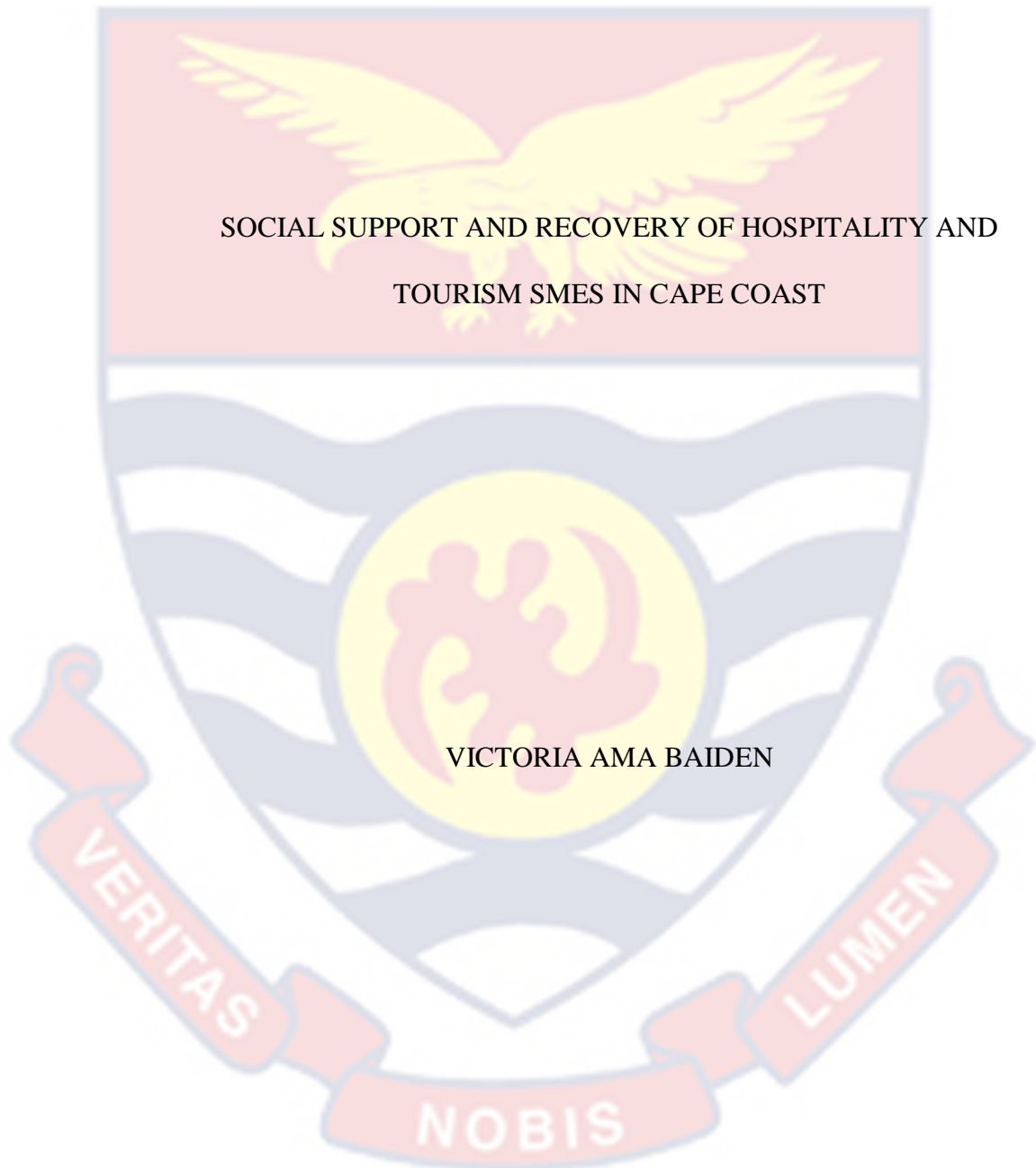


UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



SOCIAL SUPPORT AND RECOVERY OF HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM SMES IN CAPE COAST

VICTORIA AMA BAI DEN

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2023

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST



SOCIAL SUPPORT AND RECOVERY OF HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM SMES IN CAPE COAST

BY

VICTORIA AMA BAIDEN

This thesis submitted to the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management
of the Faculty of Social Sciences, College of Humanities and Legal Studies,
University of Cape Coast, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for award
of Master of Philosophy degree in Hospitality Management

JUNE 2023

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this thesis is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature..... Date:

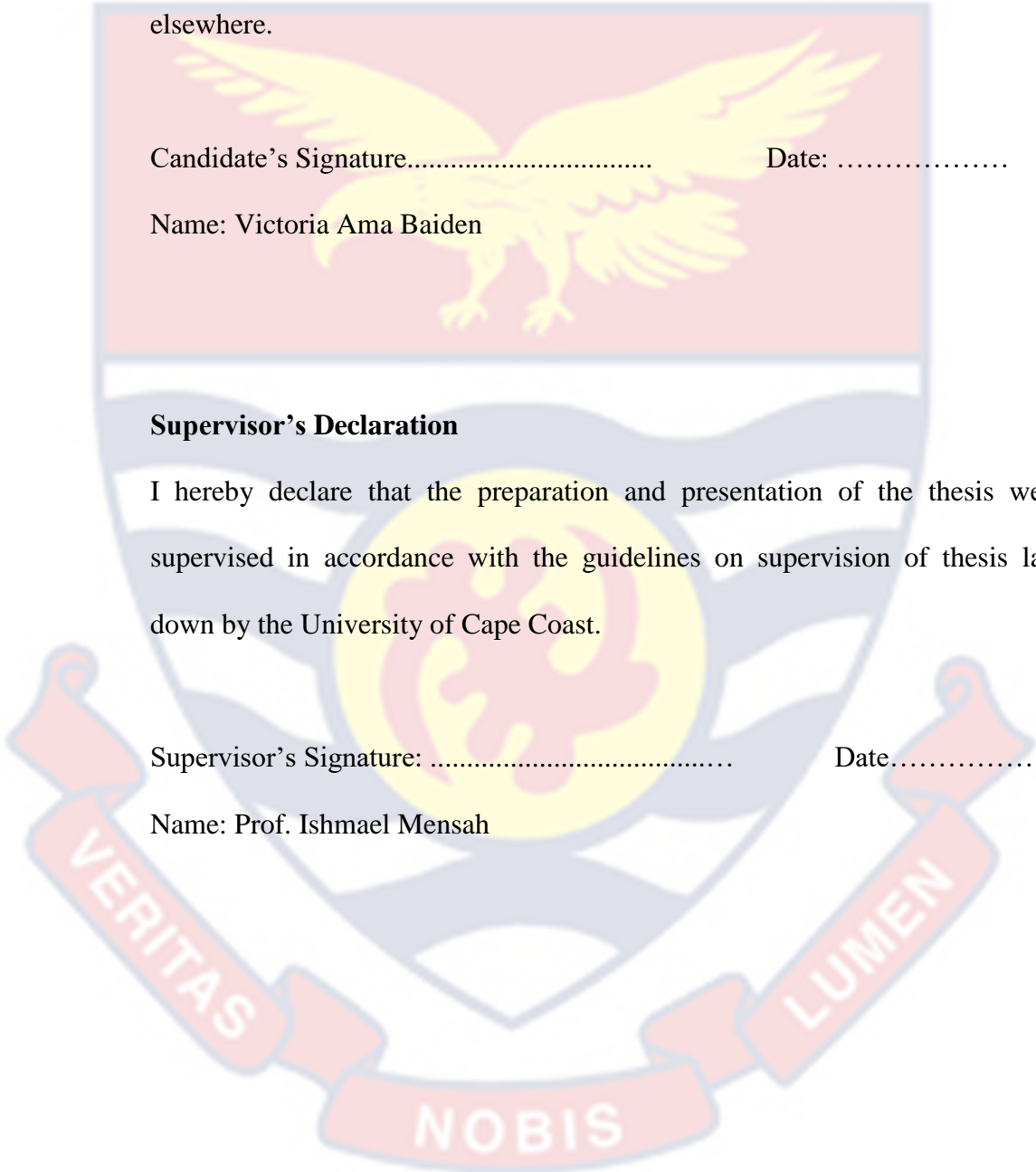
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Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the thesis were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of thesis laid down by the University of Cape Coast.

Supervisor's Signature: Date.....

Name: Prof. Ishmael Mensah



ABSTRACT

Social support plays a critical role in the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs by providing encouragement, guidance and resources to help businesses overcome challenges and bounce back from setbacks. Researchers have argued on varied factors that influence the hospitality and tourism SMEs' recovery process but then there is a robust correlation between social support and business recovery. The study examined the role of social support in the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast. Questionnaires and interview guides were used to collect data from the respondents. The study sampled 142 respondents using a simple random sampling technique for the survey. In addition, 10 managers/owners of the hospitality and tourism SMEs were interviewed. The results of the study indicated that the hospitality and tourism SMEs experienced a sudden decline in revenue generation between 2020 and 2021, leading to other challenges. The study further established that social support was a key dimension in the business recovery process during the COVID-19 pandemic. The likelihood of business success and sustenance are hinged on the availability of social support. Thus, social support reduces the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism businesses. The more robust the social support the higher the likelihood of a business achieving a good outcome. It is therefore recommended that managers/owners of small and medium-sized tourism enterprises adopt long-term, adaptable crisis management methods that take into consideration both financial and non-financial elements.

KEYWORDS

Appraisal support

Emotional support

Informational support

Instrumental support

Recovery

SMEs

Social Support



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DEDICATION

Rev. Samuel B. Baiden, Rev. Esther O. Baiden, Samuel O. Baiden, and Joseph

N. Baiden



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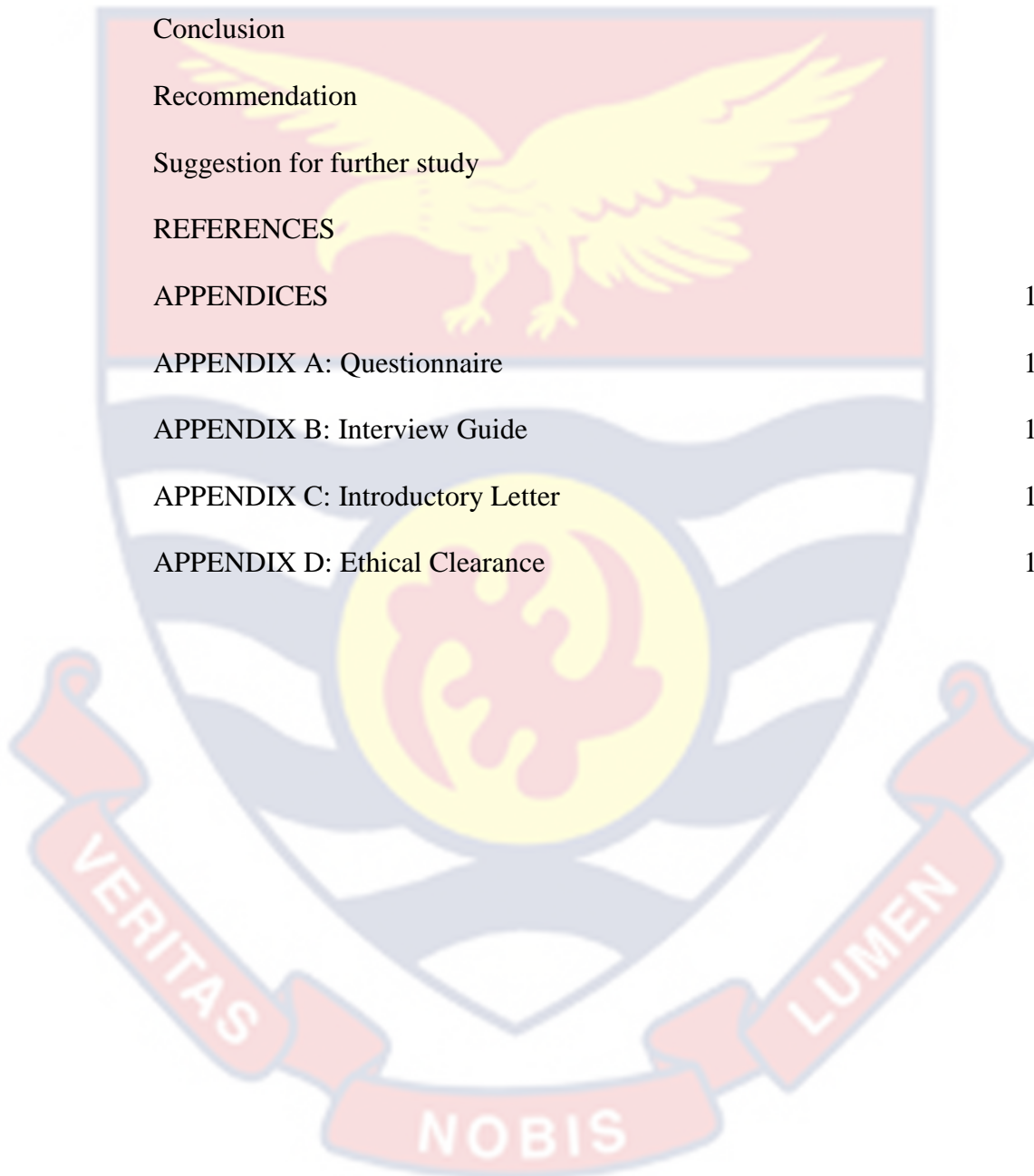
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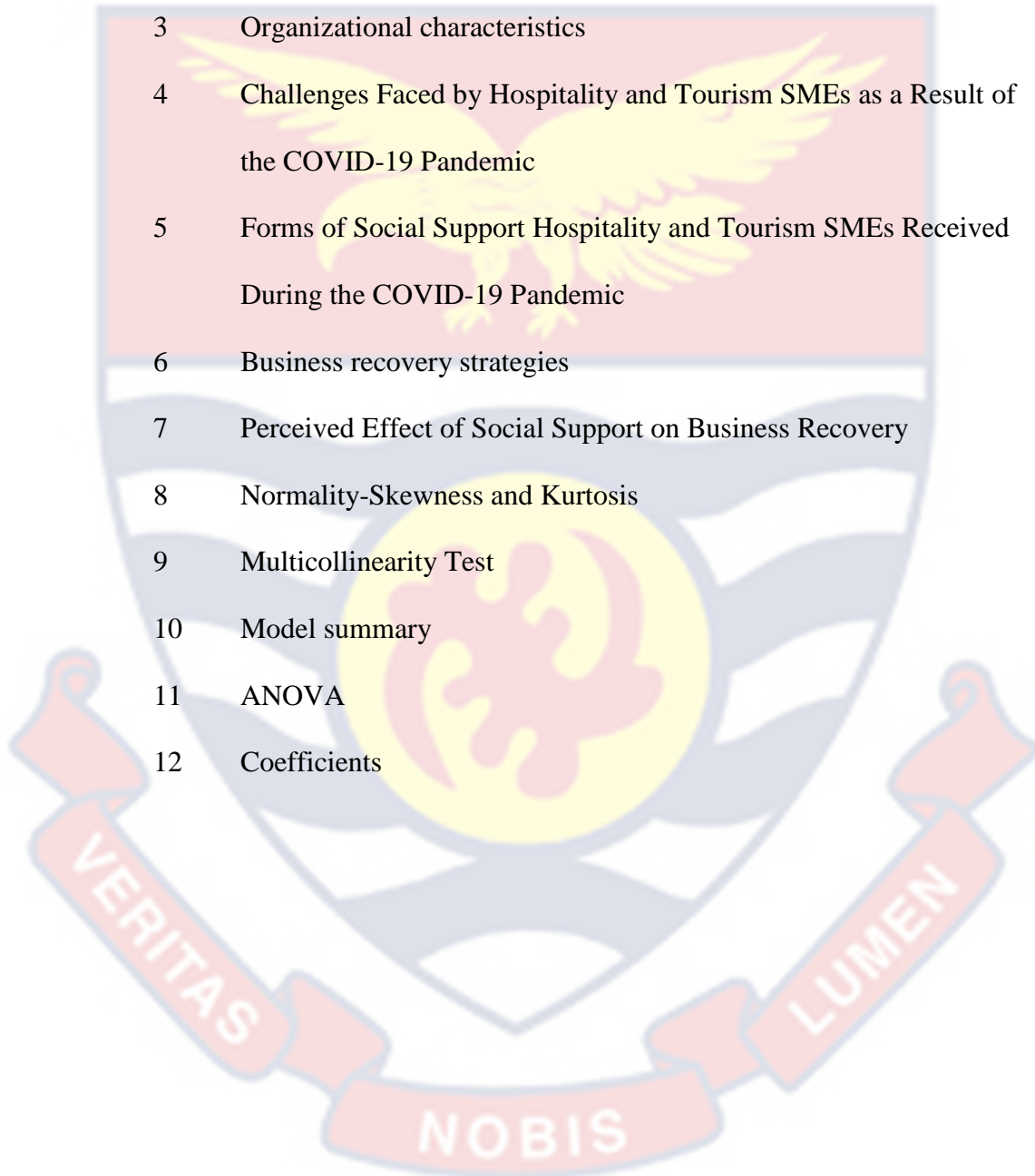
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background to the Study

The hospitality and tourism industry has contributed immensely to the development of economies across the world. The hospitality industry, for instance, has had a significant effect on the global economy in terms of employment, development, and tax payments (Cisneros-Martínez, McCabe & Fernández-Morales, 2018). As of 2015, it was estimated that over 10.2 million people were directly employed in the industry throughout Europe, with a revenue of over €1trillion (or around 8.1% of total economic production) and a total value added of over €460billion [or 3.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP)] (Young, 2013). In 2010, the hospitality and tourism sector contributed around €126billion to government treasuries in excise duties, VAT, and employment and social security taxes.

