Table 4.1

Interpretation of Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha	Interpretation
> .90	Excellent
> .80	Good
> .70	Acceptable
> .60	Questionable
>. 50	Poor
< .50	Unacceptable (problematic)

Note: Adapted from "Calculating, interpreting and reporting Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for Likert type scales," by J. A. Gilem, & R. R. Gilem, 2003, p. 87. Copyright 2003 by Midwest Research to Practice Conference in Adult, Continuing, and Community Education.

The average inter-item correlation is the average correlation between all test items in the scale or subscale; the closer the correlation is to 1.00, the stronger the relationship between the scale items. Generally, average inter-item correlations per scale (or subscale) of between .15 and .50 are considered acceptable, while average inter-item correlations above .50 are considered as excellent for reflective measures (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

Item-total correlation is the correlation between the item score and the total scale (or subscale) score, or the correlation between the subscale scores and the total scale score. Generally, an item-total correlation larger than .40 is acceptable, since the item can account for 16% of the variability in scale scores (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). In addition, it shows that the item measures the same underlying construct as the scale.

As a result, the standardised Cronbach alphas for all **scales** ranged between $.61 \leq \alpha \geq .97$. All scales had standardised Cronbach alphas above the acceptable cut-off of .70 except for the Work Design scale ($\alpha = .61$) (Gilem & Gilem, 2003). As stated above, the standardised Cronbach's alpha served as the indicator of internal consistency, which carried the most weight in the evaluation of scale consistency and led to the conclusion that the two indicators (subscales) of that work design scale do not measure the same underlying construct. Also,

the standardised Cronbach's alphas for both subscales, viz., *Work Design: Task Characteristics* ($\alpha = .77$) and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* ($\alpha = .71$), increased to acceptable alpha levels of greater than .70 when they were considered as independent scales. To this end, the researcher and her supervisor decided on splitting the work design competency latent variable into two independent latent variables – **work design task characteristics** and w**ork design social characteristics**. A detailed discussion of this follows in paragraph 4.2.1.5. The standardised Cronbach's alphas for all the **subscales** across all scales are therefore well above the acceptable cut-off of .70 ($.82 \leq \alpha \geq .96$) (Gilem & Gilem, 2003).

In addition, all **scales and subscales** had an acceptable average inter-item correlation larger than .15, ranging between .33 and .77 (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013).

The **subscales** had acceptable item-total correlations of above .40, except for the subscale *Work Design: Task Characteristics Task Identity* (.24) and *Work Design: Social Characteristics Interaction Outside the Organisation* (.34). These smaller than .40 item-total correlations showed that these subscale scores did not account for a sufficiently large proportion of variability in the overall scale score, namely *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* respectively. Also, four **items** of the *Social-Emotional Competency* scale had item-total correlations smaller than .40. Table 4.1 below provides a summary of the results of the item analysis.

Table 4.2

Summarised Reliability of the Scales and Subscales

Scale	Subscale	Number of items	Average inter-item correlation	Standardised Cronbach's alpha
Employee engagement		9	.60	.94
Task-oriented behaviours		14	.66	.97
Empowering leadership behaviours		18	.77	.94
Empowering leadership behaviours	Leading by example	2	.77	.91
	Participative decision-making	2	.87	.93
	Coaching	6	.73	.94
	Informing	4	.70	.90
	Showing concern	4	.84	.95
Social emotional competency		22	.38	.93
Work design task characteristics		24	.33	.77
Work design task characteristics:	Work schedule autonomy	3	.74	.92
	Decision-making autonomy	3	.74	.89

Table 4.2 (continued)

Summarised Reliability of the Scales and Subscales

Scale	Subscale	Number of items	Average inter-item correlation	Standardised Cronbach's alpha
	Work methods autonomy	3	.87	.95
	Task variety	4	.85	.96
	Task significance	4	.73	.91
	Task identity	4	.72	.91
	Feedback from the job	3	.76	.90
Work design social characteristics		17	.36	.71
Work design social characteristics:	Social support	4	.55	.82
	Initiated interdependence	3	.77	.90
	Perceived interdependence	3	.63	.83
	External interaction	4	.81	.94
	Feedback from others	3	.87	.95

The next section provides a brief summary of the results of each scale's item-analysis. As mentioned above, the primary and most important indicator of internal consistency was the standardised Cronbach's alpha. However, the researcher did consider the item-total correlations to identify possible problematic items. The items and subscales with much lower item-total correlations than others, in other words item-total correlations smaller than .4, were noted (Murphy & Davidshofer, 2005). The alpha-when-deleted was only taken into consideration when the subscale or item had a much smaller inter-item correlation than the rest of the items for that particular scale or subscale, in order to determine if it would be worthwhile to remove the item or subscale (M. Kidd, personal communication, July 15, 2020).

4.1.1.1 Engagement

The work engagement scale, UWES-9 (nine-item scale), which was developed by Schaufeli and Bakker (2003), was used to operationalise employee engagement. The standardised Cronbach's alpha is .94, which indicates excellent internal consistency. The average inter-item correlation is .60, which shows that all items correlate sufficiently high with one another, thus measure the same construct. In addition, the total-item correlations ranged between .63 and .83, which is well above the .40 cut-off, and no alpha will increase above the standardised alpha if an item is deleted.

4.1.1.2 Task-oriented behaviours

A self-developed scale was used to operationalise task-oriented behaviours. This 14-item measure taps specifically into the technical and job-related knowledge of the hotel manager.

The items of the measure were derived from constitutive definitions that relate to task performance, technical job knowledge and expertise. As mentioned in paragraph 3.6.2.1, the items were adapted to accommodate job responsibilities and duties from job descriptions derived from the O*Net (2016) database, which specifically relates to the rooms division and food and beverage managers, or to the first-line front-office and service supervisors of each hotel.

The standardised Cronbach's alpha is .97, which indicates excellent internal consistency. The average inter-item correlation is .66, which shows that all items correlate sufficiently high with one another, thus measure the same construct. In addition, the inter-item correlations range between .69 and .88, which is well above the .40 cut-off, and no alpha will increase above the standardised alpha if an item is deleted.

4.1.1.3 Empowering leadership behaviours

The ELQ developed by Arnold et al. (2000) was used to operationalise empowering leadership behaviours. This 38-item scale measures empowering leadership behaviours along five subscales, namely (1) leading by example, (2) participative decision-making, (3) coaching, (4) informing, and (5) showing concern/interacting with the team. The standardised Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale was .94, and the Cronbach's alphas for the various subscales ranged between $.90 \leq \alpha \geq .95$, which indicates excellent internal consistency.

The average inter-item correlations ranged between .70 and .87, which shows that all items correlated sufficiently high with one another. Thus, the subscales of the overall scale, and the items of the subscales, all measure the same underlying dimension. In addition, the item-total correlations ranged between .74 and .91, which is well above the .40 cut-off. Only one item of the *Empowering Leadership: Informing* subscale indicated that the alpha would increase above the standardised alpha, from .90 to .91, if that item was deleted. This was noted, but the researcher did not regard it as necessary to remove this item, since the standardised alpha was already exceptionally good.

4.1.1.4 Social-emotional competency

The Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue), a 30-item scale, was developed by Petrides and Furnham (2000) and was used to operationalise social-emotional competency. As mentioned in the methodology chapter, some facets were excluded due to the possible increase in chance variance in the scores due to response errors or biases (please refer to paragraph 3.6.2.3 for further information). This decreased the number of items from 30 to 22.

The standardised Cronbach's alpha is .93, which indicates excellent internal consistency. The average inter-item correlation is .38, which shows that all items correlate acceptably with one another (larger than .15), thus measuring the same construct. Most total-item correlations were larger than .40, which indicates that the majority of items accounted for more than 16% of the variability in scale score respectively. However, there were four items with item-total correlations between .10 and .30. These item scores can therefore be considered as not explaining enough variance in the scale score. Importantly, no alpha will increase above the standardised alpha if an item is deleted, and it was decided not to remove these items. The three items were: (1) "*My manager tends to back down when negotiating with other people*"; (2) "*My manager does not have any power over other people's feelings*"; and (3) "*My manager believes he/she has a number of good qualities*."

4.1.1.5 Work design competency

The Work Design Questionnaire (WDQ) was used to operationalise the job design competency. The scale was developed by Morgenson and Humphrey (2005) and measures four broad components of work design with 21 underlying factors. Take note that only two of the four broad components were assessed for the purpose of this study (refer to paragraph 3.6.2.4 for more information). This adapted 41-item scale had two broad components, namely *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics.* The two broad components collectively comprise twelve factors. The twelve factors are: (1) *Work schedule autonomy*, (2) *Decision-making autonomy*, (3) *Work methods autonomy*, (4) *Task variety*, (5) *Task significance*, (6) *Task identity*, (7) *Feedback from the job*, (8) *Social support*, (9) *Initiated interdependence*, (10) *Received/perceived interdependence*, (11) *Interaction outside the organisation*, and (12) *Feedback from others* (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006).

As mentioned above (paragraph 4.2.1), the questionable Cronbach's alpha of the *Work Design Scale* ($\alpha = .61$) served as an indication that the two subscales (indicators), task and social characteristics, possibly do not measure the same underlying construct (work design competency). Moreover, it became clear that the standardised Cronbach's alpha for both subscales, viz. *Work Design: Task Characteristics* ($\alpha = .77$) and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* ($\alpha = .71$), increased to acceptable alpha levels of larger than .70 when they were considered as independent scales in their own right, distinct from an overall work design scale score.

In fact, the *Work Design Competency Questionnaire*, designed by Morgenson and Humphrey (2006), measures four **theoretically distinct components**, and to calculate an overall *Work*

Design Competency Scale score therefore will be a theoretical misconception. Upon further evaluation of the initial outer model output analyses, it became clear that the Work Design Scale as a composite scale did not exhibit good convergent validity (average variance extraction (AVE) = .33). In other words, it was clear that the indicators of Work Design Competency did not share a large enough proportion of variance with the underlying construct – a further indication that work design task and social characteristics might be two theoretically distinct constructs. Correspondingly, the authors reported that the data, with four distinct work design components and 21 subsequent underlying factors, fitted the model best [χ^2 = 5027; *df* = 2618; [χ^2/ *df* = 1.92; RMSEA = .04; SRMR = .06; CFI = .91] (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006).

The researcher and her supervisor therefore decided on splitting the work design competency latent variable into two independent latent variables that differentiated between the two theoretically distinct components, namely work design task characteristics and work design social characteristics competencies. Therefore, the originally hypothesised five-variable model was adapted to a six-variable model, and the subsequent data analysis results below explain the results of the adapted six-variable model.

4.1.1.5.1 Work design task characteristics

The standardised Cronbach's alphas for the various subscales of the **Work Design: Task Characteristics** component ranged between $.89 \leq \alpha \geq .92$ – this indicates excellent internal consistency. The average inter-item correlations for the subscales ranged between .72 and .87, which shows that all indicators correlate sufficiently high with one another. Thus, the items of the subscales all measure the same underlying dimension. In addition, the total-item correlations ranged between .71 and .91, thus accounting for a sufficient proportion of variability in the total subscale score. No alpha will increase above the standardised alpha if an item is deleted in any of the *Work Design: Social Characteristics* subscales.

4.1.1.5.2 Work design social characteristics

The standardised Cronbach's alphas for the various subscales of the **Work Design: Social Characteristics** component ranged between $.82 \leq \alpha \geq .95$. This indicates excellent internal consistency. The average inter-item correlations for the subscales ranged between .55 and .87, which shows that all indicators correlated sufficiently high with one another. Thus, the items of the subscales all measure the same underlying dimension. In addition, the total-item correlations ranged between .49 and .91, thus accounting for a sufficient proportion of variability in the total subscale score. No alpha will increase above the standardised alpha if

an item is deleted in any of the *Work Design: Social Characteristics* subscales. Three items of three respective subscales indicated that the alpha would increase above the standardised alpha if that item was deleted. However, these changes in alpha if those items were deleted are small and do not make a difference to an already excellent standardised Cronbach's alpha.

4.2 Correlations

An inter-correlation matrix was generated that showed the correlation coefficients between the manifest variables. The inter-correlation matrix provides the researcher with a preliminary idea of the nature and strength of the relationships between the variables.

A Pearson correlation coefficient indicates the degree to which changes in one variable are associated with changes in the other variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Moreover, the Pearson correlation coefficient is a measure of the size and the direction between two variables, where 0 is indicative of no relationship, and +1 or -1 indicates a perfect positive or negative linear relationship between the variables. Generally, a rule of thumb is that correlations smaller than .30 are considered weak, while correlations between $.30 \leq r \geq .70$ are considered moderate, and correlations larger than 0.70 are considered strong (Taylor, 1990). A statistically significant correlation indicates that the sample data provides strong enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis that the population parameter is zero – thus, one can be sure that there is a relationship between the variables, since the size of the relationship is significantly larger or smaller than zero (Taylor, 1990).

All correlations vary between $.27 \leq r \geq .91$, which indicates a significant, weak to very strong, positive linear relationships between all variables ($p < .01$). Take note that there is a weak relationship between *Engagement* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* (r = .27), and a strong positive relationship between *Task-oriented Behaviours* and *Social-Emotional Competency* (r = .76). However, a very strong relationship between *Task-oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* (r = .91) can be considered as an early indication of redundancy, which means that the variables are so similar that they in essence represent the same theoretical construct. The issue of redundancy is addressed in the next section, paragraph 4.4. See the correlation results in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3

Pearson Correlation Results

	Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson	p-value
1	Engagement	Task-oriented behaviours	.41	< .01
2	Engagement	Social-emotional competency	.40	< .01
3	Engagement	Empowering leadership behaviours	.51	< .01
4	Engagement	Work design task characteristics	.47	< .01
5	Engagement	Work design social characteristics	.27	< .01
6	Task-oriented behaviours	Social-emotional competency	.76	< .01
7	Task-oriented behaviours	Empowering leadership behaviours	.91	< .01
8	Task-oriented behaviours	Work design task characteristics	.45	< .01
9	Task-oriented behaviours	Work design social characteristics	.42	< .01
10	Social-emotional competency	Empowering leadership behaviours	.80	< .01
11	Social-emotional competency	Work design task characteristics	.53	< .01
12	Social-emotional competency	Work design social characteristics	.39	< .01
13	Empowering leadership behaviours	Work design task characteristics	.58	< .01
14	Empowering leadership behaviours	Work design social characteristics	.41	< .01
15	Work design task characteristics	Work design social characteristics	.44	< .01

4.3 Regression and redundancy analysis

As mentioned above (paragraph 4.3 and as displayed in Table 4.3), high correlations between two variables can be problematic, as it can be an early indication of collinearity. In this case, there is an exceptionally high correlation between *Task-oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* (r = .91, p < .01). In order to further test whether the high correlation between these two variables is problematic, and to establish the severity of collinearity among them, as well as the amount of variance explained by the one that is not explained by the other, the variance inflation factor (VIF) and tolerance values were calculated (Hair et al., 2014a).

The regression models allowed the statistician to regress the five independent variables against the dependent variable to calculate the proportion of variance associated with the five independent variables – i.e., to calculate the r-square values (coefficient of multiple determination) to determine the proportion of variance associated with each variable (Hair et al., 2014a). To this end, r-square coefficients were used to calculate the VIF and tolerance values (see the calculations below).

$$\text{Tolerance} = (\text{TOL}_{x1}) = 1 - R^2$$
$$\text{Variance inflation factor} = (VIF_i = 1/\text{tolerance})$$

According to Hair et al. (2014a), each variable's tolerance and VIF value should be higher than .20 and lower than 5 respectively. If this is not the case, then the researcher should

consider removing variables, merging variables into a single index, or creating higher-order constructs. See Table 4.4 for the redundancy analysis results for the six-variable model.

