

DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

**SUPERVISION PROCESSES AND EMPLOYEE REACTIONS: A STUDY
OF SELECTED INDIGENOUS BANKS IN THE WESTERN REGION OF
GHANA**

PHILIP MENSAH

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**SUPERVISION PROCESSES AND EMPLOYEE REACTIONS: A STUDY OF
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PHILIP MENSAH

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Supervisor (DUT): OE. OKEKE-UZODIKE (PhD) _

ate: 26-03-26

ABSTRACT

This study sought to evaluate the context of supervision processes and employees' reactions in selected indigenous banks within the Western Region of Ghana. Grounded on leader-member exchange (LMX), norm of reciprocity, and social support theories, the specific objectives covered the relationships among dysfunctional supervision processes, high-performing employees (HPEs), employee silence and employee alienation, the mediating role of HPEs, and the moderating roles of promotion practices and political skill. Adopting an explanatory sequential mixed methods design and multistage cluster sampling to select 227 participants for the quantitative study, a questionnaire was utilised to collect data on a cross-sectional basis, while an interview schedule was applied to collect qualitative data from 20 participants selected using a purposive sampling technique. SmartPLS 4 was used to analyse quantitative data, while content analysis was used for qualitative data. The combined results depict the findings as follows: i). Dysfunctional supervision processes undermined the performance of HPEs. ii) Employee silence and employee alienation were adopted as nonconfrontational strategies to respond to dysfunctional supervisory behaviours. iii). Dysfunctional supervision processes indirectly encouraged subordinates to adopt employee silence and employee alienation by diminishing HPEs' positive attributes. iv). Promotion practices strengthen the role HPEs play in reducing employee silence, but not employee alienation. v). Political skill did not strengthen to the extent that dysfunctional supervision processes diminish the performance of HPEs. vi). A model on dysfunctional supervision processes and employee reactions was developed to clarify the relationships among the constructs to be used within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that management in indigenous institutions in Ghana: (i), prioritise leadership development programs to promote ethical and supportive supervision; (ii), proactively recognise and reward HPEs who exemplify openness, collaboration, and knowledge sharing, as signals to employees that speaking up and supporting colleagues are valued and rewarded; and (ii), to ensure that promotion decisions are predicated on fair and clear performance criteria to encourage employees to collaborate, share information and ideas, thereby reducing employee silence.

DECLARATION BY STUDENT

I, Philip Mensah, hereby declare that this thesis is my own original undertaking conducted in accordance with the guidelines from the Faculty of Management Sciences, Durban University of Technology. All the sources of information used in this thesis were duly referenced. Hence, I declare that this thesis has not been submitted either in part or whole to any other university for the award of any degree.

Philip Mensah 22175074 Signature

Date: March 2026

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my wife Edith Mensah and children Papa Armo, Kweku Ainoo, Kwame, and Kobby.

Another dedication goes to my late parents Cecilia Bassaw and J. A. Mensah, and sisters Dina Mensah, Florence Mensah, Rosina Quarshie, Helen Dentu, and Gladys Dentu.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	Agricultural Development Bank (ADB)
AVE	Average variance extract
BPTW	Best Places to Work
CMB	Common method bias
COR	Conservation of resources
FGD	Focus group discussion
FTF	Face-to-face
GHA	Generalised hierarchical abuse
HPEs	High-performing employees
HPO	High Performing Organisations
HPWSs	High-performance work systems
HTMT	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio
KH	knowledge hiding
KSAO	Knowledge, skills, abilities and other attributes
OCB	Organisational citizenship behaviour
RCBs	Rural and Community Banks
RMSEA	Root mean square error of approximation
SDO	Social Dominance Orientation
SDT	Social dominance theory
SRMR	Standardised root mean square residual
US	United States
UK	United Kingdom
VIF	Variance inflation factor
DSSA	Department of Statistics South Africa
CBN	Central Bank of Nigeria
GSS	Ghana Statistical Service

GDP	Gross Domestic Product
SSA	Sub-Saharan Africa
GIPC	Ghana Investment Promotion Centre
WRCC	Western Regional Coordinating Council
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
IMF	International Monetary Fund
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers
MoF	Ministry of Finance
BoG	Bank of Ghana
RCBs	Rural and Community Banks
LMX	Leader-member exchange
PLS-SEM	Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling
FSSB	Family-supportive supervision behaviour
GHA	Generalised hierarchical abuse
SET	Social exchange theory
ES	Employee silence
EA	Employee alienation
UAE	United Arab Emirates
OCB	Organisational citizenship behaviour
HRM	Human resource management
FTF	Face-to-face
NGOs	Nongovernmental organisations
CMB	Common method bias
GCE	General Certificate Examination
SSCE	Senior School Certificate Examination
WASSCE	West African Senior Secondary Certificate Examination
HND	Higher National Diploma
NFI	Normed fit index

POPI	Protection of Personal Information
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
RSA	Royal Society of Arts
CWB	Counterproductive work behaviour
DPM	Dual-process model
SCT	Self-control theory

CHAPTER 1

AN OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Businesses are required to maintain an awareness of ongoing changes within their environment. However, achieving such objectives requires organisations to rely heavily on their human resources, as noted by Pattanayak (2025), which is an indispensable component of every organisation. Therefore, the efficacy of an organisation's staff is crucial within this particular setting for maintaining its prosperity. Organisations are structured and hierarchical; thus, the effectiveness of the workforce in achieving success lies, to a certain degree, on the level of relationships that exist within the structure, such as those between supervisors and subordinates (Leino *et al.* 2022).

Supervisors assume the managerial responsibilities of providing guidance, assessment, and mentorship to staff. However, in addition to this, supervisors have significant responsibilities in facilitating the development of subordinates' skills and empowering them to achieve their career objectives. This highlights the possible influence of supervision processes and the crucial role they play in shaping the subordinates' reactions and conduct in the workplace, and determining the personal and job-related outcomes of subordinates (Zhao *et al.* 2023). This research, therefore, explores how this plays out in the Ghanaian context by examining a few selected indigenous banks.

Beyond this introduction, the chapter outlines the background of the study and the research site, which elicited the statement of the problem envisaged. The latter purported the development of the research aims and the subsequent research objectives aligned with the research questions. Furthermore, the study hypotheses, the justification, significance, and the contribution of the study are discussed. Next is the scope and delimitations, the synopsis of related literature, the preliminary research methodology, the definition of key terms, the structure of the thesis, and the conclusion of the chapter.

1.2 Background of the Study

The world today is continuously witnessing varying degrees of turbulence, making it difficult for businesses to thrive. Recalling the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19) and the ongoing conflicts across the globe (Russia and Ukraine war; Israel and Palestine, etc.), many economies have been shattered and are struggling to make a headway. For example, inflation rates in the US spiked to 8.5% in July 2022 before reducing to 3.2% in February 2024 (U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics 2024). Similarly, inflation rates in the UK and Europe have slowed down from 10.4% and 8.5% in February 2023 to 3.4% and 2.6%, respectively, in February 2024 (Bank of England 2024; European Central Bank 2024). That said, the African continent is not exempt, as many countries have struggled with high inflation rates. For example, in February 2024, South Africa and Nigeria recorded an inflation rate of 5.6% and 31.7%, as opposed to 7.0% and 21.9%, respectively, in 2023 (CBN 2024; DSSA 2024). However, Ghana has not been left behind, with an inflation rate of 23.2% in February 2024 as opposed to 52.8% in February 2023 (GSS 2024c). With such challenging economic conditions, organisations experience profound upheavals and strive to meet their goals and objectives.

In this turbulent context, organisational survival increasingly depends on two critical factors, namely, managers who proffer the management processes effectively (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 7) and a workforce which is high-performing and engage in behaviours that lead to the production of high-quality products and services that enhance good reputation, motivate customers to increase their sales and ultimately overall performance of the organisation (Webster *et al.* 2022: 1). Therefore, the importance of human resources as a vital organisational asset and the concept of human relations as a driving vehicle towards achieving organisational goals becomes optimal. This is also of primary importance, given that organisations are hierarchical systems with core management processes that emphasises chains of command, order, control and discipline (Martela 2019: 5). Furthermore, this hierarchical system represents a four-tier pyramid consisting of varied levels of workforce with operative employees at the base, followed by supervisors, middle managers, and top management. Hence, for developing effective organisational performance, such a structure highlights the need for checks and balances as well as effective relationships, predicated on relevant supervision.

From a management perspective, Schuh and Carlisle (1991: 497) define supervision as “any relationship where one person has the responsibility to provide leadership, direction, information, motivation or support for one or more persons.” Central to this definition is the word ‘relationship’, typically involving two individuals and, in the context of this thesis, the employees, one being a supervisor and the other a subordinate. In another context, Losim *et al.* (2021:1) define supervision as “the act or function of supervising (that is overseeing a process, work, workers, etc., during the execution of work or performance).” When managed effectively, it leads to functional supervision which supports employee growth, improved performance, and organisational success (Pimmer *et al.* 2017: 5; Tan *et al.* 2023: 321-322). However, conversely, it leads to dysfunctional supervision manifested through behaviours such as abuse, tyranny, victimisation, bullying, and undermining activities, which can erode workplace morale and trigger harmful employee reactions (Tepper 2007: 263-264). The detrimental effects of such dysfunctional supervisory behaviours on individual employees, work teams, and the broader organisation have been widely acknowledged in the literature (Khizar *et al.* 2023; Li *et al.* 2024), making it the focus of this study.

Accordingly, in response to dysfunctional supervision, employees may react by adopting defensive coping behaviours such as employee silence and alienation. Silence refers to the deliberate act of refraining from expressing ideas, facts, and views pertaining to work and the organisation (Dyne, Ang and Botero 2003: 1360). At the same time, alienation reflects the degree to which a person feels separated from his or her professional life. (Hirschfeld and Field 2000: 790). Both reactions not only diminish individual productivity but can also impair team collaboration and innovation, thereby threatening organisational resilience in uncertain times. These employee reactions are particularly concerning in high power-distance cultures such as Ghana (Hofstede 2001), where subordinates are less likely to challenge authority and more prone to silence or withdrawal in the face of supervisory misconduct.

Nevertheless, amid such challenges, high-performing employees (HPEs) play a vital role. HPEs are known for their exceptional output, initiative, and collaborative spirit (Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8; De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 582), making them key drivers of team

effectiveness and workplace cohesion. Hence, their presence can mediate and moderate the negative effects of poor supervision by promoting a culture of support, engagement, and information sharing. However, their effectiveness is not guaranteed in all settings. When exposed to dysfunctional supervisory behaviours, even HPEs may feel demotivated or emotionally depleted; thus, reducing their willingness to engage in discretionary efforts that support colleagues or the organisation.

Moreover, the extent to which dysfunctional supervision influences HPEs, employee silence and alienation may be shaped by organisational and interpersonal factors. One such factor is political skill, which refers to the ability to wield influence through persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation (Mintzberg 1983, cited in Treadway *et al.* 2004: 495). Supervisors with good political skills are better suited to manage subordinates' perceptions and maintain harmonious relationships even under strain. Another critical factor is the fairness and transparency of promotion practices, which shape how employees perceive organisational support and opportunity. For example, when promotion practices are fair, it sustains HPEs' prosocial behaviours, strengthens employees' view of HPEs as role models, and encourages the participation and involvement of team members.

The relationships among these constructs have been studied mostly in advanced economies. However, how they are envisaged in an unstable environment in the emerging economies in Africa remains a growing research concern; thus, the rationale of this study.

1.3 The Research Study Site

This study was conducted in Ghana, a West African country, bordered by Togo, Burkina Faso, the Ivory Coast, and the Gulf of Guinea. The country is divided into 16 regions as depicted in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1: Map of Ghana depicting the sixteen regions



Source: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration

Ghana is classified as one of the emerging market economies in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and one of the more stable economies within the West African region (World Bank 2021). It also has a diverse economic structure that is categorised into agriculture, industry, and services with a nominal gross domestic product (GDP) of GH¢226,657.3

million in the fourth quarter of 2023 (GSS 2024d:6). Notably, agriculture significantly contributes to the Ghanaian economy, employing a substantial segment of the population, mainly in the indigenous areas and contributing 21.4% of GDP in the fourth quarter of 2023 (GSS 2024d: 6). Principal agricultural goods encompass cocoa, which positions Ghana among the world's foremost cocoa producers, as well as oil palm, timber and variety of fruits and vegetables (GIPC 2023; GSS 2024e; Onumah, Asante and Osei 2023: 302). The industrial sector has shown growth with a share of 32.3% of GDP in quarter four of 2023, with manufacturing as its backbone (GIPC 2024: 2; GSS 2024d: 6). Among the key industries in the manufacturing sector are aluminum smelting, cocoa processing, chemicals and cement, processing of metals, pharmaceutical manufacturing, textile and garment manufacturing, and wood processing.

Moreover, Ghana is rich in natural resources, including gold, oil, bauxite, and manganese. According to a report by the Ghana Chamber of Mines (2024), the mineral sector consolidated its position as the country's largest source of forex in 2023, outstripping the proceeds from the export of crude and cocoa. Among the available minerals, gold exports have made a significant contribution to the country's foreign exchange revenues for decades, from \$731 million in 2004 to \$7.6 billion, which was 97.4% of total minerals export revenue of \$7.8 billion in 2023 (Ali, Anufriev and Amfo 2021: 5; Arhin, Erdiaw-Kwasie and Abunyewah 2022: 1; Ghana Chamber of Mines 2024; 2023). However, the services sector is dominant in terms of percentage contribution to overall national output, recording 46.3% of GDP in the fourth quarter of 2023 (GSS 2024d: 6). This sector is comprised of health and social work, education, information and communication, finance and insurance and hotels and restaurants (GSS 2023). According to the Ministry of Finance (2023), the contributions of these key sectors were expected to be maintained in 2024, suggesting that the services sector would sustain its dominance over industry and agriculture.

Overall, the World Bank (2024) estimated the growth in Ghana's GDP to remain at 2.8% in 2024 and rebound to approximately 5% in 2026. However, despite Ghana's notable economic advancements, the growth in GDP has not generated many jobs, exacerbating the unemployment situation in the country. In addition, it is reported that the country

continues to operate below capacity, as it is grappling with various challenges ranging from high inflation, subdued growth, debt distress, and public debt unsustainability, being a net importer of crucial commodities, high unemployment, income inequality, and inadequate access to health services (World Bank 2024). Amongst these, unemployment and income inequality have remained critical. For example, a report by the Ghana Statistical Services (GSS) shows that the number of people who were unemployed in Ghana in the third quarter of the year 2023 was 1.85 million, and the average for the first three quarters of 2023 was 14.7% (GSS 2024f).

Amongst the sixteen (16) regions depicted in Figure 1.1, the Western region, which was the specific location for the research study, experienced a worsening unemployment situation in the third quarter of 2023. This region is surrounded by the Western North region in the north and west, Central region in the east, La Côte d'Ivoire in the west and the Gulf of Guinea (the Atlantic Ocean) in the south (Ghana Health Service 2023; WRCC 2024). With a total land area of 14,447 square kilometres and a coastline of 192 kilometres, the region has a population of 2,214,660 (Ghana Health Service 2023). It is a predominantly the hub of agricultural where almost 60% of the population engage in subsistence farming; however, the region is also endowed with natural resources such as gold, timber, and crude oil (Ghana Health Service 2023).

Despite the presence of a harbour that functions as a significant export port and a transit hub for certain nations in the West Africa sub-region and its location on Trans-ECOWAS highway, the region was the only one amongst the 16 regions that had a decline of 1.1% employment from the third quarter of 2022 to the third quarter of 2023 (GSS 2024b). Moreover, the Western region topped the list of unemployment in the third quarter of 2023 in both the urban and rural areas, with an increase of 143.8% and 75.7%, respectively. The immediate implications of unemployment are worsening poverty levels (World Bank 2024), namely, less purchasing power and reduced sales for enterprises, thereby stagnating economic activities, particularly in rural areas or indigenous communities in Ghana.

Indigenous societies in Ghana are generally collectivist, characterised by hierarchical socio-cultural values and demands. Hence, within these societies, there is a hierarchical

structure of leadership with greater emphasis on respect and obedience to those in leadership, who are viewed as a repository of knowledge and wisdom, believed to occupy position of authority, entrusted with decision making, and are the spokespersons for their groups (Schwartz 2006: 156; Slade Shantz *et al.* 2020: 21, 28). In addition, these societies demand that workers respect employers, the poor respect the rich, ordinary people respect sacred people, young people respect the elderly, while disrespect is punished (Van der Geest 1997: 535-536). These cultural practices and demands permeate the management of business entities and the nature of supervision in organisations that operate within these communities.

1.4 Statement of the Research Problem

The concept of supervision has transformed over time, due to the internal and external demands and challenges facing organisations. Supervision is a supervisor-supervisee relationship and, thus, plays a critical role in shaping employee behaviour and, in turn, organisational performance. In the financial sector, particularly in banking, adequate supervision is essential for operational success, regulatory compliance, and long-term sustainability. Therefore, the International Monetary Fund (IMF 2023) underscores the importance of supervision in preventing bank failures, a concern echoed in Ghana's financial sector, where banks face growing pressure to adapt to global economic shifts (PwC 2023).

Specifically, the ability of Ghanaian banks to meet the needs of consumers without compromising their practices has remained a vital concern. The report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2022) asserted that Ghanaian banks should contribute to the economy by effectively developing financial models, products, and services, as well as through effective marketing and business operations. Hence, the latter entails the day-to-day running of the business, which requires the need for capable human resources. This concurs with the findings of Yahaya and Segbenya (2023), who identified managerial competencies as an underlying factor affecting the operations of Ghanaian banks. In this context, supervision processes involving managers or supervisors' roles in tandem with the subordinates' relationships become vital.

Existing literature on supervision processes predominantly focuses on functional supervisory behaviours such as coaching, mentoring, family-supportive behaviours, and feedback (FSSB) (Carvalho, Carvalho and Carvalho 2022: 4; Hammer *et al.* 2009; Zhao and Liu 2020: 294) and their role in enhancing the positive attributes of high-performing employees (Fan *et al.* 2023; Harati, Ashkanasy and Amirzadeh 2024; Kumari *et al.* 2022; Mohamad, Sanusi and Othman 2024; Ribeiro *et al.* 2021; Zarghoni and Rasool 2021). However, despite its importance, supervision in many organisations is often marked by dysfunction. For example, in high power-distance societies like Ghana (Hofstede 2001), supervisors may adopt dysfunctional behaviours such as abusive or punitive supervision to drive performance, enforce compliance, and assert authority (Mensah and Okeke-Uzodike 2025; De Clercq, Azeem, and Haq 2023: 437; Zhang *et al.* 2018). Although some studies suggest positive results from such behaviours (Lee, Yun and Srivastava 2013; Liao *et al.* 2016; Oh and Farh 2017), the broader literature emphasises their negative outcomes, including employee silence and alienation (Abalkhail 2022; Jiang *et al.* 2019; Liu *et al.* 2021; Santos *et al.* 2023; Wang, Hsieh, and Wang 2020), and low-performing employee attributes (Li, Wang and Paşamehmetoğlu 2024; Santos *et al.* 2023; Srivastava, Gupta and Mohapatra 2024). While research into these consequences is growing, few studies have directly examined how dysfunctional supervision erodes the positive attributes of HPEs (De Clercq, Azeem and Haq 2023; Grill 2023; Mehmood *et al.* 2024; Mehraein, Visintin and Pittino 2023; Zhou *et al.* 2024), resulting in employee silence and alienation.

Although considerable research has been conducted on why employees adopt negative reactions to dysfunctional supervision related to firms in Asia and Western contexts, limited empirical evidence exists in Africa, particularly within Ghana's indigenous banking sector (Mensah and Okeke-Uzodike 2025). This gap is concerning given the sector's central role in financial inclusion and economic development. More importantly, while existing literature acknowledges the role of HPEs in promoting a culture of support, engagement, and information sharing (Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018: 8), less is known about their mediating influence on the interplay between dysfunctional supervision, employee silence, and employee alienation. Furthermore, there is a dearth of empirical studies that explore how organisational frameworks, such as political skill and promotion

practices, tend to condition these relationships. This is particularly relevant in culturally unique and under-researched contexts such as indigenous African banking institutions. This gap in the literature is concerning, given that employee silence and alienation can severely undermine productivity, innovation, and organisational resilience.

Nevertheless, without a clear understanding of the interactive dynamics between supervision, employee high-performance, and workplace reactions, organisations risk entrenching harmful supervisory cultures that may stifle voice and diminish employee engagement. Therefore, this study seeks to rectify these critical deficiencies by examining the direct and indirect pathways through which dysfunctional supervision affects employee silence and alienation. Thus, the research examined the mediating role of HPEs and assessed how promotion practices and political skill moderate these relationships within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana. The goal is to enhance both theoretical and practical domains by contextualising the supervision process and employee reactions within a high power-distance setting, which is an under-researched area.

In academia, research on supervision processes remains fragmented, with a limited focus on practical dynamics within the financial sector. More specifically, there are limited studies investigating how supervision influences behavioural responses such as silence and alienation in Ghana's banking institutions. Therefore, addressing this gap is crucial for understanding employee resilience, engagement, and performance within the supervisory environment. Accordingly, there is a need to explore this field of research and answer the question, "What is the nature of the supervision process and employee reactions in the selected indigenous banks in the Western region of Ghana?"

1.5 The Study Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of research is the ultimate result the research seeks to achieve (De Vos *et al.* 2011). To achieve this aim, specific research objectives and corresponding research questions were formulated.

1.5.1 The Main Aim of the Study

The study aims to evaluate the context of supervision processes and employees' reactions in selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana. Within the limitations of this study, as noted in the background section of the study (Section 1.2), only the dysfunctional aspects of supervision processes were examined. Employee reactions are examined through the variables that informed the development of the subsequent research objectives. These variables include high-performing employees, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skill.

1.5.2 The Study Research Objectives

Drawing from the main aim of the study and focusing on the dysfunctional aspects of supervision processes, the following objectives were developed:

- i. To examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on high-performing employees;
- ii. To examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation;
- iii. To examine the mediating role of high-performing employees in the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence, and supervision processes and employee alienation;
- iv. To investigate the moderating effects of promotion practices on the interaction between high-performing employees and employee silence, and high-performing employees and employee alienation;
- v. To explore the moderating effects of supervisors' political skill on the interactions between the supervision processes and high-performing employees; and
- vi. To develop a model on the effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on the variables of employee silence, employee alienation, high-performing employees, promotion practices, and political skill.

1.5.3 Research Questions

Each research objective developed for the study was formulated into a question as follows:

- i. What is the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on high-performing employees?
- ii. What is the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation?
- iii. How do high-performing employees mediate the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence, and supervision processes and employee alienation?
- iv. How do promotion practices moderate the interaction between high-performing employees and employee silence, and high-performing employees and employee alienation?
- v. How does a supervisor's political skill moderate the interaction between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees?
- vi. What model can be developed on the effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on the variables of employee silence, employee alienation, high-performing employees, promotion practices, and political skill?

1.6 The Study Hypotheses

According to Beltrones (2021:13), hypotheses are defined as the philosophical propositions officially constructed and supported by logical analysis within established knowledge. Often, hypotheses are developed or framed in line with the study's research objectives.

Based on the study's research first objective (i), null and alternate hypotheses were developed with a specific interest in understanding the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees as follows:

H1a: There is a significant negative relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees.

H1_o: There is no relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees.

In the same vein, the following hypotheses were derived from Research Objective 2, and the focus was on understanding the relationships among the variables, dysfunctional supervision processes, employee silence, and employee alienation. In this regard, the research hypotheses developed are two-pronged, with the first focusing on dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence, while the second focuses on dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation. Thus, the structured hypotheses are as follows:

H2_a: There is a significant positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H2_o: There is no relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H3_a: There is a significant positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H3_o: There is no relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

On Research Objective 3, two hypotheses were developed to examine the interplay among the variables of high-performing employees, dysfunctional supervision processes, employee silence, and employee alienation. Hence, the hypotheses developed are as follows:

H4_a: High-performing employees mediate the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H4_o: High-performing employees do not mediate the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H5_a: High-performing employees mediate the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H5_o: High-performing employees do not mediate the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

The sixth and seventh hypotheses were developed from Research Objective 4. This objective aimed to determine the moderating role of promotion practices on the impact of high-performing employees on two variables, namely, employee silence and employee alienation. Given this, the following hypotheses were developed:

H6_a: Promotion practices moderate the interaction between high-performing employees and employee silence.

H6_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the interaction between high-performing employees and employee silence.

H7_a: Promotion practices moderate the interaction between high-performing employees and employee alienation.

H7_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the interaction between high-performing employees and employee alienation.

Research Objective 5 was developed into one hypothesis to understand the moderating role of political skill on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on high-performing employees. Thus, the following hypotheses were developed:

H8_a: Supervisor's political skill moderates the interaction between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees.

H8_o: Supervisor's political skill does not moderate the interaction between dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees.

1.7 Justification and Significance of the Study

The justification for this study stems from the global financial sector's challenges in keeping pace with the world economy, of which managerial practices have been identified as a cause. In particular, the Ghanaian banking industry, which struggled to meet customer demand, was attributed to ineffective managerial competencies, mainly in its daily operational activities, as revealed by the Ministry of Finance (MoF) (2022) and Yahaya and Segbenya (2023). The other factors cited for the industry's struggle included embezzlement and fraud, negligence and ineffective corporate governance practices, regulatory noncompliance, persistent operating deficit, poor debt recovery and corruption, low deposit mobilisation, and the use of unqualified staff (Awo and Akotey 2019; BOG 2019a; BOG 2019b). Moreover, these factors led to the banks becoming insolvent, making them unable to meet customers' needs and deepening the challenges of trust facing the Ghanaian banking industry, as well as its ability to promote trust and reposition its credibility (MoF 2022; Ofori-Acquah, Avortri and Preko 2023).

In line with the above, the Bank of Ghana (BoG) revoked the licences of 420 financial institutions and took over total assets amounting to GH¢26.05 billion (7.45% of GDP) between 2017 and 2019 in an exercise dubbed the Banking Sector cleanup (MoF 2022). Other remedies included: an increase in the minimum capital requirement from GH¢120 million to GH¢400 million; operationalisation of the deposit protection scheme; addressing risk from high non-performing loans; poor corporate governance; and deficient risk management system and issued and enforced "fit and proper person" requirements for shareholders; and directors and key management positions to promote high standards in the industry (BoG 2019b: 5).

These measures were undertaken to strengthen the regulatory and supervisory processes of the Bank of Ghana, protect the interests of the depositors, enhance trust, and promote the stability of the financial sector, as noted by the BoG (2019b). However, compliance with these measures meant increased pressure for the board, executive management, supervisors/branch managers, and subordinates. Given the above measures, the desire of banks to comply and conform leads to different supervision processes and behavioural tendencies from both supervisors and subordinates. Within

this context, this study aimed to evaluate the nature of supervision processes and employee reactions in selected indigenous banks within the Western region of Ghana.

Another justification also emerged from the fact that the revamping of economic activities among indigenous communities to reduce poverty levels was predicated on the availability and accessibility of capital. In view of this, the significance of this study lies in the role of rural and community banks (RCBs) in rural financial intermediation and their impact on poverty reduction (Danquah *et al.* 2021: 316). Moreover, the successful execution of this position requires the implementation of effective and efficient solutions. However, several banks have exhibited subpar performance, which is mostly attributed to the nature of the supervision processes. This study aims to evaluate the nature of supervision processes by examining their relationships with variables such as high-performing employees (HPEs), employee silence, and alienation within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana.