In Ghana, Price Water House Cooper's report on the hospitality and tourism industry revealed that Ghana's hotel sector grew by 1.2 percent from 2015 to 2016 and was expected to grow by 1.1 percent, 2.1 percent and 2.3 percent respectively in 2017, 2018 and 2019 (PwC, 2017). Also, the industry is projected to worth \$1.5 million by 2024 as well as an annual estimate of over 950,000 foreigners visiting the country (Ackuayi, Godsway & Bonsu-Owu 2014). The achievements of this sector are largely attributed to the influx of foreign investments and travellers (World Travel & Tourism Council, 2019). It is essential for firms within the industry because, the hospitality and tourism industry serve as a great catalyst for the growth of economies (Seidu, Opoku Mensah, Issau & Amoah-Mensah, 2022).

All signs pointed to the industry's continued success, with a worldwide expansion of more than 3 percent predicted for 2020. Before the outbreak of the virus (COVID-19), African nations were predicted to witness to grow at 4-5 percent UN World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), 2020. During the pandemic, Ghana's hospitality and tourism industry came to a standstill as the country fought to safeguard its citizens during the COVID-19 pandemic. The industry leaders had unprecedented difficulty getting back to work after the COVID-19 outbreak. The hospitality and tourism Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) were significantly impacted negatively from the loss of operations as the country was under lockdown.

During such periods of crises, vast choices sometimes with complex interdependencies, must be taken at the individual, family, company, and community levels to recover from such situations. Resuming normal operations in the economy, re-establishing social connections, and mending damaged infrastructure are all examples of the kind of choices that have to be made in this situation (Chang, 2010; Jordan & Javernick-Will, 2013; Olshansky, 2005; Smith & Wenger, 2007). Ozili (2021) and Sigala (2020) agree that the viability of community SMEs after a pandemic is crucial to the community's overall recovery.

Social support has been touted as a good mechanism towards business recovery (Martinez & Abrams, 2013). The phrase "social support" is somewhat broad, including a wide range of particular aspects of an individual's social environment that may contribute to their sense of well-being and resilience in the face of global health threats (Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000). Social support is defined as "emotional, instrumental, and

financial support obtained from one's social network" (Berkman, 1983). Ownsworth, Henderson, & Chambers (2010) also describes social support as a person's network of friends and family who are there for them emotionally and physically when they need it.

Broadly, Feeney and Collins (2015) assert that social support encompasses supportive resources which include emotional (attention and care), informational (suggestions), companionship (shared experience), tangible (financial assistance) and intangible (personal advice). Therefore, having both the sense and knowledge that one is cared for and supported by others and that one has members to rely on for supportive assistance in times of difficulties such as the COVID-19 pandemic enable individuals to be resilient. From the perspective of Kort-Butler (2018), social support can be conceptualized to include instrumental, informational, or emotional resources provided to an individual to help solve a problem. Emotional support entails showing empathy, compassion, motivation, value, or reassurance; instrumental support refers to physical support that can be quantified; and informational support entails giving guidance or giving information that could assist a person resolve an issue (Kort-Butler, 2018).

There is a relationship between social support mechanisms and psychological and physiological wellbeing (House, Landis & Umberson, 2004). Although the connection between social support and business revival has been known for a while, research into the processes that underline this association has been sluggish (Gurung, Sarason & Sarason, 2001). In terms of context, social support might be a routine support in a normal scenario or non-routine support in a business crisis situation (Fan, Geng, Zhang & Zhu, 2011).

Researchers have argued on varied factors that influence the hospitality and tourism SMEs' recovery process. Researchers opine that consistent and reliable progress is assured when there are various existing levels of support in the organisation, either tangible or intangible (Dietch & Corey, 2011; Schrank, Brownell, Tylee, & Slade, 2014; Xiao & Peacock, 2014). They equate reopening with success for SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industries but fail to take into consideration the variety of outcomes that might occur once a firm reopens. Creating exhaustive and all-encompassing evaluations of complex social events, such as the recovery after a pandemic, is difficult, if not impossible (Winner, 2014; Zobel, 2014). It has been argued by researchers analysing recovery to consider the critical role social support play in ensuring that recovery programs yield the desired outcomes (Feeney & Collins, 2015).

Impact of COVID-19 on the Hospitality and Tourism Industry

In the hospitality and tourism sector, small and medium-sized businesses (SMEs) play a critical role in both the growth of the industry domestically and internationally (Jalali & Jaafar, 2019). Due to the industry's reliance on seasonality and high labor costs, small and medium-sized firms (SMEs) in the hospitality and tourism sector are particularly vulnerable to changes in the market. Many small and medium-sized companies in the hospitality and tourism sectors have extremely narrow profit margins, so even a slight decline in sales can have a significant impact on their margin. According to Lu, Zhao, Li, Ni, Yang, Wu, & Tan, (2020). the main problems SMEs face during pandemics include poor market demand, disruptions in supply chains, and a lack of cash flow.

As a result of the pandemic, there has been over a million layoff in the industry throughout the globe while many businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry have seen significant drops in income and are worried about going bankrupt (Del Valle, Kim-Schulze, Huang, Beckmann, Nirenberg, Wang & Gnjatic, 2020). The United Nations World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) predicted a decline of 20-30 percent in international visitor arrivals in 2020 compared to 2019. In 2020, the industry lost over US\$4.5 trillion globally, and the industry's contribution to global GDP fell by a remarkable 49.1 percent from 2019 to 2020; this is in comparison to a 3.7 percent GDP fall of the global economy in 2020 (Del Valle et al., 2020). During the years 2014–2019, the hospitality industry was responsible for one-fourth of the world's net new employment, but this share has since shrunk by 18.5 percent, as reported by UNWTO (2021). The hospitality and tourism industry received an outstanding turning point in Ghana over the years.

In the year 2020, though, this upward tendency is severely hampered by the COVID-19 epidemic that is sweeping the globe. The hospitality and tourism industry was one of the first to be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and it was one of the sectors that were hit the hardest. Toward the end of March 2020, the Ghanaian government implemented restrictions on the entry of tourists into the country via air, land, and sea as a responsive measure to the pandemic. However, the measures taken to control the situation has significantly affected the hospitality and tourism industry and the economy as well.

State of Hospitality & Tourism SMEs During the Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the hospitality and tourism sectors globally, including Ghana, due to travel restrictions, lockdowns, and virus concerns. The reduction in tourist arrivals directly affected the revenue streams of hotels, restaurants, tour operators, and other related SMEs (Gössling, Scott, & Hall, 2020; Nunkoo, Daronkola & Gholipour, 2022).

Also, many SMEs faced financial challenges due to declining revenue and increased operational costs, including reduced bookings and occupancy rates. (Nhamo, Dube & Chikodzi, 2020). More so, the decline in tourism and hospitality activities led to job losses, affecting employee livelihoods and staff retention. Small businesses, in particular, may have faced difficulties in retaining staff and providing adequate support during these challenging times (Pit, Fisk, Freihaut, Akintunde, Aloko, Berge & Yap, 2021).

Additionally, SMEs are focusing on local tourism and domestic markets, offering staycation packages and promoting nearby attractions, while implementing technology like contactless check-ins, online booking systems and enhanced cleaning protocols and to ensure the safety of their guests.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the enormous contributions of the hospitality and tourism industry to the growth of economies including Ghana, the industry has nonetheless been wrecked by a myriad of challenges. These include wars, terrorism, natural disasters, diseases, pandemics particularly the COVID-19 have had adverse impacts on the sector over the years (Adongo, Amenumey, Kumi-Kyereme & Dube, 2021; Creaco & Querini, 2003). The COVID-19

outbreak has affected the Hospitality and Tourism industry than other sectors (Gossling et al., 2020). Due to the rapid spread of the COVID-19 and the initial lack of vaccine against the virus, governments around the world including the government of Ghana were forced to institute lockdowns and inter-state movements (Sharma & Mahendru, 2020). While other sectors adopted digital platforms for survival (Mehroliya, Alagarsamy, & Solaikutty, 2021), the hospitality and tourism sector suffered restrictions due to the reliance on the mobility of guests and visitors.

For instance, the hospitality and tourism industry in Ghana has lost about USD170 million due to the closure of the airport and borders, low hotel occupancy, and the shutdown of attractions (Dayour, Adongo & Kimbu, 2020; United Nations report, 2020). For the coronavirus to be contained, 90 percent of international travel has to be halted (Gössling et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been claimed that the country lost an estimated USD 171 million in tourist earnings between the months of March 2020 and June 2020. (Mensah & Boakye, 2021; GNA, 2020).

Although a plethora of research (Brown, 2010; Sarason, Sarason, & Gurung, 2001; Wernerfelt 1984; Wright, 2016) have examined the influence of social support systems on businesses recovery, a few studies (Berkman, 1983; Henderson, 2010; Pearlin, & Bierman 2013; Nguyen-Trung, Forbes-Mewett, & Arunachalam, (2020) have looked at it in the hospitality and tourism industry. Even what is worrying is the research focuses on large hospitality and tourism businesses neglecting small and medium-sized businesses. While large businesses had support from the government and Non-

Government Organisations (NGO) to necessitate recovery, hospitality and tourism SMEs have received less attention (Mensah & Boakye, 2021).

Although scholars have insisted that the social support is a multidimensional construct (Underwood, 2012; Boons & Ludeke-Freund, 2013; Kim, 2014), studies have evaluated relationships between social support and recovery of business at the dimensional level (Tajeddini, Trueman & Larsen, 2006; Lee, Sadri, Ukkusuri, Clawson & Seipel, 2019). Some aspects of social support networks are more likely to have a significant impact than others on the success of recovering small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the hospitality and tourism industries when analysed in tandem with one another (Boons & Ludeke-Freund, 2013). In addition, the scope of previous studies on the constructs has been reduced to either a qualitative approach (Gregurec, Tomičić-Furjan, & Tomičić-Pupek, 2021) or a quantitative approach (Župerkienė, Šimanskienė, Labanauskaitė, Melnikova & Davidavičienė, 2021) neglecting the need of the mixed method of research.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by examining the role of social support on SMEs' recovery in the hospitality and tourism industry in Cape Coast.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of the study is to examine the role of social support in the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast. The specific objectives seek to:

1. explore the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism SMEs.

2. examine the various forms of social support in hospitality and tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. examine the strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs towards business recovery.
4. assess the effect of social support on the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs.

Research Questions

1. What were the challenges faced by hospitality and tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic?
2. What were the various forms of social support for hospitality and tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. What were the strategies employed by hospitality and tourism SMEs to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic?

Research Hypotheses

1. H1_a: Emotional support has no significant influence on business recovery.
2. H1_b: Instrumental support has no significant influence on business recovery.
3. H1_c: Informational support has no significant influence on business recovery.
4. H1_d: Appraisal support has no significant influence on business recovery.

Significance of the Study

The study will contribute to academics, practice, and policy in the following ways. First and foremost, the findings of this study will add to the

body of literature, on research on social support and business recovery of Hospitality and Tourism SMEs during pandemic, by serving as a resource for future researchers. This research will broaden the knowledge base of Hospitality and Tourism students with specializations in social support and pandemic recovery at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. The extent to which key indicators of the anti-crisis package of measures need to shift in order to boost SMEs' business activity will also be determined using this data. Another contribution of the study is that it will help shape policies of government agencies and corporations meant to assist small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

The finding as well is useful to hospitality and tourism SME operators to adopt business recovery techniques that are likely to yield better results in times of crisis. This study will also help policymakers, such as the Ghana Tourism Authority to devise plausible strategies for future action to bring about an improvement in the recovery strategies of the hospitality and tourism SMEs. Also, the findings will provide valuable insights on the extent to which social support from family members and persons who show up to provide support to either family-owned businesses, relative or friend's business during times of crisis.

Definition of Terms

Social support can be defined as supportive assistance one can rely on in times of stressful events/help a person receives from their networks in times of need. **Emotional support** is the availability of an individual willing to listen, commiserate and treat with kindness those who are emotionally troubled to minimise their distress.

Instrumental support refers to the physical aid and financial support given or received by persons or an organisation in difficult situations.

Informational support can be defined as the support a person receives in knowledge and guidance that might help in addressing issues as well as offering feedback on their progress.

Appraisal support is the assistance offered to individuals by assisting them in evaluating their situation and not necessarily providing new information.

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) per this study refer to businesses that has six to thirty employees as small and thirty-one to one hundred employees as medium.

Recovery refers to the short-term restoration activities that return the business to a minimum acceptable level of operation after a pandemic.

Delimitation of the Study

The scope of the study explains the boundaries of the research, and this is based on the fact that the researcher cannot study everything and everywhere, as stated by Kothari (2004). The scope of the study location was narrowed down to only Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana despite the numerous hospitality and tourism locations in Ghana. Studying the whole country will be a hectic task, thus the study was limited to Cape Coast. There is a lot of SMEs in Ghana, but the study was also limited to only SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector. However, the inclusion criteria were that only hospitality and tourism SMEs registered to legally operate in Ghana were considered for the study. This implies that a lot of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industry that were not registered were excluded from the study. The

reason for the exclusion is that they may illegally operate during the restrictions, thus without deeply experiencing the impact of the pandemic.

Limitations of the Study

This research encountered some challenges such as reluctance, unavailability of some of the study participants and the exclusion criteria of the study. For the interview an attempt to contact the study was faced with hindrances such as their busy schedules, hence, delaying the data collection process. This resulted in two-months of data collection instead of one month as initially scheduled. Also, a lot of SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector were not legally registered to operate hence, led to a smaller sample size. However, the researcher was able to get adequate SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector that fall within the inclusive criteria due to the help of the Central Regional Branch of Ghana Tourism Authority.

Organisation of the Study

This thesis consists of five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction, which focuses primarily on the study's context, problem statement, and objectives in addition to its organization. The second chapter provides a review of the theoretical and empirical literature pertinent to the study. The third chapter includes information on the research methodology, demographic, sample, and analytic tools employed in the study. The findings of the study are presented and discussed in Chapter Four. The fifth chapter also includes a summary of the key results, conclusions, recommendations, and suggestions for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on social support and business recovery. The review is aimed at analysing the relevant theories and empirical evidence of the study framework. In light of this, the literature review is categorized into three: the conceptual framework, theoretical review and empirical review.