Table 4.4

Redundancy Analysis Results for the Six-variable Model (Five Independent Variables)

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	R-square
Empowering leadership behaviours	.12	8.36	.88
Social-emotional competency	.34	2.91	.66
Task-oriented behaviours	.15	6.79	.85
Work design task characteristics	.55	1.83	.45
Work design social characteristics	.74	1.35	.26

As a result, it was evident that there was a high degree of collinearity between *Task-oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*. The r-square values showed that 85% of variance in *Task-oriented Behaviours*, and 88% of variance in *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, were accounted for. In addition, the tolerance values for these two variables were < .20, and the VIF for both variables was > 5. This means that only a very small amount of variance is explained by one variable and NOT explained by the other (tolerance < .20), and conversely this implies that a VIF factor > 5 indicates that more than 80% of variance in *Task-oriented Behaviours* can be explained by *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, and vice versa (VIF values of 6.79 and 8.36 respectively) (Hair et al., 2014a).

Hence, two other regression models were run with only four independent variables each (not five) – one omitting *Task-oriented Behaviours* and the other model omitting *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*. The respective tolerance and VIF values showed that the issue of collinearity can be solved by not fitting a model comprising both *Task-oriented* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours.* When fitting a model with four independent variables, neither *Task-oriented Behaviours* nor *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* shared an unhealthy proportion of variance with *Social-emotional Competency*, *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*. See Table 4.5 below as an example of acceptable tolerance and VIF values for all independent variables.

Table 4.5

Redundancy Analysis for a Five-variable Model Omitting Empowering Leadership Behaviours (Four Independent Variables)

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	R-square
Social-emotional competency	.37	2.67	.63
Task-oriented behaviours	.40	2.49	.60
Work design task characteristics	.65	1.53	.35
Work design social characteristics	.75	1.34	.25

In this study, the purpose of running regression models was twofold. Firstly, to determine the degree of collinearity between two or more latent variables (i.e., to conduct a redundancy analysis, as discussed above), and secondly, the regression analysis results provide a preliminary indication of the significance of the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable, as well as of the amount of variance explained by the regression equation.

As a result, when running the first regression model with all six variables, the five independent variables explained 31% of variance in the dependent variable, engagement (r-square value = .31). The higher the r-square value of the regression model, the smaller the difference between the observed and predicted values (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Since it is more difficult to predict human behaviour than physical processes, it is common for studies that explain human behaviour to have r-square values less than 50% (Frost, n.d.). Please refer to paragraph 4.4.2.1, *Coefficient of determination*, for a more detailed description of r-square values, and of the interpretation of the r-square value of the six-variable PLS inner model. Although the independent variables explained a satisfactory proportion of variance in the dependent variable (r-square = .31), none of the independent variables were significantly related to engagement in the six-variable regression model.

However, as explained above, in order to solve for collinearity issues, two other regression models were run with only four independent variables each (not five) – one omitting *task-oriented behaviours,* and the other model omitting *empowering leadership behaviours*. Generally speaking, independent variables with larger standardised beta coefficients are more important to the model than those with smaller coefficients but, more importantly, the squared semi-partial correlations express the unique contribution of the independent variables to the total variance of the dependent variable (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). To this end, the former model – the one omitting task-oriented behaviours (and including empowering leadership

behaviours) – found a significant relationship between *empowering leadership behaviours* and employee engagement (β = .41; *p* < .01), with a semi-partial correlation of .23 (thus, empowering leadership behaviours contributed 5.3% of unique variance to engagement). In addition, there seemed to be a strong positive relationship between *work design task characteristics* and engagement – the p-value is only slightly greater than .01 (β = .26; *p* = .02), and *work design task characteristics* contributed 4% of unique variance to engagement. Thus, *empowering leadership behaviours* and *work design task characteristics* contributed the largest proportion of unique variance to engagement. The latter model – the one omitting empowering leadership behaviours (and including task-oriented behaviours) – confirmed the significant relationship between *work design task characteristics* and employee engagement (β = .34; *p* < .01), where *work design task characteristics* contributed 7.2% of unique variance to engagement.

In brief, redundancy analysis established a severe degree of collinearity between *empowering leadership behaviours* and *task-oriented behaviours*, while the results of the regression analysis provided the researcher with a preliminary indication that *work design task characteristics* might be a strong predictor of engagement.

4.4 Partial Least Square Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM)

PLS-SEM is suitable for prediction-oriented research that assists researchers to focus on the clarification of endogenous variables in exploratory studies (Henseler et al., 2009). Specifically, PLS path modelling is used when a proposed model consists of many latent factors and in relation to which one expects a high degree of multicollinearity between the factors (Chin, 1998). The PLS path model consists of two elements: (1) the outer model, which displays the relationships between the latent variables and its indicator variables, and (2) an inner model, which displays the relationships between the latent variables (Hair et al., 2014a; Monecke & Leish, 2012).

Based on the findings of the regression and redundancy analysis results, various PLS-SEM models were fitted. Thus, in the subsequent discussion, the following models are discussed: (1) the assessment criteria and estimates from the originally hypothesised model (six-variable model); (2) the assessment criteria and estimates from the two five-variable models – one model omitting *empowering leadership behaviours* and one omitting *task-oriented behaviours*. The purpose of fitting various models by removing latent constructs from the model was to assess the impact this has on the relationships between the exogenous latent variables and the endogenous latent variable.

4.4.1 Evaluation and interpretation of the six-variable outer model

The outer model evaluates the reliability and validity of the construct measures. The assessment of the outer model forms the basis of the assessment of the inner model relationships and ensures that the indicators or manifest variables sufficiently represent and accurately measure the respective latent variables (Hair et al., 2014b). To this end, the outer model estimates explain more about the relationship between the observed and latent variables. The following assessment criteria are discussed: (1) composite reliability, (2) convergent validity, and (3) discriminant validity.

Based on the questionable Cronbach's alpha of the work design scale ($\alpha = .61$), a decision was made to split the Work Design Competency latent variable into two independent latent variables, namely *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*. Thus, the six-variable model comprises five exogenous latent variables (*task-oriented behaviours*, *empowering leadership behaviours*, *social-emotional competency*, *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*), and one endogenous latent variable – *engagement*. Please see Figure 4.1 below for a path diagram representation of the six-variable model distinguishing between *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*.

Figure 4.1

Path Diagram of the Six-variable Model
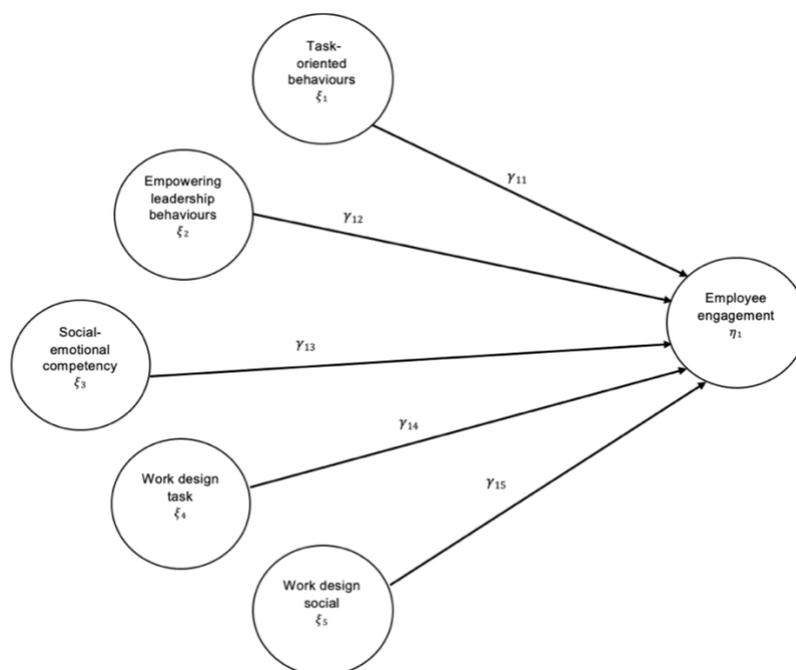
4.4.1.1 Composite reliability

Composite reliability is also a measure of internal consistency, but unlike Cronbach's alpha, the composite reliability calculation does not assume equal indicator loadings. Instead, each indicator's own individual reliability is taken into account, and indicators are prioritised accordingly (Hair et al., 2014a). Composite reliability should be above .708, but in exploratory research, .60 to .70 is also considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2014a).

In accordance with the Cronbach's alphas derived during item analysis, the composite reliability coefficients of the PLS measurement (outer) model corroborate that the scales and subscales have good internal consistency. The composite reliability values of .95 (*Engagement*), .97 (*Task-oriented Behaviours*), .93 *(Social-emotional Competency)*, .95 (*Empowering Leadership Behaviours*),.84 (*Work Design: Task Characteristics*), and .76 (*Work Design: Social Characteristics*) demonstrate that all six scales have high levels of internal reliability (i.e., composite reliability coefficients larger than .708).

4.4.1.2 Convergent validity

Convergent validity is determined by the extent to which the indicators of a scale share a large enough proportion of variance with the underlying construct. Convergent validity is determined by evaluating the average variance extracted (AVE) and the outer loadings of the outer model. According to Hair et al. (2014a), AVE is the degree to which the latent construct explains the variance of its indicators. Generally, an AVE value larger than .50 indicates that the construct on average explains more than 50% of variance in the indicators. If the AVE value is smaller than .50, then more chance or error variance is explained by the indicators than by the latent construct (Hair et al., 2014a). See Table 4.6 below for the AVE values for all scales.

Table 4.6

AVE Values for all Scales

Scale	AVE loading
Empowering leadership behaviours	.8
Engagement	.64
Social emotional competency	.41
Task oriented behaviours	.67
Work design task characteristics	.42
Work design social characteristics	.43

The AVE values of *Engagement* (.64), *Task-oriented Behaviours* (.67), and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* (.80) are well above the required minimum of .50. Thus, the scales of these three constructs have high levels of convergent validity, and the items accurately tap into the underlying latent construct. However, the AVE values of *Social-Emotional Competency* (.41), *Work Design: Task Characteristics* (.43) and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* (.42) are smaller than .50. One can argue that these scales might explain more error variance than variance accounted for by the latent constructs, although AVE is only marginally below .50. It is important to note that the AVE value for the composite Work Design scale was .33 before the construct was split into two distinct constructs, namely *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*. In other words, by not calculating a composite score for the Work Design Competency scale, and by splitting the Work Design scale into its two distinct subscales, there was an increase in the subscales' AVE values. Thus, the indicators of these scales as distinct constructs explain more variance in the latent construct than the one composite scale.

Table 4.7 below shows a more detailed breakdown between the individual indicator paths and the latent scale construct (i.e., the outer loadings are the path coefficients that display the magnitude and the direction of influence between the observed variable and the latent variable). The square of the outer loadings explains the proportion of variance (%) in the indicators, as explained by the latent construct. As a rule of thumb, it is good if outer loadings are greater than .708 and account for more than 50% of the variance in the latent scale construct (Hair et al., 2014a). However, one can also be less stringent when evaluating the acceptability of the size of the outer loadings. Outer loadings between .50 and .69 can also be regarded as acceptable, so long as loadings are not smaller than .50 and account for less than 25% of the variance in the latent construct (Taylor & Geldenhuys, 2019).

In addition to the magnitude of the outer loadings, one can also evaluate the difference between the bootstrap confidence interval's upper and lower limit values (with a probability of 95%). If a zero is present between the upper and lower limit values, then one should accept the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the observed and latent variables. In contrast, if there is no zero between the upper and lower limit values, then one can reject the null hypothesis, since the path is significant, which indicates a relationship between the observed and latent variable (Lane, n.d.).

The results in Table 4.7 show that there are seven items in the *Social-Emotional Competency* scale that have outer loadings smaller than .50. Two of those items have non-significant outer loadings that are exceptionally low, viz., .12 (p = .43) and -.07 (p = .63). By implication, this

means that the item, "My manager tends to back down when negotiating with other people", and the item, "My manager does not have any power over other people's feelings" (both reverse-coded items), do not sufficiently measure the underlying construct, social-emotional competency. These outer model estimates corroborate the item analysis results previously explained in paragraph 4.2.1.5, which showed total-item correlations of smaller than .4 for both these items.

In addition, there are two subscales of the *Work Design: Social Characteristics* scale that have outer loadings smaller than .50. Also, two of those subscales have non-significant outer loadings that are exceptionally low. The subscale, *Interaction Outside the Organisation*, has an outer loading of .24 (p = .31), and the subscale, *Perceived Interdependence,* has an outer loading of .36 (p = .07).

Also, there is one subscale of the *Work Design: Task Characteristics* scale, namely *Task Identity*, that has an outer loading smaller than .50. However, there seems to be a strong trend towards a positive linear relationship between the observed and latent variable, with no zero between the upper and lower bootstrap confidence interval (.37, p = .02).

In brief, most outer loadings of the indicator variables are acceptable (larger than .50) and statistically significant. However, as mentioned above, there are two items of the *Social-Emotional Competency Scale* and two subscales of the *Work Design: Social Characteristics scale* that indicate a non-existent or weak relationship between the observed and latent variables. Please refer to Table 4.7 for a more detailed view of the outer loadings and the upper and lower limit values of the bootstrap confidence interval.

Table 4.7

Outer Model's Outer Loadings

Observed variable	Latent variable	Outer loading	95% lower	95% upper	Significant
Leading by example	Empowering leadership behaviours	.84	.75	.91	yes
Participative decision-making	Empowering leadership behaviours	.87	.80	.91	yes
Coaching	Empowering leadership behaviours	.97	.95	.98	yes
Informing	Empowering leadership behaviours	.88	.80	.94	yes
Showing concern	Empowering leadership behaviours	.92	.88	.94	yes
Engagement 1	Engagement	.83	.74	.89	yes
Engagement 2	Engagement	.81	.72	.87	yes
Engagement 3	Engagement	.81	.73	.87	yes
Engagement 4	Engagement	.87	.83	.91	yes
Engagement 5	Engagement	.86	.81	.91	yes
Engagement 6	Engagement	.82	.72	.89	yes

Table 4.7 (continued)

Outer Model's Outer Loadings

Observed variable	Latent variable	Outer loading	95% lower	95% upper	Significant
Engagement 7	Engagement	.72	.58	.81	yes
Engagement 8	Engagement	.81	.74	.87	yes
Engagement 9	Engagement	.76	.63	.85	yes
Social-emotional competency 2	Social-emotional competency	.55	.33	.74	yes
Social-emotional competency 3 R	Social-emotional competency	.35	.09	.57	yes
Social-emotional competency 4 R	Social-emotional competency	.89	.79	.92	yes
Social-emotional competency 5	Social-emotional competency	.45	.12	.65	yes
Social-emotional competency 6 R	Social-emotional competency	.83	.68	.91	yes
Social-emotional competency 7	Social-emotional competency	.39	.18	.60	yes
Social-emotional competency 14	Social-emotional competency	.48	.26	.65	yes
Social-emotional competency 15	Social-emotional competency	.45	.20	.66	yes
Social-emotional competency 16 R	Social-emotional competency	.53	.26	.69	yes
Social-emotional competency 17 R	Social-emotional competency	.55	.23	.74	yes
Social-emotional competency 18	Social-emotional competency	.87	.74	.91	yes
Social-emotional competency 19 R	Social-emotional competency	.59	.31	.73	yes
Social-emotional competency 20	Social-emotional competency	.81	.74	.87	yes
Social-emotional competency 21 R	Social-emotional competency	.67	.38	.81	yes
Social-emotional competency 22	Social-emotional competency	.76	.61	.86	yes
Social-emotional competency 23	Social-emotional competency	.81	.65	.87	yes
Social-emotional competency 24	Social-emotional competency	.62	.46	.75	yes
Social-emotional competency 25 R	Social-emotional competency	.12	-.22	.39	no
Social-emotional competency 26 R	Social-emotional competency	-.07	-.36	.17	no
Social-emotional competency 27	Social-emotional competency	.75	.63	.84	yes
Social-emotional competency 28	Social-emotional competency	.85	.75	.90	yes
Social-emotional competency 29	Social-emotional competency	.78	.68	.85	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 1	Task-oriented behaviours	.83	.77	.88	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 2	Task-oriented behaviours	.75	.62	.84	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 3	Task-oriented behaviours	.76	.66	.85	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 4	Task-oriented behaviours	.85	.78	.90	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 5	Task-oriented behaviours	.86	.77	.91	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 6	Task-oriented behaviours	.72	.59	.82	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 7	Task-oriented behaviours	.81	.72	.88	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 8	Task-oriented behaviours	.85	.78	.90	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 9	Task-oriented behaviours	.90	.86	.94	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 10	Task-oriented behaviours	.88	.80	.92	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 11	Task-oriented behaviours	.83	.76	.89	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 12	Task-oriented behaviours	.86	.80	.91	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 13	Task-oriented behaviours	.83	.76	.89	yes
Task-oriented behaviours 14	Task-oriented behaviours	.74	.62	.81	yes
Work schedule autonomy	Work design task characteristics	.65	.34	.83	yes
Decision-making autonomy	Work design task characteristics	.66	.33	.84	yes
Work methods autonomy	Work design task characteristics	.61	.29	.81	yes
Task variety	Work design task characteristics	.62	.35	.77	yes
Task significance	Work design task characteristics	.60	.28	.76	yes
Task identity	Work design task characteristics	.48	.01	.62	yes