1.8 Scope or Delimitations

The scope of a study refers to the parameters that specifies its aims, target population, variables, methodologies and constraints, aiding researchers in concentrating and clarifying the topic being studied (Monson, Smith and Bajic 2022: 3). In Ghana, there are 144 rural and community banks (RCBs) which operate in all the regions (ARB Apex Bank 2022). Some of these banks also have branches in multiple regions. However, the focus of the study was on RCBs that have head offices in the Western region, and only branches located in that region were considered.

In addition, the process of supervision comprises positive and negative activities and behaviours. Functional behaviours encompass, namely, task-oriented behaviours, relation-oriented behaviours, and change-oriented behaviours. However, dysfunctional behaviours reference abusive supervision, petty tyranny, victimisation, workplace bullying, supervisor aggression, supervisor undermining, generalised hierarchical abuse, supervisory mistreatment, and negative mentoring experiences (Tan *et al.* 2023: 321-322; Tepper 2007: 263-264). The focus of the study was on dysfunctional or negative

supervision processes within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana, rather than positive supervision processes. Additionally, different employees' reactions to negative supervision processes include shame, absenteeism, poor performance, stress, emotional exhaustion, and negative affectivity (Kim, Holtz and Hu 2020; Metin-Orta 2021; Ogunfowora, Weinhardt and Hwang 2021). However, this study is centred on employee silence and alienation as employee reactions to dysfunctional supervision processes.

1.9 Synopsis of Related Literature

Over time, the concept of supervision, which involves social influence, has been developed and defined across various disciplines. Moreover, the literature review elaborates on these definitions from different disciplines/perspectives. Furthermore, the literature presented focuses on the functions of supervision, as well as the processes and dimensions of dysfunctional supervision processes. A review of the concepts of HPEs, including employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skills, follows. Detailed insights into these concepts are presented, followed by an explanation of the study's underpinning theory. The theories explore leader-member exchange (LMX), social support, and the norm of reciprocity theory. Finally, a detailed review of the hypotheses development is presented.

1.10 Preliminary Research Methodology

The researcher used pragmatic philosophy, which grants researchers the flexibility to employ various methodological approaches in addressing the research questions. The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design, along with a primary focus on employing a deductive methodology for theory construction. The process started by employing the selected theories to develop and examine the hypotheses, in order to either confirm or refute them. Primary data were collected on a cross-sectional basis using a structured questionnaire and interview guide. From a target population of 688, a sample size of 247 respondents was selected from three indigenous banks. Quantitative data were collected from 227 respondents, while qualitative data were collected from 20

participants. These respondents were selected using a combination of multistage cluster sampling and purposive sampling techniques. Quantitative data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS4 statistical software, while qualitative data analysis was performed using content analysis with the aid of NVivo 14 Pro software. Chapter 4 provides a comprehensive elucidation of the methodological decisions made.

1.11 Definition of key terms

In a research study, concepts are defined and operationalised in line with the purpose and the nature of the research. This is necessary because concepts may have different definitions and meanings based on the context in which they are used; hence, it is incumbent upon a researcher to clearly define the key terms of the study. In light of this, this section presents the key terms and their definitions.

1.11.1 Supervision processes

According to Claiborn, Etringer and Hillerbrand (1995: 43), supervision is defined as a mechanism of social influence in which the supervisor encourages subordinates to consider and embrace new perspectives on various matters and tasks. Throughout the course of time, supervisors have employed a diverse range of behaviours to motivate and engage their subordinates during the supervision process. This implies that the phrase "supervision process" might encompass both constructive behaviours and destructive or dysfunctional behaviours. In this study, dysfunctional supervision is conceptualised as a higher-order construct that encompasses a range of negative leadership behaviours, including petty tyranny, victimisation, workplace bullying, supervisor hostility, supervisor undermining, and abusive supervision (Balwant 2021: 82; Tepper 2007: 263-264). Due to the similarity among these dimensions, this study operationalises dysfunctional supervision is based on the definitions provided by Tepper (2000:178) and Claiborn, Etringer and Hillerbrand (1995: 43). Thus, dysfunctional supervision is "the views of subordinates about the extent to which supervisors apply aggressive verbal and nonverbal behaviours without physical harm with the intention of stimulating the subordinates to adopt new attitudes on different issues and work."

1.11.2 High-performing employees (HPEs)

The concept of high-performing employees, also referred to as “stars” potential stars, high-potential employees, and “good people”, represents those who demonstrate exceptionally high and sustained performance, visibility and social capital (Call, Nyberg and Thatcher 2015: 623). In this study, HPEs are defined as the few individual stars who contribute above-average output to the organisation and, therefore, sit at the top of the organisational pyramid and have the potential to fill leadership positions (Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8; Kehoe *et al.* 2018: 2).

1.11.3 Employee silence

Pinder and Harlos (2001: 334) focused on the individual level and introduced the notion of employee silence. They defined this as the act of refraining from expressing any genuine opinion regarding one's assessment of their organisational situation to individuals who are perceived as having the ability to enact changes or improvements. Moreover, this definition was corroborated by Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003: 1360) who further defined employee silence as the deliberate act of refraining from expressing ideas, facts, and views pertaining to work and the organisation. In this study, employee silence is defined from the perspectives of Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003: 1360) and Pinder and Harlos (2001: 334) as mentioned above.

1.11.4 Employee alienation

According to Fromm and Anderson (2017: 135), alienation refers to the state of perceiving oneself as a stranger, thereby creating a sense of detachment. In this definition, alienated individuals do not view themselves as the focal point of their universe but consider their activities and the resulting outcomes to have derived from sources they obediently follow. In this study, alienation is examined in the context of the organisation. On this basis, employee alienation is operationalised as the degree of disengagement employees have from their professional life and loses the freedom to express themselves in the workplace (Jiang *et al.* 2019: 3; Hirschfeld and Field 2000: 790).

1.11.5 Promotion practices

Promotion refers to the advancement of an individual to a more senior position accompanied by increased remuneration (Ngan, Tze-Ngai and Vong 2019: 2). Scholars have identified three main routes to promote individuals in organisations. These routes are based on tenure or seniority, possession of technical skills and performance (Beehr, Taber and Walsh 1980: 55). Hence, the term promotion practices is operationalised in this study to refer to the raise of an individual through tenure, possession of technical skills and/or performance to a senior position with improved remuneration.

1.11.6 Political skill

Mintzberg (1983, cited in Treadway *et al.* 2004: 495) defined political skill as encompassing the capacity to exert influence by persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation. Ferris *et al.* (2002: 111) added both social observation and intelligence to the definition. In this context, political skill is operationalised as the ability to execute actions with both integrity and cunning, effectively concealing any personal or hidden agendas.

1.12 Structure of the Thesis

Theses have different focus and content, however, they all share a common recognisable and appropriate structure (Gruba *et al.* 2017: 25). According to these authors, the standard structure expected from the writers of theses is to motivate the work, present background material, conduct an investigation, argue and display the results and end with a sound conclusion. Following the standard structure, this research was presented in seven chapters.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Chapter 1 presents an overview of the research study, which highlights the supervision processes within the indigenous organisational setting. By doing so, the researcher elaborated on how human resources are vital assets that propel modern-day organisations to thrive in the ever-changing business environment. This is attributed to the supervisor-subordinate relationship that exists within the hierarchical structure in indigenous organisations. The research further explained this in the context of the research study site, showing how the supervisor-subordinate relationship was

established within the Ghanaian traditional/cultural setting. The chapter further presents the perceived problems characterised within the context of the study, leading to the study's aim, and various objectives set out for the study. In addition, the study presents the formulated hypotheses that were tested to prove their existence or nonexistence. Thereafter, the significance, justification and contribution of the study are discussed. The study also presented preliminary literature information and provided the reader with insights into the adopted methodology. The structure of the thesis is presented, and the conclusion of the chapter follows.

Chapter 2: Review of Related Literature

In Chapter 2, literature regarding the primary constructs of the study was reviewed. The review began an examination of the concept of supervision and supervision processes. Supervision was defined from the perspectives of different disciplines, from which a definition was formulated and adopted for this study. This is followed by management functions as a foundation in supervision processes, including the supervisory relationship and supervision outcomes, under which literature on positive and negative dimensions was covered. The focus was shifted to literature on the negative or dysfunctional supervision processes, which is the core of the study. The literature on the other concepts of the study was also reviewed. High-performing employees served as the mediating variable, and the reviewed literature examined their characteristics. Moreover, a review of the literature on employee silence and employee alienation, which constituted employee reactions to dysfunctional supervision processes in this study, was undertaken. This review covered the definition and dimensions of these concepts. Lastly, literature on promotion practices and political skill was reviewed as moderators. This review covered their definitions and dimensions, and detailed information on these reviews is provided in Chapter 2 of the study.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Review and Hypotheses Development

Chapter 3 focuses on a review of the literature on the theories that underpin the study. These theories are leader-member exchange, social support and norm of reciprocity theory. The literature on the definitions, aspects and applications of these theories was reviewed. For this study, the manner in which these theories link the concepts together

was emphasised. Thereafter, a review of empirical studies on the research concepts was undertaken. This review highlighted previous studies on the concepts under investigation, which ultimately led to the development of the hypotheses to be tested. The chapter also covers the conceptual framework, which summarises the number of hypotheses.

Chapter 4: Research Methodology

Chapter 4 presents information on the methodological choices available for researchers, based on Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2019) research onion. The chapter starts with the definition and types of research philosophy, which explains the researchers' beliefs and assumptions. This is followed by a discussion of the research approach, which explains the types of reasoning and inferences that can be adopted for research, including deductive, inductive, and abductive reasoning. In this study, the researcher chose pragmatist philosophy and an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, which entails analysing quantitative results and subsequently utilising these results to provide a more comprehensive explanation. In view of this, a deductive approach to theory development was employed, which necessitates the development of hypotheses (Kajamaa, Mattick and de la Croix 2020: 268; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 182). Based on the layers of the research onion, the chapter presents the strategy/design, explaining why a structured questionnaire and interview guide were used to collect the primary data on a cross-sectional basis. To collect data from an appropriate sample of the population, the chapter discusses sampling techniques and explains why multistage cluster sampling and purposive sampling were adopted. The chapter continues with data quality criteria and procedures for quantitative data analysis using SmartPLS4 and qualitative data analysis using content analysis and NVivo Version 14. This chapter also presents information on ethical considerations.

Chapter 5: Data Presentation and Analysis

Researchers are expected to present and analyse the data they collect from the field using the recommended methods in the literature. In chapter 5, the researcher presented and analysed the quantitative data using SPSS for the demographic data and PLS-SEM 4 for the core data on the constructs. The recommended criteria to assess the quality of the measurement model were applied, and the results of the assessment are presented.

In addition, the recommended steps for evaluating the structural model were followed, and the results of the hypotheses are presented and analysed with respect to their significance, coefficient of determination, effect size, and predictive relevance. NVivo Version 14 software was also used to process the qualitative data, while content analysis was used for the analysis. The results are presented using tables and figures.

Chapter 6: Discussions and Findings

After presenting and analysing the data, a thorough discussion of the relationships between the constructs as depicted in the conceptual framework. Hence, Chapter 6 discusses 10 hypotheses grouped into three categories — direct relationships, mediating relationships, and moderating relationships. The discussions began with the direct relationships between dysfunctional supervision processes with HPEs, employee alienation, and employee silence. These discussions were conducted with consideration for the context of the activities and expectations of indigenous societies. Following the pattern in the conceptual framework, a discussion was made on the mediating role of HPEs. This is followed by discussions on the moderating roles of promotion practices and political skill. All these discussions led to findings that supported or rejected the research hypotheses and objectives.

Chapter 7: Summary of Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations

This is the final chapter of the thesis where the researcher summarises the findings based on the research questions. The summary focuses on the findings on the effects of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs, the mediating role of HPEs on the indirect effects of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation and the moderating role of promotion practices and political skill on the direct and indirect impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. Based on the findings, the proposed conceptual framework was reviewed to align with the actual situation revealed by the findings. The chapter concludes with a discussion of limitations, implications, and recommendations for future research.

1.13 Conclusion of the Chapter

In conclusion, Chapter 1 laid the foundation for the comprehensive examination of the complex relationships among dysfunctional supervision processes, HPEs, employee alienation and silence, political skill, and promotion practices within the context of selected indigenous banks. The primary aim of this research was to critically evaluate the context of dysfunctional supervision processes in terms of the effects and coping strategies on employee reactions, particularly in the context of indigenous banks. This inquiry was driven by the recognition of the crucial role played by supervision processes in shaping employee behaviours and the need to better understand how these processes impact employee alienation and silence. The chapter introduces the hypotheses, provides justification for the study, and underscores its significance in contributing to the existing body of knowledge.

The chapter also outlines the scope and delimitation of the research by clarifying the boundaries within which the study was conducted. Moreover, a synopsis of related literature is provided, highlighting key concepts and shedding light on the theoretical and empirical foundations. Additionally, the chapter briefly discusses the preliminary research methodology, offering a glimpse into the research paradigm, approach, methodological choices, design and data collection and analysis procedures employed to answer the research questions. This was followed by an outline of the thesis structure, detailing how the subsequent chapters unfolded. In the next chapter, a review of related literature on the concepts under investigation is presented.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The primary objective of any researcher is to generate results that contribute to the expansion of knowledge. The process of expanding or producing new knowledge begins with reviewing existing literature related to the concepts of interest. According to Collins *et al.* (2021: 3), a literature review refers to the systematic procedure of locating, assessing, and interpreting all existing research that is pertinent to a particular research question, subject matter or phenomenon of interest. Through using this procedure, a researcher can formulate and/or enhance a research topic, aim, and objective of a study. Consistent with prior research (Etim, Jeremiah and Dan 2020; Hoor-UI-Ain and Iraqi 2022; Meier and Reinecke 2021; Valackienė and Yeboah 2023), the literature review encompassed three distinct categories; namely, conceptual review, (which elucidates the definitions and other attributes of the principal concepts under investigation); theoretical review (which examines the diverse theories that elucidate the interconnections among the concepts); and empirical review (which presents the outcomes of prior studies pertaining to the subject matter of the study).

This chapter provides a conceptual review, whereas Chapter 3 will present the theoretical and empirical reviews. Beyond this introduction, the study presents a review of the concept of supervision and associated processes, as well as determinants and consequences aligned with the research objectives. A review of these determinants is thus presented, which includes high-performing employees, promotion practices, and political skills. Moreover, a review of the literature on the consequences, which are employee silence and employee alienation, is presented. Accordingly, the idea is to understand how these concepts have been defined over the years, their characteristics and dimensions.

2.2 Supervision as a Concept

Supervision, according to Leddick and Bernard (1980: 187), began to develop between 1925 and 1930, during which researchers highlighted the supervisor's responsibility. Moreover, in 1959, Eckstein and Wallerstein (1959, cited in Leddick and Bernard 1980) used an analogy of a chess game to describe the stages of supervision with labels "opening" as the first stage, with both the supervisor and the trainee eyeing each other for signs of expertise and weakness. The second stage was called "mid-game", characterised by interpersonal conflict, where the supervisor assumes the role of counsellor-teacher. The last stage, called "end game", is where the supervisor adopts a more passive role, hence promotion the trainee's autonomy.

Following this perspective, attention shifted to a facilitative approach that emerged in the 1960s, encouraging supervisors to adapt their role according to their comprehension trainee requirements (Leddick and Bernard 1980). Supervisors are to achieve this by modelling the behaviour of an integrated, facilitative, nondirective counsellor, so that the trainees might learn by example. Another approach to supervision that emerged in the 1960s was the behavioural approach, which involved offering a specific degree of thorough teaching in various behavioural techniques. Hence, Leddick and Bernard (1980) noted that, by 1966, the field of supervision had three major models; namely, dynamic, facilitative and behavioural. Finally, the 1970s saw the appearance of a skills training approach that focused on the trainee's process behaviours. According to Leddick and Bernard (1980: 190), this approach provided a thorough and extensive description of the skills required for each learner, with the supervisor fulfilling the dual roles of educator and trainer. This is because the skills training approach applies goal setting or other behavioural techniques to produce change in the behaviour of the trainees.

Supervision permeates all aspects of human existence and can be viewed from various lenses such as within a family structure, educational settings and organisations. For example, in the context of a family structure, supervision is undertaken by the heads or older persons, whether in extended or nuclear family settings. Supervision in family

settings is particularly prevalent within indigenous societies as elders assume leadership roles and exercise oversight over the affairs and activities of the communities.

Similarly, in an educational setting, supervision is defined based on the discipline related to the individual and the focus of the training. In the domain of health and applied sciences, Kadushin and Harkness (2014: 11) define supervision as the systematic procedure wherein a supervisor is granted the authority to supervise, arrange, enhance and evaluate the job performance of the supervisees under their care. Moreover, in the academic postgraduate studies, Bekki (2022: 20) refers to supervision as an interpersonal interaction between a supervisor and the supervisee. The field of psychology also defines supervision as the systematic process through which seasoned professionals, known as supervisors, equip less experienced colleagues with the necessary skills and knowledge to enter their profession (Körük and Ahmet 2019: 51).

In the discipline of human resource management, the definition of supervision varies depending on the specific environment in which it is employed. In this domain, Michael *et al.* (2006: 470) refer to supervision as the process by which supervisors exert their influence on the attitudes, behaviours, and overall job-related performance of their subordinates. This definition aligns with that of Claiborn, Etringer and Hillerbrand (1995: 43), which views supervision as a process of social influence, whereby the supervisor stimulates subordinates to consider and adopt new perspectives on various issues and work.

Supervision in the context of an organisation, referred to as workplace supervision by Noble (2008: 455), can be formal or informal and serves as a mechanism for organisations to succeed. According to Noble (2008: 455), a supervision session in the workplace enhances the creative, critical and reflective capacities of both the supervisor and supervisee, facilitating the identification of concepts regarding the type of organisational learning that is promoted, legitimised and validated; how work is designed, structured and organised; the application of learning to address organisational needs, and the barriers that hinder learning. Noble (2008: 455) argues that when the supervision session is equipped with time and resources to address these concerns, it creates a work

culture that readily accepts change and generates best practice options for workers, thereby enhancing the organisation immeasurably.

Irrespective of the context in which supervision takes place, a common purpose of supervision is to enhance the performance of the individual and the organisation being supervised; hence, the primary role of the supervisor is to stimulate, guide, improve, renew, encourage and oversee the performance of the supervisee. In addition, supervisors offer supportive and evaluative services to further enhance the practice experience of the supervisees. It is also anticipated that the supervisor would facilitate the transfer of information to the supervisee and establish a secure atmosphere conducive to the supervisee's knowledge development. In all of these activities, a supervisor engages in various management functions to facilitate the attainment of organisational objectives and enhance performance.

2.3 Management Functions: The Foundation in Supervision Processes

Supervision is a component of the management process which encompasses the necessary skills relating to planning, organising, leading, and controlling. These management tasks are inseparable, and supervisors or managers apply them in their day-to-day management of organisations. Thus, these management functions underscore the process of supervision. Planning is also a contested field, and different attempts have been made to define this activity. While some scholars define planning in reference to a core concern or function of planners, others view the concept from a broader perspective, reflecting a central idea or process, such as linking knowledge to action (Forsyth 2022; McClendon *et al.* 2003). Hence, from a management perspective, scholars view planning as a methodical and intentional endeavour aimed at generating essential decisions and activities that define and direct the identity, functions, and rationale of an organisation or entity (Bryson 2010: 256; Kools and George 2020).

According to Leonard and Trusty (2016: 50-52), planning entails determining the necessary actions by establishing goals, objectives, policies, procedures, and other plans required to achieve the organisation's purpose. From this perspective, Robbins and

Coutler (2009) note the importance of planning in providing direction to managers/supervisors and non-managers (in most cases, the supervisees). These scholars added that because planning is an activity that reduces uncertainty in an organisation, it compels the supervisors to make projections, and anticipate and respond to changes as they occur. Thus, supervisors can analyse the organisation's present conditions, which helps in determining ways of reaching a desired future state. Furthermore, planning helps to minimise waste and redundancy in organisations (Robbins and Coutler 2009). In view of the foregoing, an organisation creates plans, defines its goals and mission and requires that the daily operations be carried out. In this regard, the role of the supervisors becomes optimal in ensuring the effective implementation and success of such planning. Therefore, supervisors are responsible for the organisation's manpower needs, scheduling of activities, as well as communicating tasks and monitoring activities to limit any oversight in relation to quality standards, supervisees and team performances.

Similarly, the term organising has been used in different contexts and perspectives. It is used in terms of events, teams, functions, and skills, as a principal committee and centre of management. Regardless of how it is used, a common trigger for organising is related to inadequate resources to deal with challenges in society; hence, organising takes place in all aspects of our lives, either by individuals, groups or organisations. As a management function, organising refers to the systematic procedure of gathering and allocating various resources, such as human, financial, physical, informational, and various other resources, with the aim of attaining predetermined objectives (Lloyd and Aho 2020: 12; Mullins and Christy 2016: 354). Irrespective of what to assemble and assign, the fundamental goal of organising is to allocate available resources to achieve organisational goals. Hence, organising in human resources means designing individual jobs, attracting talent, task allocation, authority delegation, and the establishment of a structure and hierarchy (Asuah-Duodu, Gubalane and Nudalo 2019; Leonard and Trusty 2016: 50).

In the same manner, organising financial resources involves ensuring that capital is employed to achieve specific objectives. Lloyd and Aho (2020:12) posit that marshalling physical resources involves focusing on the effectiveness of where products such as raw

materials and other consumables are placed and used. More specifically, the process of organising informational resources involves using and distributing the organisation's knowledge in a purposeful manner to achieve objectives (Lloyd and Aho 2020: 12). Organising other resources encompasses any resource apart from human, financial, physical, and informational resources needed for the smooth running of the organisation. The foregoing activities in an organisation mean that organising is undertaken at all levels within the organisation. Most importantly, supervisors are key in organising, as they define and group various job duties into distinct areas, sections, units or teams (Asuah-Duodo *et al.* 2019). In addition, they delineate responsibilities, allocate them, and concurrently grant subordinates the autonomy to execute their assignments (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 50).

The concept of 'leading' is reflected across all spheres of life, from the animal world to human societies. In an organisational setting, there is always a force that rallies the system towards a common goal. Such a force addresses the concept of leading as a function of management. Leading focuses on the employees (individuals, teams or groups), making it a crucial part of every manager or supervisor's job. Accordingly, leading is deemed to encompass the act of providing guidance, instruction, influence, and coaching to employees with the aim of attaining the objectives established by the organisation (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 51). Moreover, as a management function, leading involves influencing and providing guidance towards achieving a common goal.

It is a crucial aspect of effective management undertaken by those in positions of authority; as such, supervisors are entrusted as leaders to inspire a shared vision and foster a positive work environment, thereby enhancing the overall performance of a team, group, or organisation. In addition, the day-to-day process of running an organisation requires that supervisors possess the necessary skills, communication aptitude and ability to motivate their subordinates. This is because leading effectively plays a significant role in employee morale, job satisfaction, productivity, communication and developing their potential (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 51). This is possible when supervisors lead by example, establish clear and realistic goals, and provide constructive

feedback, which ultimately helps the supervisees to overcome any difficulties encountered.

Last, but not least, controlling is a management function which entails management efforts to ensure that goals set at the planning stage are accomplished (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 52; Lloyd and Aho 2020: 14). This involves an analysis of an ongoing plan and provision of updates on the plan as needed to ensure efficiency and effectiveness (Ohimor 2022). According to Conkright (2015: 16), this is accomplished by ensuring that the actual and intended performance are aligned, while corrective actions are taken when necessary to achieve the planned objectives. Thus, the starting point for controlling is the monitoring of performance, which checks progress towards goals with two outcomes in mind: advancing towards the objective or deteriorating in performance. However, irrespective of the outcome, the control process invariably directs the manager or supervisor back to the planning phase, in the form of a new project or revision, when there is a deviation in performance.

Thus, managerial functions are distinctly separate activities viewed as a process in the form of a loop starting from planning and ending at controlling (Leonard and Trusty 2016: 53). However, in the process of carrying out these activities, supervisors exhibit different forms of behaviours that they deem necessary to achieve the targeted goals. Evidently, the performance of these functions in supervision influences the supervisory relationship.

2.4. Supervisory Relationship and Supervision Outcomes

The supervisory relationship denotes the dynamics between the supervisor and the supervisee, encompassing various components such as the power, authority and values of the supervisor, the role of the supervisee, and the aspects of trust and conflict inherent in their interaction (Ghazali, Jaafar and Anuara 2018). Hiebler-Ragger *et al.* (2021) opine that key features of supervisory relationships include collaboration for change, which involves emotional bonding, shared comprehension of supervisory responsibilities and objectives, and the hierarchical nature of the supervisory relationship. Other activities that take place within the relationship include supervisors training their supervisees to

effectively address various challenges, including managing doubts and fears, identifying personal needs, as well as countertransference and understanding diverse value systems (Ghazali *et al.* 2018). These activities underscore the fact that the foundation of supervision is predicated on the relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, and that the quality of this relationship improves the supervisee's learning processes and contributes to the supervision outcome.

According to Bradley and Ladany (2001), the supervision outcomes are described as the interplay of external events and qualities related to the supervisor, and the attributes and external events affecting the supervisee during the supervision process. Though supervisory outcomes are embedded in both the supervisor and the supervisee, the management of the process remains a significant role of the supervisor. As such, the supervisor's behaviour in managing the supervision process is crucial for organisational success. Thus, supervisors employ a range of actions or practices to exert influence to ensure the adequate performance of their subordinates. However, the outcome of the management process can be positive or negative for both the supervisor and the supervisee. Given the limitations of this study, the focus on supervisory outcomes is directed toward the supervisee; nevertheless, the outcome associated with such actions may be perceived positively or negatively by the supervisee.

2.4.1 The Positive Supervision Outcome

Supervision is considered a vital professional practice that develops the competencies of employees. However, Bambling (2014) discusses the positive outcomes of supervision under three core definitions: restorative, formative, and normative functions. Supervision, as a restorative function, facilitates professional development and ongoing practice by improving role performance and reducing burnout in stressful settings. Supervision, as a formative function, is regarded as a teaching method that leads to the development of skills and knowledge, as well as self-awareness and self-efficacy in supervisees. Finally, Bambling (2014) observed that supervision as a normative function ensures professional accountability, which, in turn, develops competencies of the supervisees.

Beyond these outcomes, other scholars have discussed additional positive outcomes of supervision from the perspectives of stress management, well-being, roles in decision-making, idea of satisfaction, sociability, affective commitment, and role difficulties. Each of these perspectives is further elaborated. One positive outcome of supervision is that it strengthens the supervisee's ability to cope with stress. Notably, stress arises when there is a perception that the demands of a situation outstrip the available resources to deal with them (Yeo and Yap 2023). Stress arises in the supervision process when different expectations are placed on the supervisee. Therefore, managing stress involves adopting coping strategies, which are methods used to mitigate the negative effects of stressors (Agbaria and Mokh 2022). In the context of supervision, supervisors support supervisees by providing problem-solving strategies and task-oriented actions such as planning, instrumental support, and steps to reduce or resolve problems, as well as adaptive strategies, including reappraising and reinterpreting a stressor as non-threatening (Agbaria and Mokh 2022: 1855). Studies have also shown that these strategies lead to enhanced psychological well-being.