Conceptual Review

Concept of Social Support

The concept of social support has received significant attention over the past five decades (e.g., Barrera, 1986; Cobb, 1976; Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Dean & Lin, 1977). Hobfoll (1988, p.121) explicates social support as “social interactions or relationships that provide individuals with actual assistance or that embed individuals within a social system to provide love, caring, or sense of attachment to a valued social group.” As pointed out by Hupcey (1998), Cobb’s (1976) and Hobfoll’s (1988) definition of social support includes only ‘emotional’ and ‘informational’ aspects of social support and hence failed to acknowledge the relevance of ‘instrumental’ or tangible support. Social support according to Hupcey (1998, p.6) combines these four dimensions: “emotional support (liking, love, empathy); instrumental/tangible support (goods and services); informational support (information about the environment); and appraisal support (information relevant to self-evaluation)”. Thoits (2010, p.46) has subsequently presented a more in-depth description of social support as “emotional, informational, or

practical assistance from significant others, such as family members, friends, or co-workers; (and that) support actually may be received from others or simply perceived to be available when needed”. A much-used typology proposed by Cohen (1992), Hupcey (1998), and Thoits (2010) combines four dimensions of the support system: emotional support, ‘tangible support’ or instrumental/material aid; ‘appraisal support’.

Social support, according to Dean and Lin (1977) is a result of major social networks that provide both tangible and non-tangible assistance. Song (2019) later reconstruct social support as “support access to an individual through social ties to other individuals, groups, and the larger community”. Social support depends on the structural and interactive features of social networks, as noted by Kaplan, Cassel, and Gore (1977, p.54) “(i.e., anchorage, reachability, density, range, directedness, intensity, and frequency).” Using insights from attachment theory, Henderson (1977, p.11) defines social support as “affectively pleasant social engagement with others in times of stress.”

According to Yap & Devilly, (2004), the idea of social support has two distinct components: the support that is really received and the support that is actually perceived. The term “received social support” relates to the aid a person has actually received, whereas the term “perceived social support” describes how readily one believes assistance to be available when needed (Barrera, 1986; Yap & Devilly, 2004; Kaniasty & Norris, 1996). However, most studies have shown that perceived social support has a stronger correlation with fewer distress symptoms than actual social support received (Cohen & Wills, 1985; Helgeson, 1993; Norris & Kaniasty, 1996).

One reason for this is that individuals often reject social assistance even when it is given to them, even if the donor of such support has good intentions (Dunkel-Schetter & Herbert, 1992).

Support from friends and family is sometimes confused with social integration, social networks, and social capital, all of which are built on networks but play important social roles. A person's social network is the smallest observable unit of society, providing a panoramic view of both the people to whom they are connected and the relationships between them (Song & Son, 2011). This can imply that social connections that are more clearly defined by normative role definitions tend to give more practical help, and close relationships tend to create a greater diversity of support than informal networks. However, social integration refers to "the structural density of an individual's social network, the quantity and quality of relationships, the number and kinds of social roles an individual perform, and the frequency of interaction among individuals in a group" (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003, p.213).

According to Mirowsky and Ross (2003), further suggested that the more socially interactive individuals are the more inclined they will give or be given help. For instance, socially interaction increases dependency and decreases individual freedom (Mirowsky & Ross, 2003, p.214-216). Through sustaining and developing existing ties, social integration contributes to high levels of social support. As the resources of the network's individuals are relied upon for a variety of mutually supporting objectives, resources may be seen of as a kind of social support.

Consequently, social support may be seen as an effect of many other network characteristics, such as social cohesiveness, social integration, social

capital, and so on (Lin, Song, & Son, 2011). Consequential measurements of social support may be found in markers of social integration, social capital, and other features of networks. According to Lin, Song, and Son (2011) viewpoint, the connection between these network-based elements is a two-way and ever-changing. For instance, the degree and nature of social integration, the availability of social capital, and the strength of social cohesiveness may all be redirected by the activation process of social support, which may be either fulfilling and successful or disappointing and ineffectual.

The people in an individual's social network are the source of that person's social support, however just having a social network is no assurance that an individual will get social support from others in their network (Pearlin, 1989). When one person helps another out significantly in meeting their informational, emotional, material, or friendship needs, and that help is acknowledged by both the giver and the receiver as support, a social support system is formed. While the sheer size of one's network may seem impressive, what really counts is the quality and depth of the relationships within it, as well as the generosity and openness of those who are eager to help (Parks, 2017).

However, individual's level of social support is widely held to be a significant factor in any attempt to explain their behaviour. Socially supported and entrepreneurially self-confident individuals are more likely to succeed in business (Krueger, Reilly & Carsrud, 2000). Social support from families, friends, and other social groups comes in many forms (Ko, Wang, & Xu, 2013). Ko et al. (2013) revealed that validation, tangible support, emotional support, compliment, and encouragement are the most common types of social

support given. From the empirical evidence, Francisco, José, José and Juan (2007) posit that social support significantly affects the success of businesses.

Simply put, social support is the help a person receives from their social networks in times of need. Researchers have shown that the level of social support a person receives before and throughout the lifespan of a business has a significant impact on both their chance of joining the process and their performance within it (Stam et al., 2014). Social support is defined in the context of business as an individual's hope for and confidence in receiving help and guidance from friends, family, and colleagues (Laslo-Roth, George- Levi, & Margalit, 2022; Sahban, & Sri-Ramalu, 2014). Both immediate family members (i.e., mom, dad, and kids) and extended family members (i.e., friends, neighbours, and teachers) count as core social groupings. The purpose of social support is to encourage and facilitate modern businesses in their pursuit of establishing and operating a firm (León, Descals & Domínguez, 2006). The responsibilities and effects of receiving social support from these various channels might vary widely. Different cultures place varying amounts of value on or dependence on the assistance of family and friends, thus it's important to analyse each separately (Procidano & Heller, 1983).

The concept of social support is studied as a multifaceted entity. Emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support are only some of the theoretical or conceptual ways in which social support has been broken down.

Emotional support

Emotional support is characterised by offering helps such as sympathy, concern, affection, and trust (Cohen, Sherrod, & Clark, 1986). According to theorists, emotional support is one of the most important benefits of close relationships, and research suggests that being on the receiving end of sensitive emotional support is linked to many measures of satisfaction. Most modern views of interpersonal interactions centre on the need for emotional support (Cunningham & Barbee, 2000; Reis, 2001). Although many theorists have suggested different definitions for the emotional support construct, most agree that it consists of showing sympathy and interest in another person when they are feeling down or anxious (Cutrona & Russell, 1990). Emotional support, as defined by Taylor (2011, p.190), is “affirming another person of their worth and treating them with kindness and compassion”. Assisting those who are emotionally troubled to get through their discomfort by listening to, empathizing with, validating, and investigating their emotions is also part of providing emotional support (Burleson, 1984).

Throughout a global epidemic, the support offered by close connections frequently has beneficial benefits, enabling individuals in need to deal with challenges more successfully, minimize distress, and preserve a good sense of self and attitude toward life (Burleson, 1994; Stroebe & Stroebe, 1996). According to studies, persons with supportive social connections have better mental health than those with non - supportive social support (Berkman, Glass, Brissette, & Seeman, 2000; Gurung, Sarason, Sarason., 2001; Seeman, 2000). Coupled with this, research indicates that emotional support is one of,

if not the most sought assistance supplied by close relationships (Xu & Burleson, 2001; Cutrona & Russell, 1987).

Emotional support comprises of “hearing and offering empathy” (Klyver et al. 2018, p.710) as well as “encouraging, understanding, attentiveness, and favourable respect” (Powell & Eddleston, 2017, p.265). According to Klyver et al. (2020), entrepreneurs can benefit from receiving emotional support because it increases their levels of optimism, dedication, and innovation, all of which are necessary for addressing challenges, dealing with unpredictability, and maintaining motivation and focus during trying times. Additionally, SMEs owners who are emotionally stable are better able to concentrate on expanding their businesses (Brüderl & Preisendorfer, 1998).

Instrumental support

The provision of material resources to aid in issue resolution is what is meant by “instrumental support” (Honig, Klyver & Steffens, 2018). Cross, Nguyen, Chatters, & Taylor (2018, p.13) define instrumental support as “the provision of tangible goods and services or tangible aid”. Although helping someone out financially might be seen as a sign of affection, it is distinct from emotional assistance. Tangible support is considered as concrete/physical assistance; for example, giving financial aid or performing assigned work for others. Tangible support” denotes active assistance that addresses certain needs.

Behavioural scientists established the idea of instrumental support to characterize a subtype of social support, along with other terminology that focused on the physical needs of people (Cohen, & Wills, 1985). Additionally, the notion is used in a study analysing social support in the workplace and

addressing assistance received while completing tasks (Cheng, Eschleman, & Mathieu, 2019; Cheng, Ghani, Gul, Shah & Usman 2021). Instrumental support, for example, seems to have a physical influence on the receiver. Thus, instrumental support in this study involves physical or tangible social support such as financial assistance received by SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industries during the pandemic.

Informational support

Choi (2020) defines informational support as the information offered to someone else during a moment of distress or uncontrollable situation. According to Cronenwett (1985), informational assistance aids in issue identification and means to resolution. Cutrona & Russell (1990) and Tilden & Weinert (1987) justify the use of informational assistance in the problem-solving procedure. Cobb (1976, p.11) views social support as information and classifies three types of information according to their functions: “information that leads a person to believe that he or she is cared for and loved, is esteemed and valued, and is part of a network of communication and mutual obligation.”

Informational assistance comprises supporting a person with knowledge and guidance that might help them address an issue, as well as offering feedback on their progress. Cassel (1976) hypothesized that such input might help a person retain a feeling of social belonging and integration. In addition, informational support may influence adaptational performance by suggesting alternative approaches to an issue or by assisting a person in reappraising a circumstance in the way of relieving stress; for instance, it may encourage the belief that nothing could have been done, that the stressful event

is not as significant as initially believed, or that the individual need not feel responsible (La-Rocco et al., 1980).

Appraisal support

Instead of focusing on finding solutions to issues, appraisal support encourages individuals to share knowledge with one another that is pertinent to the process of self-evaluation (Szkody & McKinney, 2020). According to Kahn and Antonucci (1980), affirmational support is another name for appraisal support. Expressions that acknowledge the correctness of actions or comments made by another individual are included in the realm of affirmational support (Kahn & Antonucci 1980). The learning approach that people go through in order to assess external cues that are important to their own well-being is characterized by appraisal theory. Social Support Appraisals measure the degree to which a person feels that he or she is loved by, regarded by, and associated with members of his or her family, friends, and other people in his or her life (Vaux, 1988).

Business Recovery

Business recovery refers to the short-term restoration of activities that return the business to a minimum acceptable level of operation after a pandemic or crisis (Bhaskara & Filimonau, 2021; Ewertowski, 2022). Operational activities such as customer patronization, reconnecting with old customers, exposure to new customers, return on investment, increase in sales revenue, identifying new sales and distribution channels to reach consumers and proactive communication with clients and customers to understand and manage their expectations (Corey, & Deitch, 2011; Stevenson, Brown, Seville, & Vargo, 2018; Morrish, & Jones, 2020).

The economic recession in the mid-2000s, often associated with the global financial crisis of 2007-2008, had a substantial impact on various industries, including hospitality and tourism (Kemp, 2015). Recovery for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the hospitality and tourism sector during that period involved a combination of adaptive strategies, government support, and shifts in consumer behavior (De Marchi, Lee & Gereffi, 2014). Many SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector implemented cost-cutting measures to weather the economic downturn. This included streamlining operations, reducing non-essential expenses, and renegotiating contracts with suppliers. Also, some businesses diversified their offerings to attract a broader customer base. This involved expanding services, introducing packages or promotions, or targeting new market segments.

Government intervention played a crucial role in supporting SMEs. In some cases, financial stimulus packages, tax incentives, or low-interest loans were provided to help businesses stay afloat and invest in their recovery (Tambunan, 2008; Peter, Adegbuyi, Olokundun, Peter, Amaihian, & Ibidunni, 2018). Some SMEs in the hospitality and tourism sector sought collaboration and partnerships to pool resources and increase visibility. This involved joint marketing efforts, shared events, and collaborative packages with other businesses in related industries (Wang, 2011; Mariani, 2016). Also, to retain existing customers and attract repeat business, some SMEs implemented and enhanced customer loyalty programs. Discounts, special promotions, and personalized offers were used to encourage repeat visits. Dynamic pricing models were adopted to respond to changes in demand. Offering discounts during off-peak times and introducing flexible cancellation policies helped

attract budget-conscious consumers (Vogt, 2011; Ramanathan, Subramanian, & Parrott, 2017; Ahmad, Ahmad, & Bakar, 2018).

Theoretical Review

The theory that underpins this study is the social support theory and the resource-based theory. These theories are thoroughly reviewed.

Social Support Theory

The theory of social support emerged from the research and publications by Don Drennon-Gala and Francis Cullen (1994) in their bid to establish the connection between individuals and social experiences in society. The primary tenet of the social support theory is that receiving help from friends and family in the form of both material and emotional resources makes a person more resilient to adversity (Drennon-Gala & Cullen, 1994). Social support theory is primarily embedded in ideas based on how “organized networks of human relations can assist people in meeting emotional, informational and instrumental needs” (Colvin, Cullen & Vander Ven, 2002, p. 24). The origin of social support is distinct such that support that comes from members of one’s main group (e.g., family and friends) and secondary groups (e.g., schools and churches), may be a source of strength for them.

A major premise of social support theory is the idea that having a good external source of support may help people deal with and cope with negative situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Charvat, Horstman, Jordan, Leverenz, & Okafor, 2021). It is therefore argued that the likelihood of hospitality and tourism SMEs success and sustenance is hinged on the availability of social support. The theory suggests that social support serves as a coping mechanism during times of stress, crisis, or challenges. Having a

support such as emotional, instrumental, informational, and appraisal can help SMEs better navigate difficult situations and reduce the negative impact of pandemic such as Covid-19 (Sarason, 2013; Cohen & McKay, 2020).

However, the shortcoming of the theory is that it does not explicitly distinguish between the quantity and quality of social support. Social support goes beyond having a large social network to factors such as the nature of the relationships and the type of support (Feeney & Collins, 2015). The social support theory is used in this study on the grounds that the availability of emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support to SMEs during and after a pandemic such as Covid-19 can propel recovery of full business operations. Also, social support can serve as an inimitable resource that can enable hospitality and tourism SMEs to recovery fast and gain competitive advantage hence, the use of the resource-based view theory as a supporting theory of social support theory.

Resource - Based View Theory

The Resource-Based View (RBV) was propounded by Wernerfelt 1984. RBV posits that a firm's distinct resources are a source of sustainable competitive advantage. As a popular theory in strategic management literature, it elucidates the role of resources such as social support in a business recovery after a crisis such as Covid-19 pandemic. RBV contends that resources are the fundamental assets that firms possess which aids them succeed (Akio, 2005; Peteraf & Barney, 2003; Powell, 2001). The foundation of RBV is that a firm's position is defined by a bundle of unique and valuable resources and capabilities such as social support which are both tangible and intangible and thus provides a balance vis-a-vis environmental models of strategy in an ever-

changing environment such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Rumelt, 1984, p. 557; Wernerfelt, 1984, p.172).

The RBV theory provides a framework for strategic decision-making by helping firms identify which resources and capabilities are critical for achieving and maintaining a competitive edge (Taher, 2012). The RBV theory provides a clear focus on the sources of sustainable competitive advantage. By emphasizing unique and valuable resources, it helps firms identify and leverage their distinctive strengths in the market (Arend & Lévesque, 2010). In contrast, RBV theory does not offer a straightforward method for managers to identify which resources are truly valuable and unique to their firm. Applying the RBV theory can be complex, especially for practitioners who may find it difficult to identify and assess intangible resources or to measure the exact contribution of specific resources to competitive advantage (Madhani, 2010).

In today's business atmosphere, the success of a business is dependent on a business's ability to serve, preserve and recover from stressful events such as the COVID-19 pandemic (Agyapong & Boohene, 2020). In view of this, Day and Wenseley (1988) advanced that businesses should deploy resources and capabilities, which are strategic in nature, to overcome hurdles such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Social support is a kind of resources distinct among hospitality and tourism SMEs. The nature of operations in the sector requires constant quality interactions and long-term of continued service provision which forms a basis for social network building. The availability of social support resources such as emotional, instrumental, informational and

appraisal are hinged on the social network of hospitality and tourism SMEs (Heaney & Israel, 2008).