Table 4.7 (continued)

Outer Model's Outer Loadings

Observed variable	Latent variable	Outer loading	95% lower	95% upper	Significant
Feedback from the job	Work design task characteristics	.70	.37	.83	yes
Social support	Work design social characteristics	.67	.42	.81	yes
Initiated interdependence	Work design social characteristics	.51	.27	.69	yes
Perceived interdependence	Work design social characteristics	.24	-.34	.62	no
Interaction outside the organisation	Work design social characteristics	.36	-.10	.67	no
Feedback from others	Work design social characteristics	.69	.53	.80	yes

For the purposes of this study, the poorer items and subscales identified above were not removed. There are two reasons for not removing these problematic items and subscales: (1) the removal of these items cannot be theoretically justified by the researcher, since the content of the items and subscales seems to represent the latent construct, and (2) if one should remove these items and subscales, it would by default improve the results. The improved results will be a consequence of running the updated model on the same sample data. Thus, the results will become dependent on this particular dataset with its own unique peculiarities (M. Kidd, personal communication, July 25, 2020).

4.4.1.3 Discriminant validity

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which a construct in the model is truly distinct from other constructs. In other words, to establish discriminant validity is to determine that a construct is unique and captures phenomena distinct from other constructs (Hair et al., 2010). Traditionally, variance-based structural equation-modelling techniques, such as PLS, make use of the Fornell-Larker criterion and the examination of cross-loadings. However, Henseler et al. (2015) claim that a measure called the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio determines the discriminant validity between constructs more reliably than the above-mentioned techniques. Derived from the classical multitrait-multimethod (MTMM) matrix, the HTMT ratio is the mean of all the correlations of indicators across constructs measuring different phenomena, as well as the correlations of indicators within the same construct (Henseler et al., 2015).

The rule of thumb is that, if the indicators of two constructs have an HTMT value that is clearly smaller than 1, then the true correlation between the two constructs is most likely different, and indicative of discriminant validity. In contrast, an HTMT ratio greater than 1 indicates that the two constructs are not sufficiently distinct and lacks discriminant validity (Henseler et al., 2015). Also, the bootstrapping procedure allows for constructing confidence intervals for HTMT, and a confidence interval containing the number 1 implies that the null hypothesis (H_0:

HTMT $\geq$ 1) cannot be rejected and the differences between the true correlations are probably not significant (Henseler et al., 2015).

In Table 4.8 below, one can see that all HTMT values are smaller than 1. Also, there are no confidence intervals that contain the number 1, thus the differences in the true correlations between the constructs are significant, and this signifies that the constructs are distinct. The HTMT value between *Task-Oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* is .96, and by far supersedes the HTMT values between the other latent constructs, which range between .41 and .87. Although all relationships between the constructs in the model have HTMT values smaller than 1 and can be considered sufficiently distinct from one another, it should be noted that the HTMT ratio between *Task-Oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* is closer to 1. Thus, even though the true correlation between the two constructs is likely to be different, many of the indicators within these two constructs and across the indicators of the other constructs correlate highly with one another. These findings correspond to the findings from the regression and redundancy analyses, which indicate severe collinearity between these two constructs (refer to paragraph 4.4).

Table 4.8

Discriminant Validity – HTMT Ratios

Latent constructs	HTMT	95% lower	95% upper	Discriminate
Engagement → Empowering leadership behaviours	.54	.40	.68	yes
Social emotional competency → Empowering leadership	.87	.79	.93	yes
Social emotional competency → Engagement	.48	.34	.61	yes
Task-oriented behaviours → Empowering leadership	.96	.93	.98	yes
Task-oriented behaviours → Engagement	.44	.27	.62	yes
Task-oriented behaviours → Social emotional competency	.82	.69	.89	yes
Work design social → Empowering leadership	.58	.44	.7	yes
Work design social → Engagement	.41	.23	.54	yes
Work design social → Social emotional competency	.60	.45	.68	yes
Work design social → Task-oriented behaviours	.60	.47	.71	yes
Work design task → Empowering leadership	.69	.54	.83	yes
Work design task → Engagement	.56	.40	.70	yes
Work design task → Social emotional competency	.67	.50	.80	yes
Work design task → Task-oriented behaviours	.55	.39	.73	yes
Work design task → Work design social	.73	.46	.85	yes

4.4.2 Evaluation and interpretation of the six-variable structural model

In contrast to CB-SEM (which estimates parameters by minimising the difference between the observed and estimated covariance matrix), the PLS-SEM model does not have a goodness-of-fit statistic. Instead, the PLS-SEM model uses the sample data to obtain parameters that

best predict the endogenous latent variable (Hair et al., 2014b). To this end, the model's quality is based on its ability to predict the endogenous constructs. The following assessment criteria are discussed: (1) coefficient of determination, (2) multicollinearity, and (3) the evaluation of the main effects.

4.4.2.1 Coefficient of determination

The coefficient of determination is a measure of the proportion of an endogenous construct's variance that is explained by its predictor constructs to determine prediction accuracy (Hair et al., 2014b). According to Hair et al. (2014a), PLS-SEM aims at maximising the r-square values of the endogenous latent variable in the path model. Generally, r-square values that are smaller than .25 are considered weak, r-square values between .25 and .50 are considered satisfactory, r-square values between .50 and .75 are considered moderate, and r-square values greater than .75 are considered substantial (Hair et al., 2014a). Thus, one can argue that the objective is to achieve high r-square values. However, it should be noted that the exact r-square value depends on the particular model and field of study.

The r-square value for the six-variable model is .34. This means that *Task-oriented behaviours*, *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, *Social-Emotional Competency*, *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* explain 34% of variance in the dependent variable, *Engagement*. The independent variables account for a sufficient amount of variance in the dependent variable, as the predictive accuracy of Industrial Psychology models usually varies between .2 and .4 (Frost, n.d.; M. Kidd, personal communication, July 15, 2020).

4.4.2.2 Multicollinearity

When two latent constructs are highly correlated, it can be an indication of collinearity. Collinearity implies that two constructs are so similar that they might encapsulate the same theoretical meaning.

As seen in paragraph 4.4, Regression and Redundancy Analysis, the variance inflation factor (VIF) values show that two of the exogenous latent variables, *Task-Oriented* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, have VIF values greater than 5 (Hair et al., 2014a). This means that these two constructs explain more than 80% of the variance in each other. Therefore, the inner model collinearity results corroborate the regression analysis findings that *Task-Oriented Behaviours* (VIF = 6.79) and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* (VIF = 8.28) are severely

collinearly related to each other, and one of these variables can be considered for removal (see Table 4.9 below).

Table 4.9

Multicollinearity Analysis of the Six-variable Model

Exogenous latent variables	Variance inflation factor (VIF)
Empowering leadership behaviours	8.28
Social-emotional competency	3.96
Task-oriented behaviours	6.79
Work design social characteristics	1.75
Work design task characteristics	1.82

4.4.2.3 Evaluation of the main effects

The last criterion that has to be assessed as part of the inner model is if there is a positive linear relationship between the hypothesised paths in the model. In other words, one would like to establish whether there are significant relationships between the underlying latent constructs, as hypothesised. Path coefficients determine the strength and direction of the hypothesised relationships between the latent variables, and the bootstrap confidence intervals are used to determine the significance of the path coefficients (Hair et al., 2014a).

PLS-SEM is a non-parametric data analysis technique that does not rely on distributional assumptions. Instead, bootstrapping is used as a procedure that draws a large number of subsamples from the original data and estimates models for each subsample (Hair et al., 2014a). Bootstrap confidence intervals are created during this process. A confidence interval provides the upper and lower limits of values within which the true population parameter will fall. Thus, if the number zero falls within the upper and lower confidence intervals, then it can be argued that it is probable that the true population parameter between the two constructs can be zero. In other words, if the 95% confidence interval contains a zero, one cannot conclude that the true population parameter is statistically significant from zero. To this end, the null hypothesis that states the estimate to be significantly different from zero cannot be rejected (p-value > .05) (Lane, n.d.). Conversely, if the upper and lower bootstrap confidence intervals do not contain a zero, one can conclude that it is not probable for zero to be the true population parameter and the null hypothesis can be rejected, which means that the estimate is statistically significant (p-value ≤ .05).

Table 4.7 below displays the hypothesised paths, the corresponding path coefficients, the 95% upper and lower bootstrap confidence intervals, and the p-value. One can see that the only

significant path that does not contain a zero within the upper and lower confidence interval, with a corresponding p-value of $\leq$ .05, is the relationship between *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Employee Engagement*.

Table 4.10

Path Coefficients: Six-variable Model

Hypothesised paths	Path coefficient	95% lower confidence interval	95% upper confidence interval	Significant	p-value
Empowering leadership → Engagement	.34	-.26	.74	no	.16
Social-emotional competency → Engagement	.22	-.06	.66	no	.22
Task-oriented behaviours → Engagement	-.20	-.77	.35	no	.44
Work design social → Engagement	.09	-.15	.36	no	.01
Work design task → Engagement	.20	.01	.49	yes	.01

However, as mentioned previously, one has to take into consideration the severe degree of collinearity between *Task-Oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* detected when conducting the regression and redundancy analysis, and corroborated and confirmed by the multicollinearity results of the exogenous latent variables as an inner-model assessment criterion. The discussion in paragraph 4.5.3 evaluates and interprets alternative PLS models in which variables in the model were omitted to solve for the severity of collinearity between *Task-Oriented* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*.

4.4.2.4 Graphical representation of the six-variable model

The graphical representation of the six-variable structural model below (Figure 4.2) shows the five exogenous latent variables (including the distinction between *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* as two independent constructs) and the one endogenous latent variable. In addition, the path coefficients (and p-values in brackets) are visible for the various hypothesised paths between the latent constructs.

Figure 4.2

Graphical Representation of the Six-variable Inner Model
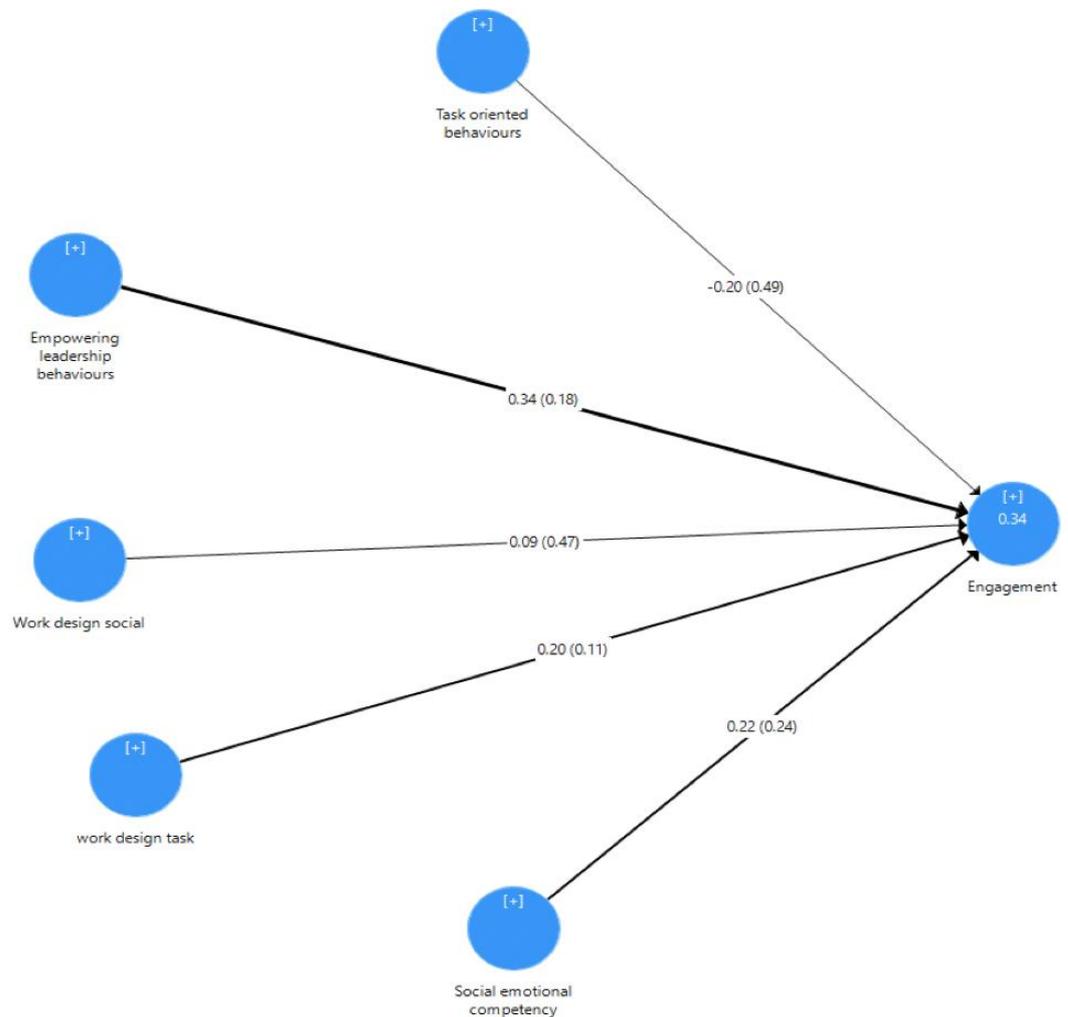
4.4.3 Evaluation and interpretation of the five-variable measurement models

According to Hair et al. (2014a), one can solve for the severity of collinearity between *Task-Oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* by removing variables, merging variables into a single index, or creating higher-order constructs. To this end, two additional **five-variable** PLS-SEM models were run in which variables in the model were omitted to solve for collinearity between *Task-Oriented* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*.

In the first model, *Task-Oriented Behaviours* was omitted from the model. Thus, it is hypothesised that the exogenous latent variables, viz., *Empowering Leadership Behaviours*, *Social-Emotional Competency*, *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social*

Characteristics, are positively linearly related to the endogenous latent variable, *Employee Engagement* (see Figure 4.3 below).