Supervision is also considered important for the supervisee's well-being. Grant, Christianson and Price (2007: 53) conceptualise well-being into psychological well-being, which describes employees' satisfaction with their work practices and procedures, physical well-being, which concerns employees' physical health issues that emerge from injury or disease, as well as stress. The third conceptualisation of well-being, according to Grant, Christianson and Price (2007:53), is social well-being, which emphasises the interactions among employees. This dimension of wellbeing is studied in terms of trust, social support, cooperation, reciprocity, leader-member exchange, coordination and integration. Moreover, supervision enhances employee well-being when supervisors redesign and enrich assigned tasks, increase rewards through incentive compensation practices, improve relationships through team-building practices, and promote health through safety practices that reduce injuries, illnesses, absenteeism, and other adverse outcomes for employees (Grant, Christianson and Price 2007). These activities serve as a conduit for the externalisation and exploration of tensions and worries (Chiller and Crisp 2012: 236).

Increased decision-making on the part of the supervisee is another positive outcome of supervision. Decision-making involves a systematic evaluation of alternative solutions to select the most suitable for addressing a problem or situation (Morelli, Casagrande and Forte 2022: 610). The two primary approaches used to elucidate the decision-making process are the normative and descriptive approaches. While normative approaches operate in a reduced uncertainty and look for solutions based on the rational evaluation of the occurrence of an action, a descriptive approach operates amidst uncertainty, revealing that individuals exhibit heightened risk when confronted with decisions framed as losses, and demonstrate increased risk aversion when decisions are framed as gains (Morelli, Casagrande and Forte 2022: 611). According to Morelli, Casagrande and Forte (2022: 611), people's perception of decision-making is dependent on how loss and gain results are presented and on the expectations of those who make the decisions. During the supervision process, supervisors significantly influence their supervisees' decision making. Using their knowledge, experience and the quality of their previous decisions, they present a contextual description of decisions that can result in a loss or gain to the supervisees. More specifically, this makes it easy for the supervisees to engage in decision-making.

Supervisees' satisfaction with supervision is another outcome that stems from their response to the supervisors' personal attributes and performance, their assessment of the supervisors' behaviour in the supervision process, and their comfort level in articulating thoughts concerning supervision (Kissil, Davey and Davey 2013: 189). According to Ladany *et al.* (1999: 448), supervisee satisfaction refers to their general assessment of the quality of supervision and the degree to which it addresses their needs and promotes their development. This facilitates the supervisee's motivation in pursuing their aims, to disclose negative reactions to their supervisors, and share their own experiences of role conflict and ambiguity within the supervisory relationship (Ladany *et al.* 1999).

Positive supervision also improves the sociability of subordinates. For example, sociability refers to the social skills necessary to enable successful social interactions (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton and Shacklock 2011: 222). Moreover, Riggio and Reichard (2008: 171)

explain that social skills encompass a wider array of competencies that are intricately associated with the understanding of the society, which is also the capacity to deliberate and act judiciously in social context. With these social skills, employees can articulate themselves in social exchanges, “read” and comprehend various context, master social roles, as noted by Riggio and Reichard (2008: 171). Brunetto, Farr-Wharton and Shacklock (2011: 222) also opined that employees with social skills build effective workplace networks and influence coworkers to support them. Brunetto, Farr-Wharton and Shacklock (2011: 222) underscore the role of supervision in sociability, providing organisational mechanisms, including formal and informal consultations. According to these scholars, these mechanisms foster employee networks, encourage the establishment of relationships, and improve information flow to aid problem-solving among employees.

Another positive outcome of supervision is affective commitment, denoting an emotional engagement to the profession and the organisation (Brunetto *et al.* 2013: 830). Accordingly, workers exhibiting elevated levels of affective commitment are more inclined to demonstrate loyalty attachment to the institution, thereby diminishing their propensity to depart from it. Also, supervisor-subordinate practices have been identified as impacting subordinates’ observations of the value of interconnection in organisations, which are deemed a significant factor in affective commitment (Brunetto, Farr-Wharton and Shacklock 2011). Ladany and Friedlander (1995) have also observed that good supervisory working alliance minimises subordinates’ role difficulties, which they explained to include “role conflict” and “role ambiguity.” In relation to supervision, the scholars explain that role conflict occurs in a situation where a supervisee is compelled to perform actions that contradict his or her own judgment.

Another explanation they gave for the occurrence of role conflict in supervision is when a supervisee engages in numerous duties that necessitate conflicting behaviours. Role ambiguity is also explained by Ladany and Friedlander (1995: 221) to occur when supervisees lack clarity regarding their role expectations in supervision. A supervisee may be unsure about the appropriateness of discussing personal matters with the superior. Ladany and Friedlander (1995) further opined that supervisory measures, within the

framework of a robust working cooperation with supervisees, might decrease the likelihood of these role difficulties. According to these authors, supervisees typically depend on their superiors for precise information regarding their duties and responsibilities. Hence, when both the supervisor and supervisee deliberate on expectations, establish objectives, and concur on supervisory activities within the framework of optimistic relationships, supervisees are less prone to encounter misunderstanding in interacting with the supervisor.

2.4.2 The Negative Dimension of Supervision

Understanding the practices in supervision that prevent a negative outcome is important. First, this section commences with an outline of the practices involved in supervision, followed by an examination of the negative dimensions associated with the supervision process.

2.4.2.1 Supervision Practices

Organisations achieve positive supervision outcomes when an effective or functional supervision process is in place. The effectiveness of the supervision process also hinges on the practices supervisors establish in their relationships with their subordinates. Over the years, scholars have extensively documented several supervisory practices that serve to motivate and empower subordinates to accomplish organisational goals. Among the practices covered include coaching, mentoring, feedback, counselling, and family-supportive supervision behaviour (FSSB) (Carvalho, Carvalho and Carvalho 2022: 4; Hammer *et al.* 2009; Zhao and Liu 2020: 294).

Focusing on coaching, the concept has existed since the 1950s when organisational psychologists began to provide specialised counselling to some executives, which was replicated in the 1960s to advance workplace training (Zuñiga-Collazos *et al.* 2020: 31). Since that time, different views have emerged, some of which are specific, while others are broad. A recent definition from Carvalho, Carvalho and Carvalho (2022: 4) describes coaching as an ongoing discourse among supervisors and subordinates, designed to clarify expectations and offer continuous advice and developmental assistance to enhance performance. Contrary to this broad definition, Peterson (1996: 78) provides a

succinct definition that coaching involves providing individuals with tools, information, and openings necessary for development and effectiveness. Whether broad or concise, it can be deduced from these definitions that coaching is widely used by managers and teams of large organisations, as well as by owners and managers of small businesses (Zuñiga-Collazos *et al.* 2020: 33). According Carvalho *et al.* (2022:4), supervisors or line managers engage in three activities in coaching their subordinates. These are: guidance, which establishes clear prospects and offers constructive criticism; facilitation, which helps in analysing and exploring solutions to problems; and inspiration, which motivates the employee to recognise and cultivate their potential.

Mentoring is another positive behaviour that helps individuals develop (Stoeger, Balestrini and Ziegler 2021: 5). In view of this, many people with special expertise and in different capacities, including supervisors, have used mentoring to influence the behaviours of subordinates. This activity has existed for many decades and is practised within the context of education, business, social change and sport (Clutterbuck *et al.* 2017: 3), leading to different areas of research and versions of definitions. Since this research concentrates on the dynamics between supervisors and subordinates, with a particular emphasis on workplace mentorship. Accordingly, definitions of mentoring within the context of business organisations are reviewed. In this regard, mentoring is defined as a long-term process wherein an experienced person who might not be the direct superior, offers direction, assistance, counsel to a less experienced worker to expedite career progression (Carvalho *et al.* 2022: 4; Mullen and Klimaitis 2021: 21; Zentgraf 2020: 1). From this definition, two main functions are performed through mentoring. The first is career-related and enhances professional performance and the second is psychosocial-related and addresses psychological and socio-environmental issues through role modeling, acceptance and confirmation, counseling and friendship (Mullen and Klimaitis 2021: 21). Putting these two functions together clearly illustrate that the ultimate aim of mentoring, which is, to solve problems and increase learning and professional development of the subordinates (Zentgraf 2020:2).

Regarding feedback, the concept persists as one of the most significant determinants of learning and success (Hattie and Timperley 2007: 81). According to Tzafestas and

Tzafestas (2018: 277), it is the third pillar of mankind's existence and is necessary for the endurance and balance of any system within the natural, biological, technological or societal realms. In this respect, feedback has been generally defined as the mechanism for the programmed self-regulation of an electrical, mechanical or biological system by returning a portion of its output as input (Tzafestas and Tzafestas 2018: 278). These scholars went on to provide a concise definition that feedback is any reaction or information regarding the outcome of an activity. Moving on from this definition, feedback is defined in management literature as a process of conveying to workers whether their performance aligns with or deviates from expectations (Carvalho *et al.* 2022: 5). According to Hattie and Timperley (2007: 90), there are four levels of feedback. The first level concerns feedback regarding the task, covering assessments that evaluate the efficacy of task execution. The second level involves feedback concerning task processing with a specific focus on information about relationships within the work environment. The third level concerns feedback that includes self-regulation, which involves an interplay between commitment, control and confidence. The last level concerns feedback about the self, as a person, which expresses a positive evaluation and affect regarding the individual (Hattie and Timperley 2007: 96).

Counselling is used in all aspects of life, and, in most cases, it is used in conjunction with guidance. It is also an interactive process in which a professionally credited counselor or trained advisor provides advice, opinions, and instructions to direct and/or help employees to adjust and find solutions to any personal issues that adversely affect their output (Carvalho, Carvalho and Carvalho 2022: 5; Solehuddin *et al.* 2023: 2; Steben and Money 2007: 55). As a process, counselling begins with a person who privately and secretly expresses and explores the difficulty he or she is experiencing to the counsellor. The counsellor listens carefully and provides an overview of the solutions regarding the problems at stake (Solehuddin *et al.* 2023: 4). For example, a supervisor engaging in counselling can adopt a style known as directive counselling where the focus is on the counsellor (supervisor) to analyse, synthesise, diagnose, prognose, and make the best decisions and follow-up. However, the opposite is non-directive counselling where the counsellee (subordinate) is given the freedom to find solutions to their problems (Solehuddin *et al.* 2023: 5). The third type of counselling is eclectic counselling that is

conducted on the basis of the situations and cases at stake and is, thus, flexible and adapted according to the needs of the counselee.

The last supervisory behaviour of interest in this research pertains to family-supportive supervision, which entails acknowledging the significance of workers' personal life outside of work and endeavouring to assist them in managing the demands of both work and non-work domains (Shen, Hentschel and Hideg 2023: 6). This attitude is appropriate under modern workplace practices that prioritise the well-being of employees. Hammer *et al.* (2009: 839) propose that this conduct may be categorised into four dimensions: emotional support, instrumental assistance, role modelling behaviours, and innovative work-family management. Supervisory emotional support entails creating an environment that allows employees to address family-related matters. However, instrumental assistance encompasses the reaction to a request made by an employee for resources or services to balance their work and family duties. Creative work-family management refers to proactive managerial-led efforts to reorganise work in order to enhance employee productivity both at work and in one's personal life (Hammer *et al.* 2009: 846). Irrespective of these, scholars have noted that these practices (coaching, mentoring, feedback, counselling and family-supportive supervision behaviour) can be applied in a subtle yet negative way to stimulate employees towards task accomplishment with an overall idea of improving productivity. That said, the outcome may be destruction to the supervisee. The next section elaborates on how this plays out in the context of the supervision process.

2.4.2.2 Dysfunctional Practices in Supervision Processes

Extant literature has confirmed that many supervisors adopt these behaviours to stimulate their subordinates to achieve organisational and departmental goals. Some of the consequences of adopting these positive behaviours are increased job performance, (Campo, Avolio and Carlier 2021: 13), innovative work behaviours, and affective commitment (Ali *et al.* 2020: 14), greater job satisfaction, higher promotion rates, and higher salaries (Jeong and Park 2020: 45). Notwithstanding, even with these favourable outcomes, some supervisors intentionally or unintentionally employ negative or dysfunctional behaviours in the supervision process. Notably, various factors contribute

to the use of dysfunctional supervision processes. Tepper, Simon and Park (2017: 128) present a categorisation of these elements into three distinct groups: supervisor behaviour, subordinate characteristics, and contextual factors. Regarding the latter, one of the contextual factors that explain the existence of negative supervision in indigenous institutions is the hierarchical socio-cultural systems found in some societies.

According to Slade Shantz *et al.* (2020: 21-28), indigenous societies prioritise respect and obedience towards leaders who are regarded as reservoirs of knowledge and wisdom, hold positions of authority, and are responsible for decision-making and representing their groups. In these societies, respect for those in positions is non-negotiable, and any kind of disrespect is met with dire consequences (Van der Geest 1997: 535-536). Naturally, this reverence for leadership permeates the supervision processes within indigenous business organisations. Accordingly, this means that many of the people who work in various leadership positions in indigenous businesses will consciously or unconsciously exhibit dictatorial or possessive behaviours that are classified as destructive leadership or negative supervision.

For many decades, businesses have suffered from the decisions and behaviours of people who occupy authoritative positions. This has also generated considerable interest in academia regarding the motives and behaviours of some leaders. Thus, a popular term used to describe these bad behaviours is destructive leadership; herein, referred to as dysfunctional supervision processes in this study. For obvious reasons, research on destructive leadership behaviours has taken centre stage for decades (Li *et al.* 2023; Mackey *et al.* 2021; Octavian 2023; Scheffler and Brunzel 2020). Schyns and Schilling (2013: 141) define it as “a process in which over a longer period of time the activities, experiences and/or relationships of an individual or the members of a group are repeatedly influenced by their supervisor in a way that is perceived as hostile and/or obstructive.” Over the years, the concept of dysfunctional supervision has been explored in various forms. However, in this study, it is conceptualised as a higher-order construct that encompasses various destructive behaviours, including petty tyranny, victimisation, workplace bullying, supervisor aggression, supervisor undermining, generalised hierarchical abuse and abusive supervision (Balwant 2021: 82; Tepper 2007: 263-264).

Petty Tyranny

Petty tyranny is the act of someone in a position of power and authority engaging in forceful and arbitrary conduct, perhaps demonstrating vindictiveness or imposing control over others (Ashforth 1997: 126). Generally, supervisors exhibit this behaviour in six different forms, including arbitrariness and self-aggrandisement, undermining subordinates, a lack of understanding, a coercive conflict resolution style, thereby reducing initiatives and implementing uncontrollable punishments (Ashforth 1997: 127; Ashforth 1994: 757). However, there is limited research on the antecedents and consequences of this behaviour (Akhtar and Shaukat 2016; Kant *et al.* 2013). Nevertheless, a growing number of studies on destructive leadership (Li *et al.* 2024) show that the consequences of petty tyranny include work alienation and lower self-esteem (Akhtar and Shaukat 2016).

Workplace Victimization

Victimization refers to an individual's perception of being targeted and harmed by one or more individuals, either on a temporary or frequent basis (Aquino 2000: 172). Notably, this behaviour is not confined solely to antagonism from those in lower positions but can also occur horizontally amongst colleagues and vertically from subordinates to superiors (Tepper 2007: 267). Furthermore, the scope of victimisation includes acts of physical aggression, such as hurling objects, shoving, striking, and aggressiveness that can cause bodily harm to others (Aquino 2000: 172-180). Existing studies have also proven that workplace victimisation leads to excessive consumption of alcohol, psychological distress, physical complaints, poor health, physician-diagnosed mental disorders, and job dissatisfaction (Kim *et al.* 2021: 639; Tsuno *et al.* 2022: 1).

Workplace Bullying

Bullying is the persistent targeting of one or more individuals with negative activities, resulting in the victims' inability to effectively defend themselves against such actions (Hoel and Cooper 2001: 4). Moreover, this concept encompasses several attributes, including detrimental behaviours, tenacity, long-lasting nature, unequal distribution of power, deliberate activities, and personal perspectives (Hoel and Cooper 2001: 4-5). Bullying, similar to abusive supervision, entails the recurrent experience of hostile

behaviours in the workplace. However, bullying is not restricted to hierarchical hostility and can manifest in other directions, such as co-worker to co-worker, co-worker to superior or customer to subordinate (Tepper 2007: 267). Among the consequences associated with workplace bullying are work alienation, psychological stress, depression, impaired peer relations, poor concentration at work, knowledge hiding, and increased intention to resign/leave (Boudrias, Trépanier and Salin 2021; Goh, Hosier and Zhang 2022: 20; Singh and Srivastava 2023: 991; Yao *et al.* 2020: 675).

Supervisor Aggression

Aggression refers to any deliberate conduct aimed at causing harm or injury to another individual who is actively trying to avoid such treatment (Neuman and Baron 2005:16). Research has also shown that this type of behaviour can be undertaken by different stakeholders within an organisation. Hence, supervisor aggressiveness as described by Mitchell and Ambrose (2012: 1) refers to the view of employees regarding purposeful detrimental action by their supervisors. Four distinct themes can be identified: firstly, aggressiveness refers to behaviour that is challenging or intentional towards a specific target; secondly, aggression involves the intention to harm one or more individuals; thirdly, aggression encompasses actions that are directed towards other organisms, either directly or indirectly; and fourthly, the fact that targets of aggression are motivated to avoid such treatment suggests that they do not provoke or find satisfaction in the aggressive behaviour (Neuman and Baron 2005: 16). Moreover, workplace aggressiveness encompasses both physical and non-physical actions and is influenced by several sources within and outside the organisation, including subordinates, immediate supervisors, top management and customers. Accordingly, some of the effects of supervisor aggression include reduced vigour and job stress (Malik *et al.* 2021: 10).

Social Undermining

Social undermining refers to the deliberate act of diminishing someone's accomplishments, rejecting them outright, eroding their thoughts, withholding crucial information, failing to provide protection, giving them the silent treatment, denying them work-related resources, and intentionally impeding their progress with the intention of causing harm (Duffy, Ganster and Pagon 2002: 333). The definition of social undermining

encompasses three key elements. Firstly, it refers to behaviour that is deliberately intended to impact the target. Secondly, social undermining is considered harmful due to its gradual or incremental nature. Lastly, social undermining can manifest in various forms and can vary in the extent to which it damages relationships or reputations (Duffy, Ganster and Pagon 2002: 332-333). Unlike abusive supervision, social undermining explicitly illustrates the negative consequences it can have, including the disruption of social connections, the decline in subordinates' professional accomplishments, harm to subordinates' standing, less employee psychological empowerment, less employee work engagement, employee job dissatisfaction, high employee turnover intentions, submissive behaviour, and shame (Fatima, Majeed and Jahanzeb 2020: 8; Hershcovis 2011: 504; Sun, Zhao and Wang 2022: 90).

General Hierarchical Abuse (GHA)

Generalised hierarchical abuse (GHA) refers to a pervasive cultural environment in which those in lower positions endure a systematised climate of mistreatment and harassment from those in higher positions (Agrawal and Pandey 2021: 241). In organisations, this behaviour manifests in the form of shouting at an individual, making threats, displaying intimidating eye contact, employing the tactic of silence as a kind of punishment, and subjecting someone to humiliation or ridicule (Keashly, Hunter and Harvey 1997: 176). Typically, this kind of conduct or mistreatment is perpetrated by those in positions of authority; however, it does not differentiate between nonphysical and physical hostility but instead explores individual authorities and employees' subjective evaluations of the connection between abusive behaviour and its associated factors (Tepper 2007: 265).

Abusive Supervision

The most extensively investigated destructive behaviour is abusive supervision. This behaviour is defined by Tepper (2000: 178) as the view of subordinates about the extent to which superiors constantly display hostile verbal and nonverbal behaviours, without involving physical harm. More specifically, Tepper's (2007: 265) definition of abusive supervision means that subordinates' assessment of superiors' behaviour is subjective, which can be influenced by the subordinates' traits and the evaluation setting. For example, an individual may see a supervisor's conduct as offensive in one situation but

not in another. Additionally, two subordinates may have contrasting assessments of the same supervisor's behaviour. Another characteristic of the definition is the aspect of persistent displays of nonphysical hostility that occur when someone is repeatedly subjected to hierarchical abuse. This continues until either the person being targeted ends the relationship, the person causing the abuse ends the relationship, or the person causing the abuse changes the behaviour (Tepper 2000: 178; Tepper 2007: 265). Additionally, the definition portrays that leaders who engage in abusive conduct intentionally undertake the actions for a specific reason. This might include mistreating subordinates in order to motivate them to perform well or to establish a zero-tolerance policy for failure (Tepper 2007: 265).

The verbal and non-verbal characteristics of Tepper's (2000: 178) definition of abusive behaviours encompass numerous actions of abuse, such as shouting or screaming at someone, employing insulting language, swearing, intimidating with threats, displaying hostile eye contact, employing the "silent treatment" and publicly humiliating someone (Keashly, Trott and MacLean 1994: 342). Other instances, according to Bassman and London (1993: 18), are unreasonable or unjust demands and the withholding of essential services such as: leisure time; public derision and disregard; excessive workload that diminishes personal life; excessive authority; emphasis on staff deficiencies; social seclusion; and the use of threats and intimidation. Moreover, it may encompass deceit, unreasonable or impractical assertions, offensive language, insults, bribes, unjustified withholding of deserved incentives (such as a promotion or pay rise), and physical aggressiveness. Additional forms of abuse include deliberately sabotaging subordinates, obstructing employees from seizing opportunities, appropriating credit for the work of others and undermining or disparaging the capabilities of individuals (Bassman and London 1993: 18).

Outlaw (2009: 264) expanded on the non-physical characteristic of Tepper's definition and came up with four forms of mistreatment, namely, psychological, emotional, social, and economic abuse (Outlaw 2009: 264). Emotional abuse includes verbal and behavioural tactics aimed at eroding the victim's sense of self-esteem and self-value. It also includes grievances, derogatory remarks, personal attacks, public humiliation, and

even allegations of misconduct. Psychological abuse differs in that it aims to erode the victim's sense of security in their rational thinking and reasoning. Essentially, the abuser causes the victim to experience confusion. Moreover, in certain instances, it manipulates the abused into believing that what is actually black is white and vice versa (Bassman and London 1993: 18). Social abuse often entails the coerced isolation of victims when they are deliberately isolated from their social circles, including family and friends, via the use of threats, violence, or manipulation. Economic abuse refers to the abuser exerting control over the victim's finances by determining the amount of money they should receive; thus, frequently resulting in inadequate funds.

Looking at the scale and variety of behaviours that constitute abuse, there are justifiable reasons why the effects of this phenomenon have been investigated in different organisations and cultures. Among the consequences of abusive behaviour are decreased subordinates' organisational commitments and organisational identification, higher turnover intentions, anger, anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, low self-image, high burnout, and lower job satisfaction (Salton Meyer and Ein-Dor 2021: 211; Zhang and Liao 2015: 962-963). The other effects are citizenship behaviour towards other abused peer-group members, counter-productive behaviour towards the supervisor, and non-abused peer-group members (Samreen, Rashid and Hussain 2022: 1).

While these dimensions represent distinct facets of supervisory dysfunction, they share a common thread: the misuse of power in ways that harm subordinate well-being and minimise the quality of leader-member exchanges. However, the term scholars prefer to use most frequently, as a proxy indicator for broader dysfunctional leadership, is abusive supervision (Schyns and Schilling 2013: 148; Tepper, Simon and Park 2017: 124). Although narrower in scope than the full dysfunctional supervision, abusive supervision has the following strengths over the other constructs:

- Encompasses core behaviours, including ridicule, public criticism and belittlement that are central to all other forms of dysfunctional supervision (Mitchell and Ambrose 2007: 1159);

- Strongly correlates with outcomes such as employee silence and alienation (Bayhan Karapinar *et al.* 2024; Kaur and Mittal 2024; Savaira, Hussain and Farooq 2024; Zia and Ahmed 2024); and
- has been extensively tested across various cultural contexts, including non-Western organisational environments, thereby enhancing cross-contextual validity (Caputo *et al.* 2025; Guo, Cheng and Zaigham 2024; Luo, Tung and Chen 2024; Zhuang and Shi 2025).

On the basis of these strengths, dysfunctional supervision is operationalised using abusive supervision measures. The details of the measures are provided in Chapter 4 under Section 4.7.2 of this thesis.

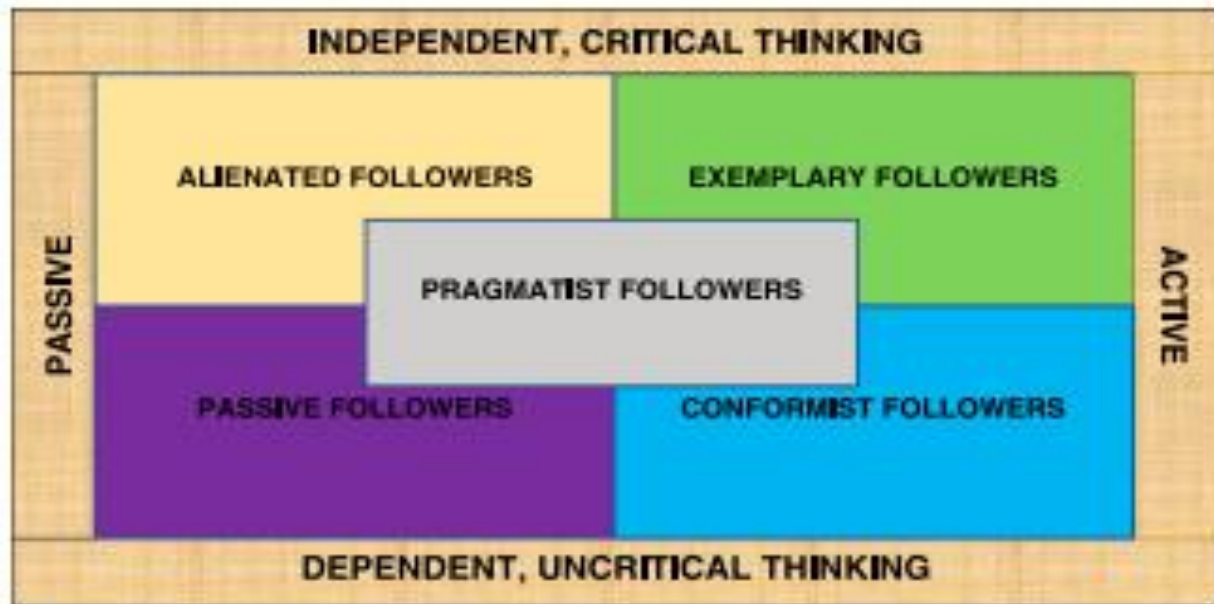
2.5 Literature on other Concepts of the study

In the following subsections, the literature on employee reactions is reviewed with a particular focus on the key variables relevant to the study, including high-performing employees (HPEs), employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skills.

2.5.1 Employee reactions

In this study, employee reactions are interpreted through Kelley's (1992) followership typology. Moreover, the model offers a valuable lens for understanding the behavioural dynamics of employees within organisations, particularly in response to varying leadership styles. It also categorises followers based on their levels of critical thinking and engagement, providing a framework through which HPE, employee silence, and employee alienation can be meaningfully interpreted and distinguished. The model further identifies five distinct followers: passive, conformist, alienated, pragmatist, and exemplary, as depicted in Figure 2.1 (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley, 2022).

Figure. 2.1 Kelley's (1992) Follower Typology



Source: Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley (2022)

Passive followers, often referred to as “sheep,” lack initiative and critical thinking. They rely heavily on their leaders for direction, motivation, and decision-making. These individuals expect the leader to assign tasks, define procedures, allocate resources, and determine outcomes. Their role is limited to executing instructions with minimal personal responsibility (Kelley 1992). Moreover, conformist followers, or “yes people,” are enthusiastic and motivated but do not engage in independent thinking. Although they are proactive in carrying out tasks, they rely on leaders for guidance and avoid conflict, making them preferred by leaders who lack self-confidence and sound judgment (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022; Kelley 1992).