Empirical Review

Several studies have been carried out on the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism and hospitality industry globally (Dayour et al., 2020; Soliku, Kyiire, Mahama & Kubio, 2021; Mensah & Boakye, 2021; Soliku et al., 2021). Some of the studies are discussed in the succeeding section.

As the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic grows, it has threatened the survival of small and medium scale businesses in the hospitality and tourism industry across the globe. Quarantines, social distancing, and cascading economic impacts made it difficult for many of these SMEs to carry out business.

Impact of COVID-19 on Hospitality and Tourism SMEs

The effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) might vary widely depending on factors such as industry, geography, and company style; yet, studies show that businesses everywhere are facing difficult circumstances. The common impact of the COVID-19 on SMEs in hospitality and tourism industry discovered by researchers are declined sales, operational challenges, financial strain on the business, and personal stress.

Declined Sales

For instance, Soliku, Kyiire, Mahama & Kubio, (2021) examined the impacts and implications of COVID-19 on the eco-tourism sector in Ghana. The study revealed that tourism economic activities in the area had declined and collapsed during the COVID-19 period. This according to the study has

resulted in loss of revenue. Similarly, the findings of Dayour, et al. (2020) on coping and post-recovery strategies during COVID-19 for hospitality and tourism businesses in Ghana revealed declined in revenue as the most common challenges of SMEs during the pandemic. These findings are supported by Mensah & Boakye, (2021) Gursoy and Gursoy (2020) and whose findings also revealed declined in revenue generation during the pandemic. According to the findings of this research, it is challenging for companies to physically access their clients because of the closure of enterprises as a result of lockdowns, mobility limitations, and social alienation. People are altering their purchasing patterns to cut down on non-essential products and services as the economic shock ripples through the populace. Furthermore, they argue that some endeavours, such as travel and events, are very risky and should be avoided.

Operational Challenges

Another impact discovered by researchers is operational challenges (e.g., Dayour et al., 2020; Mensah & Boakye, 2021; Soliku et al., 2021). The study of Soliku et al. (2021) revealed that the COVID-19 has made most managers laid-off most of their employees. Also, it was revealed that SMEs find it difficult to reach out to most of their customers. This was in congruence of the findings of Dayour et al. (2020); Gursoy and Chi (2020) and Mensah and Boakye, (2021) whose studies revealed operational impact of COVID-19 on SMEs. Gursoy and Chi (2020) investigated the effects of the COVID-19 outbreak on the hospitality industry. The result shows that the restrictions placed on travelling as measures in controlling the pandemic led to a decline in business operation and lay-off of employees. Similarly, Dayour et al. (2020)

also revealed that COVID-19 immensely affected the hospitality and tourism industry as it resulted in business shutdowns, contract cancellations, and layoffs of employees. This research shows that the implementation of social distance policies posed difficulties for businesses, who are unable to provide adequate protections for their workers.

Financial Strain

Also, studies have revealed financial strain on the hospitality and tourism SMEs during the pandemic. According to Soliku et al. (2021), cash flow problems arise as a result of falling revenue and operational issues. Reduced financing made it harder for hospitality sector operators to get working capital. Studies have also revealed the personal stress of the SMEs operators in the hospitality and tourism sector. Abhari, Jalali, Jaafar, and Tajaddini (2022) state that certain hospitality and tourism sector entrepreneurs find it difficult to adjust their thinking to the present problem and deal with their worries, pressure, and anxiety. The worries and pressures of workers were also a problem for entrepreneurs to deal with. Since it is impossible to predict how the situation will develop, making long-term plans is challenging. Therefore, business owners are less able to make the various challenging, time-sensitive choices required to overcome the situation (Abhari et al., 2021).

Social Support and Business Recovery of SMEs

Studies have indicated a positive and significant relationship between social support and entrepreneurship success. For instance, Honig, Klyver, and Steffens (2018) examine “social support timing and persistence in nascent entrepreneurship.” The findings revealed a positive relationship between emotional support, instrumental support, and entrepreneurial persistence. The

result suggests that entrepreneurs who received emotional and instrumental support from their social contacts are more likely to be persistent.

Studies in the general Chinese community (Yu, Li, Li, Xiang, Yuan, Liu, & Xiong 2020), healthcare providers (Hou et al., 2020), and teenagers have all demonstrated that social support has a protective effect in lowering anxiety, sadness, and mental discomfort caused by the COVID-19 pandemic (Dong, Mo, Hu, Qi, Jiang, Jiang, & Tong, 2020). Research by Chen, Zou, & Gao, (2021) found that having a strong social network helps ease emotional pain and lessens the blow of COVID-19 related stresses. Decrease in emotional distress during infectious disease outbreaks may be achieved by interventions that lessen exposure to stressors and provide social support within communities (Chen et al., 2021).

In the face of adversity, relying on one's social network for both knowledge and hands-on help may be a helpful coping mechanism for both the mind and the body (Mo, Deng, Zhang, Lang, Liao, Wang, & Huang, 2020). There is a favourable and statistically significant link between social support and professional success, according to studies conducted among administrative personnel (Nasurdin Ling & Khan, 2018). Another research found that feeling like you have friends at work might boost your productivity (Schaufeli & Salanova, 2007). Social support has been shown to increase output, according to research conducted by Beehr, Jex, Murray, and Stacy (2000).

Research conducted by Krueger, Reilly and Carsrud, (2000) found that entrepreneurs who had both strong social networks and a strong sense of their own ability to succeed on their own were more likely to do so. Analyzing the

predictions that stood on their own, Okoye, Audu and Karatu, (2017) found that only social support significantly influenced entrepreneurial success. Similarly, research by Setyawati, Nurfaizal, Dwiatmadja and Anggraeni, (2019) discovered that social support significantly boosted both the owner's sense of creative self-efficacy and their own levels of originality. The results also show that the link between social support and owner creativity might be mediated by creative self-efficacy. In the wake of calamities, small businesses rely on their owners' innovative problem-solving skills to get back on their feet.

Social support and expectations, as well as social support and self-esteem, are significantly linked, as shown by Friedlander, Reid, Shupak, & Cribbie, (2007). Researchers have shown that social support increases feelings of contentment and happiness (Nurfaizal et al., 2018; Siedlecki et al., 2014). A person's sense of self-efficacy grows and strengthens in tandem with the amount of social support they get (Schunk & Meece, 2006).

Business Recovery Strategies During Pandemics

Business Operations Strategy

Studies found that hospitality and tourism SMEs put in several recovery strategies during a pandemic. For example, during SARS 2003 pandemic, Chien & Law (2003) examined the impact of the SARS on hotels. The study identified that SMEs put in recovery strategies such as suspension of business operation, temporary closures, employees pay cuts and compulsory leaves with no pay, taking preventative measures, introducing new procedures, and planning for the worst. Similarly, Tew., Lu, Tolomiczenko, & Gellatly 2008 examined SARS as a lesson in strategic

planning for hoteliers and destination marketers. The findings revealed that SMEs put in recovery strategies such as cutting costs by laying off workers, employees taking a vacation or unpaid leave; and discounted packages for the customers.

Sales Strategy

Kim et al. (2005) conducted research on how the SARS pandemic affected the Korean hotel business and how the sector recovered. Expense reduction, collaboration with other SMEs via joint marketing, price reductions, new marketing campaigns, and a halt to investment were all shown to be effective ways of weathering the recession. Instead of terminating people and investing in training programs, they advocated for employees to take time off for vacation or unpaid leave. They also made significant strides in developing efficient means of communicating both internally and outside. Additionally, Gu and Wall (2006) investigated the ways in which Chinese tourist businesses dealt with the SARS pandemic. Based on their research and observations, most Chinese tourist businesses responded to the SARS epidemic by cutting prices, investing more in marketing, creating innovative goods, probing untapped areas, and teaming up with similar businesses.

Digital Marketing Strategy

Several papers (Mitchell, Powell, Blumenthal, Norten, Ironson, Pitula & Berkman, 2003; Olshansky, 2005; Wright 2016) also mentioned hospitality and tourism SMEs responses to the most recent health crisis, COVID-19. Several of the suggestions made by Rodriguez-Antón and Alonso-Almeida (2020) have been put into practice in the Spanish hotel sector. Haqbin, Radmanesh and Shojaei (2022) investigated COVID-19 recovery solutions for

hospitality and tourism small and medium-sized enterprises. The findings revealed that the recovery strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism sector SMEs include cost reduction, price reduction, outsourcing, adoption of digital marketing, holistic crisis management policy, temporary closure of operations, resource allocation social cooperation, applied for government support and loans among others.

Business Model Strategy

As another example, a case study conducted by Breier et al. (2021) on six Austrian hospitality enterprises analysed the impact of business model innovation on their operations during the COVID-19 crisis. According to the results, implementing business model innovation during and after the crisis aided in the development of new income streams and the maintenance of a more robust liquidity position. Avraham (2021) did a similar investigation at how crisis recovery programs impacted popular U.S. tourist spots. This research revealed that crisis recovery efforts use three distinct image restoration strategies: targeting the original news outlet, the target demographic, and the target demographics friends and family.

Kukanja, Planinc, and Sikošek (2020) examined “crisis management practices in hospitality and tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic.” The study specifically analysed how hospitality and tourism SMEs reacted to the crisis caused by the pandemic. The purpose of this research is to identify the operational crisis management methods that hospitality and tourism SMEs used to mitigate the effects of the crisis. According to the data, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) prioritize the following crisis management techniques in order to recover from the pandemic: workforce, cost control,

organizational support, and promotional and customer-related marketing tactics. Thukral (2021) refers to this recovery strategy as applying creativity to problems to obtain the opportunity.

Alves, Hao, Lok, Luo, and Yubo (2020) studied the difficulties faced by small businesses in Macao. The focus of the research was on the crisis management techniques used by SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research showed that among the tactics used by small businesses include HR policies that allow for some leeway, efforts to cut costs, steps to better connect with customers, and the use of government assistance programs.

Conceptual Framework

Drennon-Gala and Cullen's (1994) notion of social support served as the basis for this research. This idea discusses how people and companies may make advantage of the social assistance they get from their networks in times of need (Kim et al., 2013). As its name implies, social support is meant to provide a helping hand to entrepreneurs and company managers as they launch and operate their ventures (León, Descals & Domínguez, 2006). The social support hypothesis has been utilized by researchers to show that having a social network of people who have your back in several ways (emotionally, instrumentally, informationally, and appraisingly) makes it easier to deal with adversity (Cao et al., 2010; Chamlin & Cochran 1997; Colvin, Cullen, & Vander Ven, 2002).

This study conceptualizes social support as the exogenous variable with four specific dimensions: emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal supports. Business recovery was utilized in the study as the endogenous variable. Other variables like the challenges faced by SMEs

during the Covid-19 pandemic and strategies adopted to curtail the impact of the pandemic were also investigated in the study. In Figure 1, the relationship between the exogenous variables and endogenous variables are shown from the direction of the arrows. Based on the social support theory and resource based view theory, the study hypothesised that the presence of support such as emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal can influence the recovery of SMEs. Also, Figure 1 illustrates how the recovery strategies and challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic impacted the Hospitality and Tourism SMEs.

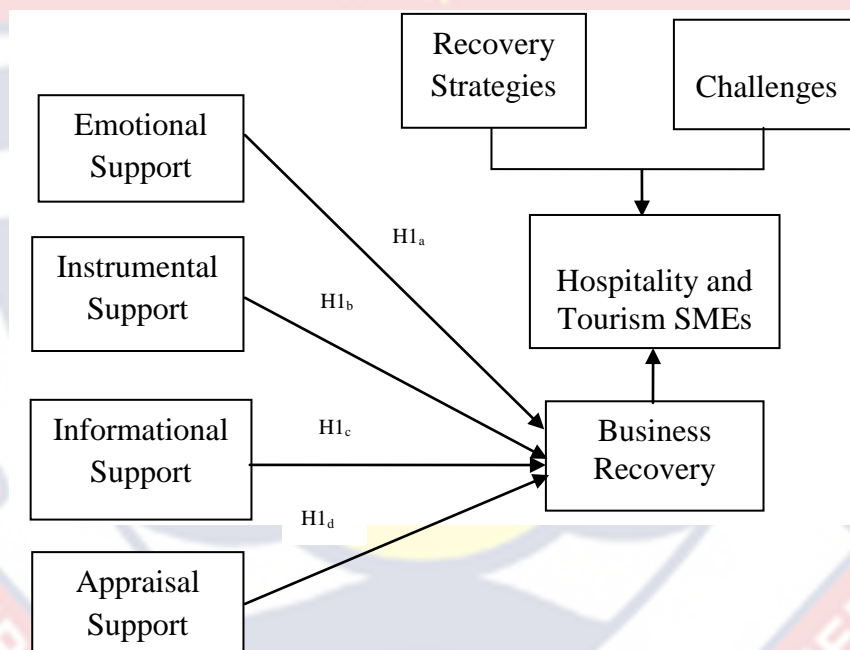


Figure 1: Conceptual framework

Source: Author's Construct

Chapter Summary

This chapter presents a review of relevant literature on social support and business recovery. The review is aimed at analysing the relevant theories and empirical evidence of the study framework. In light of this, the literature review is categorized into three: the conceptual framework, theoretical review and empirical review. The concept of social support has received significant

attention over the past five decades (e.g., Barrera, 1986; Cobb, 1976; Cohen, Gottlieb, & Underwood, 2000; Dean & Lin, 1977). The concept of social support is studied as a multifaceted entity. Emotional support, instrumental support, informational support, and appraisal support are only some of the theoretical or conceptual ways in which social support has been broken down.

The primary tenet of the social support theory is that receiving help from friends and family in the forms of both material and emotional resources makes a person more resilient to adversity (Cullen, 1994). The likelihood of business success and sustenance is hinged on the availability of a social support which explains that social support reduces the adverse impact of crisis on the business outcome, so the more robust the social support the higher the likelihood of business achieving a good outcome. A major premise of social support theory is the idea that having a good external source of support may help people deal with and cope with the negative situations (Cao et al., 2010) such as the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hospitality and Tourism SMEs, to maintain their position in business have to be innovative with recovery strategies. There is an ever-increasing interest in studying how to bounce back from disasters on a global scale, since the potential for disruptive events is ever-present (Burnard & Bhamra, 2011). Studies have found social support to have a significant influence on business recovery during pandemics (Chang, 2010; Jordan, Javernick, 2013; Kort-Butler, 2018; Olshansky, 2005; Smith & Wenger, 2007). However, this study would help to prove or disprove their assertions.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS

Introduction

This chapter describes the methods employed for the study. It deals with the design, population, sample size and sampling procedure. Also, it focuses on the instrument for data collection, data collection procedures, data processing and analysis and ethical consideration.

Research Philosophy

This study is grounded in the pragmatist approach. Pragmatists are of the view that essential knowledge can be produced from any form of research undertaken by a researcher (objective or subjective form); thus, can be acquired through both quantitative and qualitative approach (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). However, the differences that may result are based on the type of research questions set for the study. Sekaran and Bougie (2016) advanced that a pragmatist focuses on practical and applied research. Pragmatism values the pursuit of a comprehensive and holistic understanding of a phenomenon. Mixed methods research allows researchers to gather both quantitative data (numbers, statistics) and qualitative data (descriptive, narrative), providing a more complete picture of the research topic. This comprehensive approach can lead to richer insights and a more nuanced understanding of complex phenomena (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016; Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Research Approach

Given cognizance to the research philosophy, the mixed methods approach was employed for the study. Mixed methods concern the combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to obtain

knowledge on a given interest of inquiry (Creswell (2014). According to Saunders et al. (2016), the mixed method approach is more robust and provides comprehensive answers to research questions. It aims to minimise the limitations encountered in qualitative or quantitative studies. A mixed methods approach allows researchers to gain a more comprehensive understanding of a research problem or question. Qualitative methods provide insights into the underlying context, motivations, and perceptions, while quantitative methods offer statistical generalizability and patterns. Together, they provide a more holistic view of the phenomenon under investigation (Salaria, 2012).