Figure 4.3

Path Diagram of the Five-variable Model (Including Empowering Leadership Behaviours)
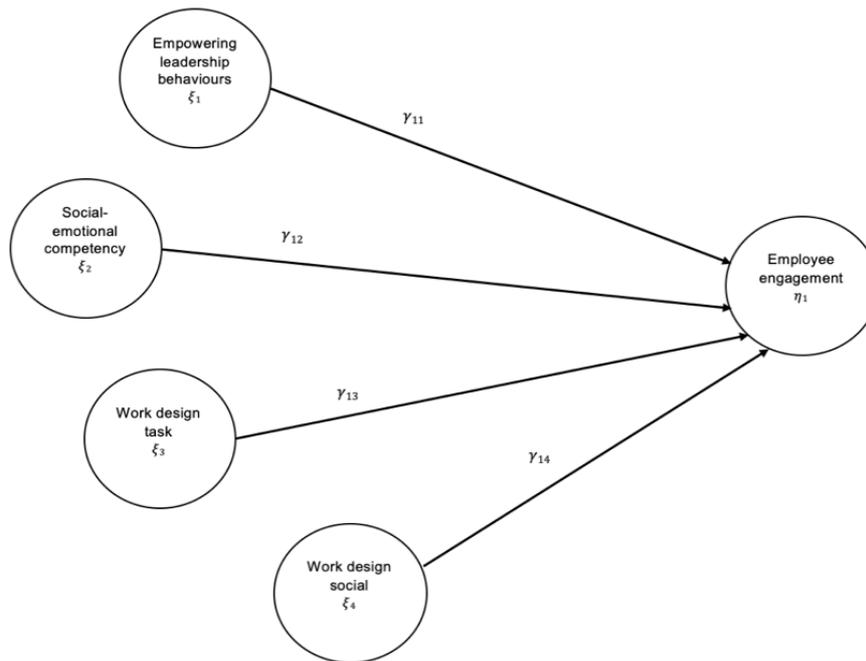
In the second model, *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was omitted from the model. Thus, it is hypothesised that the exogenous latent variables, viz., *Task-Oriented Behaviours*, *Social-Emotional Competency*, *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*, are positively linearly related to the endogenous latent variable, *Employee Engagement* (see Figure 4.4 below).

Figure 4.4

Path Diagram of the Five-variable Model (Including Task-oriented Behaviours)
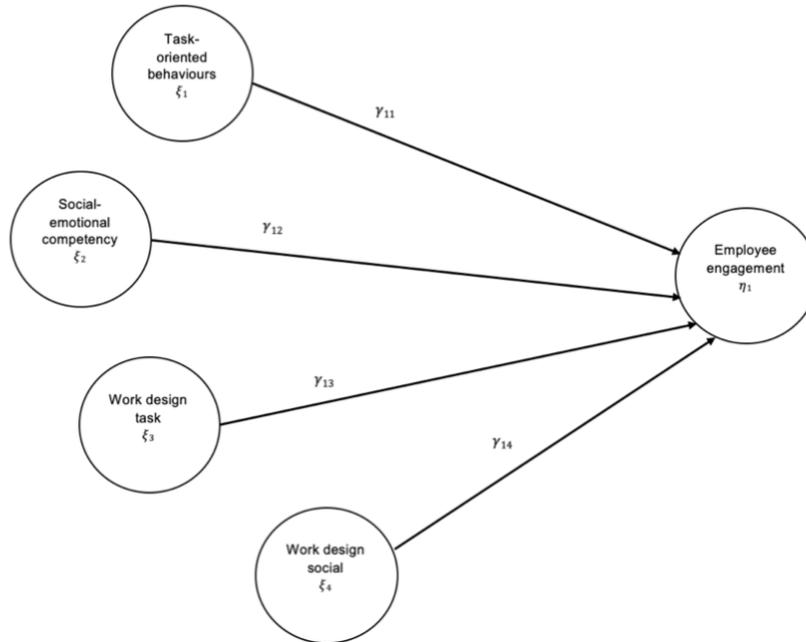
A comparison of the outer model results of these two additional models follow in the section below. Even though there were no noteworthy differences in the outer model output between the two alternative models, it is still discussed briefly.

4.4.3.1 Composite reliability

In both five-variable models, the composite reliability scores for all the scales remained the same, as determined by the six-variable outer model (see discussion of composite reliability in paragraph 4.5.1.1). The composite reliability coefficients of the PLS measurement (outer) model corroborate the item-analysis results, namely that the scales and subscales have good to excellent internal consistency of larger than .708. The composite reliability values ranged between .76 and .95 for all scales.

4.4.3.2 Convergent validity

In both five-variable models, the AVE values for all the scales remained the same as determined by the six-variable outer model (see discussion of convergent validity in paragraph 4.5.1.2). The AVE values for *Engagement* (.64), *Task-Oriented Behaviours* (.67), and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* (.80) are well above the required minimum of .50. Thus,

the scales of these three constructs have high levels of convergent validity, and more than 50% of variance in the items is accounted for by the construct. However, the AVE values of *Social-Emotional Competency* (.41), *Work Design: Task Characteristics* (.43) and *Work Design: Social Characteristics* (.42) are smaller than .50, although the AVE is only marginally below .50.

Similarly to the six-variable outer model estimates, most outer loadings of the indicator variables for both five-variable models are acceptable (larger than .50) and statistically significant. However, as mentioned in paragraph 4.5.1.2, there are two items of the *Social-Emotional Competency* scale and two subscales of the *Work Design: Social Characteristics* scale that indicate a non-existent or weak relationship between the observed and latent variables. These are the same problematic items and subscales encountered in the six-variable model output.

4.4.3.3 Discriminant validity

In both five-variable models, all HTMT values are smaller than 1. Also, there are no confidence intervals that contain the number 1, thus the differences in the true correlations between the constructs are significant and the constructs are sufficiently distinct, which provides evidence of discriminant validity.

4.4.4 Evaluation and interpretation of the five-variable structural models

A comparison of the inner model results of these two additional models follow in the section below. In contrast to the outer model output, which showed no noteworthy differences between the two models, there are significant differences between the two five-variable model estimates. Specifically, there are differences in the number of statistically significant path coefficients between the different models.

4.4.4.1 Coefficient of determination

In the first five-variable outer model, in which *Task-Oriented Behaviours* were removed and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was included, the independent variables account for 34% of variance in the dependent variable (R-square = .34).

In the second five-variable outer model, in which *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was removed and *Task-Oriented Behaviours* was included, the independent variables account for 33% of variance in the dependent variable (R-square = .33).

4.4.4.2 Multicollinearity

In contrast to the output of the six-variable multicollinearity model, the collinearity issue between *Task-Oriented Behaviours* and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was solved by fitting two separate models from which these latent variables were removed one at a time. To this end, the inner model collinearity results for the two five-variable models respectively have VIF values smaller than .5. This means there are no longer any variables in either one of the models that share an unhealthy amount of variance, and that all exogenous latent constructs are theoretically distinct from one another. See Table 4.11 for a comparison of the VIF values of the collinearity results for the two five-variable models.

Table 4.11

Multicollinearity Results for the Two Five-variable Models

Construct	First five-variable model (VIF)	Second five-variable model (VIF)
Empowering leadership behaviours	3.963	
Social-emotional competency	3.719	3.607
Task-oriented behaviours		3.252
Work design social characteristics	1.717	1.751
Work design task characteristics	1.653	1.617

4.4.4.3 Evaluation of the main effects

The most significant differences between the three models were evident when examining the main effects. In other words, there are differences in the number of significant relationships between the latent variables in the three structural models.

In the six-variable model, one can see that the only significant path that does not contain a zero within the upper and lower confidence interval, with a corresponding p-value $\leq$ .05, is the relationship between *Work Design Task Characteristics* and *Employee Engagement*.

Similarly to the six-variable model, in the first five-variable inner model from which *Task-Oriented Behaviours* was removed and *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was included one can see that the only significant path that does not contain a zero within the upper and lower confidence interval is the relationship between *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Employee Engagement*. All other hypothesised paths between the latent constructs were found to be non-significant.

However, in the second five-variable outer model from which *Empowering Leadership Behaviours* was removed and *Task-Oriented Behaviours* was included, there were two hypothesised paths that were related significantly: there is a positive linear relationship between *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Employee Engagement*, as well as between *Social-Emotional Competency* and *Employee Engagement*. Please refer to Table 4.12 below for a detailed comparison of the main effects between the three models.

Table 4.12

Differences in Main Effects Between all Models

Model	Hypothesised path between exogenous variable and engagement	Path coefficient	95% lower	95% upper	Significant
Six-variable model	Empowering leadership behaviours → Engagement	.34	-.26	.74	no
	Social-emotional competency → Engagement	.22	-.06	.66	no
	Task behaviours → Engagement	-.20	-.77	.35	no
	Work design social characteristics → Engagement	.09	-.15	.36	no
	Work design task characteristics → Engagement	.20	.01	.49	yes
Five-variable model (empowering leadership)	Empowering leadership behaviours → Engagement	.18	-.24	.48	no
	Social-emotional competency → Engagement	.18	-.08	.54	no
	Work design social characteristics → Engagement	.08	-.14	.33	no
	Work design task characteristics → Engagement	.23	.03	.48	yes
Five-variable model (task-oriented)	Social-emotional competency → Engagement	.29	.01	.70	yes
	Task behaviours → Engagement	.03	-.39	.32	no
	Work design social characteristics → Engagement	.10	-.14	.34	no
	Work design task characteristics → Engagement	.25	.06	.50	yes

4.4.5 Interpretation of the main effects across all three models

The following discussion briefly interprets the implications of the main effects across all three models according to the research hypotheses.

Hypothesis 1: *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours will be positively related to employee engagement.*

The hypothesised positive relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement was established as non-significant in both PLS path models in which it was included as a predictor. The path coefficient was -.02 for the six-variable model and .03 for five-variable model, with zero falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for both. It appears that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours (i.e.,

behaviours related to the manager's technical job knowledge and expertise) does not have an impact on the level of employee engagement. These results do not support the hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is no relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2: *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviour is positively related to employee engagement.*

The hypothesised positive relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement was established as non-significant in both PLS path models in which it was included as a predictor. The path coefficient was -.34 for the six-variable model and .18 for the five-variable model, with zero falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval for both. It appears that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviours (i.e., participative decision-making, coaching, informing employees, and showing concern for the wellbeing of the team) does not have an impact on the level of employee engagement. These results do not support the hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is no relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 3: *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager displays social-emotional competencies is positively related to employee engagement.*

The hypothesised positive relationship between social-emotional competency and employee engagement was established as significant in the five-variable PLS path model (model including task-oriented behaviours). The path coefficient was .29 for the five-variable model, with zero not falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. However, one should take note that the relationship between social-emotional competency and employee engagement was established as non-significant in the six-variable PLS path model (the model evident of collinearity issues). Regardless, it appears that the degree to which the manager displays social-emotional competency (i.e., empathy, stress management, emotion management, adaptability, etc.) does have an impact on the level of employee engagement. These results support the hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is a positive linear relationship between social-emotional competency and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 4: *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs task and social-work characteristics (i.e., the way*

in which the manager displays work design competency) is positively related to employee engagement.

As explained in the previous sections, due to a questionable standardised Cronbach's alpha and a low AVE value (.33), it was evident that work design competency scale needs to be split into two independent distinct variables, namely *Work Design: Task Characteristics* and *Work Design: Social Characteristics*. In addition, this notion of calculating a composite score for the work design competency scale was also dismissed by the scale developers, who claimed that the scale measures four broad theoretically distinct components, of which two components (subscales) were used in this study (Humphrey & Morgenson, 2006). To this end, the above hypothesis was not tested, but rather culminated in the hypotheses 4(a) and 4(b).

Hypothesis 4(a): *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs task work characteristics is positively related to employee engagement.*

The hypothesised positive relationship between work design task characteristics and employee engagement was established as significant in all three models. The path coefficient was .2 for the six-variable model, with zero not falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. Also, the path coefficient was .23 for the five-variable model (including empowering leadership behaviours), with zero not falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. Moreover, the path coefficient was .25 for the five-variable model (including task-oriented behaviours), with zero not falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. Thus, it appears that the degree to which the manager display work design task characteristics (i.e., tasks that offer autonomy in work scheduling, autonomy in decision-making, task variety, task significance, feedback from the job, etc.) does have an impact on the level of employee engagement. These results support the hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is a positive linear relationship between work design task characteristics and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 4(b): *In the proposed employee engagement model it is hypothesised that the degree to which the manager designs social work characteristics is positively related to employee engagement.*

The hypothesised positive relationship between work design social characteristics and employee engagement was established as non-significant in all three models. The path coefficient was .09 for the six-variable model, with zero falling within the 95% bootstrap

confidence interval. Also, the path coefficient was .08 for the five-variable model (including empowering leadership behaviours), with zero falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. Finally, the path coefficient was .10 for the five-variable model (including task-oriented behaviours), with zero falling within the 95% bootstrap confidence interval. It therefore appears that the degree to which the manager displays work design social characteristics (i.e., designs tasks that offer social support, interdependence between roles, interaction with people outside the organisation, and feedback from others) does not have an impact on the level of employee engagement. These results are in contrast with the hypothesis and it can be concluded that there is no relationship between work design social characteristics and employee engagement.

4.4.5.1 Graphic representation of the best-quality five-variable model

Please refer to the graphic representation below (Figure 4.5) of the five-variable structural model from which *Empowering leadership behaviours* was removed and *Task-oriented behaviours* was included. The structural model path diagram displays the relationship between four exogenous latent variables – social-emotional competency, task-oriented behaviours, work design task characteristics and work design social characteristics – and the one endogenous latent variable (employee engagement). In addition, the path coefficients and p-values in brackets are visible for the various hypothesised paths between the latent constructs.

Figure 4.5

Graphical Representation of the Five-variable Model with Best Predictive Accuracy
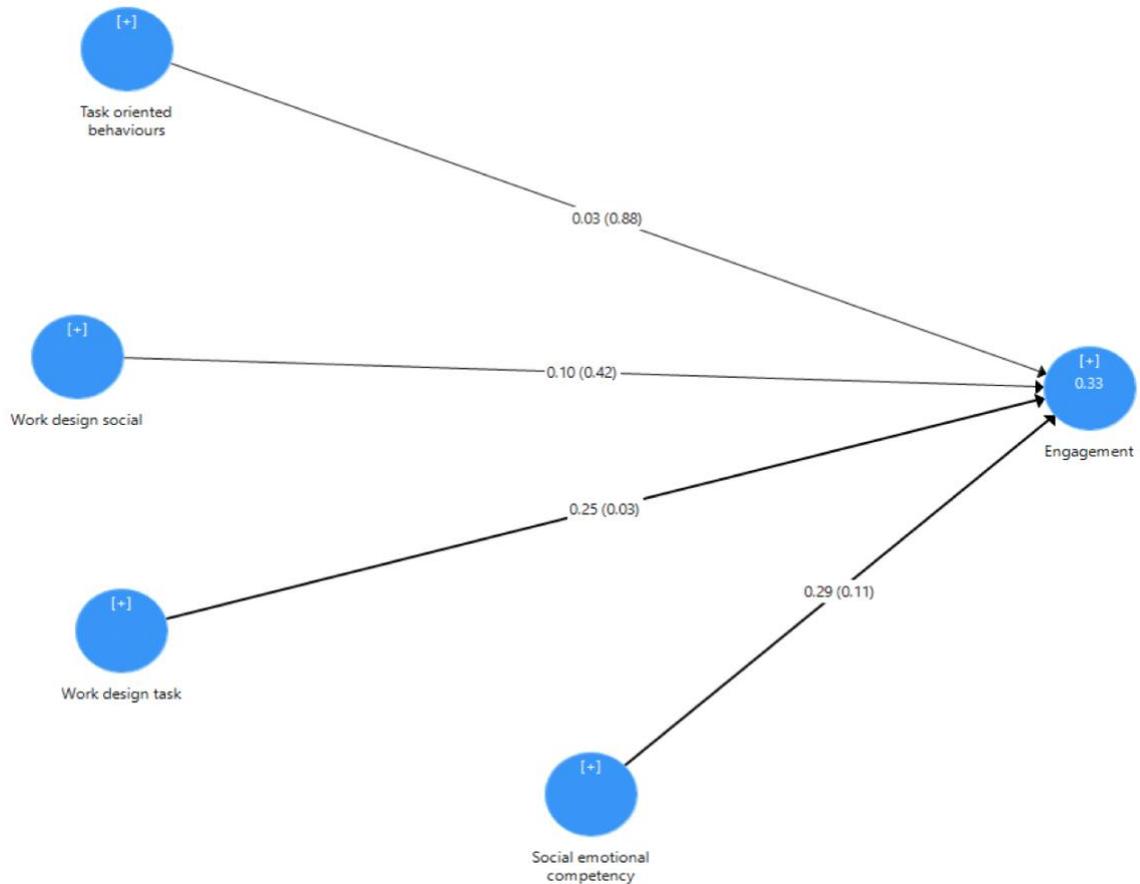
4.4.6 Summary of results

As part of the preliminary statistical analysis, the item analysis results show that all scales and subscales have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alphas greater than .7 – except for the *Work Design Competency Scale*. Upon further inspection, it became clear that the scale developers never intended a composite *Work Design Competency Scale* score, but that the four broad components of the *Work Design Competency Scale* were theoretically distinct. Consequently, the latent variable, *work design competency*, was split into two distinct exogenous latent variables, namely *work design: task characteristics* and *work design: social characteristics*. As a result, the standardised Cronbach's alpha for the two distinct scales was acceptable and larger than .7. Thus, all the subsequent statistical analysis procedures distinguished between *work design: task characteristics* and *work design: social characteristics* as two distinct manifest variables and two distinct latent variables, where applicable.