Alienated followers are independent thinkers but disengaged in their roles. They see themselves as intelligent and strong, yet often feel undervalued and develop resentment towards leadership and organisational systems. As a result, they become sceptical, resist change, and may spread negativity within their teams (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022; Kelly 2008). Pragmatist followers are cautious and self-interested, lacking a strong commitment; as such, they are “fence sitters” who align with leadership only when a clear direction emerges. Although they are reluctant to take initiative, they maintain alignment

with the organisation, often preserving the status quo (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022; Kelley 2008; Leung *et al.* 2018: 100). Exemplary followers, also known as “star” or “effective” followers, are highly engaged and critical thinkers. They take initiative, offer constructive feedback, and demonstrate strong alignment with organisational goals. They support leaders when appropriate and challenge them constructively when necessary, guided by a profound comprehension of the organisation’s vision and mission (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022; Kelley 2008).

Focusing on the key variables within the limits of this study, the related literature was reviewed.

2.5.1.1 High-performing Employees and Kelley’s Follower Typology

In today’s competitive business environment, organisations are continually pursuing innovative, effective and excellent ways of doing things for sustained growth and performance. Across multiple contexts, a number of employees exceptionally account for the organisation’s output. Such employees are equipped with skills, are dedicated and drive transformative change within the organisations (Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8). Studies have shown that employees with exceptional individual performances have, over time, demonstrated a valuable contribution to the workplace (Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018: 2); hence, one of the key factors in achieving organisational objectives lies in having such exceptional employees often referred to as high-performance employees (HPEs) or star performers. An HPE is an individual who surpasses the expectations of an ordinary employee by taking further measures to create a superior contribution to the overall success of the organisation (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 572). As posited by Asgari *et al.* (2021: 8) and Kehoe *et al.* (2018: 2), HPEs are a few individual stars who contribute a disproportionate amount of output to the organisation and therefore sit atop the performance pyramid.

HPEs are most accurately represented by the exemplary follower category in Kelley’s (1992) follower typology. Exemplary followers demonstrate both high critical thinking and high active engagement, making them independent, self-motivated, and deeply committed to organisational success. These characteristics mirror those of HPEs, who consistently exceed performance expectations, take initiative, and contribute

meaningfully to innovation and productivity. Moreover, within the indigenous banking sector of Ghana, where institutions are striving to remain competitive amidst economic and operational turbulence, HPEs are critical to driving growth, sustaining service delivery, and ensuring adaptability. However, unlike conformist or passive followers, who depend on direction and rarely challenge the status quo, exemplary followers offer constructive feedback, anticipate challenges, and work collaboratively towards shared goals (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022). Therefore, Kelley's typology provides a valuable lens for understanding how HPEs function within supervisor-subordinate relationships, particularly in environments where performance is highly valued but often constrained by managerial practices.

De Waal and Oudshoorn (2015: 581) assert specific characteristics of HPEs that demonstrate exemplary follower typology, including personality traits, decisiveness, teamwork, basic skills and innovativeness. Accordingly to these scholars, personality traits encompass exhibiting honesty and integrity and directing attention towards the current duties. Decisiveness entails promptly making decisions and doing so without excessive input from others (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 581). This capability is essential for making informed decisions in many scenarios. Teamwork encompasses acts such as showing concern for others, providing assistance to colleagues in their tasks, maintaining a positive mindset, and exchanging knowledge with others.

Accordingly, teamwork is crucial for producing high-quality work. Employees must be able to work together, support each other, share information that aids in their development, and approach tasks with a positive mindset in order to succeed in a team environment (Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018: 8). The fourth category, basic skills, pertains to possessing and applying functional skills, interpersonal skills, competence, technical skills and knowledge to excel in the workplace (Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8; De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 582; Michlitsch 2000: 30; Presley 1988: 7; Webster *et al.* 2022: 3). Lastly, innovation involves being creative, continuously evaluating new technologies and focusing on new challenges (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 582; Michlitsch 2000: 30).

The application of these characteristics has brought tremendous benefits to organisations, supervisors and other employees. For example, the positive impact of a

high-performing employee on supervisors is their ability to provide personal and professional support. Supervisors can rely on high-performing subordinates to effectively carry out their job responsibilities, thereby enabling them to uphold their organisational commitment. This, in turn, leads to the acquisition of material rewards and the preservation of their elevated status (Zhu, Zhang and Wang 2021: 215). These authors and Webster *et al.* (2022: 3) posit that employee excellence performance also improves organisational performance and guarantees the organisation's survival and continued success. Moreover, Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley (2018:8) have also shed more light on the benefits of HPEs to other subordinates. According to these authors, people who work with HPE are afforded the chance to embrace behavioural standards that are linked to successful work results, as demonstrated by the stars. Furthermore, by engaging in more direct encounters with high performers through formal cooperation, mentorship, sponsorship and assistance, other subordinates are afforded additional opportunities to leverage the expertise of high performers, thereby enhancing their performance.

2.5.1.2 Employee Silence and Kelley's Follower Typology

Organisations demand that every employee bring valuable resources on board to achieve the stated goals, survive, and thrive. These resources include knowledge, skills, abilities, ideas, opinions, suggestions, recommendations, and concerns. While some of these are requirements officially expected from every employee based on their position, role, and function, others are applied voluntarily as citizenship behaviours. Regrettably, some employees frequently opt to remain silent on issues and situations that require them to offer their input. When this situation arises, the organisation is denied valuable resources to remain competitive. This adverse effect has led to decades of research on why employees choose to remain silent. Studies addressing this have been undertaken in relation to types and styles of leadership (Farghaly Abdelaliem and Abou Zeid 2023), professions (Harmanci Seren *et al.* 2018; Labrague and De los Santos 2020), organisational context (AL-Abrow 2022; Singh and Srivastava 2023) and cultural context (Kim and Park 2019). Employee silence has also been studied as a group phenomenon, in which a set of employees is involved or an individual phenomenon involving a single employee. These perspectives on studying employee silence have led to different definitions.

For example, in studying silence in organisations as a group phenomenon, Morrison and Milliken (2000: 707) used the term organisational silence and defined it as a phenomenon in which workers refrain from expressing their ideas and concerns on organisational matters. In expanding this definition, Knoll and Van Dick (2013: 350) defined organisational silence as a situation in which employees refrain from speaking out about issues in the workplace, including unlawful or unethical practices or occurrences that contradict their personal, ethical, or legal principles. These two definitions portray that silent behaviour is a result of the collective mindset inside the organisation. Nevertheless, there was a contention that specific individual employees also opt to stay silent for various reasons. In view of this, scholars such as Pinder and Harlos (2001: 334) have shifted their focus to the individual level and introduced the notion of employee silence. These scholars defined the concept as the act of refraining from expressing any genuine opinion regarding one's assessment of their organisational situation, whether related to behaviour, cognition or emotions, to individuals who are perceived as having the ability to enact changes or improvements. This definition was corroborated by Dyne, Ang and Botero (2003: 1360) who also defined employee silence as the deliberate act of refraining from expressing ideas, facts and views pertaining to work and the organisation. Furthermore, whether investigated as a group or individual phenomenon, all employee silence deprives the organisation of valuable employee resources, hindering its ability to survive and thrive. Other consequences of employee silence include stress, job dissatisfaction, employee turnover, and sabotage (Mengenci 2015: 225).

Based on the characteristics previously discussed, employee silence can be mapped onto passive, conformist, and pragmatist followers. Passive individuals often lack either the confidence or perceived psychological safety to express themselves, especially in contexts dominated by dysfunctional or abusive supervision. For example, in Ghana, indigenous institutions where the influence of socio-cultural practices creates high power distance and leadership authority often goes unquestioned (Schwartz 2006: 156; Slade Shantz *et al.* 2020: 21, 28; Van der Geest 1997: 535-536), followers may choose silence as a self-protective response to avoid conflict or retaliation. Conformist followers, for example, prioritise harmony and compliance, avoiding any dissent that might threaten their relationship with supervisors. However, pragmatists, who seek to preserve their

standing, may “wait and see” before taking a stance, often defaulting to silence in uncertain situations (Alanazi, Wiechula, R. and Foley 2022; Kelley 2008). Even HPEs, though characteristically outspoken and engaged, may adopt silence when their efforts are consistently overlooked or when they perceive leadership as unapproachable or abusive. Thus, Kelley’s typology helps to illuminate the varying motivations behind silence and further underscores the role of supervisory behaviour, either encouraging or suppressing voice behaviour among different follower types.

2.5.1.3 Employee Alienation and Kelley’s Typology

The notion of alienation has exerted a pervasive influence throughout human history, to the extent that it has been posited that “the history of humanity could be narrated as the chronicle of human alienation” (Seeman 1959: 783). The notion encompassed many interpretations from labour, individuals, the self, and other elements within the environment (Nair and Vohra 2012:27). According to Fromm and Anderson (2017:135), alienation refers to the state in which an individual perceives himself as a stranger; thus creating a sense of detachment. According to these writers, alienated individuals do not view themselves as the focal point of their universe or the originator of their acts. Instead, they consider their activities and the resulting outcomes as dominant forces that they obediently follow and even revere. Thus, by adopting this approach, the individual in question discontinues all communication with both themselves and the other party (Fromm and Anderson 2017: 135).

Notably, Marx is a prominent thinker who extensively examined the concept of alienation, in the context of employment, defining it as the disconnection between the worker and their ownership of property (Nair and Vohra 2009: 294). Marx posits that alienation stems from the economic foundation of society, wherein people utilise their labour to transform natural resources into new products that hold economic worth (Shantz, Alfes and Truss 2014: 2532); hence, in industrial society, labour and alienation are intertwined due to the capitalist conditions that result in scientific management, which ultimately lead to the deterioration of work (Shantz, Alfes and Truss 2014: 2532). Moreover, the deterioration of work is the root cause of alienation, as it leads the employee to perceive themselves

as disconnected from the outcome of their labour, like an outsider (Shantz, Alfes and Truss 2014: 2532; Nair and Vohra 2009: 294).

Work alienation, according to Hirschfeld and Field (2000: 790), is described as the extent to which an individual experiences a disconnection from their professional life. A recent definition was also provided by Jiang *et al.* (2019: 3) that work alienation is a situation in which employees experience a loss of control over the work process and the freedom to express themselves in the workplace. For example, according to DiPietro and Pizam (2008: 2-3), work alienation is caused by certain workplace conditions which may include the division of labour, a centralised and formalised organisation, strict control of work processes, repetitive and monotonous tasks, rigid work rules and regulations and transactional leadership practices. These factors hinder employees from working independently and participating in decision-making related to their work.

Moreover, employee alienation is most clearly reflected in Kelley's alienated follower type. These employees engage in critical thinking but are disengaged from their roles within the organisation, frequently feeling undervalued, exploited, or ignored (Alanazi, Wiechula and Foley 2022; Kelley 2008). In the Ghanaian banking context, where performance demands are high but recognition may be limited (PwC 2019), alienation can emerge as a psychological defence mechanism among employees who perceive a gap between their contributions and the rewards or respect they receive. Thus, alienated followers often internalise the belief that the system is unfair, leading them to resist organisational change or spread discontent among peers. Significantly, even HPEs may shift into this category when persistent dysfunctional supervision erodes their trust in leadership or diminishes their sense of purpose. This shift reflects the dynamic nature of followership and how high-performing individuals, under certain supervisory conditions, may become disenchanting and withdraw. By framing alienation through Kelley's typology, the study is able to contextualise it not as a personal reaction but also as a systematic outcome of poor supervisory-subordinate relationships.

2.5.2 Promotion Practices

A promotion is a sort of recognition granted to employees who demonstrate superior performance compared to their peers within a cohort of employees (Francesconi 2001: 282). Simply put, it refers to an individual's advancement to a more senior position accompanied by an improved remuneration (Ngan and Tze-Ngai Vong 2019: 2). Promotion is every employee's wish, and it comes with different interpretations. Additionally, it provides employees with feedback that their efforts are worth it and recognisable. To management, the employee is working hard and needs to be motivated to continue. To society, the employee is conscientious and the organisation is worth working for because it rewards hard work (Sekhar, Patwardhan and Singh 2013: 477). These interpretations encourage some employees to participate in programmes and activities, such as enrolling in courses, seminars, training and development, and understudying high-performing employees to prepare them for promotion. However, on the other hand, management also provides the environment that prepares employees for promotion. This includes identifying the training needs of employees and arranging or supporting them to undertake training, either in-house or outside the organisation, in preparation for future promotions. Thus, promotion plays a crucial role in shaping employees' careers and has a significant positive impact on job satisfaction (Bußwolder, Dregert and Letmathe 2019: 1). Hence, it has been used as a compelling strategy for attracting and retaining talented individuals (Ngan and Tze-Ngai Vong 2019: 2).

2.5.3 Political Skills

Organisations are commonly perceived as political environments, where various interest groups compete, resources are limited, and achieving goals often requires partnership formation and the strategic use of control (Ferris *et al.* 2003: 29; Ferris *et al.* 2005: 127; Mintzberg 1985: 133). To excel and achieve success in this political environment, individuals must possess effective political skills (Ferris *et al.* 2005: 127). Additionally, political skills, as initially described by early scholars like Mintzberg, encompass the capacity to exert influence through the use of persuasion, manipulation, and negotiation (Mintzberg 1983, cited in Treadway *et al.* 2004: 495). However, Ferris *et al.* (2002: 111)

define political skill as a human attribute that encompasses both social intelligence and the ability to adapt one's behaviour in various and evolving circumstances in a manner that cultivate trust, confidence and sincerity. This means that those with political skill can perform their duties with both integrity and cunning, effectively concealing any personal or hidden agendas (Ferris *et al.* 2002: 111). Research has revealed that the concept of political skill encompasses four primary characteristics, namely, social astuteness, interpersonal influence, networking ability, and apparent sincerity (Ferris *et al.* 2005: 129; Maher *et al.* 2021: 3).

Social astuteness enables individuals to keenly notice others and adapt to various contexts. Individuals who possess this characteristic have a clear understanding of social dynamics and can precisely discern both their own and others' behaviour (Ferris *et al.* 2005: 129; Ferris *et al.* 2007: 292; Ferris *et al.* 2012: 7). As a result, such individuals are cognisant of their objectives and that of others they influence, in order to accomplish their objectives (Brouer, Chiu and Wang 2016: 5; Ferris *et al.* 2007: 292). Interpersonal influence occurs when people exhibit a nuanced and persuasive individual strategies that significantly influences those in their vicinity (Ferris, 2005: 129). People with this characteristic tend to act like chameleons, adapting and calibrating their behaviour to various contexts in order to provoke the intended reactions from others (Ferris *et al.* 2007: 292). The networking ability denotes persons who have a robust capacity to cultivate and leverage a wide range of connections with individuals who possess resources considered important and essential for their personal and organisational effectiveness (Ferris *et al.* 2005: 129). Ferris *et al.* (2012: 9) opine that those with this characteristic actively seek out relationships with prominent individuals (Ferris *et al.* 2012: 9). Apparently, sincerity denotes demonstrating a notable level of sincerity, reliability, and ethical conduct in both their verbal expressions and behaviours (Ferris 2007: 292; Ferris *et al.* 2012: 9). Those who possess this skill exhibit honesty, transparency, and candour (Ferris *et al.* 2005: 129).

2.6 Conclusion

This chapter offers important insights into the concepts of supervision and its associated processes. The chapter elaborated on the management functions of a supervisor and examined the relationship between a supervisor and a supervisee. In this context, insights into the outcome of supervision were presented. Furthermore, practices that depict such outcomes are followed. Through the lens of Kelley's follower typology, the literature presented and examined different concepts related to employees' reactions, including high-performing employees, employee silence, employee alienation, as well as organisational contexts, such as promotion practices and political skill. Moreover, the evolution of these concepts has evolved over the years, as presented. The next chapter focuses on the theoretical background and the empirical literature that informed the formation of the hypotheses, followed by an examination of the research gaps.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL REVIEW AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1 Introduction

The preceding chapter provided a review of the related literature on specific concepts adopted for this research. This chapter presents a review of the theoretical framework that underpins the research study, as well as the development of the hypotheses. Additionally, the importance of utilising a theoretical framework in a research study is important, as it serves as a guide for the entire study and provides the foundation from which knowledge is construed. Similarly, hypothesis development in a research study is a prerequisite to defining the primary research purpose and the study objectives; hence, the hypothesis is considered a central element in research studies.

In view of the above, this chapter presents a review of the literature on existing theories that serve as a roadmap for the study, including leader-member exchange theory, the norm of reciprocity, and social support theory. A review of each model and how it connects to the study focus area is presented. The chapter then further provides literature leading to the development of each research hypothesis tested in the study. These hypotheses were developed based on selected constructs, namely, supervision processes, high-performing employees, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skills. The review of the empirical literature showed the relationships among these constructs, which informed the development of each hypothesis tested in the study. The concluding thoughts for the chapter are then presented.

3.2 Theoretical Framework of the Study

Just as the strength of a building is judged by its foundation, the understandability and acceptability of the research process and findings are also judged by the underpinning theories. Meyfroidt *et al.* (2018) define a theory as a general explanation or stylised account of events, phenomena, or their attributes based on a set of factors and their causal relations. For Haugh (2012), it is a statement of relations among concepts within

a set of boundary assumptions and constraints that seeks to explain, predict, and specify the connections among the concepts to inform the possible existence of events in the world, as presented in the proposed conceptual framework. Therefore, Nilsen (2020: 2) posits that a robust theory offers a strong description of how and why particular interactions results in specific occurrences. On this basis, theories have become major components to explain the relationships among concepts that are of interest in research undertakings.

In this study, three theories are used to explain the relationships among the concepts in the various parts of the research's conceptual model. These theories include leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, the norm of reciprocity, and social support theory. The researcher believes that these theories are beneficial in explaining the relationships among the constructs. For example, LMX is the right theory to explain how a supervisor will have different relationships with different individuals in the same work team. The norm of reciprocity is also the most befitting theory to explain employees' reactions to dysfunctional supervisory behaviour. Finally, the social support theory was chosen to explain the support high-performing employees (HPEs) provide to other colleagues in the team. In the ensuing sections, a review of the literature on these theories and their connection to the study's concepts is presented.

3.2.1 Leader-member Exchange (LMX) Theory

In the 1970s, Graen and colleague (Graen and Cashman 1975, cited in Winkler 2009) introduced LMX theory, which has made a significant contribution to leadership literature. This theory, although it emerged from role theory, has evolved to rely extensively on social exchange theory (SET) (Thompson, Buch and Glasø 2020). Nevertheless, a notable distinction between SET and LMX lies in their respective scopes of investigation. SET encompasses a broad range of relationships within organisations, such as those between co-workers. However, on the other hand, LMX theory specifically examines the dyadic exchange relations between leaders and followers, which are cultivated through a sequence of social exchanges (Gottfredson *et al.* 2020; Martin *et al.* 2010; Michael *et al.* 2006). According to Martin *et al.* (2016: 3), the core tenet of LMX is that leaders exhibit differentiation in the management of subordinates, leading to different levels of

interactions between superiors and subordinates. That is, in specific work teams, certain subordinates are placed in a high-quality exchange relationship (ingroup) while others are placed in a low-quality exchange relationship (outgroup) depending on the kind of relationship that exists between the leader and the subordinate. Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu (2018) provide a clear definition of LMX, specifically the level of quality in the relationships between leaders and group members.

In a high-quality LMX, subordinates and leaders engage in a dynamic and interactive process that involves unspecified commitments and continual reciprocity, fostering an environment characterised by openness and positivity (Michael *et al.* 2006; Terpstra-Tong *et al.* 2020). Here, leaders engage in the sharing of extensive knowledge, collaboration, conviction, care and reward (Chernyak-Hai and Rabenu 2018: 459). To reciprocate, subordinates are expected to perform on behalf of the leader by enhancing their work performance, dedication, loyalty, and citizenship behaviours (Michael *et al.* 2006: 471; Thompson, Buchand Glasø 2020: 59). According to Mitchell *et al.* (2015), when all parties involved in an exchange relationship meet their obligations, it results in a high-quality exchange. This, in turn, reduces workplace conflict and destructive work behaviour while also promoting beneficial work behaviour, such as knowledge sharing. Nevertheless, in the event that the subordinates fail to meet expectations, the leaders may interpret this as a failure on the part of the followers to meet the anticipated responsibilities that are inherent in the exchange relationship. This phenomenon has the potential to elicit feelings of frustration, anger and disappointment among leaders, thereby leading to the manifestation of detrimental leadership behaviours (Thompson *et al.* 2020: 59).

However, on the contrary, subordinates who experience low-quality LMX are placed at a relative disadvantage in terms of employment rewards and career advancement. This phenomenon may be attributed to the economic-based and transactional nature of LMX with individuals from outgroups. In such contexts, subordinates experience limited access to their supervisors, fewer resources, restricted knowledge, and a lack of balanced reciprocity (Maslyn and Uhl-Bien 2001: 697; Terpstra-Tong *et al.* 2020: 3). In the context of work relationships, the presence of exploitative or imbalanced social exchange relations can have a detrimental impact on subordinates. This is due to the perception of

inequity or unfair treatment by supervisors, leading subordinates to engage in counterproductive or destructive work behaviours that harm both the supervisor and the organisation (Martin *et al.* 2016; Maslyn and Uhl-Bien 2001; Mitchell *et al.* 2015; Terpstra-Tong *et al.* 2020). Prior studies have also substantiated the impact of low-quality LMX on individuals in subordinate positions (Bowler, Paul and Halbesleben 2019; McLarty *et al.* 2021; Seo, Mah and Yun 2024).

This conclusion vividly explains employees' reactions to dysfunctional supervision as contextualised in this study. As discussed in Section 1.3, the hierarchical socio-cultural environment of indigenous societies significantly shapes the occurrence of dysfunctional supervisory behaviours, whether intentionally or unintentionally. Moreover, the existing body of literature has demonstrated that attributes associated with destructive or dysfunctional supervision result in reduced supervisor accessibility, limited resources, constrained information, and imbalanced reciprocity (Klasmeier *et al.* 2022; Maslyn and Uhl-Bien 2001; Silver, King and Hebl 2023), ultimately undermining employees' high-performance attributes.

3.2.3 Norm of Reciprocity

The research is further supported by the norm of reciprocity theory proposed by Gouldner in 1960. The idea is based on two fundamental principles as outlined by Gouldner (1960: 171): (1) individuals should assist those who assist them, and (2) not harm those who have assisted them in the past. According to Kolm (2008: 1), reciprocity can be defined as the act of treating others in the same manner that others have been treated, without any coercion or obligation. This concept serves as a fundamental principle upon which societies are constructed; thus, the minimal requirements identified by Gouldner have become the prevailing pattern of human social behaviour observed in all interpersonal and group interactions (Kolm 2008: 11). The absence of reciprocal acts of service and compassion hinders the attainment of societal peace and cohesiveness as all human connections are contingent upon a reciprocal exchange of benefits (Gouldner 1960: 162). Kolm (2008: 15) asserts that the use of reciprocities, including reciprocal services of help, information, and trust, is essential for the functioning of all working groups. The author

reiterates that reciprocities in the workplace are widespread and essential, and that companies exhibit diverse forms of reciprocities among colleagues and across different levels of management.

At first glance, the norm of reciprocity theory seems to be limited to the act of giving equal favour in return. However, Kolm's (2008) definition of reciprocity encompasses two distinct types: positive reciprocity and negative reciprocity (Perugini *et al.* 2003: 255). According to Üzümçeker and Akfırat (2023: 2) and Gouldner (1960: 171), positive reciprocity refers to the act of providing rewards or exhibiting good conduct towards others who treat you favourably or refrain from inflicting damage to those who have assisted you. Conversely, negative reciprocity refers to the act of retaliating or causing harm in response to those who mistreat or harm others (such as retaliating against someone who has behaved adversely towards you) (Kolm 2008: 12; Perugini *et al.* 2003: 255; Üzümçeker and Akfırat 2023: 2).

Perugini *et al.* (2003: 255) posit that the incorporation of any form of reciprocity might potentially lead individuals to subjectively regard an interpersonal transaction as equitable. For example, individuals tend to reciprocate when they receive gifts and favours, and they retaliate against those who cause them harm. Therefore, according to Nguyen, Doan and Tran (2022: 127), the theory necessitates individuals engaged in trade relationships to actively engage in reciprocal activities. According to Üzümçeker and Akfırat (2023:2), the establishment of minimal interpersonal trust and honesty, which are crucial for the proper functioning of society, is contingent upon individuals adhering to the principle of reciprocity and being aware that others will reciprocate in like fashion.

The application of this theory has been employed in various human endeavours, including civil justice, wherein persons who have demonstrated virtuous conduct are incentivised and those who have shown unfavourable conduct are subjected to punitive measures (Perugini *et al.* 2003: 251). Moreover, the concept of reciprocity has been employed to investigate and ascertain various forms of obligations and human conduct in both the public and private domains. For example, it is also evident across diverse fields including behavioural economics, anthropology, sociology, psychology and communal societies (Huang *et al.* 2023; Nguyen *et al.* 2022; Üzümçeker and Akfırat 2023: 1). A further

application of the rule of reciprocity involves examining a firm's involvement in an open-source community, analysing the impact of human intellectual and social capital, as well as leisure activities and demographic factors (Ari *et al.* 2024; Aksu, Cuhadar and Arici 2022; Yu 2020). Consistent with the aforementioned studies, this research relied on the norm of reciprocity to explain HPEs' and other colleagues' responses to the dysfunctional supervision protocols.

3.2.4 Social support theory

Many scholars have cited negative or destructive supervision to be one of the common work stressors that lead to aversive and potential harmful reactions of employees (Beehr *et al.* 2000: 391; Webster and Brough 2021: 36). According to Srikanth (2020: 1310), social support has been recognised as a coping mechanism that can mitigate the impact of stress on employees. Orrick *et al.* (2011: 500) assert that the concept of social support has its origins in the field of criminology (Cullen 1994). Moreover, this notion is based on the underlying premise that communities and individuals who offer "instrumental and expressive" resources to others through the demonstration of support and concern for their welfare are likely to encounter a reduction in criminal activity. Nevertheless, the use of social support theory has expanded beyond its initial emphasis on crime prevention or reduction to encompass broader life challenges. In this context, the concept of social support may be delineated as the provision of social resources, whether tangible or perceived by one or many individuals, to aid the target person in effectively coping with stressors and enhancing his or her overall state of well-being (Kort-Butler 2018: 1; McIntosh 1991: 202).

The concept of social support has been extensively examined and analysed within organisational psychology, affirming the significance of interpersonal relationships in one's professional life and in effectively dealing with occupational stress (Beehr 2014). The significance of interpersonal relationships is seen in the diverse range of social support they offer within an individual's professional sphere. According to Cohen and Wills (1985), the various forms of assistance may be classified into four categories: emotional support, informational support, social companionship, and instrumental support. Emotional support encompasses several forms of expression, such as compassion,

liking, caring, listening, esteem, value or encouragement as stated by Kort-Butler (2018) and Beehr (2014). By offering this assistance, individuals convey to the key individuals that they are esteemed for their inherent value and life experiences and are embraced regardless of any challenges or personal shortcomings (Cohen and Wills 1985).

Informational support is defined as the provision of counsel, guidance or information that assists an individual in defining, comprehending, managing and resolving an issue (Cohen and Wills 1985: 313; Kort-Butler 2018: 2). According to Cohen and Wills (1985: 313), informational support assists individuals in reevaluating a stressor as a harmless event and proposes appropriate coping strategies to address a perceived loss of control. Furthermore, Cohen and Wills (1985) highlighted social companionship as an additional form of social support available to employees. This assistance includes engaging in leisure and recreational activities with others to alleviate stress. This is accomplished by satisfying the desire for social connection and interaction with others, diverting their attention from their concerns, and by promoting pleasant emotional states. Instrumental assistance is the final form of social support accessible to employees. The process involves the allocation of monetary assistance, tangible assets, and essential interventions (Cohen and Wills 1985; Kort-Butler 2018). Cohen and Wills (1985) suggest that instrumental support can alleviate stress by directly addressing instrumental issues or by allowing the user more time for activities such as relaxation or enjoyment. Although there are conceptual distinctions between these forms of support, they often rely on one another, depending on the degree to which an employee perceives events as stressful.