Qualitative data provides a rich contextual background for quantitative findings. This contextualization helps in the interpretation of statistical results by offering a deeper understanding of the social, cultural, or organizational factors that may influence the observed patterns. It adds depth and meaning to numerical data (Bryman, 2006; Clark *et al.*, 2008). The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods contributes to the increased validity and reliability of a study. While qualitative methods provide depth and context, quantitative methods offer statistical rigor. Together, they create a more robust research design that can withstand scrutiny and produce findings with higher credibility (Creswell, Klassen, Plano Clark & Smith (2011).

Research Design

This study the concurrent research design which is made up of three major research designs: sequential, concurrent and embedded (Saunders et al., 2016). The concurrent design best favours this study as it gives equal emphasis on both the interview and the questionnaire for qualitative and quantitative data respectively. With this design, data collection from both the

quantitative, that is the questionnaire, and the qualitative, that is the interview are done at the same time and analysed concurrently (Creswell, 2014). The design is used when researchers wish to collect both data and analyse at the same time, make comparison between the results and draw conclusion from both sides. The rationale behind the choice of this design was that the researcher valued equally the two forms of data and treated them as such.

Both the quantitative and the qualitative data were collected concurrently on the same days. Data was thereby merged, and the results of analyses used simultaneously to understand the research questions through the comparison of findings from the quantitative and qualitative analysis. Clark, Creswell, Green, & Shope (2008) stated that “during interpretation, this design helps the researcher to directly compare and contrast quantitative statistical results with qualitative findings in order to elaborate valid and well-substantiated conclusions about the problem under study”.

Furthermore, the choice of this design was based on the premise of its flexibility of use when collecting data because the researcher was interested in investigating the role of social support in the recovery of Hospitality and Tourism SMEs using structured questionnaire to obtain the quantitative data and structured interview to obtain the qualitative data.

Study Area

The research area was Cape Coast Metropolis in the Central Region of Ghana, this is due to its general recognition of diverse range of attraction options and city of education in Ghana. Cape Coast has a University, a College of Education, a Nursing Training College, and ten public first-class second-circle institutions such as Wesley Girl’s, Holy Child, Mfantipim, and

Adisadel College. Cape Coast is located 165 km west of Accra, the capital city of Ghana and to the south, the Atlantic Ocean. Cape Coast has a total population of 2,859, 821 people, according to the 2021 Population and Housing Census (Ghana Statistical Service, 2021), with the Akan ethnic group accounting for nearly 84% of the total population. As an urban destination for tourism, Cape Coast attracts tourists from all over the globe for its numerous tourist attractions and receives a large volume of tourist traffic throughout history in relation to tourism activities, providing accommodation, restaurants, entertainment and tourist attractions (Aksoz & Bac, 2012; Mensah & Gamor, 2017). Based on the influx of hospitality and tourist activities in Cape Coast, it becomes imperative to assess the factors of business recovery in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The town has benefited from the inflow of students and visitors from all across Ghana and beyond. Cape Coast serves as a regional capital and major city, and its transportation infrastructure makes it easy to travel to surrounding communities. Because of this, the city is well-positioned to benefit from and contribute to tourism and tourism development, and it attracts a large number of tourists and business people alike (Boakye, 2012; Badu-Baiden, Boakye & Otoo, 2016; Ghana Tourist Board, 2013).

Cape Coast is thought to be one of the most popular tourist destinations in all of Ghana, and this is not unexpected given the city's wide range of attractions (GTA, 2017). In addition, Cape Coast metropolises are the places where visitors spend the most time, and they are often engaged in a variety of activities, such as shopping and window-shopping (Badu-Baiden, Boakye &

Otoo, 2016). For these and other reasons, Cape Coast is a great location for this study.

Population

Population refers to a group about which a study seeks to generalize or the theoretically determined grouping of study subjects. A study population, also known as a target population, is a set of elements from which a sample is drawn (Babbie, 2010). According to Vogt & Johnson (2011), it can also be defined as “the population of individuals whom the researcher is interested in describing and making statistical inferences about” (Adom, 2015, p.106). The population for this study was all the licensed hospitality and tourism SMEs in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The population of SMEs in operation in the hospitality and tourism sector in Cape Coast Metropolis as at the time of the study was estimated at 200. The target population were the owners or managers of hospitality and tourism firms in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This means, 200 owners or managers represented the total population employed in the study.

Sample Size and Sampling Procedure

This segment outlines the procedure for gathering data and the selection of sample procedures. Sampling refers to the selection of a subset of a studied population (Babbie, 2007). Sampling is the mechanism of picking certain components of a population for research in order to make conclusions based on the results of the individual samples (Zikmund et al., 2013). According to Adom (2015), sampling must be executed in such a way that the elements chosen from the target population properly represent the whole population from which the elements were chosen. Researchers are opened to two types of

sampling, namely probability sampling and non-probability (Sarantakos, 2005), both of which were employed in the current study.

Under the probability all elements in the population have an equal chance of being sampled and the probability that any of them will be chosen can be determined (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2005), probability sampling is used when a researcher wants to generalize the results of a study to the universe under investigation. Probability sampling includes random, stratified, systematic and cluster sampling methods. The methods for selecting a random sample from the research population under the probability sampling design include lottery technique, random numbers method, and computer method (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). The study employed simple random sampling technique to determine the respondents for the study. Frankfort-Nachmias, Nachmias, & DeWaard, (2015) describes simple random sampling “as the basic probability sampling design that gives each of the total sampling units of the population an equal and known nonzero probability of being selected.”

The study employed stratified random and purposive sampling techniques. Using Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table a sample size of 132 is appropriate from the population estimated at 200. According to Saunders et al. (2016) a minimum sample size of 5-50 is appropriate for a qualitative study if data saturation can be achieved. Hence, 10 owners and managers of hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast were interviewed for the qualitative strand of the study. The sample frame which has the details of the registered hospitality and tourism SMEs was obtained from the Ghana Tourism Authority and used as basis of the study’s contact.

Table 1: Sample Frame

SMEs	Population	Sample Proportion
Restaurant	40	32
Guest house/hotel	30	12
Souvenir	28	18
Fast food joint	100	78
Travel and tour operators	2	2
Total	200	142

Source: Field Survey (2022)

The stratified random sampling technique was deemed appropriate for selecting the sample from each stratum because it gives each SMEs a fair representation. The RANDBETWEEN function in Microsoft Excel 2019 was used to select hospitality and tourism SMEs from the Cape Coast Metropolis from each stratum. The respondents in each stratum were assigned numbers from one to the last number of the population, and the excel function was used to select the SMEs randomly from each stratum. The process was repeated until the desired sample size was selected from each stratum. The instrument was further distributed among the respondents selected by the Excel Function.

On the other hand, nonprobability sampling is a strategy in which members of the population are chosen because the researcher believes they are representative of the population and are accessible. This sampling method provides no foundation for determining the likelihood that each item in the population has an equal chance of being included in the sample (Kothari, 2004; Vishwakarma & Singh, 2012). Concerning the qualitative aspect of the study, the purposive sampling technique, a nonprobability sampling in which an expert picks the sample based on his or her judgment about certain relevant sampled members' attributes (Zikmund et al., 2013), was adopted to select 10

owners or managers of hospitality and tourism SMEs to provide appropriate information in response to some aspect of the study objectives. Here, the study interviewed the owners or managers on the support obtained during the pandemic.

Data Collection Instrument

Data collection in a descriptive study usually involves techniques such as interviews, questionnaires, and observation (Creswell, 2014; Robson, 2011). The researcher used questionnaires and interview guide to collect data from the respondents. The questionnaire was structured based on the research questions, and the key variables of interest to the study. Questionnaires were used to facilitate the collection of data to analyse the quantitative objectives of the study. It enabled a statistical analysis to be conducted to test for the relationship between social support and business recovery.

The questionnaire has three sections. Section 'A' captures demographic data (such as age, gender, educational background, years of operating, and business location) from the respondents. The respondents were provided with an option to tick as described in their demographic information. Section 'B' solicits information on challenges faced by hospitality and tourism SMEs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The responses will be based on a 5-point scale ("1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral ; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree"). Section 'C' of the questionnaire solicits information on the social support received during the pandemic. Social Support Scale was adapted from Cobb's (1976), Macdonald, (1998), Zimet, Dahlem, Zimet and Farley (1988), and) to measure the social support received. The scale-item statement was grouped under emotional support, instrumental/tangible

support, informational support, and appraisal support. Also, a 5-point Likert scale comprising (1 = “not at all”; 2 = “Slightly”; 3 = “Somewhat”; 4 = “Moderately”; 5= “Extremely”) was used to measure the rate at which social support was received.

The in-depth interview guide was used to acquire qualitative data. This gives the researchers complete freedom to direct the flow of the interview, ask questions in any sequence they see fit, and tailor the wording of any questions to the specifics of the interview (Rubin & Babbie, 2008). The interview guide approach helped the researcher to establish some level of rapport and trust with respondents by encouraging them to bounce back from the COVID-19 downturn. It also enhanced the opportunity for the researcher to convey empathy to participants and also to share in their emotions.

The interview consisted of one section and take approximately 20 minutes per participant. The first section enquired about the challenges faced by the hospitality and tourism SMEs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. In the second section of the interview, data was solicited on the strategies adopted for business recovery during the pandemic. The in-depth interview guide was an appropriate technique since it allowed respondents the time and scope to talk about their opinions on the subject. The interview was selected as the method of data collection because of its potential to provide in-depth insights and because it gives study participants more freedom to express themselves freely and candidly (Oppenheim, 2000).

Reliability and Validity

A research instrument's validity and reliability demonstrate how well it captures the parameters it was designed to measure (Saunders *et al.*, 2016).

Reliability refers to a measure's consistency, whereas validity assesses how well the assessment items accurately represent the construct in a quantitative study (Haele & Twycross, 2015). The Cronbach's alpha test was used to assess the reliability and validity of the research instrument. Previous studies have found that a Cronbach alpha value closer to 1 gives higher reliability of the questionnaire items (Saunders *et al.*, 2012; Creswell, 2014; Beins & McCarty, 2017). However, the threshold many researchers accept is that an alpha value of 0.7 or more shows that the indicator is reliable.

Pretesting of Data Collection Instruments

The questionnaire was pre-tested on hospitality and tourism SMEs in Elmina, this area was chosen because it is also one of the tourist destinations in Ghana with visitor characteristics as Cape Coast. According to Saunders *et al.* (2016) pre-test of the research instrument provide clarity to the questions and help identify lapses in the research instrument. In this study, the purpose of the pre-test was to test the research instrument's reliability, content validity and to identify and rectify problem areas in the instrument. The internal consistency of the instrument was determined using the Cronbach's Alpha.

The reliability coefficient for challenges faced by hospitality and tourism SMEs as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic was a Cronbach's Alpha (α) of 0.807. In terms of the various forms of social support hospitality and tourism SMEs received during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Cronbach's Alpha (α) of 0.823 was obtained. Also, a reliability coefficient of 0.858 was obtained for the effect of social support on business recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs. In addition, strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs towards business recovery obtained a reliability coefficient of 0.899.

Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining ethical clearance from the Institutional Review Board of the University of Cape Coast, an introductory letter was collected from the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management and was sent to the various SMEs managers/owners for their consent and approval before the data was collected.

The introductory letter and the consent form were given to the participants one month before the data collection. In order to achieve the objectives of the study, structured questionnaires and the interview guide were sent by the researcher via WhatsApp/email to SMEs owner/managers a week before the data collection. The aim is to make them conversant with the kind of question they will be answering, and to facilitate the interview process.

However, the data collection started in the first week of November, 2022 and ended in the last week of December, 2022. Both the quantitative and qualitative data were collected simultaneously. A total of 2 months was used for the data collection. Due to the nature and the sample size of the study, field assistants were recruited and trained for the data collection. To ensure that the data were accurately recorded, data collection was done face-to-face and permission was sought from the interviewees to tape-record the interview session.

Data Processing and Analysis

Data collected was organized and presented in tables in a meaningful way for easy analysis to aid decision making. The raw quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires was processed and organized using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Means and standard

deviation, and regression analysis are the statistical tools to be used for analyses of the quantitative data. Research objectives were analysed using descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations) while inferential statistics (correlation and multiple regression) was used to analyse the hypotheses.

Descriptive statistics were used to determine the characteristics of the study constructs. They were used to determine whether the constructs used for the study do not violate assumptions underlying the usage of any of the statistical techniques employed by the researcher in addressing study objectives. Whereas statistics such as means, median and standard deviations were used for continuous variables, frequencies and percentages were used for categorical variables (Pallant, 2016). Again, the overall assessment of the objectives 1 and 2 was done using mean values generated for the constructs with 1 to 2.9 representing low levels and 3 to 6 representing high levels of a variable; a 0.1 cut-off point, as applied by Boaler, Dieckmann, Pérez-Núñez, Sun and Williams (2018) and Onyefulu (2018).

Furthermore, a thematic analysis was conducted on the interview data. Qualitative studies are anticipated to fulfil the standards of transcription and interpretation of data in order to produce a fruitful conclusion in the process of analysing the data (Atkinson, 1998). Accordingly, a transcription of each informant's recorded interview was conducted so that we may ask them the same set of questions. The information was analysed using a thematic framework based on the interviews. Braun and Clarke (2006) looked at the big picture of how to analyse qualitative data which was considered in the study. However, to facilitate the identification of the themes in the data, the study

made use of the NVivo v10 qualitative analytical tool to identify similar themes.

Ethical Considerations

Patten and Newhart (2017) state that the right to privacy, anonymity, and information secrecy are the fundamental ethical principles that must be met in every study. The health consequences of COVID-19 pandemic provide still another obstacle. It was everyone's goal to solve these ethical problems. Given that the researcher is aware of the potential psychological injury, financial hardship, and social harm that might befall respondents if ethical considerations are not addressed, the researcher acquired ethical permission from the Institutional Review Board at the University of Cape Coast.

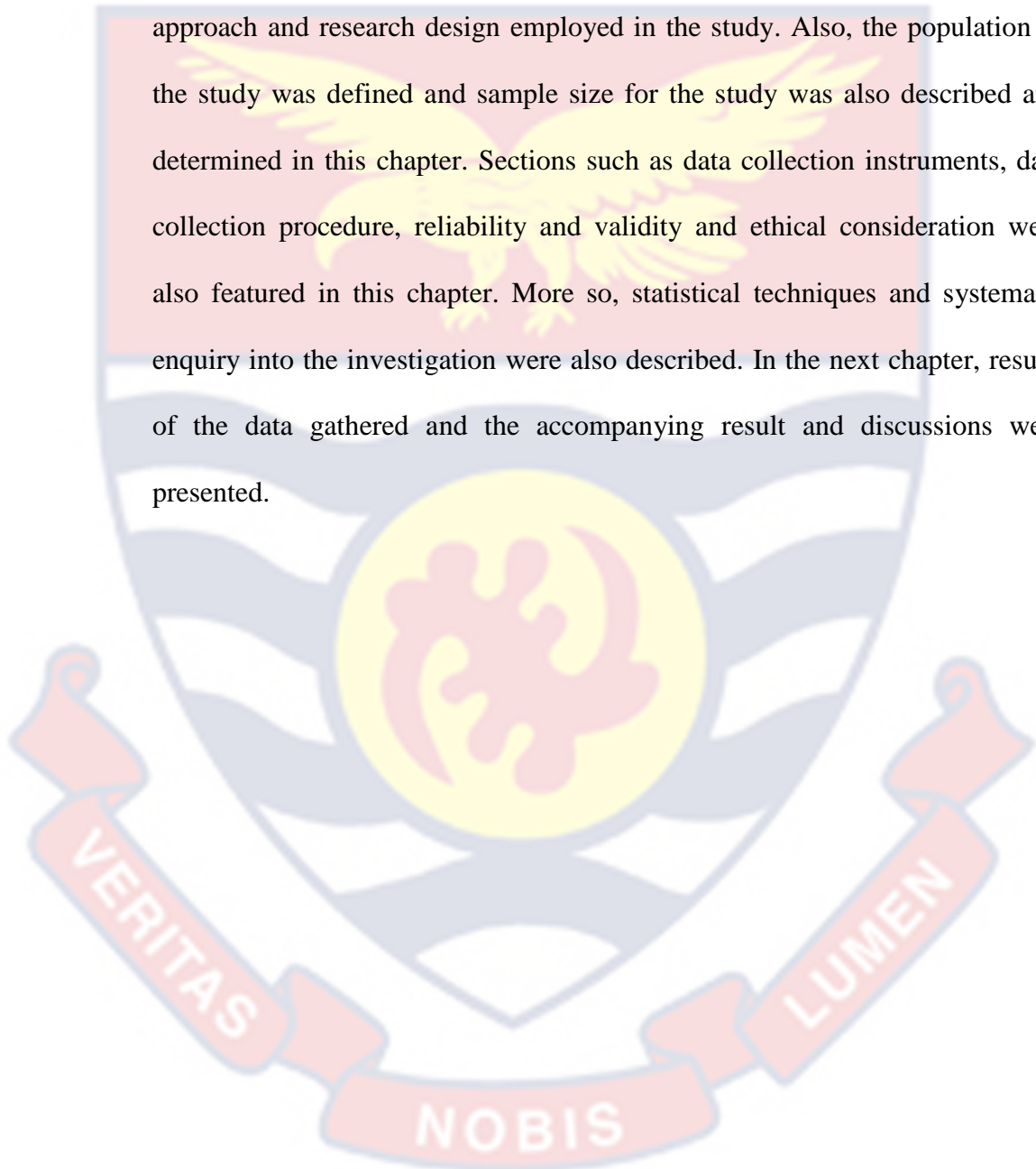
All efforts were made to ensure that these ethical issues were addressed. All respondents were allowed to participate in the data collection exercise on their own accord through voluntary participation. Respondents' right to privacy was protected by allowing them to complete the surveys on their own, and no information about them was collected without their knowledge or consent. Finally, all respondents were assured that the information they provide would be kept strictly confidential. The survey and the interview were conducted with a non-disclosure agreement signed and agreed to be binding on the researcher, which stipulates that any information considered confidential not be disclosed to a third party other than the authorities responsible to review the work.