The intercorrelation matrix showed an extraordinarily high correlation between *task-oriented behaviours* and *empowering leadership behaviours*, which may be an early indication of redundancy (r = .96). The regression and redundancy analysis output confirms that there is a possibility of severe collinearity between two variables. The VIF values of *task-oriented behaviours* and *empowering leadership behaviours* were greater than .5; this indicated that these variables accounted for more than 80% of the variance in each other. Thus, from the analyses it seems that *task-oriented behaviours* and *empowering leadership behaviours* may be theoretically similar.

In order to solve the severity of collinearity between *task-oriented* and *empowering leadership behaviours,* three different PLS-SEM models were run - a six-variable model that comprised all of the latent constructs, and two additional five-variable PLS-SEM models from which *task-oriented* and *empowering leadership behaviours* respectively were removed from the models. The outer model results indicated good composite reliability for all scales. In addition, the indicators of the respective scales explained a sufficiently large proportion of variance in the underlying constructs, although the AVE values for *work design: social characteristics*, *work design: task characteristics* and *social emotional competency* seemed to have AVE values marginally smaller than .5. All three PLS path models showed a significant relationship between *work design task characteristics* and *employee engagement*. In addition, a significant relationship was found between the degree to which the manager displays *social-emotional competency* and *employee engagement* once empowering leadership behaviours was removed from the model. In conclusion, the best-quality PLS-SEM model that was able to predict the endogenous latent variable was the five-variable model in which *task-oriented behaviours* was included and *empowering leadership behaviours* was excluded.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To begin with, this chapter serve as an in-depth discussion of the results presented in Chapter Four. In addition, the researcher discusses the limitations of the study and makes recommendations for future research. Lastly, the practical implications for organisations are discussed.

5.1 Discussion of results

The purpose of this study was to answer the research-initiating question, "*What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?*" In order to answer this question, the researcher developed a reduced explanatory structural model that explains the variance in front-end employee engagement as a result of front-end managerial competencies, and the nature and strength of the relationships between front-end managerial competencies and customer-contact employee engagement. The path coefficients of the hypothesised relationships in the proposed structural model were interpreted, and the following section provides an explanation of the evaluation of the results.

Initially, the researcher formulated four hypotheses to be tested. The hypotheses were formulated on the four selected managerial competencies, and it was hypothesised that the degree to which the front-end hotel manager displays these competencies will have a positive, linear impact on the level of engagement of customer-contact employees. The four originally selected managerial competencies were *task-oriented behaviours*, *empowering leadership behaviours*, *social-emotional competency*, and *work design competency*. As discussed in Chapter Four (paragraph 4.4.1), it became evident that computing a composite score for *work design competency* was a theoretical misconception. The need to split *work design competency* into two distinct independent variables – *work design task characteristics* and *work design social characteristics* – became clear after examining the psychometric properties of the scale, as well as referring to the intention of the developers of the work design scale. The developers claimed that the questionnaire comprised four broad, theoretically distinct components, of which two were used as subscales in this study – *work design task* and *work design social characteristics* (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006). Consequently, the customer-contact employee engagement model grew from having only four exogenous latent variables to five exogenous latent variables and five hypotheses. The five exogenous latent variables

that represent the five selected managerial competencies are *task-oriented behaviours*, *empowering leadership behaviours*, *social-emotional competency*, *work design task characteristics* and *work design social characteristics,* and feature accordingly in the subsequent discussion.

The five hypotheses were tested by running three different PLS-SEM models with various combinations of variable inclusion and removal. The need to run three different models originated from the severity of collinearity between two variables in the model. As explained in paragraph 4.4.3, one can solve for the severity of collinearity between *task-oriented* and *empowering leadership behaviours* by removing variables from the model, and fit multiple models with different variations of variables included and removed (Hair et al., 2014a). Thus, three models were run: (1) a six-variable model that included both collinear variables, (2) a five-variable model that included *empowering leadership behaviours*, and (3) another five-variable model that included *task-oriented behaviours*. Importantly, the quality of a PLS-SEM model is assessed by its ability to predict the endogenous latent construct. To this end, the third five-variable model, which included *task-oriented behaviours* (and omitted *empowering leadership behaviours*) was the best-quality model that established significant relationships between two of the predictors and the endogenous construct (Hair et al., 2014b).

Hypothesis 1, which examined the relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement, was found to be non-significant in all three PLS models. This shows that task-oriented behaviours do not have a direct positive impact on employee engagement. In fact, the path coefficient results of the six-variable model seemed to indicate a trend towards a negative relationship between the two, which hints that the degree to which the manager displays core managerial tasks might even have a negative impact on employee engagement. In other words, the degree to which the manager maintains internal efficiency, monitors team performance, manages resource requirements, plans and schedules work activities, structures work processes and exhibits knowledge and adherence to labour legislative requirements might have a negative impact on the degree to which the employees approach their work with vigour, enthusiasm and energy.

Yukl (2013) distinguishes between three broad managerial competency categories, namely task-oriented, relations-oriented and change-oriented behaviours. Moreover, Yukl (2013) argues that the degree to which a manager displays behaviours pertaining to these three broad categories depends largely on the situation. Usually, first-line or lower-level managerial jobs require the manager to display more technical skill and job-related knowledge than interpersonal and conceptual skills. In other words, the more ambiguous the work

environment, the more it is required of managers to display interpersonal and conceptual skills. Thus, the trend towards a negative relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement might be the result of managerial behaviour that is focused only on technical skills and job-related knowledge and disregards the importance of interpersonal and conceptual skills.

The non-significant relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement is in contrast with previous studies. Gruman and Saks (2011) argue that the degree to which the manager displays task-oriented behaviours can lead to the fulfilment of the three psychological states of engagement defined by Kahn (1990) – psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability (see paragraph 2.3.1.1 for a detailed discussion). In addition, these findings are in contrast with a study done by Parke et al. (2018), who found a significant relationship between one of the core managerial tasks, planning and scheduling, and employee engagement. Along the same lines, a large quantitative study of over 6 000 participants found a positive significant relationship between task-oriented behaviours, such as planning and scheduling (as well as the structuring of work processes), job clarity (understanding expectations and objectives), career development and promotion, and supervisor support and recognition (Boone James et al., 2010). Thus, the non-significant relationship between task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement is in contrast with previous studies, since there are studies that confirm significant relationships between certain task-oriented behaviours and employee engagement.

Hypothesis 2, which examined the relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and engagement, was found to be non-significant. This shows that the degree to which the manager displays empowering leadership behaviours does not have a significant positive and direct impact on employee engagement. In other words, the degree to which the manager (a) leads by example, (b) allows subordinates to participate in decision-making, (c) assists subordinates to improve their growth areas, (d) informs subordinates about the impact of company decisions on their work objectives, and (c) cares about the well-being of subordinates does not have an impact on the degree to which the employees approach their work with vigour, enthusiasm and energy.

This finding is in contrast with findings from previous research studies. To begin with, a study conducted by Albrecht and Andreetta (2011) reported a significant relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement, while mediated by empowerment. In addition, another study found that empowering leadership positively affected psychological empowerment, which in turn influenced both intrinsic motivation and creative

process engagement (Zhang & Bartrol, 2010). Along the same lines, leadership empowerment behaviour contributed statistically significantly to employee engagement and low turnover intention, while employee engagement partially mediated the relationship between leadership empowerment behaviour and turnover intention (Van Schalkwyk et al., 2010). Lastly, the relationship between high-performance work practices and employee engagement was found to be mediated by empowering leadership behaviours and psychological empowerment (Huertas-Valdivia et al., 2018). Thus, the non-significant relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement is unexpected, and in contrast with most other studies that tested this relationship.

Hypothesis 3, which examined the relationship between social-emotional competency and engagement, was found to be significant. This shows that the degree to which the manager displays social-emotional competency will have a significant positive and direct impact on employee engagement. In other words, the degree to which the manager is capable of: (a) controlling his/her emotions and effectively managing stress, (b) displaying empathy, (c) being flexible and willing to adapt, (d) being socially aware, (e) being capable of having fulfilling personal relationships, and (f) being self-motivated and optimistic has an impact on the degree to which the employees approach their work with vigour, enthusiasm and energy.

The positive relationship between social-emotional competency and employee engagement confirmed the findings of previous research studies. To begin with, one study found that emotional intelligence is significantly related to employee engagement. Specifically, the degree to which the manager displays self-management, self-awareness, social awareness and social management was found to have a positive impact on employee engagement (Mwangi, 2011). A study conducted by Quang et al. (2015) found that five emotional intelligence competencies, viz., self-motivation, self-esteem, self-management, emotional literacy, and interpersonal relation, had statistically positive effects on employee engagement. In addition, the researchers found that these five competencies could account for 79% of employee engagement, thus establishing that the degree to which a manager displays social-emotional competencies has a strong positive impact on employee engagement. Importantly, Cherniss (2010) claims that the impact of social-emotional competencies on performance outcomes is greater when the job involves a lot of social interaction. Therefore, due to the characteristics of the work environment in hotel organisations (teamwork, the high frequency of customer contact, and job stress associated with emotional labour), the impact of emotionally intelligent managers is even greater on performance outcomes.

Hypothesis 4a, found that the relationship between work design task characteristics and engagement was significant. This shows that the degree to which the manager designs task characteristics will have a significant positive and direct impact on employee engagement. In other words, the degree to which the manager designs work in such a way that it allows the subordinate autonomy to schedule their own work, make their own decisions and select their own work methods, provides the subordinate with a variety of tasks, allows the subordinate to complete an entire piece of work from beginning to end, and ensures that the significance of the job is realised has an impact on the degree to which the employees approach their work with vigour, enthusiasm and energy.

The positive relationship between work design task characteristics and employee engagement confirmed findings from previous research studies. For instance, Patrick and Bhat (2014) found a positive relationship between work resources, such as autonomy and support, and Kahn's (1990) three psychological states of engagement (viz., psychological meaningfulness, psychological safety, and psychological availability). In addition, task interdependence (which is a social work characteristic) and task autonomy (both of these task and social characteristics are subscales in this present study) were found to be significantly related to employee engagement, mediated by role ambiguity and information communication technology (Lee et al., 2017). Moreover, significant relationships were established between task variety, task identity, task significance, autonomy, and feedback (George et al., 2020). Therefore, the relationship between work task characteristics and engagement was as expected.

Hypothesis 5a, which examined the relationship between work design social characteristics and engagement, was found to be non-significant. By implication, this means that the degree to which the manager designs social work characteristics does not have a significant positive and direct impact on employee engagement. In other words, the degree to which the manager designs work in such way that it (a) provides the opportunity for social support from others, (b) offers opportunities to the subordinate to work with others to complete a task by creating interdependence between roles, (c) provides an opportunity for subordinates to be in contact with clients, and (d) offers an opportunity to receive feedback from others does not have an impact on the degree to which the employee approaches his/her work with vigour, enthusiasm and energy.

Social job characteristics can be considered as structural features that influence performance outcomes and are very prominent in today's world of work (Oldham & Hackman, 2010). Thus, the fact that it seems as if social work characteristics do not have an impact on employee engagement is in contrast with previous studies. To begin with, co-worker relations, supervisor

support (Othman & Nasurdin, 2012), and organisational support were found to be moderately positively related to employee engagement. However, the relationship between co-worker relations and employee engagement was mediated by psychological availability, thus emphasising the important role of psychological availability as a mediator (Rothmann & Welsh, 2013). In addition, transformational leadership indirectly affects employee engagement through daily social support (Breevaart et al., 2014). Moreover, receiving feedback – a Work Design: Social Characteristic – has been proven to lead to higher safety culture domain scores and employee engagement (Sexton et al., 2018). Along the same lines, another study found a positive relationship between supervisory feedback and employee engagement, while higher levels of employee engagement had an impact on service employee performance (Menguc et al., 2013). Interestingly, Bakker and Xanthopoulou (2009) established that a higher frequency of communication (interaction) between worker dyads leads to the contagion effect of engagement (particularly vigour); in other words, if work partners interacted more with each other than usual on a daily basis, the manifested vigour of the one partner had an indirect, positive effect on the other partner's performance. To this end, the findings of this study are surprising and in contrast with previous research.

5.2 Limitations of the study and recommendations for future research

The first limitation to address is the severe collinearity between *task-oriented* and *empowering leadership behaviours*. In order to find possible explanations for the severity of collinearity between the two constructs, the researcher reconsidered the operationalisation of the constructs, as well as the nomological network these two variables find themselves in, to determine the possible shared theoretical relatedness with other constructs. The following discussion explores both these possible avenues as an explanation for the severity of collinearity between *task-oriented* and *empowering leadership behaviours*.

The measure to assess task-oriented behaviours is a self-developed measure and taps specifically into core managerial tasks, such as maintaining internal efficiency, monitoring team performance, managing resource requirements (i.e., controlling financial resources, human resources, equipment and technology), planning and scheduling work activities and structuring work processes, as well as knowledge and adherence to legislative or collective agreements (refer to paragraph 3.6.2.1 for more detail). The standardised Empowering Leadership Questionnaire (ELQ) was used to measure empowering leadership behaviours. The questionnaire (ELQ) was originally developed to assesses effective team leadership in empowered environments and measures empowering leadership behaviours along five dimensions, namely (1) leading by example, (2) participative decision-making, (3) coaching,

(4) informing, and (5) showing concern/interacting with the team (see paragraph 3.6.2.2 for more detail) (Arnold et al., 2000).

The ELQ is a reflective measure that comprised many items that overlap greatly in terms of meaning and content. Thus, in the interest of managing the number of items and survey length in this study, 21 items that have a strong content-based resemblance with other items were removed; i.e., the items of the ELQ were reduced from 38 items to 17, but the five dimensions remained intact. After careful reconsideration of the possible theoretical overlap between the items that could cause the severity of multicollinearity between the two constructs, the researcher came to the following conclusions: (1) there is a great overlap between items belonging to the coaching dimension of the ELQ questionnaire and items from the task-oriented questionnaire (this is confirmed by the large intercorrelation between task-oriented behaviours and the coaching subscale, $r = .88$), and (2) there also seems to be an overlap between some items of the informing dimension of the ELQ and items from the task-oriented behavioural scale. For example, the item "*My manager closely observes the internal operations of the team to assess team performance*", and "*My manager suggests ways to improve my work group's performance*", both tap into the underlying construct, namely performance management. Table 5.1 below illustrates the overlap between items of the two measures.