Researchers have examined many origins of social support. According to Kort-Butler (2018) and Cullen (1994), the sources can be classified into two primary categories: primary group or micro-level, which encompasses significant others such as family members and friends, while the secondary group or social network is characterised by more regulated or hierarchical relationships and less personal connections, such as schools, religious organisations and communities in which individuals are involved. Beehr (2014: 187) and McIntosh (1991: 203) emphasised the need for social support among employees, specifically from supervisors, co-workers and others outside the office, such as significant others, family, friends, and professionals. Cohen and Wills (1985: 312)

propose two potential stress-buffering mechanisms of social support to address the issue regarding the link between stressors and strain experienced by employees. Support might potentially play a role in mitigating or avoiding a stress appraisal response by intervening between the occurrence of a stressful event and the subsequent stress reaction. In other words, when people believe that others can and will provide them the resources they need, it alters how much harm a scenario can cause and increases one's confidence in their capacity to handle the expectations placed on them. This can help avoid a specific circumstance from being viewed as highly stressful.

Social support theory has been applied in managing diverse behaviours in various domains (Chouhy, Cullen and Lee 2020; He *et al.* 2023; Leung *et al.* 2022; Sendra, Farré and Vaagan 2020). In this research, the theory is applied to describe how the existence of HPEs and supervisors' political skills serve as intervening factors in reducing the effects of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. Negative supervisory processes are described as stressors that elicit negative employee reactions (Gopakumar and Singh 2020; Singh 2021). Support from HPEs equips the subordinate with the needed resources that mitigate the effects of the dysfunctional supervision.

3.3 Development of the Study Hypotheses

According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 83), hypotheses are assertions that are testable and represent rationally conjectured correlations between two or more variables. Through testing of hypotheses, possible explanations for specific phenomena or events are developed to validate the conjectured links (Das *et al.* 2022). Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 83) contend that hypotheses are developed depending on the theoretical framework upon which the research conceptual model is founded and are often relational. Hence, the study hypotheses were developed in line with five research objectives used to examine the relationships among the constructs in the study.

3.3.1 Research Hypothesis One

The study's research hypothesis one (H1) is formulated in line with the first research objective, which is to examine the relationship between dysfunctional supervision

processes and HPEs. LMX theory explained that in low-quality LMX in which supervisors engage in exploitative or imbalanced social exchange relations, subordinates have limited access to supervisors, fewer resources, restricted knowledge, and a lack of reciprocal support (Maslyn and Uhl-Bien 2001: 697; Terpstra-Tong *et al.* 2020: 3). In response, high-performing subordinates may withdraw from positive behaviours, such as timely decision-making, offering support to colleagues, sharing knowledge, and demonstrating competence (Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8; De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 582; Webster *et al.* 2022: 3).

Prior research has shown that subordinates respond to destructive or dysfunctional supervision with poor performance and behaviours (Bellou and Dimou 2022; Jabeen and Rahim 2021; Khan *et al.* 2021; Nauman, Zheng and Basit 2021; Wolor *et al.* 2022). For example, Grill (2023), using self-reported data from 582 Swedish employees across four time points, found that destructive leadership undermines employees' sense of meaningful work and productivity. Similarly, Zia *et al.* (2024), in a study involving 304 participants in Pakistan, reported a negative relationship between despotic leadership and adaptive performance. Moreover, De Clercq and Azeem and Haq (2023) found that contemptuous leaders discourage HPEs from engaging in organisational citizenship behaviours, while Mehmood *et al.* (2024) showed that dysfunctional leadership diminishes employee creativity. Despite these findings, studies on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs remains limited within the African context, particularly in Ghana. Based on these insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1a: There is a negative relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

H1o: There is no negative relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

3.3.2 Research Hypotheses Two and Three

The second and third hypotheses (H2 and H3) were derived from the second research objective, which sought to 'examine the direct impacts of dysfunctional supervision

processes on employee reactions. The latter covers two constructs, namely, employee silence and employee alienation. The adoption of the norm of reciprocity theory served as the theoretical framework for elucidating employees' reactions to negative supervision. This relationship falls under negative reciprocity (presented in Section 3.2.3), which involves punishing or striking back in revenge against those who treat you poorly or hurt you (Kolm 2008: 12; Perugini *et al.* 2003: 255; Üzümçeker and Akfırat 2023: 2). That said, when supervisors engage in negative supervision such as abusive supervision, it leads to harmful consequences, including low psychological, social, physical, and emotional well-being, as well as emotional exhaustion (Hussain *et al.* 2020; Saldaña *et al.* 2022; Zhu, Zhao and Zhuang 2023). In light of the adverse outcomes, subordinates who consider that addressing the issue directly may expose them to potential damage as a result of the power imbalance between supervisors and subordinates may choose to reciprocate with nuanced responses, such as maintaining silence and experiencing feelings of alienation (Sarwar *et al.* 2022; Wang and Jiang 2015: 7). These reactions result in the deprivation of essential resources, including information, knowledge, ideas, abilities and other beneficial work behaviours for both the supervisor and the organisation. These detrimental effects hinder the attainment of team and organisational objectives. In the ensuing sub-sections, empirical literature on the impacts of dysfunctional supervision on employee silence and employee alienation is presented.

3.3.2.1 Supervision Process and Employee Silence

A large body of studies has revealed that a negative form of leadership or supervision fosters employee silence (Camgoz *et al.* 2023; De Clercq, Jahanzeb and Fatima 2021; Jain, Srivastava and Cooper 2023; Morrison 2023). For instance, Afshan *et al.* (2022) conducted a study to investigate the influence of abusive supervision and supervisor undermining on the propensity of frontline employees to maintain silence and their intentions to resign from their positions. The researchers employed the social exchange theory as their theoretical framework for analysis. Moreover, a time-lagged approach was used by the researchers to collect data from 350 front-line banking professionals in Thailand. The results revealed that the inclination of Asians to maintain silence is influenced by both fear and reverence for authority.

In like manner, Xu *et al.* (2020) conducted a study to investigate the collective impact of abusive supervision, high-performance work systems (HPWSs), organisational commitment and desire to quit on employee silence. Data were obtained from a sample of 456 workers and 78 human resource managers across 78 organisations in China. The findings of the study suggest that there is a positive correlation between supervisors' engagement in abusive conduct and the likelihood of subordinates remaining silent. Moreover, the existence of HPWSs amplifies the correlation between harsh supervision and silence by cultivating employees' emotional identification with the company, while diminishing their inclination to leave. In a separate investigation to examine the mediating effect of employee silence in the relationship between abusive supervision and work engagement and job satisfaction among workers, Wang, Hsieh and Wang (2020) obtained data from 233 full-time employees of a hotel in Taiwan. The findings revealed that individuals who have encountered abuse tend to suppress their ideas or expertise on work-related matters as a means of protecting the limited resources at their disposal.

Another study by Lee, Kang and Choi (2022) also aimed to ascertain the influence of abusive supervision on the creative performance of employees. Data from 555 Korean employees discovered that a supervisor's abusive behaviour resulted in an increase in employee silence and a decrease in creative performance. Another recent research conducted in Pakistan by Islam *et al.* (2022) examines the mediating effect of employee silence in the relationship between destructive supervision and knowledge hiding (KH) among workers. Moreover, data from 322 participants found that in cultures characterised by a substantial power distance, when workers see their leaders or supervisors as having aggressive behaviour, they are more likely to avoid conflicts and choose to remain silent. Despite the number of studies on negative supervision and employee silence, Ghana has seen a limited number of research studies on this topic. Additionally, most studies adopted a conservation of resources theory. However, the application of the norm of reciprocity theory to explain the relationship is limited in Ghana. Accordingly, based on the above, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H2_a: There is a positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H2o: There is no positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

3.3.2.2 Supervision Process and Employee Alienation

The role of negative supervision on employee alienation has also been investigated in research. Sarwar *et al.* (2022: 309) conducted a study to investigate the role of work alienation as a mediator in reducing the adverse effects of punitive supervision on employee well-being. The researchers utilised the conservation of resources theory (Hobfoll 1989) and the data collected from 265 hotel front-line workers in Pakistan. They found that, based on the implementation of punitive supervision, it has a negative impact on the well-being of employees and might result in a sense of detachment from their work. In another study, Nastiezaie *et al.* (2022) investigated how dictatorial leadership impacts work alienation, considering job boredom as a mediator. The researchers collected data from 253 Iranian instructors using a conventional random sample method. The results indicated that autocratic leadership has a positive and substantial effect on work alienation. Additionally, managers who employ an imperious leadership style create a sense of distance between themselves and the workforce. Moreover, they prioritise their authority and impose their preferred ways of operation on workers without seeking their input or involvement in decision-making, leading to limiting employee involvement while intensifying workplace animosity.

Moreover, Jiang *et al.* (2019) examined how organisational cynicism and work alienation act as mediators in the association between authoritarian leadership and dangerous employee actions. A total of 374 production workers were included in this investigation, which took place in three prominent Chinese cities: Shanghai, Nanjing, and Xuzhou. The study revealed that the combination of job alienation and organisational cynicism served as a mediating factor in connecting authoritarian leadership with risky employee actions. Thus, organisational cynicism and job alienation were identified as the mediating processes that explain the relationship between authoritarian leadership and dangerous employee actions. Research on the relationship between negative supervision processes and employee alienation is increasing. Du, Chowdhury and Kang (2022) conducted a study to explore strategies for mitigating the negative effects of abusive supervision on

subordinates' job alienation and psychological well-being (PWB). The results of this study, derived from a sample of 487 workers in China's industrial and service sectors, indicate that abusive supervision has both a direct and an indirect influence on psychological well-being (PWB) related to job alienation. The study revealed that job alienation had a significant role in explaining the relationship between abusive supervision and PWB. While studies on how negative supervision influences employee alienation abound, the application of the norm reciprocity theory to explain the relationship has not been widely undertaken, especially within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana; hence, this study aims to fill this gap by proposing the following hypothesis:

H3_a: There is a positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H3_b: There is no positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

3.3.3 Research Hypotheses Four and Five

The study's hypotheses four and five (H4 and H5) were developed on the basis of the third research objective, which sought to determine the mediating role of HPEs on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. Norm of reciprocity posits that individuals are socially conditioned or guided by the principle of reciprocity to return positive or negative treatment in kind (Gouldner 1960:171; Üzümcüker and Akfırat 2023: 2). In an organisational context, positive interactions, such as respect and support, encourage employees to reciprocate with loyalty, effort, and openness. Conversely, negative treatment, particularly from supervisors, often triggers defensive behaviours, including silence (withholding ideas or concerns) and alienation (emotional and psychological detachment from the organisation).

Notably, dysfunctional supervision, manifested through abusive supervision, punitive supervision, petty tyranny and social undermining, creates a negative social exchange that violates employees' expectations of fair and respectful treatment (Balwant 2021: 82; Tepper 2007: 263-264). HPEs, who significantly contribute to organisation success

(Asgari *et al.* 2021: 8; Kehoe *et al.* 2018: 2), also expect fair treatment and recognition. When exposed to dysfunctional supervision, employees may perceive a breach in this exchange and respond by reducing discretionary helping behaviours, withdrawing from proactive interactions, or experiencing emotional depletion. Consequently, their positive influence on colleagues diminishes. Given that HPEs typically serve as sources of inspiration, knowledge sharing, and psychological safety, as highlighted by social support theory, a decline in their functioning translates into less support for colleagues, which, in turn, leads to increased employee silence and alienation.

Research on the role of HPEs as mediators is growing (Downes *et al.* 2021; Malhotra and Singh 2016; Sekhar 2022). For instance, a study conducted by Zhu *et al.* (2024) in China investigated the mediating impact of role breadth self-efficacy (RBSE) on the relationship between task performance and taking charge. Furthermore, results from data collected from employees in a large manufacturing firm, in three waves, revealed that high performers' RBSE mediated the correlation between task performance and taking charge. Similarly, Webster, Greenbaum, Mawritz and Reid (2022) conducted a study on the mediating role of HPEs' psychological entitlement regarding the effect of performance and power on organisational citizenship behaviour in the USA. The result, from the data from 157 employees, confirmed the mediating role of HPEs' psychological entitlement.

Another study on the mediating role of HPEs was conducted by Kwon, Ok and Kim (2024) in South Korea. The study aimed to ascertain if the turnover of high performers, as opposed to non-high performers, mediates the association between human resource (HR) practices and firm performance. Data were collected from 153 firms, and the results proved that high performers' turnover mediates the effect of motivation-enhancing HR practices on firm financial performance. Despite these findings, research is scarce on the mediating role of HPEs with regard to the impact of dysfunctional supervision on employee silence and alienation in Africa, specifically in Ghana's indigenous banking sector. This study fills this gap by proposing the following hypotheses:

H4_a: HPEs mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H4_o: HPEs do not mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H5_a: HPEs mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H5_o: HPEs do not mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

3.3.4 Research Hypothesis Six and Seven

The research hypotheses H6 and H7 stem from the fourth objective of the study, which sought to examine whether promotion practices moderate the influence of HPEs on employee silence and alienation. The positive impact of HPEs on reducing employee silence and employee alienation is well-established, primarily through their role in promoting knowledge sharing, expertise, psychological safety and teamwork. However, this influence may vary depending on organisational context, particularly the fairness and inclusivity of the organisation's promotion practices.

Drawing on social support theory (Cohen and Wills 1985), which posits that social interactions buffer individuals against stress and enhance well-being (Srikanth 2020: 1310). HPEs characteristically provide instrumental support in terms of monetary assistance, tangible assets and essential interventions; emotional support, including compassion, liking, caring, listening, esteem, value or encouragement; and informational support, including the provision of counsel, guidance, or information (Beehr 2014; Cohen and Wills 1985; Kort-Butler 2018). When promotion practices are perceived as fair and inclusive, they reinforce and legitimise these supportive behaviours, motivating HPEs to sustain them and encouraging colleagues to engage with and benefit from them. Such environments encourage employees to express ideas, facts and views pertaining to work and the organisation (Dyne, Ang and Botero 2003: 1360), and take control over the work process (Jiang *et al.* 2019: 3), thereby reducing employee silence and alienation. In contrast, perceived unfairness in promotion practices can undermine this dynamic. HPEs may feel demotivated or undervalued, leading to a decline in their supportive behaviours. Simultaneously, colleagues view their actions as self-serving or strategic, thereby

weakening trust and reducing the effectiveness of peer-based social support. This erosion of support mechanisms further contributes to increased employee silence and alienation.

Research on the effects of promotion practices is growing (Evangeline and Thavakumar 2015; Janjua and Gulzar 2014; Salama *et al.* 2022). Zhu *et al.* (2022) collected data from 349 participants across three waves in China. One of the objectives was to investigate the moderating effect of promotion fairness on the impact of promotion failure on work engagement, mediated by self-efficacy and anger. The result confirmed that the perception of promotion fairness reinforced the indirect negative correlation between promotion failure and work engagement through self-efficacy, while diminishing this indirect correlation through anger. Similarly, Lestari *et al.* (2023) employed a mixed-methods research approach to examine the impact of position promotion on employee career development in Indonesia. The quantitative result indicated a positive relationship between promotion opportunities and employee career advancement. Drawing from these findings, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H6_a: Promotion practices moderate the impact of HPEs on employee silence.

H6_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the impact of HPEs on employee silence.

H7_a: Promotion practices moderate the impact of HPEs on employee alienation.

H7_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the impact of HPEs on employee alienation.

3.3.4 Research Hypotheses Eight

Hypothesis eight (H8) was derived from Research Objective 5, which sought to evaluate how political skills moderate the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs. Social support theory served as the theoretical foundation for explaining this relationship. This theory has been identified as one of the coping strategies available to mitigate the effects of stressors on employees (Srikanth 2020: 1310). According to this theory, when employees experiencing stress are provided with emotional, informational and instrumental support as well as social companionship (Cohen and Wills 1985: 313), they can effectively handle stress and enhance their well-being. In this study, it is proposed that dysfunctional supervision processes have a negative impact on HPEs. Social support theory also explains the moderating role of political skills. According to Ferris *et al.* (2002:

111), political skills entail undertaking an activity with cunning and concealing personal and hidden agendas. Thus, by infusing this motive in social support theory, a supervisor who exhibits dysfunctional behaviours may offer both tangible and intangible support to the abused subordinates with a hidden agenda of portraying good leadership and diverting subordinates' attention from the suffering they are experiencing. This study proposes that when a supervisor is successful in carrying out this motive, it will reduce the negative reactions from the employees.

3.3.4.1 Moderating role of political skills on the impacts of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs

Political skills have been a subject of significant interest for several decades. Thus, several researchers have examined the direct correlation between political skills and various individual outcomes. These outcomes include the perception of organisational support, job stressors, role conflict, role ambiguity, strain response, social network quality, group performance, reduction of negative work behaviours, identifying opportunities and social networking, customer-relationship-building competence and customer-oriented selling (Cullen, Gerbasi and Chrobot-Mason 2018; Shi *et al.* 2013; Thompson *et al.* 2023; Xue *et al.* 2020). To further enhance the existing literature on political skills, researchers have also focused on examining the moderating impact of political skills. Sanhokwe and Chinyamurindi (2023) also conducted a study in Zimbabwe, gathering data from 213 participants. The authors used a representative sample to investigate the correlation between political skills and the connection between job engagement and resilience in the workplace. The study revealed that the connection between job engagement and workplace resilience was influenced by an individual's political skills. The authors explained that the moderating effect of political skills indicates that political skills and work engagement are closely intertwined, and together, they can enhance and develop personal and interpersonal resources, promote a sense of community, and, consequently, enhance the ability to cope and thrive in today's complex business environments.

In their study, Zhang *et al.* (2018) examined the moderating influence of political skills. In this research, the researchers aimed to investigate the association between proactive employee behaviour and authentic leadership. The sample for data collection consisted

of 275 employees and 65 leaders from two private enterprises located in mainland China. The research revealed that the presence of genuine leadership significantly affects the proactive behaviour of employees, a behaviour that is, in turn, governed by factors such as psychological empowerment and fundamental employee self-evaluations. Furthermore, the political skills exhibited by both followers and workers play a crucial role in facilitating the connection between fundamental self-assessments and proactive behaviour.

In a separate research, Chang *et al.* (2023) examined the concept that environmental uncertainty motivates companies to engage in organisational learning, along with a focus on the moderating influence of political skills. The results show that the link between environmental uncertainty and employees' self-learning behaviour, mediated by internal marketing, is more pronounced in companies whose managers exhibit elevated levels of political skills. The researchers utilised data gathered from a sample of 90 managers and 294 employees working in Vietnamese companies. According to their perspective, this discovery demonstrates that self-learning behaviour is enhanced by the combination of internal marketing operations and managers' political skills in unpredictable circumstances, as compared to stable or typical environments.

Furthermore, Gardiner and Debrulle (2021) investigated the relationship between maverickism, characterised by traits such as risk-taking, disruption, creativity, and goal-orientation, and the likelihood of making unethical decisions. These scholars also explored how political skills influence moral judgement. Accordingly, two investigations were conducted, encompassing data from 217 workers in Australia and 300 workers in the UK. The results indicated that the connection between maverick conduct and unethical decision-making was substantially influenced by political skills. The researchers provided a rationale for their results, indicating that individuals with elevated degrees of political astuteness and nonconformity were inclined to engage in a greater number of immoral choices. According to their perspective, this discovery implies that the combination of maverickism and strong political skills enables the identification of unethical decision-making more easily. To expand the literature on the moderating role of political skills, this study examines how supervisors' political skills influence the

relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs in the context of Ghana's indigenous banking sector. Hence, the following hypotheses were proposed:

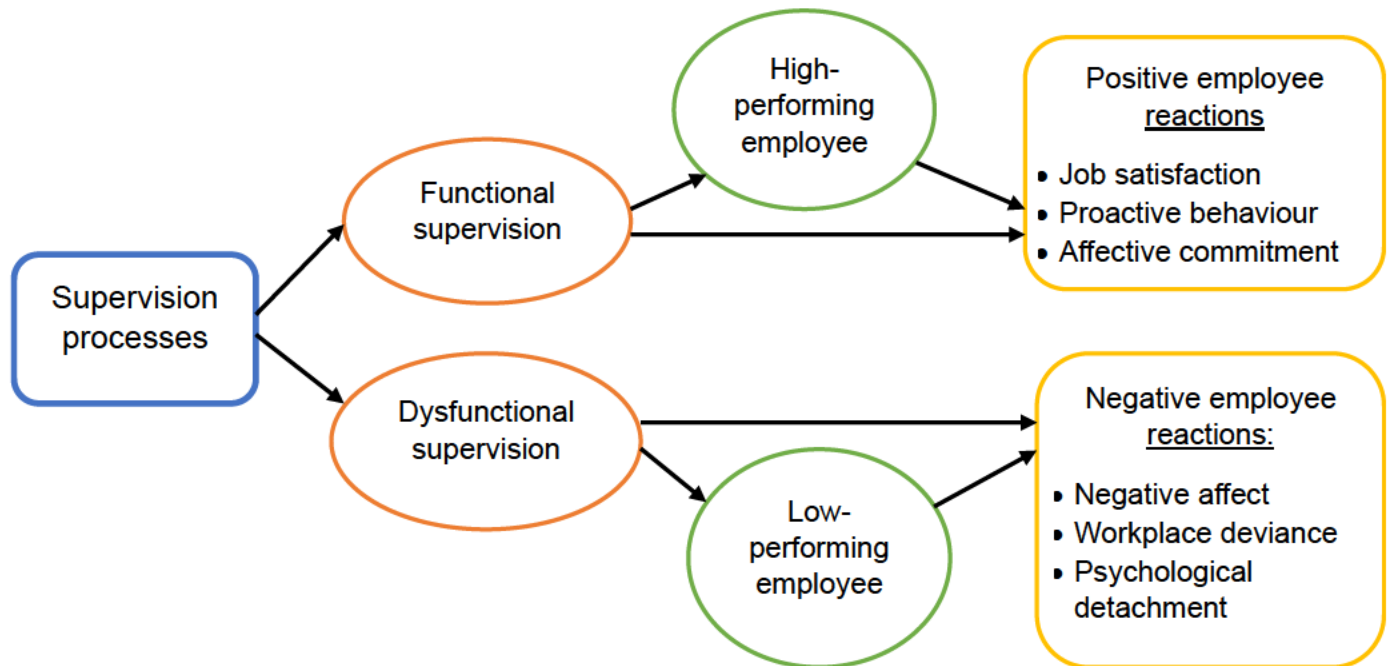
H8_a: Supervisors' political skills moderate the negative relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

H8_o: Supervisors' political skills do not moderate the negative relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

3.4 The Study Research Gap

The broader literature on supervision processes largely emphasises functional supervisory behaviours, such as coaching, mentoring, family-supportive behaviours, and feedback (Carvalho *et al.* 2022: 4; Hammer *et al.* 2009; Zhao and Liu 2020: 294). These behaviours have been shown to enhance high-performing employee attributes (Fan *et al.* 2023; Harati, Ashkanasy and Amirzadeh 2024; Kumari *et al.* 2022; Mohamad, Sanusi and Othman 2024; Ribeiro *et al.* 2021; Zarghoni and Rasool 2021), and foster positive employee reactions (Oh and Park 2019; Oh, Park and Hong 2021; Xiao *et al.* 2025; Zhao *et al.* 2024). In contrast, dysfunctional supervisory behaviours, including petty tyranny, victimisation, workplace bullying, supervisor undermining, and abusive supervision (Balwant 2021: 82; Li *et al.* 2024; Schmid *et al.* 2018; Syed, Naseer and Shamim 2022; Tepper 2007: 263-264), have been found to lead to low-performing employee attributes (Fatima, Majeed and Jahanzeb 2020; Li, Wang and Paşamehmetoğlu 2024; Lim, Koay and Chong 2021; Santos *et al.* 2023; Srivastava, Gupta and Mohapatra 2024), culminating into negative employee reactions (Baniamin, Jamil and Paudel 2025). These relationships are illustrated in Figure 3.1.

Figure 3.1 Interaction among supervision processes, high/low-performing employees, and employee reactions



Source: Researcher's conception 2025

While most studies highlight these relationships in Figure 3.1, only a few studies have shown how dysfunctional supervision directly diminishes the positive attributes of high-performing employees (Mehraein, Visintin and Pittino 2023; Zhou *et al.* 2024), ultimately leading to negative employee reactions such as silence and alienation (Abalkhail 2022; Jiang *et al.* 2019; Liu *et al.* 2021; Santos *et al.* 2023; Wang, Hsieh, and Wang 2020). This study contributes to this direction of research. It adds to literature by examining the direct interaction between dysfunctional supervision and employee silence, as well as employee alienation, the mediating effect of HPEs, and the moderating effects of supervisors' political skill and promotion practices.

Existing research has revealed that dysfunctional supervision is exhibited in different forms in organisations. Due to the magnitude of the effects of this phenomenon, studies have explored the existence of the phenomenon in different cultural contexts, causes or predictors, effects and strategies to address or remedy the phenomenon. For example, McCleskey (2013: 45) focused on human resource (HR) strategies required to address

dysfunctional supervision processes before and after the occurrence. According to the researcher, an effective selection and screening procedure is an important strategy to discover and prevent the organisation from employing leaders with destructive inclinations. In this way, the occurrence of dysfunctional supervision is blocked from entering the organisation. The second strategy is interventions to mitigate or eliminate negative supervision after its occurrence in the organisation. This, according to McCleskey (2013: 45-46), includes therapy, coaching and feedback systems. While this researcher recognises that no single involvement is effective in all context, it was recommended that intervention methods should be tailored to each leader and context to reduce or even eliminate dysfunctional supervision.

The role of HR in addressing dysfunctional supervision processes was once again investigated by Erickson *et al.* (2015: 25-27). These scholars also emphasised the importance of screening and selection that identify the destructive behavioural tendencies. According to them, exercising care in the selection of leaders helps to prevent potential perpetrators of destructive behaviours from surviving the selection process. The second HR practice discussed was 360-degree feedback mechanisms. According to the authors, feedback mechanisms support the culture of employee empowerment and teamwork by emphasising leadership responsibility, communication and feedback, as well as employee involvement in the management process. Another aspect of the feedback system is modelling and rewarding the type of constructive leadership that is expected. The authors recommended that management must be seen to be addressing the dysfunctional supervision processes. This will correct the employee impressions that those who engage in destructive behaviours are not punished. Moreover, the type of leadership and standards expected in the organisation should be clearly outlined.