Also, all COVID-19 protocols were observed during the data collection. COVID-19 preventive measures are deemed necessary in the data

collection process. The use of face masks and social distancing was observed. Participants were provided with a nose mask by the researcher.

Chapter Summary

This chapter provided information on the research philosophy, research approach and research design employed in the study. Also, the population of the study was defined and sample size for the study was also described and determined in this chapter. Sections such as data collection instruments, data collection procedure, reliability and validity and ethical consideration were also featured in this chapter. More so, statistical techniques and systematic enquiry into the investigation were also described. In the next chapter, results of the data gathered and the accompanying result and discussions were presented.



CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings and discussions of the study. The section captures the demographic information of the participants and the presentation of the findings based on the study's research question.

Socio-Demographic Information of the Respondents

The socio-demographic characteristics of respondents includes gender, age, highest academic qualification, and marital status are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that 78 (54.9%) of the participants were female and 64 (45.1%) were males. The table also shows that 49 (34.5%) of the participants were between the age group of 20 -29 years, 42 (29.6%) were between 30-39 years, and 30 (21.1%) were also between 40-49 years. On their educational qualification, 68 (47.9%) had first degree, 15 (10.6%) had master's degree, 23 (16.2%) had HND, 6 (4.2%) completed SHS/middle school, and 14 (9.9%) had no formal education. The table further shows that 59 (41.5%) of the participants were single, 58 (40.8%) were married, 12 (8.5%) separated, and 4 (2.8%) divorced. In addition, the table shows that 70 (49.3%) of the participants were owners, 59 (41.5%) were managers and 13 (9.2%) held other positions in the business.

Table 2: Socio-Demographic Information of Participants

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	64	45.1
Female	78	54.9
Age range		
Less than 20	4	2.8
20 – 29	49	34.5
30 – 39	42	29.6
40 – 49	30	21.1
50 – 59	13	9.2
60 and above	4	2.8
Educational Qualification		
SHS	6	4.2
HND/Equivalent	23	16.2
Diploma	16	11.3
First degree	68	47.9
Masters	15	10.6
No formal education	14	9.9
Marital status		
Single	59	41.5
Married	58	40.8
Divorce	4	2.8
Separated	12	8.5
Engaged	9	6.3
Position		
Manager	59	41.5
Owner	70	49.3
Other	13	9.2

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3: Organizational characteristics

Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Years of Work Experience		
Less than 5	52	36.6
5 – 10	38	26.8
11 – 15	25	17.6
More than 15	27	19.0
Business Type		
Restaurant	32	22.5
Guest house/hotel	12	8.5
Souvenir	18	12.7
Fast food joint	78	54.9
Travel and tour operators	2	1.4
Type of Ownership		
Sole proprietor	104	73.2
Partnership	30	21.1
Limited liability company	8	5.6

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Table 3 shows the business characteristics. With regards to the years of experience, 52 (36.6%) were found to have been working with their respective firms for less than 5 years, 38 (26.8%) between 5 - 10 years, and 27 (19.0%) have been working for more than 15 years. Information was solicited from 78 (54.9%) fast food joints, 32 (22.5%) restaurants, 12 (8.5%) Hotels and guest house, 18 (12.7%) souvenir shops and 2 (1.4%) travel and tours operators. The results also displayed that 104 (73.2%) of the SMEs are running sole proprietorship business, 30 (21.1%) are into partnership whiles 8 (5.6%) registered as Limited Liability Company.

Challenges faced by Hospitality and Tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 pandemic

The first objective of the study sought to explore the challenges faced by the hospitality and tourism SMEs during the period of the Covid-19 pandemic. In the quantitative strand, the mean scores and standard deviations were used to assess each of the indicators. Table 4 indicates that the hospitality and tourism sector has faced significant challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, as they strongly agreed with a lot of the statements which were indicating the possible challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic. For instance, respondents strongly agree that during the pandemic there was a significant income loss ($M=4.44$, $SD=.871$) due to the decline in revenue generated by the business ($M=4.37$, $SD=.926$). The participants bitterly complained about the decline in revenue of the business. For instance, in the qualitative strand, respondent 1 stated:

“...so, you don't have a lot of people patronizing your business, causing the business to loss income”. (Respondent 1- A 8 years experienced manager of a souvenir shop)

Table 4: Challenges Faced by Hospitality and Tourism SMEs as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Revenue loss		
A decline in revenue generated by the business	4.37	.926
Difficulties in repayment of loans	4.11	1.143
There is a financial strain on business activities	4.30	1.058
Significant income losses	4.44	.871
Operational challenges		
Loss of personal touch with customers	4.20	1.087
Employee lay-off	4.06	1.141
Social distancing guidelines have created operational challenges	4.11	.987
Cancellation of orders from customers	4.09	1.237
Supply chain disruption of business items	4.19	1.078
Personal stress		
Personal stress due to numerous difficulties and time-sensitive decisions that are necessary to navigate the crisis	4.26	.943

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Mean ratings: 0.01 to 1.00 (strongly disagree); 1.0 to 2.0 (disagree); 2.01 to 3.00 (neutral); 3.01 to 4.00 (agree); and 4.01 to 5.00 (strongly agree).

The industry relies on the free movement of people to different locations and face-to-face encounters. This brings to light the implication that some of the restrictions established and implemented by the government to prevent the spread of the virus, particularly the closing of the country's borders, hampered the operational activities of the hospitality and tourism SMEs. This evident from the results that "social distancing guidelines have created operational challenges" (M=4.11, SD=.987) and led to other challenges such as difficulties in repayment of business loan (M = 4.11 and

SD = 1.143), difficulties in payment of employees resulting to employees lay-off (M=4.06, SD=1.141), and loss of personal touch with customers (M=4.20, SD=1.087). Participants were also queried on the operational activities of the business in the interview. Respondent 3 stated:

“Operation was difficult...initially, we decided to keep our staff... but when COVID-19 was at its peak, we laid off all our workers for a period of 3 months with only one month’s pay...” (Respondent 3- A 30 years experienced manager of a guest house).

Hospitality and tourism SMES operational challenges during the pandemic have been an issue in many countries. Several researchers have discovered operational challenge as a major problem during pandemics (e.g., Dayour et al., 2020; Mensah & Boakye 2021; Soliku et al., 2021). Soliku et al. (2021) contends that the COVID-19 pandemic has made most managers laid-off most of their employees and SMEs find it difficult to reach out to most of their customers. The finding was also in congruence of the findings of Dayour et al. (2020); Gursoy and Chi (2020) and Mensah and Boakye, (2021) whose studies revealed operational impact of COVID-19 on SMEs. Gursoy and Chi (2020) show that the restrictions placed on travelling as measures in controlling the pandemic led to a decline in business operation and lay-off of employees. Similarly, Dayour et al. (2020) also posit that COVID-19 immensely affected the hospitality and tourism industry as it resulted in business shutdowns, contract cancellations, and lay-offs of employees.

Apart from the operational challenges experienced during the pandemic, the hospitality and tourism service providers have experience personal stress due to numerous difficulties and time-sensitive decisions that

are necessary to navigate the crisis ($M=4.26$, $SD=.943$). Abhari, Jalali, Jaafar, and Tajaddini (2021) state that some hospitality and tourism sector entrepreneurs find it difficult to adjust their thinking to the present problem and deal with their worries, pressure, and anxiety. The worries and pressures of workers were also a problem for entrepreneurs to deal with. Since it is impossible to predict how the situation will develop, making long-term plans is challenging. Therefore, business owners are less able to make the various challenging, time-sensitive choices required to overcome the situation (Abhari et al., 2021).

Forms of Social Support

Research two objective to sought to examine the various forms of social support received by the hospitality SMEs during the Covid-19 pandemic. The result is presented in Table 5.

Table 5: Forms of Social Support Hospitality and Tourism SMEs Received During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Emotional support	3.48	1.1629
Instrumental support	2.86	1.2288
Informational support	3.45	1.1895
Appraisal support	3.56	1.2408

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Mean rating: 0.01 to 1.00 (Never); (Rarely); 2.01 to 3.00 (Sometimes); 3.01 to 4:00 (Often), and 4.01 until 5.00 is (Always).

The result in Table 5 shows that appraisal support constitutes most frequently social support received during the pandemic ($M=3.56$, $SD=1.2408$). This implies that validation is the most common type of social support that

hospitality and tourism SMEs operators received during the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents contend that people show them appreciation, compliment them on how they handle the COVID-19 pandemic, and others also encouraged them to bounce back from the pandemic impact. The respondents acknowledge that the concern from people encouraging them gives them confidence that everything will be back to normal within a short time. For instance, respondent 4 stated:

“Friends call because they know things are not normal as it used to be because they have also felt the impact of the COVID-19...so they call to ask, ‘how are you managing?’, ‘how are you running the business?’, they encourage me to persevere and bounce back. And their words gave me confidence everything will be fine.” (Respondent 4- A 32 years old owner with 10 years experience of a fast food joint)-

Sahban, Kumar, Sri-Ramalu, 2015 contend that a positive assessment on the individual, encouragement and approval statement from individual gives people confidence. The implication is that appraisal support improves self-confidence and self-esteem to the individuals receiving it. Lasgaard, Goossens, Bramsen, Trillingsgaard, and Elklit, (2011) also posit that appraisal support from colleagues may be uniquely suited to reduce mental health problems. In this way, appraisal support may be an avenue through which the hospitality and tourism business operators are encouraged to share knowledge with one another that is pertinent to the business recovery process.

The second largest category of social support received by hospitality and tourism business operators is emotional support ($M=3.48$, $SD=1.163$). Emotional support is characterised with offering helps such as sympathy,

concern, affection, and trust (Cohen, 1992). The respondents claimed that people were interested in their wellbeing during the pandemic, people were always available to share your problem with, and some call frequently to check on them. During the interview section, one of the respondents stated:

“I received a lot of emotional support especially from family members. I broke down mentally, because the business is my only source of income which I survive on. So, the situation has made it difficult for me to think straight. But my family has been there for me especially my husband...” (Respondent 8- a 35 years married woman with 8 years experience as a owner of a restaurant)

Emotional support is one of the most important benefits of close relationships, and research suggests that being on the receiving end of sensitive emotional support is linked to many measures of satisfaction (Reis, 2001). Burlson (1994) and Stroebe and Stroebe (1996) contend that the support offered by close connections frequently has beneficial benefits, enabling individuals in need to deal with challenges more successfully, minimize distress, and preserve a good sense of self and attitude toward life. The implication of this is that emotional support received has the potential to help the hospitality and tourism SMEs operators to focus on recovery strategies the business should adopt to bounce back from the COVID-19 impact.

According to Giones, Brem, Pollack, Michaelis, Klyver, & Brinckmann, (2020), entrepreneurs can benefit from receiving emotional support because it increases their levels of optimism, dedication, and innovation, all of which are necessary for addressing challenges, dealing with

unpredictability, and maintaining motivation and focus during trying times. Additionally, SMEs owners who are emotionally stable are better able to concentrate on expanding their businesses (Brüderl & Preisendorfer, 1998). Consistent with the findings of this study, some research has found that people report emotional support to be one of the most, if not the most, desired types of support provided by close relationship partners (Burlinson & Xu, 2001; Cutrona & Russell, 1987).

Furthermore, the study found informational support as the third social support often received among the four ($M=3.45$, $SD=1.189$). According to Cronenwett (1985), informational support assists one to be aware of and solve problems. Cutrona & Russell (1990) and Tilden & Weinert (1987) also validate the use of informational support during the problem-solving process. Lastly, instrumental support was found to be the least social support received during the pandemic ($M=2.86$, $SD=1.229$). The instrumental support in this study involves physical or tangible social support received by SMEs in the hospitality and tourism industries during the pandemic.

Strategies Adopted by Hospitality and Tourism SMEs Towards Business Recovery

Objective three of the study sought to examine the strategies adopted during the Covid-19 pandemic by hospitality and tourism SMEs towards business recovery. The mean score and standard deviation were used in the analysis of the responses. Table 6 reveals the strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs towards business recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic. The result shows that the hospitality and tourism SMEs have to engage in cost reduction strategies to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

They claimed that they engaged in pay cuts and unpaid leave for employees (M=3.55, SD=1.412), temporary closures of business to avoid excessive costs (M=3.83, SD=1.253), and outsourcing of some business operations (M= 3.59, SD=1.410) to avoid spending huge cost on them. This supported the findings of Chien and Law (2003). During SARS 2003 pandemic, Chien and Law (2003) examined the impact of the SARS on the hospitality industry.

Table 6: Business recovery strategies

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Cost Reduction Strategies		
Temporary closures of business to avoid excessive costs	3.83	1.253
Optimisation of operational processes	3.68	1.064
Pay cuts and unpaid leave	3.55	1.412
Marketing Strategies		
Preventive health measures	3.96	1.281
Development of promotional campaigns	3.89	1.187
Discounted packages to boost patronage	3.78	1.379
Price reduction	3.66	1.393
Adoption of digital marketing	4.38	.753
Customer-related marketing practices	4.10	1.084
Financial Strategies		
Outsourcing of some business operations	3.59	1.410
Application for government support schemes	4.29	.938

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Mean rating: 0.01 to 1.00 (strongly disagree); 1.0 to 2.0 (disagree); 2.01-3.00 (neutral); 3.01-4:00 (agree), 4.01 to 5.00 is (strongly agree)

The study identified that SMEs put in cost reduction strategies such as suspension of food and beverage services, temporary closures, and pay cuts and no-pay leaves to recover from the pandemic. Similar assertion was made by Tew, Lu, Tolomiczenko, & Gellatly (2008) whose findings on SARS outbreak revealed that SMEs put in recovery strategies such as cutting costs by laying off workers, employees taking a vacation or unpaid leave. In recent

study, Haqbin, Radmanesh and Shojaei (2022) investigation revealed that the recovery strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs during COVID-19 pandemic include cost reduction strategies to bounce back from the COVID-19 impact. This brings to light the implication that cost control measures are paramount to business recovery success during pandemics.