Table 5.1

Potential Theoretical Overlap between ELQ and Task-oriented Behavioural Scale Items

Task-oriented behavioural scale items	Empowering leadership questionnaire items
My manager ensures that I understand what the objectives and priorities are	My manager explains the implications of company goals for my work group
	My manager explains rules and expectations to my work group
My manager sets service standards and performance goals	My manager helps my work group see areas in which we need more training
My manager closely observes the internal operations of the team to assess team performance	My manager suggests ways to improve my work group's performance
My manager empowers our team to resolve customer complaints	My manager encourages work group members to solve problems together
My manager provides us with guidance and support to handle difficult customer problems	My manager supports my work group efforts

Note: Adapted from "The empowering leadership questionnaire: The construction and validation of a new scale for measuring leader behaviours," J. A. Arnold, S. Arad, J. A. Rhoades, & F. Drasgow, 2000, p. 87. Copyright 2000 by Wiley Online Library, Inc.

In addition to the above, one can also argue that the manner in which the manager monitors team performance, provides for necessary resource requirements to complete tasks, plans

and schedules work activities, as well as structures work processes, can be empowering to subordinates. In other words, the manner in which the manager displays *task-oriented behaviours* can be perceived by subordinates as supportive and encouraging, and can empower employees to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own role (Altınkurt et al., 2016). Thus, the degree to which the manager displays *task-oriented behaviours* can empower subordinates in the same way that *empowering leadership behaviours* can empower subordinates. In fact, the degree to which the manager displays *empowering leadership behaviours* by including subordinates in decision-making processes, coaching and informing subordinates, and by interacting with the team, can empower subordinates to make their own decisions and take responsibility for their own role.

At this stage, it might be good to differentiate between psychological empowerment and structural empowerment. Psychological empowerment can be elaborated on as intrinsic task motivation and is characterised by four cognitive dimensions that explain why one feels empowerment (the four cognitive dimensions are meaning, competence, self-determination and impact) (Stander & Rothman, 2010). Stander and Rothman (2010) found that the relationship between empowering leadership and engagement is mediated by psychological empowerment. (For a more detailed discussion, see paragraph 2.4.1.1.)

Structural empowerment refers to an individual's power related to their position in the organisation. Empowerment can either result from the nature of one's job and other organisational processes (formal power), or it can result from one's network of sponsors, peers, and subordinates (informal power) (Knol & Van Linge, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2001). Importantly, both forms of empowerment (formal and informal) facilitate access to four empowerment structures: (1) *opportunities* to learn and grow (self-determination), (2) *information* about technical job knowledge and expertise needed to perform one's job effectively, (3) *support* and feedback from leaders, peers and subordinates, and (4) access to *resources*, such as equipment and tools (Knol & Van Linge, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2001). Thus, according to the above definition of structural empowerment and the explanation of the four empowerment structures, one can argue that the degree to which the manager displays *task-oriented behaviours* can have an impact on the subordinates' perception of structural empowerment. In other words, one can argue that the manner in which the manager is monitoring team performance, providing the necessary resource requirements to complete tasks, planning and scheduling work activities, as well as structuring work processes, can have an impact on the subordinates' perceptions of structural empowerment. Consequently, by displaying task-oriented behaviours, the manager might inadvertently be addressing the structural dimensions of empowerment.

Interestingly, some studies reported a significant relationship between structural empowerment and psychological empowerment. In addition, both structural and psychological empowerment are predictors of positive work behaviour, such as organisational citizenship behaviour, job satisfaction, and organisational commitment. Moreover, the influence of positive work behaviour and structural empowerment were found to be mediated by psychological empowerment (Ahadi & Suandi, 2014; Knol & Van Linge, 2008; O'Brien, 2010; Priyadharshany & Jency, 2015). Also, the relationship between structural empowerment and burnout was found to be mediated by psychological empowerment (Meng et al., 2016). In addition, the relationship between transformational leadership and employee engagement was found to be mediated by structural empowerment (García-Sierra & Fernández-Castro, 2018), while the perceptions of structural and psychological empowerment of nurses were found to be related to their engagement with their unit (DiNapoli et al., 2016). Thus, the results of these studies lead to a broader understanding of the empowerment process, the relationship between structural and psychological empowerment, and their impact on positive work behaviours such as engagement.

The researcher concludes that empowering leadership behaviours and task-oriented behaviours might very well be measuring the same underlying construct, which is responsible for the severity of collinearity between these two constructs. Both constructs represent leadership behaviours that can be related to the perceptions of structural or psychological empowerment (or both). Moreover, the relationship between these two variables and employee engagement is either mediated/moderated by structural or psychological empowerment. Thus, the researcher recommends that future studies combine empowering leadership and task-oriented behaviours into one variable and assess the possible moderating impact of structural and psychological empowerment in the relationship between leadership behaviours and employee engagement.

The second limitation of the study is the structure of the work design competency scale. As discussed in paragraph 4.1.1.5, the developers of the work design questionnaire, Morgeson and Humphrey (2006), demonstrated that the factor structure with best model fit was obtained by fitting a model with the 21 underlying factors (the questionnaire comprises four broad theoretically distinct components and 21 underlying factors). In other words, attempting to calculate a composite score for work design competency was a theoretical misconception. Although calculating a composite score for two of the four broad components, namely *work design: task characteristics* and *work design: social characteristics,* improved the convergent validity of the scale, one would ideally like to assess a model in which the 12 diagnostic subscales are fitted as exogenous latent variables in their own right. Therefore, in addition to

the data analysis procedures and results discussed in Chapter Four, the statistician also conducted a best subsets regression analysis. The only purpose of the additional analyses was to determine the predictive accuracy of the various subscales as independent variables and the dependent variable, engagement. Thus, the purpose was to further differentiate between the subscales as independent variables – something that was not possible when fitting the PLS-SEM model, due to the number of predictors given the current sample size ($n = 106$). The best subsets regression analysis was used to run variations of multiple regression models with different sets of variables. The number of variables included in each model depends on the number of variables that indicate the best cross-validation (CV) r-square value given the current sample size. The purpose of performing the best subsets regression analysis was to make recommendations for future research.

The best subsets multiple regression analysis revealed the impact of the following subscales as independent variables on employee engagement. In Table 5.2 below, the subscales of the *work design: task characteristics* and *work design: social characteristics* scales are ranked according to the number of times they appeared as a variable in the top 20 best-fitting regression models that explained the most variance in employee engagement:

Table 5.2

Work Design Task and Social Characteristics Subscales as Variables in Best Subsets Regression Models

Independent variables	Number of times in best 20 models
Work design social characteristics: *initiated interdependence*	18
Work design task characteristics: *work-scheduling autonomy*	5
Work design task characteristics: *task variety*	4
Work design task characteristics: *task significance*	4
Work design task characteristics: *decision-making autonomy*	2
Work design task characteristics: *work methods autonomy*	2
Work design task characteristics: *task identity*	2
Work design social characteristics: *perceived interdependence*	2
Work design social characteristics: *interaction outside the organisation*	1
Work design task characteristics: *feedback from the job*	0
Work design social characteristics*: social support*	0
Work design social characteristics: *feedback from others*	0

From Table 5.2 above, it is clear that *initiated interdependence* (the degree to which the job depends on others and others depend on it), *work scheduling autonomy* (the degree to which the job allows the employee to plan how to do the job), *task variety* (the degree to which the job allows the employee to perform a wide range of tasks), and *task significance* (the degree to which the job allows the employee to experience how the results from the job affect others)

are considered the best predictors of employee engagement. The researcher therefore recommends that future studies fit these subscales as exogenous latent variables.

The third limitation of the study was the small sample size (n = 106). It was difficult to obtain enough responses. If one could obtain a larger sample size, one could also consider the possibility of including more predictors in the PLS model, as explained above. In fact, smaller sample sizes usually have larger standard errors due to sampling error. Also, collinearity boosts the standard errors and thus reduces the ability to demonstrate that the path estimates are significantly different from zero (Hair et al., 2014a). Smaller sample sizes therefore are especially problematic if faced with the issue of collinearity. Moreover, the use of a non-probability sampling technique, such as convenience sampling, could affect the confidence in the data. Thus, the reader should be aware that the use of convenience sampling may constrain the representativeness of the sample and have an impact on the generalisability of the findings (i.e., caution should be applied when generalising the findings).

The fourth limitation was the use of only customer-contact employees as units of observation. It would be more ideal to make the manager the unit of analysis, as one could then aggregate the customer-contact employees' (i.e., the team's) scores to ascertain a composite rating for each manager on the various managerial competencies. In addition, if the manager was the unit of analysis, one could compare the managers' self-ratings on the four competencies with the other-report ratings of the customer-contact employees to obtain a more accurate and objective representation of the managers' standings on the four managerial competencies. Thus, the question remains, why did the researcher decide to select customer-contact employees/subordinates of managers as units of analysis? The reason for this decision was twofold. Firstly, if the managers were the units of analysis, then the study would require a much larger sample size to increase the statistical power of the subsequent statistical analysis. And secondly, the context and scope of a mini-master's thesis does not really provide for such an elaborate research design. However, it is recommended that future studies consider increasing the sample size and selecting the managers as units of analysis.

The fifth limitation is the vulnerability to common method bias. The customer-contact employees self-reported on their own level of employee engagement and on the degree to which their managers displayed the desired competencies, which made the study vulnerable to common method bias. Common method bias is one of the main sources of systematic measurement error and threatens the validity of inferences made (Podsakoff et al., 2003). To put it in another way, method variance can either inflate of deflate the observed relationships between constructs and lead to the misinterpretation of results. Importantly, common method

variance is attributable to the measurement method used in behavioural research, and not attributable to variance in the underlying constructs (Podsakoff et al., 2003). Thus, in terms of the expected results, the statistical strength between the managerial competencies and the outcome variable was not necessarily interpreted as an indication of the importance of that competency. In other words, each path coefficient (regardless of being significant or not) contributes to the covariance in the constellation of perceived variables explained by the model. Again, future researchers are invited to limit the impact of common method bias on study results by implementing a research design that collects responses from various sources, such as both managers and customer-contact employees.

In the current study, it was hypothesised that the way in which the manager displays the four managerial competencies is positively related to employee engagement. Importantly, as inferred from the literature review, one can also argue that employee engagement serves as a proxy for performance. Thus, one can hypothesise that the level of employee engagement is positively related to unit performance – specifically team effectiveness, namely productivity, service quality and customer retention in the hotel industry. In addition, one can also hypothesise that there may be a direct, positive relationship between the four managerial competencies and team effectiveness. To this end, it is recommended that future studies include a team performance index as a dependent variable in the model. Team performance was not added as a variable in this study, since the context and scope of the study did not allow the researcher to link individual customer-contact employee responses to the teams to which they belonged; i.e., the current design does not make provision to calculate composite team performance scores based on the perceived level of team performance by the manager, by individual team members or by members of the public (e.g., consumer feedback). Thus, a more optimal approach would be to test the relationships between the four managerial competencies, employee engagement, and team performance. The researcher believes future studies should consider the inclusion of team performance as a variable in the model, and the incorporation of objective performance data to supplement self-report performance data.

5.3 Practical implications for organisations

The results of this study have various practical implications for hotel organisations. One aspect that is a well-established fact and a confirmed result is that work design task characteristics have a positive impact on employee engagement. So, how can hotel organisations change/ redesign the task characteristics of customer-contact employees to be more motivating and engaging so that they lead to other performance outcomes, such as increased service quality, customer retention and overall team effectiveness? Typically, organisations implement job-

redesign interventions to adapt task characteristics on an organisational, team and individual level. However, there are some important considerations for practitioners to ensure that job-redesign initiatives yield the desired results.

As a first step, there are certain contextual factors (or antecedents) that have an effect on the effectiveness of job redesign, such as external- and internal-organisational factors, as well as individual factors. It is suggested that organisations conduct an analysis of the organisational context. Understanding the internal and external environment will enable the practitioner to holistically assess the feasibility and value of adapting certain task characteristics over others (Parker et al., 2001).

To begin with, some internal organisational factors that have an impact on work redesign interventions are managerial style, technology, the nature of the tasks, information systems, human resource practices, strategy, and organisational culture (Parker et al., 2001). External factors that have an impact on job redesign are the uncertainty of the external environment, such as the current volatile economic climate due to the Covid-19 pandemic, changing customer demands, the available technology, social and cultural norms, and the nature of the labour market. Lastly, individual factors, such as the degree to which the employee exhibits a proactive personality, exhibits self-efficacy beliefs, and has the propensity to trust (Parker et al., 2001), will have an impact on the effectiveness of work-redesign interventions. For example, a directive managerial style will impinge on the efforts made to redesign work so that employees can have more autonomy. Similarly, it will be more challenging for an employee to make decisions regarding their own role if they lack self-efficacy and do not trust their own judgement. Thus, it is important for the practitioner to consider contextual and individual factors before forging ahead with the implementation of job-redesign interventions.

As a second step, in order to determine which task characteristics to adapt, one could make use of a work design questionnaire as a diagnostic tool. One can use a tool such as the Job Diagnostic Survey (JDS), which was designed to (a) diagnose jobs considered for redesign, (b) identify job characteristics that are most in need of enrichment, and (c) assess the readiness of employees – their growth-need-strength – to determine how they will respond, and if they will benefit from the changes made to the job (Boonzaier et al., 2001; Buys et al., 2007).

The purpose of the redesign of task characteristics is to increase employee engagement and other performance outcomes. Thus, if the practitioner understands the mechanisms that link work characteristics to outcomes, the practitioner will be able to design effective work-redesign

interventions. For example, a mechanism that links work design characteristics to outcomes is quick response; this refers to giving employees the responsibility to do tasks otherwise performed by managers or other support staff (and is related to autonomy). In the context of hotel organisations, this can refer to encouraging customer-contact employees to resolve customer complaints themselves. For instance, a mechanism that drives positive work outcomes, such as decreased service recovery time and increased quality customer service, is the ability of the employee to use their tacit and local knowledge when addressing customer complaints. In addition, increased autonomy to solve customer complaints does not only provide for employees to use their existing knowledge, but also promotes knowledge creation and is seen as on-the-job training and development. Thus, enhanced autonomy leads to performance outcomes (such as increased team effectiveness and customer retention) through mechanisms such as the acquisition of new task knowledge, and the employee's integrated understanding of organisational processes and functions (Parker et al., 2001).

Finally, a third step in work redesign on an individual level is to allow employees to craft their own jobs. Job crafting can be defined as the freedom of employees to change the conditions of job tasks, the relational aspects regarding their jobs, and the meaning the job holds (Tims & Bakker, 2010). Some might argue that such freedom to craft one's own job is not always applicable to every job or industry. Interestingly, Tims and Bakker (2010) place job crafting as an individual-level work redesign intervention within the Job Demands Resource model (JD-R) (refer to paragraph 2.2.1.1 for a more detailed discussion of the JD-R model). The authors claim that employees should have the freedom to 'craft' the level of job demands and job resources to align them with their own abilities and preferences. Thus, an employee may increase the level of job resources available at work (such as participation in decision-making and task variety) or increase the level of job demands (such as increasing task complexity to make work more challenging and motivating), or decrease the level of job demands (such as emotionally demanding interactions with clients) (Tim & Bakker, 2010).

Being able to change the level of job demands and job resources (as part of job crafting) might address issues such as person-job misfit. For example, if there is a misfit between an employee's knowledge, skills and abilities, or a misfit between the needs and desires of an individual and what is offered by the job, then the increase and decrease of certain job resources and job demands might resolve the person-job misfit (Tim & Bakker, 2010). Needless to say, for job crafting to work, the organisation (and managers) have to grant employees the opportunity to make decisions regarding their own role (autonomy). In addition to autonomy, a precondition for successful job crafting is the ability of the employee to identify opportunities for change, to take action and to persevere, as well as the confidence in his/her

own abilities to take control of their job (Tim & Bakker, 2010). Take note that job crafting in the hotel industry would have to be implemented with careful consideration, since there is a high degree of interdependence between different roles and teams.