In a recent study, Schyns *et al.* (2022: 258-261) also discussed HR practices to address dysfunctional supervision processes. Similar to the work of McCleskey (2013), some of the recommended practices included recruitment techniques that should result in the employment of HPEs and reveal the destructive behaviours of job applicants. This promotion process includes providing adequate information to avoid promoting people who may harm followers, as well as offering career development and training that diminish

or eliminate negative or dysfunctional supervision processes. All these recommendations are made due to the detrimental effects of dysfunctional supervision, a phenomenon that has been extensively studied outside the African continent (Bhattacharjee and Sarkar 2024: 11; Mehraein, Visintin and Pittino 2023: 747). However, limited research has been conducted to examine the harmful effects of dysfunctional supervision within the indigenous banking sector. Hence, this research sought to address the following research gaps:

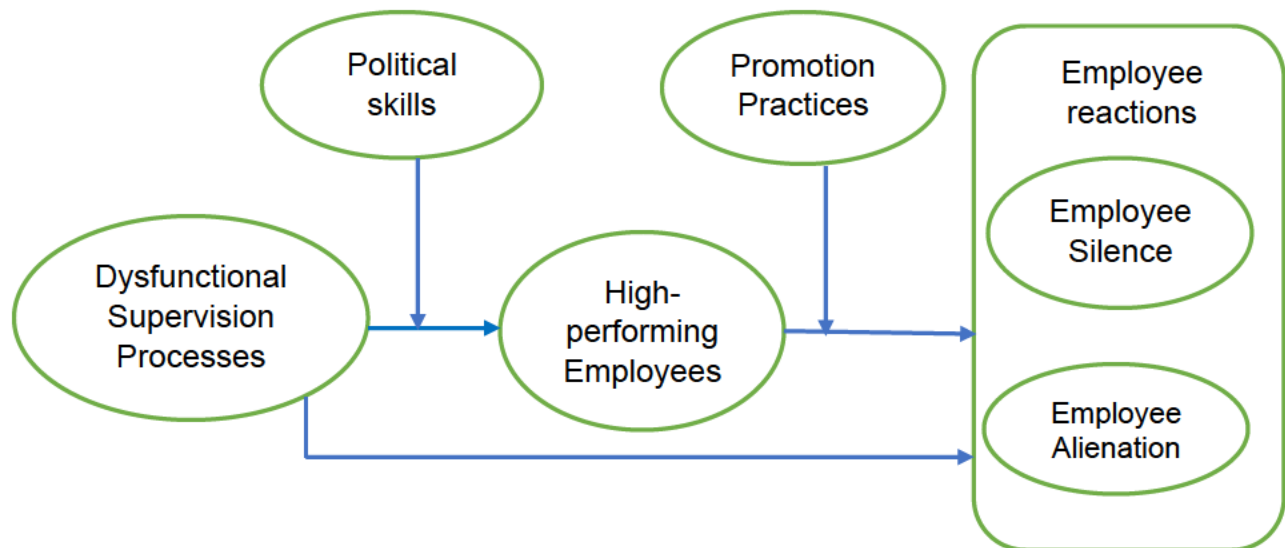
- The impact of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs in the context of the indigenous banking sector in Ghana;
- Employee reactions to the dysfunctional supervision within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana;
- The mediating role of HPEs in linking dysfunctional supervision to employee silence, and employee alienation;
- The moderating role of promotion practices on the impact of high-performing employees on employee silence, and employee alienation; and
- The moderating role of supervisor's political skill on the impact of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs.

These gaps are presented in Section 3.3, which develops the hypotheses.

3.5 The Conceptual Model

Literature on the context of supervision processes, as illustrated in Figure 3.1, does not explain the dynamic relationships among dysfunctional supervision, high-performing employees and negative employee reactions within the African context. The relationships among these concepts, explained by the aforementioned theories, are depicted in Figure 3.2, which represents the researcher's proposed framework illustrating the interrelation of the concepts based on the LMX, norm of reciprocity, and social support theories.

Figure 3.2 Proposed conceptual framework



Source: Researcher's conception

Figure 3.2 depicts the suggested conceptual framework, illustrating the interconnections between the constructs being examined. Grounded in LMX theory, the model suggests that low-quality exchanges characterised by dysfunctional supervisory behaviours undermine the positive attributes of HPEs. In such environments, the norm of reciprocity also explains that other employees may respond with defensive behaviours such as silence and alienation. Drawing on social support theory (Cohen and Wills 1985), the model further proposes that HPEs promote participatory and engaged behaviours through knowledge sharing and support for colleagues. However, when HPEs are subjected to dysfunctional supervision, they may perceive a breach in the exchange relationship with leaders, leading to reduced discretionary helping behaviours, withdrawal from proactive interactions, or experience emotional depletion. Consequently, their positive influence on colleagues diminishes, and employee silence and alienation increase.

Social support theory also informs the moderating effect of superiors' political skill and organisational promotional practices. Thus, a politically skilled supervisor may be better equipped to manage subordinate perceptions and reduce negative reactions, while fair

and transparent promotion practices can reinforce or deteriorate the effect of HPEs on employee silence and alienation.

3.6 Chapter Conclusion

In conclusion, this theoretical and empirical review of related literature has provided a wide-ranging investigation of the relationship between supervision processes, HPEs, employee silence and employee alienation. Additionally, it has examined the moderating influences of promotion practices, political skills, and HPEs within the organisational setting. This review identified research gaps that were used to inform the creation of the particular aims and hypotheses. The next chapter presents the methodological decisions that were made to achieve the objectives established in this study.

CHAPTER 4

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

Research is the systematic process undertaken by individuals to acquire knowledge and uncover information (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016: 5). Research methodology refers to the researcher's selection of specific processes or strategies for identifying, selecting, processing, and analysing information about a topic or phenomena (Nguyen *et al.* 2019: 6). The selection of methodology by a researcher is crucial in research due to its substantial influence on the overall validity and reliability of the study (Nguyen *et al.* 2019).

The researcher's selection of methodology in this chapter is influenced by the research onion model promoted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). The model outlines the sequential progression of a research investigation, progressing from broad to more focused stages (Iovino and Tsitsianis 2020). The structure consists of six crucial layers: research philosophy, research approach, methodological choices, research strategy, time horizon, and data collection and analysis. The layers represent the various components of the study that must be implemented sequentially (Iovino and Tsitsianis 2020: 82; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 130).

4.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy, sometimes referred to as worldview or paradigm, encompasses a set of ideas and assumptions on the acquisition of knowledge (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 44; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 130; Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė 2018: 122). An assumption, as defined by Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė (2018: 122), is an initial assertion derived from a person's intellectual activity, which is based on their knowledge and insights. Hürlimann (2019: 111) states that social researchers, like professionals in other fields, approach their job with a particular comprehension of nature, reality and their societal responsibilities. According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 133-135), research philosophies can be

distinguished by three types of assumptions: ontology, epistemology, and axiology. Ontology refers to the nature of reality, whether it is a single external truth or socially constructed in various forms. Epistemology concerns the assumptions about knowledge, including what is deemed satisfactory, valid and genuine, as well as how it should be disseminated. Axiology examines the role of values and ethics, specifically whether the researcher's values and beliefs should influence the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 133).

This chapter explores philosophical perspectives and assumptions on the nature of knowledge and its acquisition. Specifically, it discusses positivism, interpretivism, pragmatism, critical realism, and postmodernism. Bell, Bryman and Harley (2019: 30) define positivism as the examination of social reality using the same principles, methodologies and ethos as the natural sciences. Thus, scholars who adhere to this ideology perceive reality as objective and independent of the observer, knowledge as verifiable and quantifiable information, research as unbiased, and analyse data using quantitative methodologies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 144).

Interpretivism, in contrast to positivism, acknowledges the idea that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, under varying situations and time, offer diverse explanation and, thereby, construct different social realities (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 149). Accordingly, interpretivist researchers perceive reality as intricate, abundant, and socially produced. Such researchers consider knowledge to be composed of narratives, tales, perceptions, and interpretations. For these researchers, research is influenced by values and employs qualitative approaches to evaluate data (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 144). Some researchers adhere to critical realism, which aids in explaining our observations and experiences by investigating the central structures of reality that impact the situations under observation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 147).

On the other hand, postmodernists consider reality to be constructed and focus on the question of plausibility rather than absolute correctness (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 28). Critical realism, on the other hand, perceives reality as external, independent, and transient in nature. Overall, it considers knowledge to be a combination of facts and social constructions, as well as viewing research as inherently value-laden. Critical realism

employs various methods and data types in its approach. In contrast, postmodernism sees reality as intricate, multifaceted, and socially constructed. It regards knowledge as influenced by dominant ideologies and research as inherently value-driven. Postmodernism primarily utilises qualitative methods to analyse a wide range of data types (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 144). According to Allemang, Sitter and Dimitropoulos (2022: 42), pragmatism places importance on the context, time and place and necessitates that research-generated information be evaluated within these parameters. Adherents of this philosophy perceive reality as intricate, abundant, external, and pragmatic. Such researchers prioritise the practical significance of knowledge within specific settings that facilitate effective action. Postmodernism in research is, thus, guided by values and uses a combination of analytical methodologies (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 144). Essentially, researchers choose these philosophies based on their underlying philosophical presuppositions. Considering the information presented so far, this study adopted pragmatism as the research paradigm.

4.2.1 Choice of Pragmatism as a Research Philosophy

The concept of pragmatism emphasises the utilisation of optimal methods to examine practical issues, including diverse data sources to garner comprehensive insights into the study topic (Allemang, Sitter and Dimitropoulos 2022: 41; Andrew and Halcomb 2007: 147; Brierley 2017: 147-148). These methods may encompass a combination of qualitative, quantitative, and action research with a focus on practical solutions and results (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 144). Scholars frequently link pragmatism to the use of the mixed-methods approach (Allemang, Sitter and Dimitropoulos 2022: 41; Brierley 2017: 149; Maarouf 2019). The idea of numerous data sources is grounded in the understanding that pragmatism is inherently ambiguous and may be influenced by factors such as language, history, culture, and experiential knowledge (Žukauskas, Vveinhardt and Andriukaitienė 2018: 126).

Consequently, it presents several approaches to understanding the universe, thereby justifying the use of diverse methods within a single research investigation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 181). Pragmatic scholars aim to reconcile objectivism and subjectivism, facts and values, specific knowledge and diverse contextual experiences

(Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 151). Pragmatism, as described by Kaushik and Walsh (2019: 7), offers the advantage of assigning importance to research questions and allowing researchers to be adaptable in selecting a methodological approach based on the suitability of specific methods or "what works" (Brierley 2017: 147,148) for addressing research questions. Allemang, Sitter and Dimitropoulos (2022: 42) further elaborated on this benefit by suggesting that pragmatism offers resolutions tailored to particular local circumstances, aiming to achieve genuine social transformation that resonates with the interests of local participants. The aforementioned material, therefore, justifies the researcher's decision to embrace the philosophy of pragmatism. Overall, the application of this philosophy allows for a deeper understanding of the essence of supervision, its processes, and the reaction of employees in selected indigenous banks located in the Western region of Ghana.

4.3 Research Approach

The research approach refers to the specific methods of thinking or discernment and drawing conclusions that are utilised in a research study (Haig 2022:1; Karlsen, Hillestad and Dysvik 2021: 1; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 152). The study approaches mentioned by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 152) include deductive, inductive and abductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning follows a logical progression from a broad theory to particular conclusions. It commences by formulating premises or hypotheses based on the theory and then devises a research technique to either validate or disprove these hypotheses (Haque 2022: 62-63; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 152). Therefore, researchers employ this methodology when the aim is to elucidate causal connections between variables, necessitate quantitative data, and possess a sufficiently extensive sample size to enable the generalisability of the findings (Haque 2022: 64).

The next reasoning is inductive reasoning, which constitutes a process that moves from specific instances to general conclusions. The researcher begins with an unbiased mindset and makes numerous observations, identifies patterns, and then forms generalisations. These generalisations are used to construct a unified explanation, often known as a theory (Haque 2022: 61). Researchers employ this approach when seeking

to comprehend the interpretations individuals ascribe to particular occurrences, favouring a limited sample size, necessitating qualitative data, and placing less emphasis on the generalisability of conclusions (Haque 2022: 63).

Lastly, abductive reasoning is the method of deriving hypotheses from earlier theoretical discoveries and confirming their truthfulness to establish the validity of the conclusion (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 152; Tomasella 2022: 204). Proudfoot (2023: 315) and Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 155) define abductive reasoning as a researcher's choice for mixed-method research, combining elements of deductive and inductive procedures. According to Karlsen, Hillestad and Dysvik (2021: 2), it refers to the initial phase of investigation in which hypotheses are generated, explained via deduction, and confirmed by induction. While researchers distinguish these approaches from one another, their appropriateness for a study depends on the nature of the study and how the researcher intends to accomplish the aims set forth.

The research approach employed for this study is abductive reasoning, which is aligned with pragmatic philosophy. As stated by Karlsen, Hillestad and Dysvik (2021: 2), abduction refers to the initial phase of investigation in which hypotheses are generated, explained via deduction, and confirmed by induction. Based on this, the researcher was able to begin the investigation using deductive reasoning and validated the results with inductive reasoning. An important advantage of this approach is its ability to generate new knowledge by creatively combining and justifying ideas. It allows individuals to generate ideas based on uncertain or potentially possible phenomena, and then use deductive and inductive reasoning to further develop and analyse those ideas (Mirza *et al.* 2014: 1982). With this in mind, the researcher used LMX, norm of reciprocity, and social support theory to formulate hypotheses on the relationships among dysfunctional supervision processes, HPE, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skill. The data on these variables were collected through surveys and analysed quantitatively to obtain findings that were fit for generalisation. In addition, the researcher relied on the inductive approach to obtain qualitative data through in-depth interviews to provide further explanation to the findings through the deductive approach.

This allowed the study to benefit from the advantages of both the quantitative and qualitative research methods.

4.4 Research Design and Strategy

An essential factor in accepting a study's findings is the use of a suitable research design and strategy. This section provides information on several forms involving research designs and strategies, as well as the rationale for selecting a particular design and strategy for research.

4.4.1 Research Design

According to Zikmund *et al.* (2013: 64), research design refers to a comprehensive plan that outlines the specific methods and procedures for gathering and assessing the required information. Bell, Bryman, and Harley (2022: 44) define it as a systematic approach to producing evidence that aligns with specific criteria and research questions. As such, a research design serves as a framework that outlines the objectives of the study and guarantees that the obtained material is suitable for addressing the problem at hand (Zikmund *et al.* 2013: 64).

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 175) and Creswell and Creswell (2018: 49-51), there are three options available for researchers to design their research: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed-methods design. The quantitative research design is employed to evaluate ideas or concepts by investigating the correlation between the variables and quantitatively measuring and analysing them using various statistical and graphical methods (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 40; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 178; Taherdoost 2022: 54). This methodology is linked to positivism and employs a deductive approach to reasoning. It involves gathering standardised data by asking clear questions that are understood in the same manner by all participants (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 35; Creswell and Creswell 2018: 41; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 178). A qualitative research design is closely linked to interpretivism, and the research process involves the development of questions and techniques. Data are commonly gathered in a setting involving participants and then analysed using an inductive

approach. This entails starting with specific details and gradually identifying general themes. The analysis also involves interpreting words and images that may have multiple interpretations and engaging with the participants to further explore and clarify the findings (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 41; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 179).

The mixed-methods research design is linked to pragmatism and the abduction approach, allowing a researcher to address research problems that cannot be adequately addressed by qualitative or quantitative methodologies alone (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 106). Consequently, researchers who opt for this design gather, combine, and analyse both numerical and descriptive information in a single investigation or a set of investigations, employing both inductive and deductive reasoning to tackle and resolve the research issue (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 41; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 106). A benefit of the mixed-methods is the adaptability in choosing and employing various approaches, allowing researchers to accommodate others' chosen methods, even if they differ from their own (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 181). A further benefit is that the incorporation of qualitative and quantitative data produces a further understanding that surpasses the knowledge obtained from either the quantitative or qualitative data alone (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 41-42). Therefore, the advantages of the mixed-methods research approach were the rationale for selecting this methodology for the study. Essentially, it was chosen to obtain comprehensive insights into supervisors' perspectives on their HPEs and to assess the extent of potential dysfunctional conduct among supervisors throughout the supervision processes.

The researcher opted for a mixed-methods approach in order to elucidate the impacts of HPEs on negative supervision processes and the reduction of negative reactions from other subordinates due to the presence of HPEs. There exist three categories of mixed-method research: convergent mixed methods; explanatory sequential mixed methods; and exploratory sequential mixed methods (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 52). Researchers who employ convergent or concurrent mixed methods gather and analyse qualitative and quantitative data separately but simultaneously in the same stage of the research process, within a comparable time frame (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 52; Fetters, Curry and Creswell 2013: 2137; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 182).

Integration often takes place during interpretation, where the outcomes or discoveries of the two separate strands are combined to facilitate more robust conclusions from the data (Guetterman *et al.* 2019:3). When a researcher opts for exploratory sequential mixed-methods, the research begins with a qualitative phase where data collection and analysis are conducted to explore the perspectives of participants. Subsequently, this information is utilised to transition into the quantitative phase of data collection and analysis (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 52; Fetters, Curry and Creswell 2013: 2136; Kajamaa, Mattick and de la Croix 2020: 268).

The explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach, in contrast to exploratory sequential, entails the systematic collection, analysis, and integration of quantitative data followed by qualitative data in two successive stages (Kajamaa, Mattick and de la Croix 2020: 268; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 182). A researcher employing this mixed-method approach begins by analysing quantitative results and subsequently utilises these results to provide a more comprehensive explanation. This is achieved by selecting participants for the qualitative component of the study, thereby facilitating a deeper understanding of the findings (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 52; Fetters, Curry and Creswell 2013: 2136; Guetterman *et al.* 2019: 3). The researcher chose to employ the explanatory sequential mixed-methods technique in this study in order to first conduct quantitative investigations in an effort to establish the correlations between the components and then validate these associations using qualitative data.

The selection of a particular research design is contingent upon the characteristics and objectives of the investigation. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 186) categorised research into four distinct purposes: exploratory, descriptive, explanatory, and evaluative. An exploratory study is conducted when the subject of the study is relatively novel, with the aim of comprehending the occurrences, gaining fresh perspectives, posing critical questions, and evaluating phenomena from a different perspective (Babbie 2021: 91; Hunziker and Blankenagel 2024: 3). Moreover, it seeks to explore uncharted territory, detect and cultivate additional problems, elucidate and enhance concepts, generate or formulate hypotheses, and generate preliminary and unorganised data that can be used to pinpoint a specific question for a subsequent investigation (Babbie 2021: 91; Hunziker

and Blankenagel 2024: 3). Descriptive research, on the other hand, aims to obtain a precise depiction of events, individuals, or circumstances. It involves research questions that typically start with 'who', 'what', 'when', or 'how' (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 187). The objective of any research is viewed as a method to achieve a desired outcome, rather than being an end in itself (Hunziker and Blankenagel 2024: 4). Therefore, it might either be an expansion of a preliminary study or a precursor to in-depth research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 187).

Explanatory research, as identified by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 188), is a type of research that seeks to investigate a situation or problem with the goal of elucidating the connections between variables. Explanatory studies are defined by their focus on answering "why" or "how" research questions. The main goal is to establish a cause-and-effect link and determine the nature and direction of the correlations between the variables being studied (Hunziker and Blankenagel 2024: 4; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 188). Finally, evaluative research is conducted to assess the effectiveness of anything by investigating questions related to its functionality, such as "what," "how," or "why" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 188). For example, it is used to evaluate the efficacy of an organisational strategy, policy, programme, initiative, or process in the field of business and management (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 188).

The purpose of this study, that informed the selection of the research design, is exploratory research. This is because this study intended to understand the relationships among the variables that included dysfunctional supervision processes, HPEs, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices and political skill. The study also aimed to assess the phenomena from a fresh perspective in order to garner novel insights and make innovative discoveries.

4.4.2 Research Strategy

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 189), research strategy is defined as the systematic plan that outlines how a researcher will address the research issues. This plan facilitates researchers in achieving their research objectives and addressing the research questions of the study (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 96). Hence, the strategy centres on the research question, directs the choice of information sources, and

establishes the structure for gathering and analysing data to achieve the research objectives (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 45; Schindler 2019: 71). The selection of a strategy is, therefore, contingent upon the researchers' emphasis on numerous characteristics, including causal relationships between variables, generalisability, comprehension of behaviour within its particular social context, and temporal comprehension of events and their interrelationships (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 45).

Researchers have identified several strategies for conducting research, including experiments, surveys, case studies, grounded theory, ethnography, narrative research, and phenomenological designs (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 190; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 96). To date, researchers have employed an experimental approach to modify the impact of a particular therapy by administering it to one group while withholding it from another. This is followed by assessing the performance of both groups in relation to the desired goals (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 50). Survey research is also able to provide a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of the population (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 49-50). This strategy includes cross-sectional and longitudinal studies that enable researchers to utilise questionnaires or structured interviews to garner standardised data from a large group of participants regarding two or more variables. These data are then analysed quantitatively using descriptive and inferential statistics so as to identify patterns of association or comparison (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 59; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 193,194). The main intention of the survey strategy is to generalise from a sample to a population (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 50). Essentially, when a researcher wishes to conduct a thorough investigation into a specific topic, phenomenon or case within a real-life context, the most suitable approach for this endeavour is a case study. This involves examining a programme, event, activity, process or one or more individuals extensively (Creswell and Creswell, 2018: 51; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 196).

Moreover, grounded theory is employed when the researcher aims to formulate a comprehensive and abstract theory regarding a process, activity or interaction. This theory is based on and derived from a specific collection of facts (Creswell and Creswell

2018: 50; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 205). Ethnography is a research method that involves studying the culture or social environment by documenting the experiences and behaviours of specific individuals or ethnic groups (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 200). Researchers employing this research methodology immerse themselves in the community whom they are studying for an extended duration, with the purpose of observing and engaging in conversations with the individuals in order to generate comprehensive cultural descriptions of their collective beliefs, behaviours, interactions, language, rituals, and the significant events that have influenced their lives (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 50-51; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019:200). Narrative inquiry, on the other hand, is employed by researchers to depict the progression of human experience over time, whereas phenomenological research is used when the researcher wants to describe the world as individuals directly perceive or live it, without engaging in reflection, conceptualisation or categorisation (Clandinin and Rosiek 2007: 40; van Manen 2017: 2). The description encapsulates the core of the experiences of multiple persons who have all encountered the particular phenomenon (Creswell and Creswell 2018: 50). This approach generally entails conducting interviews.

Consistent with the implementation of a mixed-methods research design, a cross-sectional survey strategy was employed to address the quantitative component of the study. Data were collected from a sample of the population using a questionnaire. The purpose of conducting a survey was to extrapolate the conclusions obtained from the sample to the entire population. The study also employed a phenomenological research technique to address the qualitative aspect, using face-to-face (FTF) interviews for data gathering. The objective was to depict the firsthand encounters and responses of multiple persons who have all undergone adverse supervision processes. Sections 4.7.2.1 and 4.7.2.2 provide information on the questionnaire and interview schedule.

4.5 Population and Sampling

The data sources play a crucial role in any research project and determine the credibility of the study's findings. Researchers employ sampling techniques to pinpoint suitable participants for data collection, even if the total number of participants in the population

of the study area is manageable. The following sections provide details on the population of the study area and the size of the sample, the sampling techniques employed to select the participants, and the criteria used to determine who was included and excluded from the study.

4.5.1 Study Population

The population encompasses the entirety of instances, units, elements, or objects from which the sample is selected (Arnab 2017: 1; Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 188; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 294). Population, as a definition, also considers urban areas, territories, and enterprises, as well as individuals, occurrences, or things of importance that the researcher plans to investigate (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 188; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 236). This study was conducted at three indigenous banks located in the Western region of Ghana, which had a total employee population of 956 (*Human resource department of the banks*).

This study's purpose necessitated the collection of data from a specific subset of the population rather than encompassing all kinds of employees. As per Willie (2023: 1), the term "target population" denotes a distinct subgroup or limited collection of persons within the broader population that exhibit particular attributes or fulfil certain requirements and, therefore, constitute the main focus of a research project. This study focused on a target demographic of 688 full-time permanent workers from three chosen banks.

The combined number of branches for these three research study sites (i.e., the chosen banks) was 43. The participants were selected from various levels of management, as shown in Table 4.1

Table 4.1 Target population of the study

Names of Banks	Number of Branches per Bank	Target population per Bank
Ahantaman Rural Bank	18	310
Lower Pra Rural Bank	16	288
Nzema Manle Rural Bank	9	90

Total	43	688
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Source: Field data 2023

4.5.2 Study Sample Size

A sample refers to a specific portion or subgroup of the population that is chosen for research (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 188). On the other hand, sample size, as described by Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 241), is the number of respondents deemed suitable to represent the whole population. The literature emphasises the significance of sample size in accurately portraying the population and deriving valid conclusions for the study. However, it is vital that the chosen sample accurately and reasonably represents the population from which it is derived (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 294). The sample size is crucial in determining the extent to which the sample accurately represents the larger population for the purpose of generalisation (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 261). Additionally, the choice of sample size by a researcher provides information on the amount of dispersion or variance within the population, the accuracy of the estimate, the range of error, the level of confidence, and the number of subgroups within the sample (Schindler 2019: 95).

Hence, the sample size for the study was calculated using an adjusted version of Yamane's (1973: 150) formula (Adam 2021: 92).

$$\text{Sample size (n)} = \frac{N}{1 + N\varepsilon^2}$$

Where n = minimum returned sample size

N = the size of population = 688

ε = adjusted margin of error [$\varepsilon = \left(\frac{\rho e}{t}\right)$]

ρ = standard deviations = 2

e = the degree of accuracy = 5%

t = confidence level at 95% = 1.96

$$\Rightarrow \varepsilon = \left(\frac{2(0.05)}{1.96} \right) = 0.051$$

$$\Rightarrow \text{Sample size } (n) = \frac{688}{1+688(0.051^2)}$$

$$= 247$$

The sample size for the study was 247, which was further split as per the research method applied (mixed method). The breakdown for each study site is presented in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 The Study Sample Size

Names of Banks	Sample size per bank	Sample size for quantitative data	Sample size for qualitative data
Ahantaman Rural Bank	111	101	10
Lower Pra Rural Bank	103	95	8
Nzema Manle Rural Bank	33	31	2
Total	247	227	20

Source: Researcher's own computation

4.5.3 Sampling Technique

Sampling refers to the act of selecting a reduced and more feasible number of individuals to participate in research (Dawson 2002: 47). There are two main types of sampling procedures commonly used in research: probability sampling and non-probability sampling (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 296). Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022: 188) define probability sampling as the method of selecting a sample by random selection, ensuring that each unit in the population has a specific chance of being chosen. The different types of probability sampling include simple random sample, systematic random sample, stratified random sample, and cluster sample. In this thesis, cluster sampling was chosen for the quantitative data.

Cluster sampling is a method where the population is divided into distinct categories, after which large groups of units (clusters) are then randomly selected. From these chosen clusters, the researcher can then select a sample or all of the units (Ghauri, Grønhaug and Strange 2020: 164; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 246). Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 246) outline two distinct forms of cluster sampling: single-stage cluster sampling and multi-stage cluster sampling. Single-stage cluster sampling entails dividing the population into clusters for convenience, randomly selecting the necessary number of clusters as sample subjects, and examining all the elements inside each randomly chosen cluster (Ghauri, Grønhaug and Strange 2020: 164; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 246).

On the contrary, multistage cluster sampling entails the random selection of primary sampling units, from which a secondary sample unit is randomly chosen. A subsequent random selection is conducted from the secondary units, and this process continues until the final units are randomly picked, ensuring that every member of the units is included (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 246). Multi-stage cluster sampling was used to select 227 respondents for the quantitative aspect of the study. The researcher considered this sample approach to be suitable for obtaining a sufficient representation of the staff of the rural and community banks in the region. An additional benefit of this sampling strategy was that it allowed the researcher to personally interact with respondents, regardless of the challenges posed by a geographically scattered population and the expensive and time-consuming process of constructing a sample frame (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2016: 293).