Another strategy adopted for the business recovery process was marketing strategies. The result indicated that businesses had to engage in the development of promotional campaigns ($M=3.89$, $SD=1.187$), adoption of digital marketing ($M=4.38$, $SD=.753$), customer-related marketing practices ($M=4.10$, $SD=1.084$), discounted packages to boost patronage ($M=3.78$, $SD=1.379$), and price reduction ($M=3.66$, $SD=1.393$) to improve sales performance. The result implies that marketing strategies are essentials in the recovery process of the hospitality and tourism SMEs during the pandemic. The result supported the submissions made in prior studies (e.g., Rodríguez-Antón & Alonso-Almeida 2020; Haqbin, Radmanesh & Shojaei, 2022; Kukanja, Planinc, & Sikošek, 2020). Kukanja et al. (2020) findings revealed that hospitality and tourism SMEs primarily focus on the following crisis management practices such as promotional and customer-related marketing practices for business recovery during the pandemic. Thukral (2021) refers to this recovery strategy as applying creativity to problems to obtain the opportunity out of a situation.

Furthermore, hospitality and tourism SMEs result to financial support towards their recovery process. For instance, the study revealed that SMEs had to apply for government support schemes ($M=4.29$, $SD=.938$) to improve the operating activities of the business. Friedlander et al. (2007) assert that support

from the government was considered a useful coping mechanism during pandemics. For instance, some firms applied for tax waivers, pension payment exemptions and stimulus packages to support their businesses (Foote et al., 2020). However, the Government of Ghana in an effort to reduce the burden brought upon its citizenry and businesses as a result of the outbreak provided electricity and water rebates. Accordingly, these supports have been useful in keeping small businesses afloat. Alves et al. (2020) on small firms in Macao during the COVID-19 pandemic revealed that the strategies adopted by small firms for recovery include using government support schemes. Similarly, Haqbin, Radmanesh and Shojaei (2022) investigation revealed that the recovery strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs during the COVID-19 include application for government support and loans among others.

Hospitality and Tourism SMEs used different approaches to bolster their businesses. It was clear that operators used more than one coping mechanism to combat the impact of the pandemic on their businesses. These can be grouped into marketing strategies, financial support schemes, and cost reduction techniques. The recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs is crucial because of the sector's economic prominence and not least on account of the jobs it supports in a country plagued by rising unemployment.

Effect of Social Support on Recovery of Hospitality and Tourism SMEs

This objective sought to assess the effect of social support on hospitality and tourism SMEs. Predesigned statements regarding the effects were presented to respondents and they were required to rate their understanding using a five-point Likert scale. The mean score with standard

deviation and frequency was used to explain the data. The result presented in Table 7 shows that social support received is very important to the hospitality and tourism business recovery process with an overall mean of 4.26. The implication is that the likelihood of business success and sustenance can be hinged on the availability of a social support system which explains that social support reduces the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business outcome, so the more robust the social support the higher the likelihood of business achieving a good outcome.

For instance, the respondent indicated that financial assistance helps the business in the repayment of loans ($M=4.47$, $SD=.958$), voluntary help from people help the business to reduce labour cost ($M=4.44$, $SD=.971$), and useful advice help to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business ($M=4.11$, $SD=1.252$). Again, the finding shows that social support is very important as encouragement from people helps keep the business in operation ($M=4.06$, $SD=1.245$), emotional support help reduces psychological distress and buffer the effect of COVID-19 related stressors ($M=4.11$, $SD=1.250$), and support from people helps the business to get in touch with some customers ($M=4.37$, $SD=.904$). The finding implies that social support received by hospitality and tourism SMEs is very important to their business recovery process. When the participants were further probe during the interview section, Respondent 4 stated:

“Receiving support from family and friends gives you a sense of belonging and it makes you not feel alone during those difficult times.” (Respondent 4).

Previous studies such as Okoye, Audu, and Karatu (2017) and Honig, et al., (2018) supports the findings of this study. Okoye, Audu, and Karatu

(2017) found that social support significantly influences entrepreneurial success. Similarly, the study of Honig, Klyver and Steffens (2018) established a positive relationship between emotional support, instrumental support and entrepreneurial persistence of entrepreneurs. Also, the findings are supported by the social support and resource-based view theories. The availability of a distinct and valuable resource such as emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support is touted by the social support and resource-based view theories as a mechanism for enhancing business recovery amid and after business crisis.

Table 7: Perceived Effect of Social Support on Business Recovery

Statements	Mean	Std. Deviation
Financial assistance helps the business in the repayment of loans	4.47	.958
Voluntary help from people help the business to reduce labour cost	4.44	.971
Useful advice helps to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business	4.11	1.250
Encouragement from people help keep the business in operation	4.06	1.245
Emotional support helps reduce psychological distress and buffer the effect of COVID-19-related stressors.	4.11	1.250
Support from people helps the business to get in touch with some customers	4.37	.904
Average Mean	4.26	1.096

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Mean rating: 0.01-1.0 (not important); 1.0 to 2.0 (Of little importance); 2.01-3.00 (moderately important); 3.01 to 4:00 (Important), and 4.01-5.00 (Very important).

Regression Analysis

Before undertaking the regression analyses, regression assumptions such as normality test, linearity and multicollinearity were checked to avoid inaccurate interpretation of the data. The study checked the normality test assumption using the skewness, kurtosis, and histogram. Linearity was checked through the P-P plot, while the multicollinearity was checked using the tolerance and the variance inflation factor (VIF) values. These assumptions come with thresholds within which the values generated must be interpreted.

With regards to skewness and kurtosis, Pallant (2016) suggest that Skewness values ranging between 0 to ± 1 and Kurtosis values ranging between 0 to ± 1.5 are enough to justify that, normality rules have not been violated in a study. Also, the histogram should project a bell-shape to demonstrate that the data is clustered or centred around the mean. Concerning linearity, the practice is that the P-P Plot of the regression residuals should display plots near as possible to the line of best fit (Garson, 2012). Finally, the Tolerance and VIF values used in checking for multicollinearity are benchmarked at above 0.2 for Tolerance and below 10 for VIF (Pallant, 2016).

Table 8 shows the Skewness and Kurtosis values.

Table 8: Normality-Skewness and Kurtosis

Constructs	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Emotional Support	-.361	.203	-.427	.404
Instrumental Support	.255	.203	-.415	.404
Informational Support	-.573	.203	-.379	.404
Appraisal Support	-.516	.203	-.411	.404
Business Recovery	-.607	.204	-.201	.406

Source: Field Survey (2022)

Hypothesis Testing

Based on the values in Table 8, the study asserts that no normality assumption is violated. This is because all the values of the two tests were within the threshold. Figure 2 was further deployed to analyse the centric nature of the data.

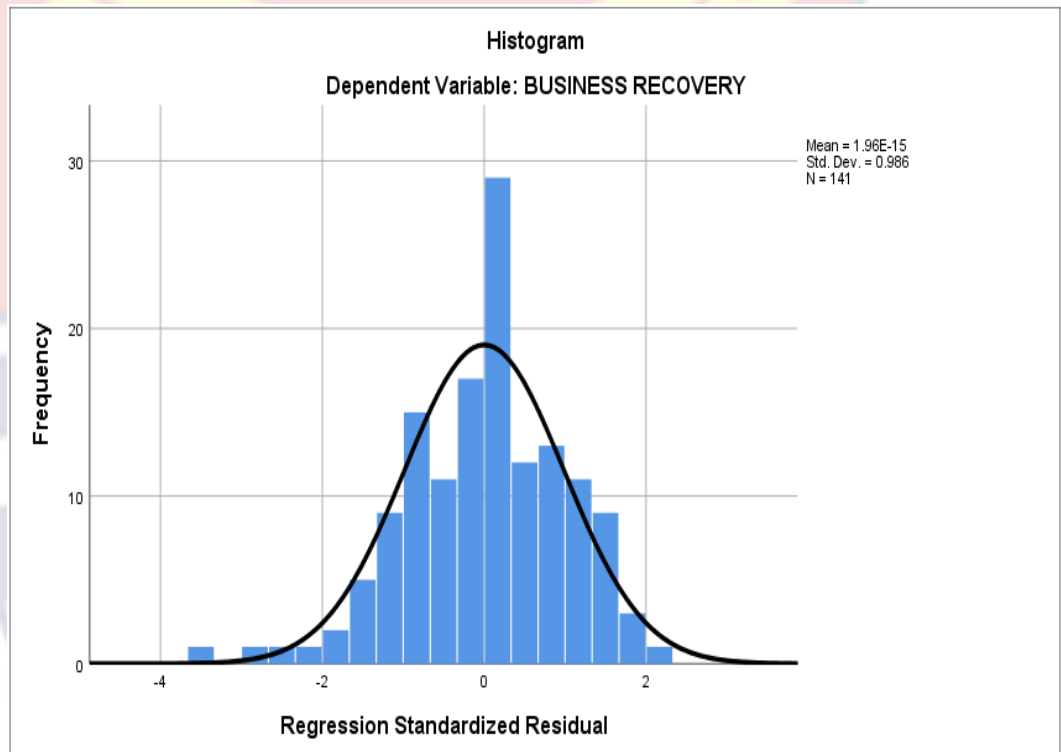


Figure 2: Regression Standardized Residual

From Figure 2, the regression standardized residual displays an approximately normal curve. This means that the normality assumption was met (Garson, 2012). The histogram showed that the data is normally distributed and does not violate the regression assumption. The next figure, Figure 3, assesses the linearity of the social support and business recovery data.



Table 9: Multicollinearity Test

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Emotional Support	.433	2.309
Instrumental Support	.569	1.758
Informational Support	.424	2.359
Appraisal Support	.635	1.574

Dependent Variable: Business Recovery
Source: Field Survey (2022)

The output in Table 9 shows that the emotional support had a tolerance of .433 and a VIF of 2.309. The Instrumental Support had a tolerance of .569 and a VIF of 1.758. Informational Support had tolerance of .424 and a VIF of 2.359. The Appraisal Support had a tolerance of .635 and a VIF of 1.574. These indicated that there were no multicollinearity issues as all independent variables had tolerance greater than 0.2 and VIF less than 10, and therefore all independent variables were included in the multiple regression model (Garson, 2012).

Research Hypotheses- The effect of social support on business recovery

The research hypotheses sought to examine the impact of social support variables on business recovery. Regression analysis was used with a model $Y = a + bX$, where X is the independent (Social support variables) variable and Y is the dependent (Business Recovery) variable. The following regression model was therefore formulated from the regression results.

$Y = 3.276 - .016(ES) + .303(IS) + .109(IFS) + .321(AS)$, where ES is emotional support, 'IS' is instrumental support, IFS is informational support, and AS is appraisal support.

Table 10: Model summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.426 ^a	.181	.157	.74037	1.466

Source: Field survey, 2022

Table 11: ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	16.628	4	4.157	7.584	.000 ^b
	Residual	75.096	137	.548		
	Total	91.725	141			

Field survey (2022)

a. Dependent Variable: Business Recovery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Appraisal Support, Instrumental Support, Emotional Support, Informational Support

From the Table 10, the R Square value of 0.181 from the regression model indicates that the independent variables (emotional, instrumental, informational and appraisal support) explain 18.1 percent of the variations in the business recovery. This implies that the remaining 81.99 percent of the variations in business recovery is accounted for by other factors statistically controlled in the study. Also, the regression result is statistically significant as the level of significance (p-value = 0.00) is less than 0.05 as displayed in ANOVA Table 11.

Table 12: Coefficients

Variables	Coefficients	Standard Error	t-Stat	P-value	VIF
Emotional Support	-.016	.107	-.149	.882	2.305
Instrumental Support	.303	.088	3.431	.001	1.757
Informational Support	.109	.101	1.079	.283	2.361
Appraisal Support	.321	.086	3.753	.000	1.574

Source: Field survey, 2022

a. Dependent Variable: Business Recovery

b. Predictors: (Constant), Appraisal Support, Instrumental Support, Emotional Support, Information Support

Effect of Emotional Support on Business Recovery

H_{1a}: Emotional support has no significant influence on business recovery.

There is not enough evidence to support that emotional support has a negative impact on business recovery. The coefficient of emotional support ($\beta = -.016$, $t = -.149$) was negatively related to the business recovery process during the pandemic. The reported p-value ($p = .882$) was more than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level. From this findings, conclusion can be drawn that the study of Powell & Eddleston (2017) which found a strong positive association between emotional support and recovery was not corroborated by this study's findings. Also, findings of Klyver et al. (2020) who concluded that, business owners/managers who benefit from emotional support increases their level of optimism, dedication and innovation, all of which are necessary for addressing challenges and dealing with unpredictability during trying times is not a case in the Cape Coast Metropolis. This maybe as a result of the general notion that people do not really care about the business of their family and friends and hence did not see the need to be available for them emotionally.

Effect of Instrumental Support on Business Recovery

H_{1b}: Instrumental/tangible support has no significant influence on business recovery. The second hypothesis was formulated to determine whether there is a relationship between instrumental support and business recovery. Based on the regression analysis, the result showed that there is a significant relationship between instrumental support and business recovery ($\beta = .303$). As consistent with hypothesis two, the instrumental support has a significant relationship on business recovery. This means that hospitality and tourism SMEs turn to thrive when family and friends support them but in instances such as COVID-19 pandemic where businesses may not be able to secure funding from other external avenues, businesses will only survive when funding come from their siblings, spouses, close relatives and friends to enable them survive in the midst of crisis.

The conclusion drawn by this study is that, the presence of adequate, effective instrumental support specifically when family and friends offer physical aid and financial resources is linked to both physical and mental wellbeing of business owners/managers. The findings of Steffens (2018) who concluded that entrepreneurs who received emotional and instrumental support from their social contacts are more likely to be persistent. Mathieu, Eschleman & Cheng, (2019); Usman, Cheng, Ghani, Gul, & Shah, (2021) concluded that the foundational implication of the concept of instrumental support is that people often need others present to help them successfully recover and the availability and adequacy of instrumental support for a business owner/manager goes a long way in recovering fully.

Effect of Informational Support on Business Recovery

H_{1c}: Informational support has no significant influence on business recovery. The third hypothesis of this study was stated that informational support has no significant influence on business recovery in the Cape Coast Metropolis. The coefficient of informational support ($\beta = .109$, $t = 1.079$) was positively related to the business recovery process during the pandemic. The reported p-value ($p = .283$) was more than the conventional probability of 0.05 significance level. Contrary to the study's expectation, the result suggests that informational support is not significant in the recovery process. However, some researchers (Cutrona & Russell, 1990 & Tilden & Weinert, 1987) found a positive relationship between informational support and recovery.

Effect of Appraisal Support on Business Recovery

H_{1d}: Appraisal support has no significant influence on business recovery.

The fourth hypothesis of this study sought to test the effect of appraisal support and business recovery. Based on the regression analysis, the result showed that there is a significant relationship between appraisal support and business recovery ($\beta = .000$). As consistent with hypothesis four, the appraisal support has a significant relationship on business recovery. This means that SMEs tend to bloom when family and friends validate and affirm their efforts, nonetheless in occurrences such as stressful events where family and friends might not be able to evaluate and validate their hard work, business owners/managers will have difficulty in overcoming hurdles.

The deduction drawn by this study is that, the presence of validation from those who care about you; our spouses, siblings, close relatives and

friends is associated to the ability for business owners/managers to be able to recover. Cheng, Eschleman, & Mathieu, 2019; Cheng, et al. (2021) concluded that the foundational implication of the concept of appraisal support is that people often need others to validate their efforts to help them successfully recover.

Chapter Summary

The main aim of the chapter was to analyse collected data based on the research questions and interview to address the overall purpose of the study. Having begun the chapter with preliminaries such as background characteristics of respondents, and normality, the chapter delve into the assessment of the key objectives highlighting the role of the four constructs of social support on hospitality and tourism SMEs in recovery in Cape Coast. The objectives of the study were analysed and discussed. In objective one, the study found that the hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast Metropolis faced challenges such as decline in revenue, difficulties in repayment of loans, employee lay-offs and loss of personal touch with customers during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In relation to objective two, the study's findings revealed that the most social support received by the hospitality and tourism SMEs were appraisal and emotional support followed by informational instrumental support. With regards to objective three, the study found that the adoption of strategies such as digital marketing, cost reduction and financial support strategies were prevalently used by the hospitality and tourism SMEs. Lastly, the findings of objective four showed that appraisal and instrumental supports had positive and significant effect on business recovery.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter presents an overview of the main findings of the study. This was preceded by a summary of the research methods employed in the study. In addition to that, the chapter presents an overview of the analytical tools employed in the study and the results based on the objectives of this study, conclusions, and recommendations based on the key findings of the study. It also provides suggestions for further studies.