The finding that social-emotional competency has a positive impact on employee engagement is another result that holds practical value for organisations. There are two suggested interventions that spring to mind when considering the impact of the manager's level of emotional intelligence (or social-emotional competency) on employee engagement, which are to (1) select leaders or managers that exhibit emotional intelligence, and (2) to develop managers' social-emotional capacity by means of managerial training and development initiatives.

The Emotional-Social Competence Inventory (ESCI and the ESCI-U) is a multi-rater assessment designed by Boyatzis and Goleman (as cited in Boyatzis, 2009) based on three clusters of competencies that explain a large proportion of variance in leadership effectiveness (Goleman, 2004). The three competencies in the inventory were established to predict leadership effectiveness in many roles and industries (Boyatzis, 2009). To begin with, the first competency cluster is *Emotional Intelligence Competencies* and refers to self-awareness and self-management. The second cluster is *Social Intelligence Competencies* and refers to social awareness and relationship management, while the third cluster is *Cognitive Competencies* and refers to the degree to which the leader displays systems thinking and the recognition of patterns (Boyatzis, 2009).

Goleman (2004) explains that **self-awareness** entails a deep understanding of one's emotions, strengths and weaknesses, needs, drives and values, and should be the first step in leadership development programmes. **Self-regulation** is the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods. Goleman (2004) emphasises that the ability to regulate one's emotions enhances integrity in leadership and creates an environment of trustworthiness. In addition, **motivation** refers to the capacity to use one's own emotions to pursue goals and is associated with optimism and commitment to the organisation. The ability to understand emotions in others (**empathy**) also is associated with the degree to which the leader displays cross-cultural sensitivity and service to clients and customers. Empathy becomes especially important with the increased use of teams, the rapid pace of globalisation, and the growing need to retain talent. And finally, Goleman (2004) argues that **social skill** and proficiency in managing relationships and building networks are associated with effective change management, persuasiveness and expertise in building and leading teams (Goleman, 2004).

It therefore is highly recommended that hotel organisations make use of standardised measures, such as the ESCI, to obtain 360-degree performance feedback on leaders and managers. Managerial training and development needs therefore can be addressed based on the performance feedback received from the ESCI.

Even though *Empowering leadership behaviours* was omitted from the five-variable model that best predicted employee engagement, due to its collinearity with task-oriented behaviours, it does not mean that empowering leadership behaviours do not have an impact on employee engagement. As mentioned previously, there are various studies that have found a relationship between empowering leadership behaviours and employee engagement (Mwangi, 2011; Quang et al., 2015; Stander & Rothman, 2010). Thus, it is worthwhile to briefly discuss the practical implications of empowering leadership behaviours for hotel organisations.

One can argue that empowering leadership is much more than just the delegation of leader responsibilities to employees (Conger & Kanungo, 1988; Fong & Snape, 2015). Empowering leadership behaviour is about instilling a sense of power in employees by granting them the necessary autonomy to grow, and providing them with performance feedback that increases self-efficacy (Yukl, 2013). Thus, being an empowering leader is to understand the drivers of structural empowerment that have an impact on the degree to which employees experience psychological empowerment (i.e., the degree to which employees experience meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact) (Ahadi & Suandi, 2014; Knol & Van Linge, 2008; O'Brien, 2010; Priyadharshany & Jency, 2015). Thus, it is suggested that managers in hotel organisations focus on (a) creating and ensuring access to opportunities for employees to learn and grow, (b) sharing information without bureaucratic rules and regulations, (c) supporting employees and providing feedback on performance, together with participative goal-setting, and (d) providing employees with the resources that they need to do their jobs (Knol & Van Linge, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2001).

In addition, the best subsets multiple regression analysis revealed that the empowering leadership behaviours of *coaching*, *informing*, and *participative decision-making* are the top three subscales of the empowering leadership behaviour scale that features in the top 20 regression models that explain the largest proportion of variance in engagement. By implication, this means that, if a manager has the ability to (a) help subordinates identify growth areas, (b) suggest ways to improve performance, (c) encourage subordinates to solve problems together, and (d) provide positive recognition, this will likely contribute to the level of employee engagement. In addition, if a manager (a) shares the relevant information with

subordinates, such as how company decisions affect work group goals and tasks, and (b) clarifies performance expectations, this will likely contribute to employee engagement. Lastly, if managers encourage work group members to express ideas and to use those ideas or suggestions to make decisions, it should contribute to employee engagement.

5.4 Summary

The degree to which a front-end hotel manager designs task characteristics, and the way the manager displays social-emotional competency, lead to increased engagement levels in subordinates. Moreover, employee engagement can be viewed as a proxy for other performance outcomes, such as team effectiveness, quality customer service and customer retention. This chapter gave an overview of the various studies that have confirmed or disconfirmed the findings of this study. As part of this discussion, the researcher also addressed study limitations, such as collinearity and sample size, and the impact thereof on sampling errors. Consequently, the researcher recommended the adaptation of the research methodology for future studies that wish to explore engagement in the hotel industry, so that future studies can collect multi-rater data and not only be dependent on self-report data. In addition, it is recommended that future studies distinguish between the various factors of the work design questionnaire (Morgenson & Humphrey, 2006), and include these factors in the model as distinct exogenous latent variables.

Lastly, in order to increase employee engagement in the hotel industry, the researcher recommends that organisations consider job-redesign interventions to ensure that task characteristics are designed optimally, given the contextual organisational and individual factors. It is recommended that hotel organisations make use of multi-rater assessments (such as the ESCI) to identify possible areas of growth based on the four social-emotional competencies, upon which development activities can be designed. Finally, it is recommended that a front-end hotel manager should focus on delivering on the drivers of structural empowerment, which in turn will lead to psychological empowerment and employee engagement (DiNapoli et al., 2016; Knol & Van Linge, 2008; Laschinger et al., 2001).

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ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE 1

UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

APPROVED WITH STIPULATIONS
REC: SBER - Initial Application Form

23 July 2019

Project number: IPSY-2019-9322

Project title: The Impact of Hotel Front-end Managerial Competencies on Employee Engagement

Dear Mrs Elizabeth Reeves

Your REC: SBER - Initial Application Form submitted on 3 May 2019 was reviewed by the REC: Humanities and approved with stipulations.

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
23 July 2019	22 July 2022

REC STIPULATIONS:

The researcher may proceed with the envisaged research provided that the following stipulations, relevant to the approval of the project are adhered to or addressed:

1) With reference to the demographic information being asked in the survey, specifically race and sex, the researcher should give participants the option "prefer not to say". [ACTION REQUIRED]

2) The researcher is reminded to supply the REC with proof of permission from FEDHASA and the various hotels who will be approached for participation in this research. [ACTION REQUIRED]

3) The researcher should provide respondents with an alternative counselling service number or psychologist's details for those who wish to contact someone other than the researcher. The researcher is advised to remind participants that any information shared during consultations with the researcher will not be included as research data. This should be made clear in the informed consent form. [ACTION REQUIRED]

HOW TO RESPOND:

Some of these stipulations may require your response. Where a response is required, you must respond to the REC within **six (6)** months of the date of this letter. Your approval would expire automatically should your response not be received by the REC within 6 months of the date of this letter.

Your response (and all changes requested) must be done directly on the electronic application form on the Infonetica system: https://applyethics.sun.ac.za/Project/Index/14541

Where revision to supporting documents is required, please ensure that you replace all outdated documents on your application form with the revised versions. Please respond to the stipulations in a separate cover letter titled **"Response to REC stipulations"** and attach the cover letter in the section **Additional Information and Documents**.

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (9322) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Proof of permission	Institutional Permission Form (FEDHASA) signed	31/01/2019	1
Proof of permission	Institutional Permission form (for hotel organisations_awaiting ethical clearance) Revised 23 04 19	24/04/2019	3
Data collection tool	Front-endHotelManagerialCompetencyquestionnaire Revised 23 04 19 V5	24/04/2019	5
Informed Consent Form	Revised Customer-contact consent form (electronic consent) 30 04 19	01/05/2019	3
Informed Consent Form	Revised Managers Supervisors third party consent 30 04 19	01/05/2019	3
Letter of support_counselling	Revised Customer-contact consent form (electronic consent) 30 04 19	01/05/2019	3
Proof of permission	Institutional Permission Form (FEDHASA) signed	02/05/2019	1
Request for permission	Institutional Permission form (for hotel organisations_awaiting ethical clearance) Revised 23 04 19	02/05/2019	2
Default	Revised DESC Report_E Reeves 30 04 19	02/05/2019	2
Research Protocol/Proposal	The impact of hotel front-end managerial competencies on employee engagement (E_Reeves) Revised 23 04 19	02/05/2019	3

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

164

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1. Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enrol participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3.Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research-related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research-related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE 2

UNIVERSITEIT
STELLENBOSCH
UNIVERSITY

NOTICE OF APPROVAL

REC: SBER - Protocol Deviation form reviewed as an Amendment

14 October 2019

Project number: 9322

Project Title: The Impact of Hotel Front-end Managerial Competencies on Employee Engagement

Dear Mrs Elizabeth Reeves

Your REC: SBER Amendment submitted on 9 September 2019 was reviewed and approved by the REC: Humanities.

Please note the following for your approved submission:

Ethics approval period:

Protocol approval date (Humanities)	Protocol expiration date (Humanities)
23 July 2019	22 July 2022

GENERAL COMMENTS:

The researcher incorrectly completed a deviation form rather than the amendment form. The REC, therefore, reviewed this application as an amendment.

Please take note of the General Investigator Responsibilities attached to this letter. You may commence with your research after complying fully with these guidelines.

If the researcher deviates in any way from the proposal approved by the REC: Humanities, the researcher must notify the REC of these changes.

Please use your SU project number (9322) on any documents or correspondence with the REC concerning your project.

Please note that the REC has the prerogative and authority to ask further questions, seek additional information, require further modifications, or monitor the conduct of your research and the consent process.

FOR CONTINUATION OF PROJECTS AFTER REC APPROVAL PERIOD

Please note that a progress report should be submitted to the Research Ethics Committee: Humanities before the approval period has expired if a continuation of ethics approval is required. The Committee will then consider the continuation of the project for a further year (if necessary)

Included Documents:

Document Type	File Name	Date	Version
Default	Revised DESC Report_E Reeves 30 04 19	30/04/2019	4
Default	The impact of hotel front-end managerial competencies on employee engagement (E_Reeves) Revised 06 09 19 (9322)	06/09/2019	5
Default	Customer-contact consent form 06 09 19 (9322)	06/09/2019	4
Default	Institutional Permission form 06 09 19 (9322)	06/09/2019	4
Default	Front-endHotelManagerialCompetencyquestionnaire (9322)	06/09/2019	6

If you have any questions or need further help, please contact the REC office at cgraham@sun.ac.za.

Sincerely,

Clarissa Graham

REC Coordinator: Research Ethics Committee: Human Research (Humanities)

167

Investigator Responsibilities

Protection of Human Research Participants

Some of the general responsibilities investigators have when conducting research involving human participants are listed below:

1.Conducting the Research. You are responsible for making sure that the research is conducted according to the REC approved research protocol. You are also responsible for the actions of all your co-investigators and research staff involved with this research. You must also ensure that the research is conducted within the standards of your field of research.

2.Participant Enrollment. You may not recruit or enroll participants prior to the REC approval date or after the expiration date of REC approval. All recruitment materials for any form of media must be approved by the REC prior to their use.

3.Informed Consent. You are responsible for obtaining and documenting effective informed consent using **only** the REC-approved consent documents/process, and for ensuring that no human participants are involved in research prior to obtaining their informed consent. Please give all participants copies of the signed informed consent documents. Keep the originals in your secured research files for at least five (5) years.

4.Continuing Review. The REC must review and approve all REC-approved research proposals at intervals appropriate to the degree of risk but not less than once per year. There is **no grace period**. Prior to the date on which the REC approval of the research expires, **it is your responsibility to submit the progress report in a timely fashion to ensure a lapse in REC approval does not occur.** If REC approval of your research lapses, you must stop new participant enrollment, and contact the REC office immediately.

5.Amendments and Changes. If you wish to amend or change any aspect of your research (such as research design, interventions or procedures, participant population, informed consent document, instruments, surveys or recruiting material), you must submit the amendment to the REC for review using the current Amendment Form. You **may not initiate** any amendments or changes to your research without first obtaining written REC review and approval. The **only exception** is when it is necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to participants and the REC should be immediately informed of this necessity.

6.Adverse or Unanticipated Events. Any serious adverse events, participant complaints, and all unanticipated problems that involve risks to participants or others, as well as any research related injuries, occurring at this institution or at other performance sites must be reported to Malene Fouche within **five (5) days** of discovery of the incident. You must also report any instances of serious or continuing problems, or non-compliance with the RECs requirements for protecting human research participants. The only exception to this policy is that the death of a research participant must be reported in accordance with the Stellenbosch University Research Ethics Committee Standard Operating Procedures. All reportable events should be submitted to the REC using the Serious Adverse Event Report Form.

7.Research Record Keeping. You must keep the following research related records, at a minimum, in a secure location for a minimum of five years: the REC approved research proposal and all amendments; all informed consent documents; recruiting materials; continuing review reports; adverse or unanticipated events; and all correspondence from the REC

8.Provision of Counselling or emergency support. When a dedicated counsellor or psychologist provides support to a participant without prior REC review and approval, to the extent permitted by law, such activities will not be recognised as research nor the data used in support of research. Such cases should be indicated in the progress report or final report.

9.Final reports. When you have completed (no further participant enrollment, interactions or interventions) or stopped work on your research, you must submit a Final Report to the REC.

10.On-Site Evaluations, Inspections, or Audits. If you are notified that your research will be reviewed or audited by the sponsor or any other external agency or any internal group, you must inform the REC immediately of the impending audit/evaluation.

APPENDIX A

INFORMED CONSENT: Customer-contact employee

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Research title: The impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on employee engagement.

Dear prospective participant,

You are invited to participate in this research study because you are **a customer-contact employee** in the hotel industry. Thus, you are in the position to reflect on how engaged you are in your job, and what behaviours your manager displays that causes you to be this engaged. My name is Elizabeth Reeves, and I am a student at the department of Industrial Psychology. I would like to invite you to take part in a survey, the results of which will contribute to a research project that will help me to complete my MCom Industrial Psychology degree.

Please take some time to read the information presented here, which will explain the details of this project. Your participation is entirely voluntary and you are free to decline to participate. If you say no, this will not affect you negatively in any way whatsoever. You are also free to withdraw from the study at any point, even if you do agree to take part by exiting the survey at any time whilst completing it. No manager/supervisor or any other person is allowed to force you to participate, or to expect of you to answer any questions in the survey in a certain way.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
The purpose of the study is to determine which managerial behaviours are important to ensure that you as an employee are doing your job with dedication, energy and enthusiasm. We would like to know how the behaviours of your manager or supervisor are related to your level of employee engagement.

2. PROCEDURE

You can complete the survey in your own time. The survey will take around 30 – 35 minutes to complete, and if you don't want to complete the entire survey in one go, then you can save your progress and continue at a later stage. In the survey, you will be asked to answer some questions on how engaged you are at work, and you will rate the behavior of your manager/supervisor. You will not be asked to give the name of your manager/supervisor, so no one will be able to link you to the manager/supervisor you are rating. There are no wrong or right answers, so you can answer honestly.

3. LUCKY DRAW

At the end of the data collection period, you will be able to stand a chance to win a prize. The prize is a weekend away for two people at a lodge nearby (or the cash equivalent thereof – depending on what you prefer). If you would like to stand a chance to win, then you will have to provide me with your contact number, so that I can deliver the prize to you. Please take note that the winner will be randomly selected, and that there is only one prize to be won for one lucky winner. The prize can be considered as a 'thank you' to express my gratitude for your participation in the study.

4. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

Your information and response to the survey will be protected. As mentioned above, it will not be expected of you to disclose the name of your manager/supervisor. Also, it is not expected of you to give your contact number, unless you would like to stand a chance to win the lucky draw. Regardless, your participation in this study (whether you are taking part in the lucky draw or not) will not be shared with anyone. Thus, your participation will remain anonymous. What is most important, is that you are aware that no information that you share with me, will be shared with anyone else at your organisation. So, your ratings will remain confidential, and no one at your hotel (including your manager/supervisor) will have access to your scores. The findings of the study will only be published as aggregate scores that will serve as an explanation for the phenomena in question, and no individual names or raw scores will be made available.

5. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

It may be that you find certain sections of the questionnaire uncomfortable rating the behavior of your own manager. Please be assured that none of your personal information or individual scores will be disclosed to anyone else. If you have any questions or concerns about the survey, or participating in the study please feel free to contact me, Elizabeth Reeves (Cell:

073 511 7449; Email: 13506315@sun.ac.za), or my supervisor, Prof. Johan Malan (Cell: 083 540 0531; Email: djmalan@sun.ac.za). You can be assured that any information shared with me during consultations will not be included as research data. Alternatively, you can contact Michèle Boonzaier, a registered Counselling Psychologist (Cell: 021 808 2556; Email: mib@sun.ac.za).

6. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

You have the right to decline answering any questions and you can exit the survey at any time without giving a reason. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Mrs Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development at Stellenbosch University.

If you would like to save a copy of this text, then you can simply save the attached document in the invitation sent to you. The attached consent form contains all the information conveyed to you on this page.

I confirm that I have read and understood the information provided for the current study:

☐ Yes   ☐ No

I agree to take part in the survey:

☐ Yes   ☐ No

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT: Organisational Permission Letter

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY
PERMISSION LETTER: HOTEL ORGANISATION CONSENT

Research title: The impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on employee engagement.

Dear Organisation,

You are invited to participate in a research study as a business that constitutes as part of the hospitality industry in the Western Cape, South Africa. This study is conducted by Elizabeth Reeves from the department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University, and contributes to the partial completion of the degree MCom Industrial Psychology.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY
Due to the national and international growth of the travel and hospitality sector, and consequently the growing public profile of this sector, the impact of travel and hospitality organisational outcomes have received significantly more attention over the last couple of years. In order to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage, it is required of organisations to consider their internal resources as sources of competitive advantage - such as competencies and capabilities, as well as information and knowledge that drive innovation for new products and services. One can argue that there exists a need to improve the productivity, service quality and overall organisational performance of these hospitality businesses. To this end, the researcher asks the following research-initiating question is: **"What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hospitality industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?"**

In short, the purpose of this study is to determine which managerial competencies have an impact on employee engagement in South African hospitality businesses. Specifically, the study focusses on determining which front-of-house/ front-end managerial competencies lead to increased engagement levels amongst subordinates/ customer-contact employees. In this study, employee engagement serves as a proxy of performance.

2. PROCEDURE

With your informed institutional permission the following procedure will apply:

The customer-contact employees/ subordinates of the front-end manager are invited as participants to the study. Customer-contact employees in the hospitality industry are invited as study participants due to the fact that they are in the position to reflect on how engaged they are in their jobs, and what causes them to be this engaged. Thus, customer-contact employees are invited to complete a survey where they will rate: (1) his/her own individual level of work engagement, and (2) the degree to which their manager/supervisor display various managerial behaviours. If the customer-contact employee wishes to participate, then he/she will complete an electronic survey that will take approximately 30 – 35 minutes to complete. The customer-contact employee do not have to complete the survey in one go, but will be able to save their progress and continue at a later stage.

The researcher will conduct a short meeting with the customer-contact employees in person to explain the, purpose of the study, to emphasise voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, and to inform possible participants about the lucky draw prize. If customer-contact employees are interested to participate, then they will provide the researcher with their contact numbers, so that the researcher can make a link to the survey available to them.

This is the full extent of the participation of the organisation in this research project.

3. LUCKY DRAW

As briefly mentioned above, customer-contact employees will be able to stand a chance to win a prize. The winner of the lucky draw will be awarded with a weekend away to a tourist destination close by (or the cash equivalent thereof – depending on personal preference) to express the researcher's gratitude for his/her participation. Please take note that the winner will be randomly selected, and that there is only one prize to be won for one lucky winner. Thus, if the participant wishes to be eligible for the lucky draw, then it will be necessary to provide the researcher with his/her contact number, so that the researcher can contact him/her to deliver the prize won.

4. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

To begin with, the organisations that wish to participate in the study will remain anonymous. Also, the customer-contact employees will remain anonymous. Even though, the customer-contact employees that wish to part take in the lucky draw will provide their phone numbers (so that the researcher can deliver the prize), the researcher (or no one else for that matter) won't be able to link the identities of the customer-contact employees to their raw scores, since contact numbers are recorded on a separate survey distinct from the responses to survey questions. Thus, individual data sets (scores) will remain anonymous and confidential.

Finally, the organisation that wishes to participate and the customer-contact employees will not have access to the raw data sets. Also, the scores and ratings will be kept confidential and will not be shared with the organisation. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the participants and/or their company, will remain confidential. In addition, the information (data) obtained will be safely stored by the researcher. Thus, no parties to the research project will have access to the raw scores, except the researcher. The findings of the study will only be published as aggregate scores that will serve as an explanation for the phenomena in question, and no individual names or raw scores will be made available.

5. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Voluntary participation applies to the organisation and the customer-contact employees as units of observation. As a first step in the data collection procedure, the researcher conducts a short meeting in person with possible participants. As stated above, during the meeting the researcher will convey: (1) the purpose of the study, (2) explain and emphasise voluntary participation, anonymity and confidentiality, and, (3) inform possible participants about the lucky draw prize. If customer-contact employees are interested to participate, then they will provide the researcher with their contact numbers so that the researcher can make the link to the survey available to them, and to deliver the prize to the lucky winner. Even though, possible participants will be able to write down their contact numbers on a paper at the meeting if the wish to partake, their identities will remain anonymous to the researcher.

Please take note that the researcher will make the link to the survey available to participants on their cellphones well after the meeting – **with no obligation to participate**. **The researcher will ensure that no possible participants feel coerced or obliged to**

participate – it will clearly be reiterated that they can withdraw from the study at any point – with the guarantee that incomplete data sets will be disregarded, and will not be analysed.

6. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There exist no foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences for the organisation participating in this study. However, there exists a possibility that respondents (i.e., customer-contact employees) may feel exposed or vulnerable when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's performance. Specifically, participants may experience emotional discomfort when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's level of emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence constitutes as a psychological construct and can elicit a psychological response). The researcher, Elizabeth Reeves, is a registered Psychometrist and will oversee the administration of the TEIQue emotional intelligence questionnaire (in collaboration with her supervisor, Prof Johan Malan, who is a registered Psychologist). Participants will be, and can be assured that no personal information or individual scores will be disclosed to any other party to reduce potential discomfort. In addition, participants can be assured that any information shared with the researcher during consultations will not be included as research data. Alternatively, participants can contact Michèle Boonzaier, a registered Counselling Psychologist, if they feel the need to converse with an independent party, other than the researcher.

7. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE COMPANY AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits involved in participating in the study, however, the results of the study may be utilised by industry and training facilities to inform managerial development, that can have a positive impact on employee engagement and overall team performance.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

And as mentioned previously, please contact me if you are interested in participating in the study, or if you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me, Elizabeth Reeves, directly (Cell: 073 511 7449; Email: 13506315@sun.ac.za). You can also contact my supervisor, Prof. Johan Malan (Cell: 083 540 0531; Email: djmalan@sun.ac.za).

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Mrs Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

I, …………………………… have read and understood the foregoing information and give institutional permission to the researcher to commence with the data collection procedure.

Signature: ………………………………………….

Date: ………………………………………………….

APPENDIX C

INFORMED CONSENT: FEDHASA Permission Letter

STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

PERMISSION LETTER: ACCESS TO HOTEL ORGANISATIONS

Research title: The impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on employee engagement.

Dear Federated Hospitality Association of Southern Africa,

As an institution, you are invited to collaborate in a research study conducted by Elizabeth Reeves from the department of Industrial Psychology at Stellenbosch University. This study contributes to the partial completion of the degree MCom Industrial Psychology.

1. THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

Due to the national and international growth of the travel and hospitality sector, and consequently the growing public profile of this sector, the impact of travel and hospitality organisational outcomes have received significantly more attention over the last couple of years.

As you are well aware, the travel and hospitality sector has a significant impact on a country's competitiveness, its growth domestic product (GDP) and employment. However, in order to obtain and sustain a competitive advantage, it is required of hotel organisations to consider their internal resources as sources of competitive advantage - such as competencies, capabilities, assets, as well as information and knowledge that drive innovation for new products and services. Thus, one may argue that there exists a need to improve the productivity, service quality and overall organisational performance of these hotel organisations. This led the researcher to ask the following research-initiating question is: **"What are the precursors of customer-contact employee engagement in the hotel**

industry? And specifically, what is the impact of front-end hotel managerial competencies on the level of subordinate employee engagement?" (please note that employee engagement serve as a proxy to team performance – that subsequently has an impact on team- and overall organisational performance).

The purpose of the study is to determine which managerial competencies are essential to ensure employee engagement South African hotels. Specifically, the researcher aims to identify how the managerial competencies of the rooms division and food and beverage manager – or – the first-line front office and service supervisor are related to employee engagement.

Customer-contact employees in the hotel industry are invited as study participants due to the fact that they are in the position to reflect on how engaged they are in their jobs, and what causes them to be this engaged. In addition, the managers/ supervisors of these customer-contact employees are invited as third-party participants. Thus, with the consent of front-end managers/supervisors, customer-contact employees can be invited to complete a survey where they will rate: (1) his/her own individual level of work engagement, and (2) the degree to which their manager/supervisor display various managerial behaviours. If the customer-contact employee wishes to participate, then he/she will complete a survey that will take approximately 30 – 35 minutes to complete. The customer-contact employee do not have to complete the survey in one go, but will be able to save their progress and continue at a later stage.

2. PROCEDURE
In this next section, I will briefly explain the extent of FEDHASA's role to the study.

2.1. FEDHASA's proposed role to the study
Should FEDHASA wish to be a collaborative partner and offer their support, then they will assist the researcher with the following:

- Should FEDHASA decide to support the study, then all hotels affiliated with FEDHASA will receive an invitation email to participate. In other words, on behalf of the researcher, FEDHASA will send an invitation email to their various contact persons at the hotel organisations. The researcher will be responsible to draft the invitation email, and will briefly explain the purpose and data collection procedure of the study in the e-mail. An organisational consent form will be attached to the email that will provide the hotel organisation with all the necessary information.

- Importantly, the researcher's email address will be embedded in the email, and if the hotel wishes to participate and gives consent, they will be able to contact the researcher directly. To this end:
  - The hotel organisations that wish to participate will remain anonymous to FEDHASA (i.e., FEDHASA will not have visibility in terms of participation).
  - Managers as third-party participants, and customer-contact employees as units of observation will remain anonymous to FEDHASA.
  - Also, the researcher will not share a database with FEDHASA – FEDHASA will not have access to any raw scores.

This is the full extent of FEDHASA's support and participation to the study.

3. LUCKY DRAW

As briefly mentioned above, customer-contact employees will be able to stand a chance to win a prize. The winner of the lucky draw will be awarded with a weekend away to a tourist destination close by to express the researcher's gratitude for his/her participation. Please take note that the winner will be randomly selected, and that there is only one prize to be won for one lucky winner. Thus, if the participant wishes to be eligible for the lucky draw, then it will be necessary to make certain personal details known to the researcher, so that the researcher can contact him/her to deliver the prize won. In this case, their identities will no longer be anonymous.

4. ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY

To begin with, the hotel organisations that wish to participate in the study will remain anonymous. The managers/supervisors and customer-contact employees will remain anonymous, unless a customer-contact employee would like to stand a chance to win the lucky draw. Even though, the identity of those customer-contact employees that wish to part take in the lucky draw will be known to the researcher (in order to deliver the prize), the individual data sets (scores) will remain anonymous and confidential. Thus, the researcher (or no one else for that matter) won't be able to link the identities of the customer-contact employees to their raw scores. In fact, should participants wish to be eligible for the lucky draw, once they gave consent and completed the survey, participants will click on a button that will redirect them to a short survey where they will provide the researcher with some personal details, i.e., his/her name and surname, contact number, and email address. This short, one question survey will be separate or distinct from the actual survey, thus making it impossible for anyone to link personal details to raw data sets - in essence, the scores remain anonymous and confidential.

179

Finally, the hotel organization that wishes to participate, the respective managers, and the customer-contact employees will not have access to the raw data sets. Also, the scores and ratings will be kept confidential and will not be shared with the hotel organisation nor the managers – the managers will not receive any form of performance feedback based on subordinate ratings. Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with the participants and/or their company, will remain confidential. In addition, the information (data) obtained will be safely stored by the researcher. Thus, no parties to the research project will have access to the raw scores, except the researcher. The findings of the study will only be published as aggregate scores that will serve as an explanation for the phenomena in question, and no individual names or raw scores will be made available.

5. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participation in the study is completely voluntary. Voluntary participation applies to the hotel organisation, the managers/supervisors as third-party participants, and the customer-contact employees as units of observation. During the data collection procedure, the contact person at the hotel organisation will fulfil an important role, since this person will need to obtain consent from the managers (as third-party participants), and he/she will distribute the invitation email with the link to the survey to all customer-contact employees. Some may argue that the nature of the relationship between the contact person and the manager, or the relationship between the manager and the customer-contact employees may be problematic, as there exists a possibility that some may be coerced in participating in order to depict the manager or the hotel in a favourable light. The researcher will ensure that the contact person is aware of these ethical underpinnings, and that he/she would ensure that all parties (specifically the contact persons and the relevant managers at these organisation) will not coerce anybody to partake in the study. To this end, it will be clearly stipulated that a prerequisite of this study is voluntary participation (or that they may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind), and that no person in a power position or otherwise, can coerce a customer-contact employee to partake.

6. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There exist no foreseeable risks, discomforts or inconveniences with regard to FEDHASA's role in this study, the participation of hotel organisations, or managers/supervisors as third-party participants.

There exists a possibility that respondents (i.e., customer-contact employees) may feel exposed or vulnerable when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's performance.

Specifically, participants may experience emotional discomfort when reporting on their manager's/supervisor's level of emotional intelligence (emotional intelligence constitutes as a psychological construct and can elicit a psychological response). The researcher, Elizabeth Reeves, is a registered Psychometrist and will oversee the administration of the TEIQue emotional intelligence questionnaire (in collaboration with her supervisor, Prof Johan Malan, who is a registered Psychologist). Participants will be, and can be assured that no personal information or individual scores will be disclosed to any other party (thus, participants will be assured once again of anonymity and confidentiality) to reduce potential discomfort.

7. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO THE COMPANY AND/OR TO SOCIETY

There are no direct benefits involved in participating in the study, however, the results of the study may be utilised by industry and training facilities to inform managerial development, that can have a positive impact on employee engagement and overall team performance.

8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact me Elizabeth Reeves (Cell: 073 511 7449; Email: 13506315@sun.ac.za), or my supervisor, Prof. Johan Malan (Cell: 083 540 0531; Email: djmalan@sun.ac.za).

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact Mrs Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

I have read and understood the foregoing information and hereby gave permission, that:

- FEDHASA will send an invitation email (drafted by the researcher) to all hotel organisations.

I, …………………………… have read and understood the foregoing information and give institutional permission to the researcher to commence with the data collection procedure.

Signature: ………………………………………

Date: …………………………………………………