Similarly, non-probability sampling, in contrast, relies on subjective techniques, such as personal experience, convenience, and expert opinion to choose the items for the sample (Hair, Page and Brunsyeld 2019: 192). This sampling technique is employed when the researcher aims to address specific research questions and achieve research objectives through a comprehensive investigation that concentrates on a limited number of instances, with the intention of obtaining detailed and extensive information (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 315). The primary types of non-probability sampling employed by business researchers are convenience sampling, judgement (purposive) sampling,

volunteer sampling, and quota sampling (Ghauri, Grønhaug and Strange 2020: 166; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 317-324).

Due to the specific characteristics of the qualitative data required for the study, the researcher employed a purposive sample. Purposive sampling represents a method in which the researcher uses his/her own judgement to select individuals who can provide the desired information. These individuals are chosen either because they are the only ones who possess the information or because they meet specific criteria set by the researcher (Berndt 2020: 3; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 321; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 246). A purposive sample technique was employed to select 20 participants for the qualitative component of the study. This facilitated the researcher in gathering qualitative data from the branch managers or supervisors for meticulous examination.

Hence, this study applied a multi-stage cluster probability sampling and purposive non-probability sampling techniques in collecting data.

4.5.4 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The researcher carefully evaluated the inclusion and exclusion criteria before choosing the sample for the study. In accordance with Patino and Ferreira (2018: 84) and McElroy and Ladner (2014: 132), inclusion criteria refer to the essential attributes or a set of prerequisites that participants must satisfy in order to be eligible for the research. The literature highlights that these features are mostly examined in relation to the demographic information of the respondents (Connelly 2020: 125; Patino and Ferreira, 2018:84). Included in this study are the geographical location of the study site, the ranking of the respondents, and the nature of their work. In order to ensure accessibility, the researcher incorporated branches of the chosen banks that are situated in the districts within the Western Region. Lastly, the study included full-time employees at the supervisory level and below.

Similarly, Connelly (2020: 125) and Patino and Ferreira (2018: 84) define exclusion criteria as specific characteristics or attributes of potential study participants that, despite meeting the inclusion criteria, could potentially hinder the success of the study or prevent

their inclusion in it. In this regard, this study excluded the branches of the chosen banks that are situated outside the Western region, as well as personnel in the security, transport, cleaning departments, and those who work part-time, on contract, or on a commission basis.

4.6 Time horizon

The objectives of a study and the characteristics of the research inquiries might influence the methods used to gather data and the structure of the research design. The timing of the study, whether it is conducted as a one-time observation or as a continuous recording, can be influenced by the research's objectives and the topics being investigated (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 212). Time horizon in research can be cross-sectional or longitudinal in nature. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 104), cross-sectional studies are conducted when data collection (at a single moment in time, which may span days, weeks, or months) is adequate to address the study's inquiries. Similarly, longitudinal studies, on the other hand, are employed by researchers to examine the evolution or progression of a phenomenon over a specific duration by collecting data at many points in time (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 212; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 105).

This research falls under the category of cross-sectional studies because one-time data were collected within a certain period during the course of the study.

4.7 Data Collection

Data collection constitutes a vital component of every research project, and it is crucial for achieving the research objectives. Data collection pertains to the capacity to gather unprocessed data from research entities utilising research instruments (Alsmadi 2023: 347). Alsmadi (2023: 347) and Arun *et al.* (2022) emphasise that the collection of high-quality, comprehensive, and pertinent data is the primary determinant of achieving research outputs of superior quality.

4.7.1 Sources of Data

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 338) distinguish between two categories of data: primary data and secondary data. Primary data refer to newly gathered data from a sample or target population for a specific purpose collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 378,434,502). Secondary data refers to pre-existing data originally collected for a different purpose (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019:338). The sources of secondary data include the researcher's company, data collection companies, municipal or other government agencies, nongovernmental organisations (NGOs), trade or consumer associations, the Internet, and other social media platforms (Hair, Page and Brunsveld 2019: 122).

The researcher relied on primary data as a suitable means for achieving the study aims. The data were collected using a questionnaire and interview guide. The next section provides an explanation of the data collection instruments adopted for the study.

4.7.2 Data Collection Instruments

Research instruments refer to the apparatus or tools utilised to gather and organise data that is pertinent to the research being undertaken (Birmingham and Wilkinson 2003: 3; Colton and Covert 2007: 4). Birmingham and Wilkinson (2003: 5) provide six distinct methodologies for data collection: questionnaires, interview schedules, content analysis, focus groups, observations and video analysis. In this study, two data collection instruments were employed: questionnaires for gathering quantitative data and interview schedules for gathering qualitative data.

4.7.2.1 Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a predetermined written collection of questions to which respondents provide their replies, often within certain options (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 142). Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 503) assert that a questionnaire encompasses all techniques of gathering data, wherein individuals are solicited to answer a standardised set of questions in a planned sequence. The purpose of this tool is to gather a significant amount of numerical data. It can be implemented in two primary ways: through self-completed questionnaires, which are typically distributed to respondents electronically; or

through researcher-completed questionnaires, where the researcher or a research assistant records the respondents' answers to the questions in the questionnaire (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 233; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 506; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 143). Questionnaire items can either be classified as open-ended, where respondents are free to furnish their own responses or closed-ended, where respondents select one or more options from a predetermined set of alternatives or predefined categories (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 253; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 146; Wilkinson 2000: 44).

Data were collected from 227 participants for the quantitative study using a closed-ended self-administered online questionnaire in the form of "Google Forms". The questionnaire was designed with a systematic format, thereby ensuring alignment, and divided into five sections. This approach was taken to effectively address the study objectives and test the hypotheses. The items in Section A gathered data on the respondents' biographical information, while the questions in Sections B to E were retrieved from existing instruments and adjusted as needed.

In Section B, dysfunctional supervision was operationalised empirically using 15 measures focusing on abusive supervision developed by Tepper (2000: 189-190). These measures have become the most widely validated and reliable instruments for assessing dysfunctional supervisory behaviours. Although abusive supervision is narrower in scope than dysfunctional supervision, its strengths overshadow those of other categories comprising supervisory dysfunctional behaviours (Caputo *et al.* 2025; Kaur and Mittal 2024; Luo *et al.* 2024; Mitchell and Ambrose 2007: 1159; Zhuang and Shi 2025). Furthermore, notable scholars, such as Tepper (2017: 124) and Schyns and Schilling (2013: 138), have noted that abusive supervision can act as a proxy indicator for a broader dysfunctional leadership climate.

Section C contained five question items on employee silence developed by Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008: 50-51). Section D consisted of eight question items on employee alienation, which were developed by Nair and Vohra (2009:302). Section E comprised 18 question items on political skill (developed by Ferris *et al.* (2005: 149-150)). Section F listed eight question items that focused on promotion practices that were developed by

Ferris, Buckley and Allen (1992: 47-68), while Section G contained 10 question items on high-performing employees as outlined by Williams and Anderson (1991:606). Sections B to G had a total of 64 question items that necessitated respondents to express their answers using 5-point Likert scales, which spanned from very positive to very negative responses (Birmingham and Wilkinson 2003:12). The specific information on the questions may be found in Appendix A1.

The quality of the question items in the questionnaire was assessed through content and criterion-related validity. Content validity is employed to evaluate the extent to which a new measuring tool or the questions in a questionnaire sufficiently encompass the ideas being studied (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 174; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 517). In order to ensure content validity, researchers solicit evaluations from experts and individuals with relevant expertise about the suitability of the measure. Criterion-related validity is employed to assess the efficacy of new measures by examining their capacity to generate data that may accurately forecast future responses (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 174; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 517).

In this study, the researcher utilised existing instruments that have satisfied the criteria for content and criterion-related validity, as indicated in the preceding paragraphs in this section. Although there were some modest modifications made to these measures, the extent of these modifications was extremely minimal and did not augment the substance of the measures to such an extent as to justify the need for another assessment of their validity in relation to the criteria.

4.7.2.2 Interview Schedule

A research interview is a deliberate exchange of information between two or more individuals, whereby the interviewer poses succinct and clear questions and attentively listens to the interviewees' responses (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 434; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 113). Through attentive listening, an interviewer may effectively delve into areas of interest, as well as elucidate and validate the intended significance of the interviewee's statements (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 434). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 436), there are three distinct categories of research interviews: structured interviews, semi-structured interviews, and unstructured interviews.

Structured interviews involve the researcher reading out the questions from the questionnaire exactly as written and recording the responses on a standardised schedule with pre-coded answers. Semi-structured interviews begin with a predetermined list of themes and key questions to guide the conduct of the interviews. Unstructured or in-depth interviews are informal and are used to facilitate an in-depth exploration of a general area of interest. These types of interviews, however, do not employ predetermined and written-down themes or questions to structure or guide the course of the interview (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 438). While structured interviews are used to collect quantitative data, semi-structured and unstructured interviews are utilised to garner qualitative data (Hair *et al.* 2019: 161).

The researcher opted for unstructured face-to-face (FTF) interviews as the method for gathering qualitative data in the study. An unstructured interview allows the interviewee to express their thoughts and opinions freely on the topic or event being investigated, as well as their own experiences, behaviours, and beliefs (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 439). This kind of interview lacks formality and does not adhere to a predetermined structure or written prompts to direct its progression (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 211; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 438; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 113). In order to effectively conduct an interview, it is essential for the researcher to possess a basic understanding of the subject matter being investigated. This is vital since this knowledge enables the researcher to ask relevant questions and utilise prompts that arise from the respondents during the interview process (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 439).

The interview schedule employed for gathering qualitative data comprised 10 sections. Section A encompassed the participants' biographical information, while sections B to J contained 19 open-ended questions derived from Ferris *et al.* (1992: 56-57) and adapted to elicit information pertaining to the constructs examined in the study (as outlined in Appendix A2). Section B focused on inquiries regarding high-performing employees, while Section C addressed inquiries regarding social dominance orientation. Section D examined inquiries regarding threats to hierarchy, and Section E explored inquiries regarding criteria for the promotion system, while Section F delved into inquiries concerning various types of promotion systems. Additionally, Section G investigated

inquiries regarding diverse methods of promotion, Section H examined inquiries involving the promotion committee, while Section I explored inquiries focusing on the role of person-organisation fit in promotion decisions. Lastly, Section J addressed inquiries regarding the role of influence and politics in promotion decisions. The rationale for doing FTF interviews is that they allow the researcher to personally interact with the participants, establish a connection, address any uncertainties, provide reassurance, and alleviate any apprehensions they may have had about disclosing sensitive information related to the discussed issue.

4.7.3 Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection refers to the systematic acquisition of research data via the use of standardised methods (Arun *et al.* 2022: 519). This procedure is crucial in research as it establishes the foundation for collecting data to either support or refute the study hypothesis. This section presents procedures for gathering quantitative and qualitative data.

4.7.3.1 Procedure for Quantitative Data Collection

The collection of quantitative data was conducted using a questionnaire, as outlined in Section 4.7.2.1. The participants were furnished with the hyperlink to the questionnaire through their human resource departments and gained access to the title page of the questionnaire by clicking on the link. The title page included concise details on the research and informed consent, stating that participation is voluntary and participants have the option to withdraw at any point during the questionnaire response process. Upon reviewing the information, participants were given the opportunity to click "NO" in order to discontinue their participation in the study and prevent them from accessing the questionnaire items. By clicking on "YES", participants affirmed their consent to participate in the study and obtained access to the questionnaire items. After completing the tasks, they clicked the "submit" option situated at the bottom of the last section of the questionnaire, resulting in their responses being automatically submitted. The participants required approximately 15 minutes to fully respond to the questionnaire.

4.7.3.2 Procedure for Qualitative Data Collection

Qualitative data were collected using interview schedules as stated in Section 4.7.2.2. The researcher performed face-to-face (FTF) interviews with 20 participants, with each session lasting approximately 25 minutes. Prior arrangements were established with the participants on the exact location, time, and duration of the interview. Before the interview, interview schedules were issued to the participants to facilitate their preparation for the interview. Furthermore, consent was obtained from the participants to digitally record the interview, in addition to the traditional manual recording.

4.7.3.3 Common Method Bias

Common method bias (CMB) refers to the variation that arises when the data collection technique employed in a study influences the replies in a manner that may not fully reflect the underlying situation (Kock 2017: 246; Podsakoff *et al.* 2003: 879). CMB is acknowledged as a significant risk to the accuracy of the study due to its role as a primary contributor to measurement error, which, in turn, affects the dependability of the study's items and the credibility of the findings (Kock, Berbekova and Assaf 2021: 3; Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2012: 542). One contributing factor to CMB is respondent-related, wherein respondents provide answers that portray themselves in a favourable or socially acceptable manner, rather than expressing their true preferences (Jordan and Troth 2020:3; Kock, Berbekova and Assaf 2021:3). For instance, a participant who wants to locate simpler methods to provide responses for a series of questions on dysfunctional supervision processes may reduce the amount of mental energy spent on contemplating the significance of the questions (MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2012: 544). Measurement instrument-related factors can contribute to CMB. These factors include the presence of complex, ambiguous or similar question structures that elicit similar responses from the respondents (Jordan and Troth 2020: 3; Kock 2021: 3; Schwarz *et al.* 2017: 94-95).

The researcher implemented the two methods recommended by Kock, Berbekova and Assaf (2021: 3) and Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012: 548) for managing CMB. These are pre-emptive procedural controls that are implemented prior to the data gathering (*ex-ante*). Kock, Berbekova and Assaf (2021: 4) suggested that the researcher should apply remedies, including presenting comprehensive information on the research

along with clear directions for the questionnaire. These instructions included emphasising that there are no correct answers and ensuring that all replies would remain anonymous. Furthermore, the researcher developed succinct questions, deliberately avoiding any topics with ambiguous or double meanings. Prior to these remedies, Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Podsakoff (2012:548) had suggested a number of procedural remedies. One of them involved using different sources, such as collecting data for the predictor variable from a set of samples or primary sources and data for the criterion variable from another set of samples or secondary sources.

Another solution, as suggested by Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff (2012: 549), is to establish temporal, proximal, or psychological separation. Temporal separation entails gathering data for the predictor variable at time 1 and data for the criterion variable at time 2 from the same sample set. Proximal separation refers to the collection of data for predictor and criterion variables that are physically distant from each other. Psychological separation, on the other hand, entails using a cover story to diminish the significance of the connection between predictor and criterion variables. The use of separation remedies reduces the respondent's capacity and/or inclination to use prior responses to complete missing information, deduce absent data, or react to later questions. Considering the challenges associated with utilising various sources for a solution (Podsakoff, MacKenzie and Podsakoff 2012: 549), and following the examples of studies that have achieved positive outcomes using a temporal separation solution (Syed, Naseer and Shamim 2022; Tafvelin *et al.* 2023; Wu *et al.* 2022), a time-lag approach with a 7-week interval was employed for data collection. The time 1 questionnaire included question items related to HPEs, employee silence, and employee alienation. The Time 2 questionnaire comprised elements related to promotion practices, dysfunctional supervision processes, and political skill. Furthermore, the researcher used ex-post statistical controls after collecting the data, in addition to the procedural remedies. The researcher utilised the complete collinearity test to compute variance inflation factors (VIFs) for all the latent variables in the model (Kock 2017: 253). A VIF exceeding 3.3 indicates that the model is influenced by multicollinearity, as stated by Kock (2017: 253). Chapter 5 will provide a demonstration of the usage of this strategy.

4.8 Data Analysis Procedures

Data analysis is the systematic process of organising, purifying, converting, modelling, and examining raw data in order to obtain valuable insights (Islam 2020: 10; Vali and Rajasekaran 2020: 2). It focuses on a range of diverse tools and techniques that have been created to interrogate current data, identify anomalies, and validate ideas (Alsmadi 2023: 365). The data analysis was divided into two sections: quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis.

4.8.1 Procedure for Analysing Quantitative Data

The researcher followed the prescribed quantitative data analysis procedures outlined by Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 271) to verify the accuracy, comprehensiveness, and appropriateness of the data for further analysis. The steps involved in the data analysis process are as follows: preparing the data by coding; keying in and editing it; gaining an understanding of the data by obtaining a visual summary of central tendencies and dispersion of variables as well as examining the relationship between variables; assessing the quality of the measures by testing their reliability and validity for consistency and accuracy; and finally, testing the hypotheses (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 273-300).

Sekaran and Bougie (2016: 273) define data coding as the process of assigning numerical values to the replies provided by participants, enabling their entry into the database. The quantitative portion of the study utilised an instrument consisting of six items to collect demographic data and 64 items to assess HPE, dysfunctional supervision processes, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skill. The demographic data responses were coded as follows: gender (sex) was coded using dummy coding (Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 273) with 0 representing male and 1 representing female; age group was coded with 1 representing 20-29, 2 representing 30-39, 3 representing 40-49, and 4 representing 50 and above; highest academic qualification was coded with 1 representing G.C.E 'A' level, 2 representing SSCE/WASSCE, 3 representing HND, 4 representing degree, 5 representing Masters, and 6 representing Other. Furthermore, the category of staff was coded with 1

representing junior staff, 2 representing senior staff, and 3 representing management member; department/section/unit was coded with 1 representing finance, 2 representing asset control, 3 representing microfinance, 4 representing credit, 5 representing customer service, 6 representing direct sales, 7 representing operations and 8 representing cashier; and tenure was coded with 1 representing 0 to 5 years, 2 representing 6 to 10 years, 3 representing 11 to 15 years, 4 representing 16 to 20 years and 5 representing 21 and above.

Each of the 64 items used to assess the components being studied was assigned a distinct code. The HPEs were assigned codes HPE1 to HPE10, while the supervision processes were coded SP1 to SP15. The employee silence items were coded ES1 to ES5, and the employee alienation items were coded EA1 to EA8, while promotion practices items were coded PP1 to PP8 and the political skill items were coded PS1 to PS17. The respondents' answers, which were obtained using a 5-point Likert scale, were assigned numerical codes. As an illustration, participants' answers to the questions assessing supervision processes varied from "*I cannot remember him/her ever using this behaviour with me,*" which was coded as 1 to "*He/she uses this behaviour very often with me,*" which was coded as 5. Another illustration is the variation in replies for questions used to assess employee silence, ranging from the lowest response of "*Never*" coded as 1 to the highest response of "*Always*" coded as 5. Items that were not answered by participants, either intentionally or unintentionally, were classified as 99.

Following the initial data preparation, the quantitative data were processed and analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) (Version 28) and Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) Version 4, which is widely recognised as the optimum statistical programme for performing quantitative analysis (Karakaya-Ozyer and Yildiz 2022: 10). The demographic data, consisting mostly of categorical variables, were analysed using SPSS, while PLS-SEM was employed to examine the major variables being investigated.

PLS-SEM has emerged as a widely used method for examining intricate connections between observable and latent variables in social science research (Sarstedt *et al.* 2020: 2). PLS-SEM, also known as the path model, is a diagram designed to visually represent

hypotheses and relationships between variables. It is used to analyse these hypotheses and associations using the SEM approach (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 4). Therefore, this approach is intended to offer causal explanations and allows researchers to estimate intricate statistical models with numerous constructs, indicator variables, and structural paths without imposing assumptions about the distribution of the data (Hair *et al.* 2019: 3). The literature highlights several benefits for academics utilising this statistical technique in their data analysis. One advantage of PLS-SEM is its insensitivity to sample size, allowing it to handle both small and large samples. Additionally, it helps researchers to attain solutions for models that include several structures and a large number of elements (Hair *et al.* 2019: 5). Furthermore, researchers possess the capability to forecast unobserved factors, also known as latent variables by using the input values of observable variables (Cepeda-Carrion, Cegarra-Navarro and Cillo 2019: 68; Hair *et al.* 2019: 6).

Memon *et al.* (2021: 1) opine that the widespread use of PLS-SEM may be attributed in part to its user-friendly graphical interface. This interface allows researchers to construct a PLS route model and perform estimations using their data in a visually intuitive manner. Therefore, researchers have the capability to evaluate the connections between observable and underlying variables in a complicated model that incorporates mediation, moderation, moderation mediation, and non-linear correlations, while also conducting numerous robustness checks. SmartPLS offers the benefit of presenting results in neatly arranged tables and visuals as well as the option to export these results or reports to Excel for future use or sharing (Memon *et al.* 2021: 5).

Researchers from various fields, such as business, social science, human resource management, marketing, tourism, hospitality, family business, accounting and finance, education, supply chain, entrepreneurship, information systems, nursing, and software engineering have utilised PLS-SEM due to its numerous advantages (Memon *et al.* 2021: 1-2). PLS-SEM was chosen for this study due to the involvement of six constructs: dysfunctional supervision processes; HPE; perceived promotion practices; supervisor's political skill; employee alienation; and employee silence. These constructs have multiple indicators and form a complex relationship with structural paths. The researcher's ability

to offer causal explanations and forecasts has contributed to academic research and managerial practice (Hair *et al.* 2019: 3).

The PLS path model consists of two components: the measurement model, also known as the outer model and the structural models, generally known as the inner model (Jony and Serradell-López 2021:8). Each of these models necessitates a thorough quality assessment to ascertain the suitability of the model in elucidating the relationships between the constructs being studied (Gotz, Liehr-Gobbers and Krafft 2010: 693).

4.8.1.1 Assessment of Measurement Model

The measuring model delineates the connections between a construct and its observed factors (Henseler 2017: 363). Before this function, the quality of the measurement model is assessed to verify the validity and reliability of the indicators and their constructs when utilised for measurement (Palit, Kristanti and Wibowo 2020: 38). Therefore, the quest for and examination of appropriate indicators represent a crucial stage in the process of operationalising a construct (Gotz, Liehr-Gobbers and Krafft 2010:693). The examination of the quality measurement model starts with the assessment of factor or indicator loadings, which is subsequently followed by an analysis of reliability and validity.

4.8.1.1.1 Indicator Reliability — Factor Loadings

Indicator reliability pertains to the extent to which the construct accounts for the variability in an item (Han and Kim 2019: 9). Therefore, while evaluating the presence of a construct or variables, researchers assess the extent to which each indicator contributes to measuring the desired construct. The assessment relies on the factor loadings of the indicators, which define the individual contribution of each indicator to its assigned construct (Han and Kim 2019: 9). The loadings' weights span from -1 to +1. A value near +1 signifies a significant effect of the variable on the construct, whereas loadings close to -1 suggest a weak influence of the indicator on the construct (Kozjek, Dolinar and Skok 2017: 5; Shaghaghian and Abedini 2013: 262). The suggested criterion is 0.70 or above, which signifies that the construct accounts for more than 50% of the indicator's variability (Hair *et al.* 2014: 103; Hair *et al.* 2021a: 117). According to Castellano *et al.* (2022: 1738) and Hair *et al.* (2021b: 77), indicators with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 should only be removed if deleting them improves the internal consistency reliability or convergent

validity beyond the recommended threshold value. However, indicator loadings below 0.40 should be eliminated from the measurement model.

4.8.1.1.2 Indicator Multicollinearity

Indicator multicollinearity refers to the degree of correlation between items (Hair *et al.* 2021: 93; Hair, Howard and Nitzl 2020: 105). According to Avelar-Sosa, García-Alcaraz, and Maldonado-Macías (2019: 170), multicollinearity is characterised by a strong association between many independent variables or indicators. Researchers ascertain the presence of multicollinearity by evaluating whether it exists (Hair *et al.* 2020: 105). For instance, the presence of multicollinearity in dysfunctional supervision processes indicates a strong connection between the questions or items used to measure those processes. Multicollinearity renders it unfeasible to evaluate the influence or correlation between a particular indicator or item and the construct it is intended to gauge. The assessment process entails calculating the variance inflation factor (VIF) for each item. This is achieved by performing a multiple regression analysis, where each indicator is regressed on all the other items within the same construct (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 20). Various thresholds have been suggested to identify collinearity issues among sets of predictor variables. While Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2021:22) and Hair *et al.* (2019: 11) have stated that a VIF value over 3 indicates a collinearity problem, Jony and Serradell-López (2021: 225) and Hair *et al.* (2019: 11) have also indicated that a VIF value above 5 indicates collinearity concerns. Subsequently, a VIF value of 3 was employed as the criterion in this study.

4.8.1.1.3 Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability refers to the extent to which the items inside a questionnaire, which assess a certain concept, are interrelated and accurately measure what they are supposed to measure (Castellano *et al.* 2022: 1738; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 77). Researchers apply internal consistency reliability to assess the degree of consistency among participants' replies to a specific set of questions that measure a construct (e.g., employee alienation) (Han and Kim 2019: 9). The researcher employed statistical techniques: Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR) to assess the internal

consistency reliability of the constructs (Hair, Howard and Nitzl 2020: 104; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 77).

i. Cronbach's Alpha

Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measure used by researchers to assess the internal consistency of a set of questions or items that measure a specific construct. It determines whether these questions or items are functioning well together and consistently produce similar results or opinions regarding that construct (Hentati *et al.* 2019: 376). Therefore, while utilising Cronbach's alpha to assess the reliability of a construct, such as employee silence, a researcher should ensure that all the items in the set of questions consistently measure employee silence. Cronbach's alpha is a statistical measure that quantifies the average intercorrelations among items. It produces a number ranging from 0 to 1, where scores closer to 0 suggest no association among the items on a certain scale, while scores closer to 1 demonstrate a high level of internal consistency (Mohajan 2017: 13). According to Mohajan (2017:13), alpha levels more than 0.70 are generally deemed acceptable and sufficient. However, when alpha values are below 0.70, they are overshadowed by the existence of the threshold values of composite reliability, which is regarded as a more appropriate measure due to criticisms of Cronbach's alpha, such as less precise measures due to the usage of unweighted items and a sensitivity to a number or items (Castellano *et al.* 2022: 1738; Hair *et al.* 2019: 13; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 77; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 17).

ii. Composite Reliability (ρ_c)

Composite reliability (ρ_c) was employed alongside Cronbach's alpha to assess the reliability of the measurement instruments. This approach entails analysing the standardised loading of each item within the constructs, as well as the errors in measurement (Kim and Bae 2020: 8; Avelar-Sosa, García-Alcaraz, and Maldonado-Macías 2019: 169). Similar to Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability measures the internal consistency of a series of questions. However, it also considers the inherent variability or the discrepancy between the anticipated and actual replies of individuals that cannot be traced to the items in the questionnaire. Therefore, it is a more accurate representation of reliability, assuming that the estimations of the parameters are precise

(Dijkstra and Henseler 2015: 300). Composite reliability is typically understood in a similar manner to Cronbach's alpha. In exploratory research, values ranging from 0.60 to 0.70 are considered acceptable, while values between 0.70 and 0.90 are deemed satisfactory for research that relies on established measures (Hair *et al.* 2014: 102; Hair *et al.* 2020: 104; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 77; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 17). Values below 0.60 indicate a low level of internal consistency reliability, while values above 0.90 (and especially >0.95) are considered undesirable.

iii. **Composite Reliability (ρ_a)**

To address the concern that composite reliability (ρ_c) may be excessively lenient and prone to overestimating real reliability scores (Hair *et al.* 2019: 12-13), Dijkstra and Henseler (2015: 300) introduced a new reliability coefficient called ρ_a (ρ_a). It is based on two principles: firstly, it assesses the weights of a construct rather than its loadings; and secondly, it is computed in a way that aims to replicate the off-diagonal elements of a latent variable's indicator correlation matrix as accurately as possible using least squares estimation (Dijkstra and Henseler 2015: 300). When evaluating the reliability of measuring instruments, Cronbach's alpha is used as the minimum estimate, composite reliability (ρ_c) is used as the maximum estimate, and ρ_a is typically considered a reasonable compromise between the two. Therefore, for this study, ρ_a was also chosen as a suitable measure (Hair *et al.* 2019: 13; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). According to Ghasemy *et al.* (2020: 14), ρ_a values ranging from 0.70 to 0.95 are deemed adequate. However, existing studies have suggested that even lower figures of alpha estimates could be accepted (Castellano *et al.* 2022: 1738; Punzo *et al.* 2019: 316; Spiliotopoulou, 2009: 152).