Summary of findings

The study examined the impact of social support on the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs from the COVID-19 pandemic. Using a mixed approach, the quantitative strand relied on both descriptive and inferential statistics while the qualitative strand used thematic analysis. The researcher used questionnaires and interview guides to collect data from the respondents. The study sampled 132 respondents using a stratified random for the quantitative strand and 10 respondents using purposive sampling technique for the qualitative strand. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Means and standard deviation, and regression analysis are the statistical tools used for analyses of the quantitative data. In addition, data from the interview was analysed thematically. Four research objectives guided the study. These are to;

1. explore the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic on hospitality and tourism SMEs.

2. examine the various forms of social support in hospitality and tourism SMEs during COVID-19 pandemic.
3. examine the strategies adopted by hospitality and tourism SMEs towards business recovery.
4. assess the effect of social support on recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs.

The first objective of the study found that the hospitality and tourism SMEs faced several challenges such as suffered sudden decline in revenue generation, loss of personal touch with customers and disruption of the supply chain of business items.

Research objective two found that emotional support and appraisal support have been the most social support received during the COVID-19, followed by instrumental/tangible and informational support.

In relation to objective three, the study found that the recovery strategies used by the hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast Metropolis includes marketing strategies, financial support schemes, and cost reduction techniques.

Lastly, objective four of the study found that instrumental and appraisal support had positive and significant influence on business recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs.

Conclusion

The study sought to examine the role of social support in the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast and the following conclusions were, therefore, drawn based on the study's key findings: In reference to the first research objective, the study's result revealed that the COVID-19 has

affected the hospitality and tourism SMEs than other sectors in the cape coast metropolis such that, they suffered sudden cancellations of bookings, shutdown of business activities, personal stress due to numerous difficulties and time-sensitive decisions that are necessary to navigate the crisis. The result has largely been supported by previous empirical studies which suggest that since it is impossible to predict how situations will develop, business owners should develop long-term plan. Thus, business owners can improve on their current status and overcome difficult situations like the pandemic.

With reference to the second research objective, the study's result indicated that the appraisal support was the most frequent social support received. This implies that business owners/mangers expect validation from family, friends, spouses and loved ones. The second largest support received by the hospitality and tourism business operators is emotional support. Emotional support is characterized with offering help such as affection, concern, sympathy and trust. As such, when business suffered low patronization due to the lockdown, family and friends of hospitality and tourism business operators were interested in the wellbeing of their people and they were always available to share their problems with them and check up on them. Instrumental support such as the provision of goods and services, performing assigned tasks and giving financial assistance were received as well. Informational support was also received by hospitality and tourism business operators, family and friends assisted in providing useful information to help hospitality and tourism business owners/manager navigate during the pandemic.

In relation to the objective three, the study found instrumental support and appraisal support to have a significant influence on business recovery in hospitality and tourism SMEs in the cape coast metropolis. This result was largely in line with previous empirical studies which implied that, hospitality and tourism business operators who received instrumental and appraisal support from their social contacts are more likely to be persistent. Thus, the presence of adequate, effective instrumental support specifically when family and friends offer physical aid and financial resources it is s linked to the both physical and mental wellbeing of business owners/managers. Also, the presence of validation from those who care about you; our spouses, siblings, close relatives and friends is associated to the ability for business owners/managers to be able to recover.

The study has established that social support was a key dimension in business recovery process during the COVID-19 pandemic. The likelihood of business success and sustenance can be hinged on the availability of a social support system which explains that social support reduces the adverse impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business outcome, so the more robust the social support the higher the likelihood of business achieving a good outcome. As indicated by Stroebe & Stroebe (1996), the support provided during a pandemic often has salutary effects, helping those in needs to recover more effectively from problems, manage upset, and maintain a positive sense of self and outlook on life. This implies that hospitality and tourism SMEs with social support are prone to quickly recover from the adverse effect of the pandemic.

Recommendation

On the strength of the research findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed:

The government must immediately implement a social assistance program for all company owners and make it possible for their businesses to recover amid and after the occurrence of an unanticipated disasters like pandemic. For hospitality and tourism SMEs to thrive and expand to provide employment opportunities which will cascade into economic growth, such social assistance program from government would be a good catalyst. in underdeveloped nations. Government should form a committee such as a rapid response team who will be responsible for the welfare of business owners/mangers during pandemics and other stressful events which will include the Ghana Tourism Authority, Cape Coast Chamber of Commerce, and other authorities. Their core responsibility will be to encourage business operators to be part of the association where they can be educated on the need to have a support system one can rely on during stressful events and to minimize the distress associated with stressful events. This will help business operators share their problems and seek for solutions when things are tough for them to handle.

Owners/managers of hospitality and tourism SMEs should plan a long-term, adaptable crisis management methods that takes into consideration both financial and nonfinancial elements. For this reason, it is important for different departments and levels of staff to work together to create a crisis management system that fits their expectations.

The study also recommended that business owners/managers should plan well for future occurrences and also builds a good rapport with family and friend and be open to other social networks so they can reach out and get the kind of support needed during unanticipated occurrences. When you have a large social network, it helps in sharing problems, finding solutions and other alternatives in going about stuffs relating to the growth of the business.

Suggestion for further study

The study focused on the role of social support in the recovery of hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast Metropolis, Ghana. The study focused on only registered hospitality and tourism SMEs in Cape Coast. As a result, generalising the study's findings to cover all hospitality and tourism SMEs in the central region and the country could be misleading. The study, therefore, suggested that further research can extend the study area to capture all districts in the regions within the country in order to aid generalisation of findings.

This study may be expanded upon to explicitly tests the cultural differences in the prominence (how widely acknowledged) of social support and the effects of this recognition on personal and business success. A qualitative study methodology might be used in the future to investigate cultural variations in the supporting behaviours of SMEs Managers/Owners.

Also, further studies may extend to capture all MMDAs in Ghana and include tourist attraction sites to aid the generalization of findings. More so, introduce an intervening variable to determine its role in improving business recovery after a crisis.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF CAPE COAST

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND LEGAL STUDIES

FACULTY OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

**DEPARTMENT OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM MANAGEMENT
QUESTIONNAIRE ON SOCIAL SUPPORT SYSTEMS AND
RECOVERY OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SMES FROM THE
COVID-19 PANDEMIC IN CAPE COAST**

Dear Sir/Madam,

This study examines the **“Social Support Systems and Recovery of Hospitality and Tourism SMEs from the COVID-19 Pandemic in Cape Coast”** The researcher is a student at the Department of Hospitality and Tourism Management, University of Cape Coast Ghana. You are hereby invited to share your views on the issue under investigation. It is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Philosophy (Hospitality Management). The responses would be used for purely academic purposes and hence, your confidentiality is greatly assured. Please be reassured that the information collected remains anonymous. Under no circumstances will they be used for any other purpose than stated. Thanks for your time and participation.

**SECTION A: CHALLENGES FACED BY HOSPITALITY AND
TOURISM SMES AS A RESULT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

Please indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree to the following statements relating to the challenges you faced as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic using a 5-point scale (“1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral ; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree”).

SN	STATEMENT	1	2	3	4	5
	The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in....					
1	A decline in revenue generated by my business					
2	Supply chain disruption of business items					
3	Cancellation of orders from customers					
4	Difficulties in repayment of loans					
5	Loss of personal touch with customers					
6	Financial strain on business activities					
7	Significant income losses					
8	Employee lay-offs					
9	Social distancing guidelines has created operational challenges					
10	Personal stress due to numerous difficulties and time-sensitive decisions that are necessary to navigate the crisis					

SECTION B: SOCIAL SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Please indicate the rate at which you received the following social support during the COVID-19 pandemic using a 5-point scale (“1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Often; 5= Always”).

SN	SOCIAL SUPPORT RECEIVED DURING COVID-19	1	2	3	4	5
	Emotional Support					
1	People make me feel good about myself					
2	People are interested in my wellbeing					
3	I get positive comments from people					
4	People show that they care about me					
5	People pay attention to my situation					
6	People support me emotionally					
7	There is at least one family member or friend to whom I can tell my problem					
8	I feel that people love me.					
9	I feel very close to my family/friends.					
10	People look out for me					
	Instrumental/tangible support					
1	People help me with financial assistance					
2	People help me with Personal Protective Equipment					
3	People help me get things done.					
4	When I need a helping hand, I get people who help out.					
5	People offer to do things for me.					
6	People help me with events that I think are important					
7	People offer me things I need					
8	People give me practical kinds of help.					

	Informational Support					
1	People give me useful advice.					
2	People provide me with helpful information					
3	People tell me where to find help if I need it.					
4	People help me learn new trends					
5	People offer suggestions to me during the lockdown					
6	People help me understand my situation better.					
7	People give me guidance and support when I need it					
8	People advise me when I have to make a difficult decision.					
	Appraisal support					
1	I experience a lot of understanding from others					
2	I experience a lot of security from others					
3	I know a very close person whose help I can always count on					
4	If I am down, I know whom I can go to without hesitation					
5	My family is not overly critical of me.					
6	My family recognize the importance of the things I do for them.					
7	I often feel better about myself after talking with members of my family or friends					
8	People show me appreciation.					
9	I often get compliments from my family or friends on how I handle the COVID-19 situation					

SECTION C: EFFECT OF SOCIAL SUPPORT ON RECOVERY OF HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SMES

Please indicate how you personally rate the importance of social support on business recovery during the COVID-19 pandemic using a 5-point scale (“1 = not important at all; 2 = Of little importance; 3 = moderately important; 4 = Important; 5= Very important”).

SN	Statement	1	2	3	4	5
1	Financial assistance will help the business in repayment of some loans					
2	Voluntary help from people can help the business to reduce labour cost					
3	Useful advice will help to manage the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the business					
4	Encouragement from people will help keep the business in operation					
5	Emotional support will help reduce psychological distress and buffer the effect of COVID-19-related stressors.					
6	Support from people will help the business to get in touch with some customers					

SECTION D: STRATEGIES ADOPTED BY HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM SMES TOWARDS BUSINESS RECOVERY

Please indicate the rate at which you faced the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic using a 5-point scale (“1 = Strongly Disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral ; 4 = Agree; 5= Strongly Agree”).

SN	Statements	1	2	3	4	5
1	Temporary closures of business to avoid excessive costs					
2	Optimizations of operational processes					
3	Pay cuts and unpaid leave					
4	Discounted packages to boost patronage					
5	Development of promotional campaigns					
6	Preventive health measures					
7	Price reduction					
8	Outsourcing of some business operations					
9	Adoption of digital marketing					
10	Application for government support schemes					
11	Customer-related marketing practices					

SECTION E: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

Have you received any social support during the pandemic? Yes/No

If yes, the respondent is qualified to continue with the survey.

1. Gender

Male Female

2. Age bracket

Less than 20 20 – 29 30 – 39 40-49 50-59
60 or older

3. Indicate your highest qualification

JHS SHS HND/Equivalent Diploma First Degree
Masters Masters No formal education
Other: Specify.....

4. Marital status

Single Married Divorce Separated Engaged
Other: Specify.....

5. Income

SECTION F: ORGANIZATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

1. Position of respondent

Manager Owner Other: Specify.....

2. How many years have you been working in this capacity??

Less than 5 years 5 – 10 years 11 – 15 years More than
15 years

3. Industry type

Restaurants Hotels/Guest House Souvenir shops

Fast food joints Travel and tour operators

4. Please indicate number of employees

A. Before COVID-19.....

B. After COVID-19.....

5. Please indicate the type of business you are operating

Sole proprietor Partnership Limited Liability Company Other:
Specify.....

6. Year of establishment.....

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW GUIDE

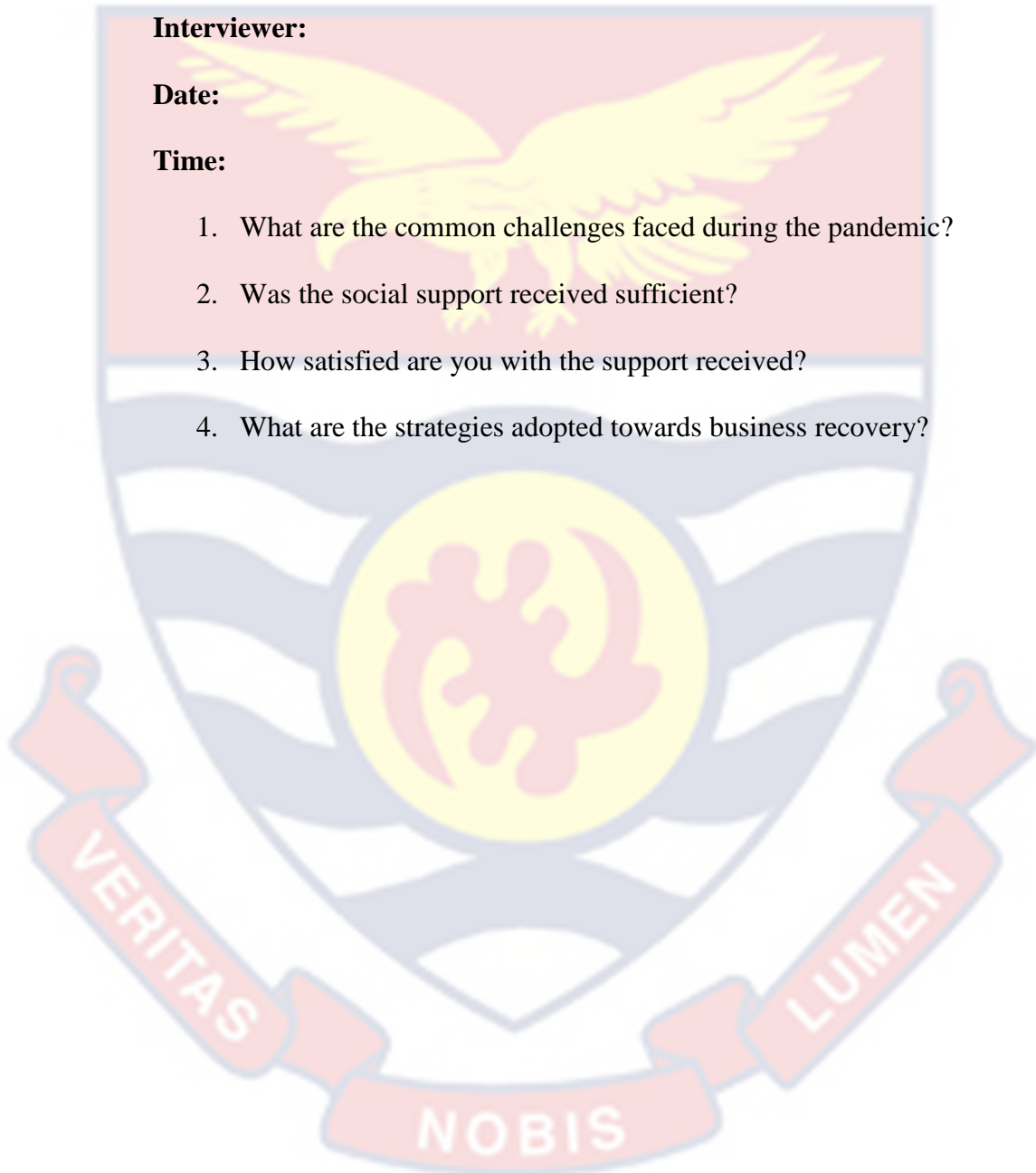
Any responses provided will be used solely for academic purposes under strict adherence to the ethics of confidentiality and anonymity. Your voluntary participation will be duly appreciated.

Interviewer:

Date:

Time:

1. What are the common challenges faced during the pandemic?
2. Was the social support received sufficient?
3. How satisfied are you with the support received?
4. What are the strategies adopted towards business recovery?



APPENDIX C: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