4.8.1.1.4 Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is confirmed when there is a positive correlation between scores derived from many scales or numerous indicators that are employed to assess the same concept (Ab Hamid, Sami and Sidek 2017: 2; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 517; Sekaran and Bougie 2016: 222). Put simply, construct convergence refers to the extent to which a construct effectively explains the variability of its indicators (Hair *et al.* 2021b:

78; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). Establishing convergent validity for a construct, such as supervision processes, entails demonstrating a correlation between the scores obtained from the indicators employed to measure the construct. When evaluating convergent validity, researchers utilise the average variance extract (AVE), which represents the mean value of the squared loadings of all indicators linked to a certain concept (Hair *et al.* 2021b: 78; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). The minimum acceptable criterion for AVE is 0.50 or above, indicating that a construct, such as supervision processes, explains 50% or more of the variation in the indicators or items that constitute the construct (Hair *et al.* 2021b: 78; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18).

4.8.1.1.5 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity refers to the degree to which a concept is genuinely separate from other concepts in terms of its correlation with them and the distinctiveness of its indicators as determined by empirical criteria (Hair *et al.* 2014: 104; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). Establishing discriminant validity involves demonstrating that a concept, such as HPEs, is distinct and encompasses phenomena that are not accounted for by other constructs, such as dysfunctional supervision processes in the model (Hair *et al.* 2014: 104). There are three methods often used in literature to evaluate discriminant validity: the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT), the Fornell and Larcker criteria, and cross-loadings. These methods have been discussed by several authors, including Ghasemy *et al.* (2020:14), Hair *et al.* (2014: 104-105), Hair *et al.* (2021b: 78-79), and Hair, Howard and Nitzl (2020: 104).

i. Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

The HTMT criterion is calculated by taking the average of the correlations between indicators across diverse constructs and comparing it to the average correlations across indicators measuring the same construct (Hair *et al.* 2021b: 79; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). Discriminant validity issues arise when the values of HTMT are elevated. The threshold values recommended by Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2015: 122) are 0.85 to 0.90. A value below 0.85 indicates that the constructs are conceptually more distinct, while a value above 0.90 indicates that the constructs are conceptually very similar (Ghasemy *et al.* 2020: 13; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 79). When the HTMT value exceeds

0.90, it indicates the absence of discriminant validity (Hair *et al.*, 2021b: 79). Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2021: 19) suggests using a bootstrapping procedure to calculate HTMT and recommend that HTMT should be significantly lower than a specific threshold, such as 0.90 or 0.85 (Franke and Sarstedt 2019; Ghasemy *et al.* 2020: 13; Hair *et al.* 2019: 9; Hair *et al.* 2021b: 79, 94; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 19).

ii. The Fornell and Larcker criteria

The Fornell and Larcker criteria proposes that the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct should be compared to the squared inter-construct correlation, which measures the extent of shared variance, between that construct and all other constructs evaluated reflectively in the structural model (Hair *et al.* 2019: 9). Discriminant validity between two constructs, such as dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs, is confirmed when the square root of the AVE of supervision processes is higher than the shared variance (SV) between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs (Franke and Sarstedt 2019: 431; Hair *et al.* 2019: 9). Research indicates that the suggested threshold for the AVE is 0.50 as stated by Hair *et al.* (2014: 107). If the AVE is below 0.50, it indicates that the amount of variance attributed to measurement error is greater than the variance accounted for by the construct. This raises doubts about the validity of both the indicators and the concept itself (Fornell and Larcker 1981: 46). Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt (2015: 120) argue that the Fornell and Larcker criteria are not effective in identifying difficulties with discriminant validity when the indicator loadings on a concept are just slightly different. Therefore, they advocate using the HTMT as a better alternative.

iii. Cross-loadings

Cross-loading, also known as item-level discriminant validity, refers to the situation wherein each measuring item has a poor correlation with all other constructs except for the one with which it is theoretically related (Gefen and Straub 2005: 92; Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2015: 118). The determination is made by examining the correlations between the scores of a certain concept and the scores of the items from unrelated concepts. This indicates the extent to which an item related to the concept also associates with other unrelated variables (Avelar-Sosa *et al.* 2019: 170). This thesis posits that a construct, specifically dysfunctional supervision processes, should have a higher degree

of association with its related items, which are a series of queries compared to any other items from diverse model constructs, such as employee silence (Avelar-Sosa *et al.* 2019: 170). Put simply, each indicator loading should be higher than all of its cross-loadings. If there are cross-loadings that are bigger than the indicators' outer loadings, it indicates an issue with discriminant validity (Hair *et al.* 2014: 105; Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2015: 118). The cross-loading criterion is commonly seen as lenient, similar to the Fornell and Larcker criterion. However, it is deemed to lack adequate sensitivity in identifying issues with discriminant validity (Hair *et al.* 2014: 105; Henseler, Ringle and Sarstedt 2015: 120).

4.8.1.1.6 Model Fit

Typically, structural equation modelling (SEM) is used to assess the validity of a proposed theoretical model that may have some inaccuracies or misrepresentations in real-world scenarios. It is necessary to test the model to determine if it closely matches the observed data collected during research (Shi *et al.* 2022: 1). Model fit evaluates the extent to which the theoretical model accurately represents or predicts the actual connections among the variables in the real world (Peugh and Feldon 2020: 2). In order to assess the degree of alignment between the collected data and the PLS-SEM 4 model, researchers employ various measures of goodness of fit, including the standardised root mean squared residual (SRMR), unweighted least squares discrepancy (d_ULS), geodesic discrepancy (d_G), Normed fit index (NFI) and Chi-Square (Alavi *et al.* 2020: 2209; Chen 2007: 467; Shi and Maydeu-Olivares 2020: 4; Yadama and Pandey 1995: 53).

SRMR is a statistical metric used to assess the degree of fit between a researcher's theoretical model and the actual data gathered for a study (Chen 2007: 467; Shi and Maydeu-Olivares 2020: 4). The discrepancy between the actual data and the model's projected values determines this function, with lower scores indicating a more accurate fit (Montoya and Edwards 2021: 7). While an SRMR score below 0.10 is considered acceptable, a value below 0.05 might be read as indicating a strong match (Cangur and Ercan 2015: 157). Nevertheless, Hu and Bentler (1999: 1) suggested that an SRMR criterion value of less than 0.08 indicates a decent match, and this threshold was used in this investigation.

The normed fit index (NFI) quantifies the degree of improvement in fit between a series of nested models, which are arranged in order from the most constrained model to the least constrained and fully saturated model (Yadama and Pandey 1995: 53). Researchers employing NFI measure the extent to which the suggested model provides a superior fit to the gathered data, in comparison to a null or baseline model that assumes no correlations between the variables and a tested or maintained model that is less restrictive (Smith and McMillan 2001: 8; Yadama and Pandey 1995: 54). The numbers in the range of 0 to 1 represent the degree of fit, with 0 indicating a total lack of fit and 1 indicating a perfect model fit. A value closer to 1 indicates a better overall fit of the model (Smith and McMillan 2001: 9; Yadama and Pandey 1995: 54). Although Hu and Bentler (1999: 4) suggest that an NFI value above 0.90 indicates a good fit, other studies have found values of 0.679, 0.787 and 0.80 to be acceptable for the research model (Gunarathne *et al.* 2022: 46; Hanu *et al.* 2023: 101; Lee 2010: 84; Lee, Hsing and Li 2021: 6; Rapert, Lynch and Suter 1996: 199; Zhao, Chen and Panda 2014: 949).

The chi-square statistic is commonly used as a measure of overall model fit. It evaluates the agreement between the hypothesised model and the data obtained from a collection of measurement items (Alavi *et al.* 2020: 2209; Smith and McMillan 2001: 4). Additionally, it assesses whether the covariance matrix obtained from the model accurately reflects the population covariance (Alavi *et al.* 2020: 2210; Smith and McMillan 2001: 6). A high chi-square statistic, compared to its degrees of freedom indicates that the model is not a satisfactory representation of the data, while a low chi-square suggests that the model fits the data well (Alavi *et al.* 2020: 2210; Hu and Bentler 1998: 425). A drawback of the chi-square test is its vulnerability to sample size. When dealing with small sample sizes, the chi-squared test may have limited power and fail to distinguish between poor and adequate models. Conversely, when working with larger sample sizes, even minor discrepancies between the implied and tested models can result in the rejection of adequate models (Alavi *et al.* 2020: 2210; Hu and Bentler 1998: 425; Smith and McMillan 2001: 7). Based on the recommendations of Septiarini *et al.* (2023: 237), it was determined that if two or three model criteria are met, the overall model can be considered suitable for the collected data. Therefore, the theoretical model used in this research was found to be appropriate for the field data.

4.8.1.2 Evaluation of the Structural Model

Once the measurement model assessment satisfies the necessary quality standards, the subsequent step involves evaluating the structural model (Hair *et al.* 2021a; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021). The structural model pertains to the configuration of the model that outlines the interconnections between latent constructs (Kanniyapan *et al.* 2019: 657). The structural model examines the connections between the constructs that are proposed based on theoretical and logical reasoning (Götz, Liehr-Gobbers and Krafft 2010: 701; Hair *et al.* 2014). Also, exogenous variables refer to latent variables that only predict other latent variables, whereas endogenous variables are latent variables that serve as dependent variables in at least one causal connection (Götz, Liehr-Gobbers and Krafft 2010: 701). The structural model assessment utilised the stages outlined in Table 4.3 as proposed by Hair *et al.* (2020: 106) and substantiated by relevant literature sources (Ghasemy *et al.* 2020: 1136; Hair *et al.* 2021a: 116; Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 226; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 16).

Table 4.3 Steps in Structural Model Assessment

-
1. Evaluate structural model collinearity
 2. Examine the size and significance of the path coefficients
 3. R² of Endogenous Variables (in-sample prediction)
 4. f² Effect Size (in-sample prediction)
 5. Predictive Relevance Q² (primarily in-sample prediction)
-

Adopted from Hair *et al.* (2020: 106).

4.8.1.2.1 Structural Model Collinearity

When conducting studies with several independent or predictor variables (e.g., dysfunctional supervision processes, HPEs and promotion practices), researchers are interested in understanding the specific effects of each predictor variable on the dependent variables. However, it is important to consider the potential influence of

collinearity on these effects. Collinearity, often referred to as multicollinearity, is the state in which two or more predictor variables exhibit a high degree of correlation with each other (Abdulhafedh 2022: 1; Dar and Chand 2023: 1). According to Abdulhafedh (2022:1), collinearity leads to a high sensitivity of the independent or predictor variables to even minor changes in the model. Consequently, the influence of the predictor variables becomes unclear, leading to a decrease in the accuracy of the estimated coefficients. This ultimately diminishes the statistical strength of the regression model and distorts the regression outcome (Dar and Chand 2023: 1; Hair *et al.* 2021a: 116).

Variance inflation factor (VIF) values can be utilised as a method to evaluate and manage collinearity. Zaki *et al.* (2023:5) define VIF as a statistical metric employed to evaluate the presence of multicollinearity among predictor variables and quantify the extent to which multicollinearity inflates the variance in predicted regression coefficients. The approach is analogous to evaluating the VIF values of indicators or manifest variables on formative constructs as specified in Section 4.8.1.1.2. In the case of collinearity in a structural model, the VIF values are calculated using the scores of independent or predictive latent variables, namely, the inner VIF values (Hair *et al.* 2019: 11; Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 226; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 22). Based on the data provided in Section 4.8.1.1.2, a VIF value of 3 was chosen as the criterion for this study.

4.8.1.2.2 Significance of Path Coefficients

Once the possibility of collinearity problems among the constructs was examined, the subsequent step involved evaluating the significance and importance of the links within the structural model using path coefficients. Additionally, the explanatory and predictive capabilities of the model were assessed (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 22). The path coefficient represents the level of correlation between two variables, which is derived from the execution of the partial least squares structural equation model (PLS-SEM) algorithm (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 226; Liu, Yi and Wang 2020: 6). In order to establish the ultimate statistical significance of the path coefficients in a structural model, it is insufficient for a researcher to simply state that they are statistically significant. Instead, it is necessary to employ bootstrapping to calculate the empirical 't' values and 'p' values for all path coefficients as demonstrated by Jony and Serradell-López (2021: 12).

Bootstrapping involves repeatedly sampling with replacement from the original sample, where the parameter of interest is estimated for each bootstrap sample. The empirical distribution of these parameter estimates is then utilised for statistical inference (Corrêa Maydeu-Olivares and Shi 2022: 733; Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 12).

Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2021: 22) state that bootstrapping produces standard errors that are used to calculate t values and p values for path coefficients. If the observed t -value exceeds the critical value, it signifies that the path coefficient is statistically significant at a specific level of error probability (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 12). The standard critical values of t for a two-tailed test, which are used to assess the significance of path coefficients, are as follows: 1.65 at a 10% significance level; 1.96 at a 5% significance level; and 2.57 at a 1% significance level (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 12; Hair *et al.* 2022: 192). Given that this study is two-tailed, a critical value of 1.96 at a 5% significance level was utilised to assess the significance of path coefficients. An alternative method for evaluating significance levels involves the use of the p -value. The p -value represents the likelihood of mistakenly rejecting a valid null hypothesis, namely, by incorrectly assuming a significant path coefficient when it is really not significant (Hair *et al.* 2022: 192). The suggested criterion for the p -value at a significance level of 5% is 0.05 or below (Hair *et al.* 2022: 192).

Upon analysing the notable connections, it is crucial to evaluate the significance of these relationships in order to interpret and draw conclusions from the results. This is because the path coefficients in the structural model may be statistically significant; however, their magnitude could be quite small (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 12; Hair *et al.* 2022: 193). Path coefficients, in terms of relevance, are standardised values that typically range from -1 to +1. Path coefficients close to +1 indicate strong positive relationships, while those close to -1 indicate strong negative relationships. Path coefficients close to 0 suggest weak relationships, and very low values approaching 0 indicate no relationship at all (Hair *et al.* 2022: 192; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 23). A path coefficient of 0.5 indicates that a one standard deviation rise in the independent construct will result in a 0.5 standard deviation increase in the dependent construct, while holding all other independent constructs constant (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 23). An alternative

approach to assessing the significance of structural model findings involves analysing the total effects. These effects encompass both the direct impact and all the indirect impacts between two constructs in the path model. By doing so, a more comprehensive understanding of the relationships within the structural model is obtained (Jony and Serradell-López 2021: 13; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 23).

4.8.1.2.3 The Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

The coefficient of determination, often known as R^2 , quantifies the proportion of variation that is accounted for by the endogenous components (Hair *et al.* 2021: 118). Ou *et al.* (2022: 3205) and Hair *et al.* (2020: 387) provide a precise definition of R^2 as the proportion of the dependent variable's (e.g., employee alienation) fluctuation that can be accounted for by the independent variable (e.g., negative supervision process) through the regression relationship. R^2 is computed as the square of the correlation coefficient between the observed and predicted values of a particular endogenous construct. It quantifies the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct that is accounted for by all the exogenous constructs that are directly or indirectly associated with it (Ghasemy *et al.* 2020: 1137; Hair *et al.* 2020: 387). R^2 values span from 0 to 1, with greater values denoting a greater extent of explanatory capability (Hair *et al.* 2021a: 118; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 23). According to Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2021: 23), R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50 and 0.25 are categorised as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Acceptable R^2 values vary depending on the context, and in certain fields, a value as low as 0.10 is seen as adequate, whilst a value of 0.90 may be regarded as indicative of overfitting (Hair *et al.* 2019: 1; Hair *et al.* 2021a: 118). The focus of this study was on the explained variance of the endogenous variables: HPE, employee alienation and employee silence.

4.8.1.2.4 The f^2 Effect Size

Aside from assessing the R^2 values of all dependent constructs, one can also determine the impact of excluding a specific independent construct from the model by examining the change in the R^2 value. This approach allows for an evaluation of whether the omitted construct significantly affects the endogenous construct (Hair *et al.* 2014: 177; Sarstedt,

Ringle and Hair 2021: 24). The f^2 effect size, as defined by Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair (2021: 24), Hair *et al.* (2020: 465) and Hair *et al.* (2014: 177), quantifies the extent to which the independent factors explain the observed phenomenon. As such, the f^2 effect size is employed to determine the independent variable that contributes the most to the variance in a dependent variable (R^2). It quantifies the relative influence of each independent variable in predicting the dependent variable (Hair *et al.* 2020: 465).

By employing the f^2 effect size to assess the change in R^2 , the PLS path model is estimated twice by removing each independent variable, in turn, and by monitoring the change in R^2 (Hair *et al.* 2014: 177; Hair *et al.* 2020: 465). First, the model is estimated with all exogenous latent variables included and, secondly, with all the specified exogenous latent variables omitted (Hair *et al.* 2014: 177; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 24). The standards for measuring f^2 effect size values are 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35, respectively, reflecting small, medium, and large impacts of the exogenous latent variable, while effect size values of less than 0.02 imply that there is no effect (Hair *et al.* 2014: 177-178; Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 24).

4.8.1.2.5 Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

In addition to examining the size of the R^2 values as a criterion of predictive accuracy, Q^2 values were also investigated (Hair *et al.* 2014: 178). The Q^2 measure is an indicator of the model's predictive relevance and is a means of assessing the predictive accuracy of a model based on the blindfolding procedure that removes single points in the data matrix, imputes the removed points with the mean, and estimates the model parameters (Hair *et al.* 2014: 178; Hair *et al.* 2019: 12). The omitted data points are deemed missing values, and the resultant estimations are then used to forecast the omitted data points, with the difference between the real (that is, omitted) data points and the projected ones utilised as input for the Q^2 measure (Hair *et al.* 2014: 178). Small variations between the predicted and the original values lead into a higher Q^2 values that suggest a greater prediction accuracy (Hair *et al.* 2019: 12). The rule is that Q^2 values should be bigger than zero for a certain endogenous construct to reflect the route model's predictive significance for the particular construct (Ghasemy *et al.* 2020: 1137; Hair *et al.* 2014: 178; Hair *et al.* 2019: 12). However, the rule of thumb is that Q^2 values which are higher than 0.00, 0.25 and

0.50 reflect a small, medium, and large predictive importance of the model (Hair *et al.* 2019: 12).

4.8.2 Procedure for Analysing Qualitative Data

Qualitative data analysis represents a process that evaluates data by first organising and then dividing these into adaptable parts, coding, synthesizing, and looking for emergent patterns (Akinyemi, Rembe and Nkonki 2020: 5). Diverse methodologies used to examine qualitative data are grounded theory, content analysis, theme analysis, narrative analysis, discourse analysis, and visual analysis (Lindgren, Lundman and Graneheim 2020: 1-2; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 651-689). In this study, qualitative content analysis was performed to examine the qualitative data.

4.8.2.1 Content Analysis

Qualitative content analysis refers to the utilisation of a systematic method of coding to describe and understand a vast quantity of textual material to yield categories, topics, and patterns (Assarroudi *et al.* 2018: 2; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz 2017: 94). It is used by academics to examine written, oral, or visual communication messages that attempt to categorise numerous words in a text into much smaller content categories (Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 107-109). According to Erlingsson and Brysiewicz (2017: 94), researchers who use content analysis embark on the following activities: condensation, which is a process of shortening the text but preserving the core meaning; coding, which involves using one or two words to describe a particular condensed meaning unit; categorisation, which is formed by grouping together those codes that are related to each other through their content and context; and theme, which is the expressing of an underlying meaning found in two or more categories. A theme is sometimes defined as a unifying 'red thread' flowing across numerous categories that lends significance to the phenomena under investigation and its varied forms (Lindgren, Lundman and Graneheim 2020: 2). Qualitative content analysis is applicable to a range of data derived from various forms of interviews, observational procedures, publications submitted to literature reviews, diaries, websites, and medical records (Lindgren, Lundman and Graneheim 2020: 2).

There are several advantages linked with qualitative content analysis in the literature. Among these advantages are the following: it allows researchers to test theoretical issues to enhance an understanding of the data; it offers the opportunity to systematically distil and transform a large amount of text into fewer content-related categories and then into a highly organised and concise summary of key results; it offers opportunities to analyse manifest and descriptive content, resulting in categories, as well as latent and interpretative content, resulting in themes (Assarroudi *et al.* 2018: 2; Elo *et al.* 2014: 1; Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 108; Erlingsson and Brysiewicz 2017: 94; Lindgren, Lundman and Graneheim 2020: 2). Another rationale for qualitative content analysis, as a research approach, is for drawing reproducible and valid inferences from data to their context, with the objective of offering information, new insights, a representation of facts, and a practical guide to action (Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 108). Based on these benefits, the researcher used qualitative content analysis for the qualitative element of the research.

Researchers who adopt qualitative content analysis are provided with two basic techniques — an inductive or a deductive approach. An inductive content analysis is employed when the codes used to label the data arise or emerge or are produced or discovered by the researcher inside the data itself or during the process of coding, depending on the actual content of the data set (Vears and Gillam 2022: 113). This technique befits a scenario where knowledge about the phenomena is insufficient or fragmented and the purpose of the study is to build theories, schematic models, and conceptual frameworks (Assarroudi *et al.* 2018: 2; Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 109). When an inductive method to qualitative content analysis is used, the technique proceeds from the specific to the general such that distinct examples are noticed and then merged into a broader whole or general statement (Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 109). In contrast to the inductive technique, the deductive approach to qualitative content analysis entails applying prepared codes that were generated from prior research, the conceptual framework or the model before the collection or without reference to the present data (Vears and Gillam 2022: 113). Unlike the inductive technique, the deductive approach progresses from the general to the specific (Elo and Kyngäs 2008: 109).

Both the inductive and deductive content analysis techniques require three primary phases: preparation, organisation, and reporting of results (Elo *et al.* 2014: 1). Elo *et al.* (2014: 2) proffer that the preparatory phase comprises gathering acceptable data for content analysis, making meaning of the data, and determining the unit of analysis. In the inductive method, the organising phase comprises open coding, and forming categories and abstraction; in contrast, in the reporting phase, outcomes are defined by the content of the categories defining the phenomena using a selected technique (Elo *et al.* 2014: 2). The inductive technique was selected since the researcher had to work with the content of vast data acquired from interviews and define the codes, categories, themes, concepts, and patterns using emergent context before discovering the linkages (Alam 2021: 13). This analytical tool was utilised because it was deemed an appropriate tool for the researcher's selection of techniques for qualitative data collection, such as open-ended surveys, interviews, and focus groups (Hsieh and Shannon 2005: 1278).

The steps listed by Elo and Kyngäs (2008: 109) for qualitative content analysis were used: first was the open coding, where notes and headings were written to the text as it was read; second, a coding sheet was created on which the researcher compiled as many headings as necessary (these were written in the margin of the text); third, categories were created from the coding sheet by deciding which items should be placed in the same category; fourthly, the lists of categories were grouped in a higher order of headings so that the number of categories could be reduced by combining similar or different categories; and fifth, there was an abstraction that involved the creation of an overview of the research topic by creating categories. Each category was named using content-characteristic words, and subcategories with comparable situations and occurrences were categorised and allocated to major categories.

4.8.2 Quality Criteria for Qualitative Findings

Several scholars have attempted to employ validity and reliability criteria to evaluate the quality of qualitative research. Nevertheless, this approach has faced significant criticism. In order to address this void, the concept of trustworthiness was suggested as a standard for evaluating the excellence of qualitative data (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 48). Trustworthiness in qualitative research pertains to the methodical rigour of the study

design, the credibility of the researcher, the plausibility of the findings, and the application of the research methods (Rose and Johnson 2020: 3). The five dimensions of trustworthiness are credibility, transferability, dependability, authenticity, and reflexivity criteria (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 13, 217).

Credibility

Credibility, in relation to internal validity, pertains to the degree of believability of the findings (Bell, Bryman and Harley 2022: 48). According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 217), credibility guarantees that the depictions of the participants' socially-constructed realities accurately align with their intended meanings. In order to do this, the researcher implemented the recommendations provided by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2029: 217) and conducted a preliminary assessment of the interview guide by engaging a cohort of employees in various organisations outside the study area to deliberate on the subjects outlined in the interview guide. This facilitated the researcher to comprehend the nature of replies generated by the questions and determine if these responses were pertinent to the study objectives (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo 2020: 43).

Transferability

Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022: 48) define transferability as the extent to which the study findings may be applied to diverse contexts that are analogous to external validity. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 217) argue that the researcher can do this by offering a comprehensive account of the research questions, design, context, findings, and interpretations. This allows for the evaluation of the study's applicability to a dissimilar situation. The researcher implemented this recommendation by presenting an elaborate account of the study's setting, research inquiries, research methodology, findings, and interpretations throughout several chapters of the study.

Dependability

According to Bell, Bryman and Harley (2022: 48), dependability refers to the capacity to generalise study findings across various time periods. According to Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo (2020: 44), dependability refers to the consistency throughout the research process, including the initial research point, data collection, and analysis. This ensures

that another researcher may easily understand and replicate the decision-making process followed by the original researcher. In order to ensure dependability, the researcher implemented recommendations from Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo (2020:44) by including tables, figures, and appendices that elucidate the process of classification in the final report. Another recommendation implemented in this study is peer scrutiny, wherein a fellow researcher studied the data and evaluated how their conclusions match the original findings.

Authenticity

The fourth criterion evaluated for trustworthiness is authenticity. This criterion assesses the degree to which researchers accurately and impartially provide a wide variety of realities. This is achieved by using diverse citations that clearly establish the link between the findings and the data (Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo 2020:46). In this study, Kyngäs, Kääriäinen and Elo's (2020:46) suggestion on authenticity was applied by including citations from diverse participants for each identified category that was established.

Reflexivity

Reflexivity constitutes an additional criterion that qualitative researchers employ to guarantee rigour and excellence in their work. According to Olmos-Vega *et al.* (2023: 242), reflexivity is a collection of ongoing, cooperative, and complex actions in which researchers intentionally analyse, assess, and judge how their personal perspectives and circumstances impact the research procedures. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019: 13) succinctly define reflexivity as the researcher's continuous awareness of their position in the research. This criterion serves as a means to detect the researcher's involvement in the study process (Mitchell *et al.* 2018: 2). Reflexivity is employed to recognise the researcher's influence on both the procedures and the results of the investigation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2019: 13). The primary aim of reflexivity is to enhance the transparency and trustworthiness of the study report (Gentles *et al.* 2014: 3; Reid *et al.* 2018: 70). Olmos-Vega *et al.* (2023: 243) identify four distinct dimensions of reflexivity: personal reflexivity, interpersonal reflexivity, methodological reflexivity, and contextual reflexivity. The researcher employed personal reflexivity, which entails providing detailed accounts of how their background, training, prior experiences, and motives shape the

decisions made during the project. The researcher employed the technique of bracketing to mitigate the impact of his personal experience on the study process. Bracketing entails the deliberate exclusion of any personal biases or influences that the researcher may have, in order to maintain objectivity in their work (Olmos-Vega *et al.* 2023:243). The researcher also used interpersonal reflexivity, which involved analysing power dynamics in situations where the researcher often holds a position of power in relation to the participants, and determining the criteria for what is considered genuine information (Olmos-Vega *et al.*, 2023:244). By employing reflexivity, the researcher guaranteed the inclusion of all vital information for analysis.

4.9 Ethical Issues and Procedure

According to Hennink (2014: 47), ethics is defined as a set of moral norms that researchers adhere to in order to safeguard study participants from any harm that would be caused by the researchers or the research process. The researcher followed Hennink's (2014: 47) rules pertaining to research ethics, which entail informed consent, self-determination, reduction of harm, anonymity, and confidentiality. In order to gain informed consent, letters of information and consent forms for both the quantitative and qualitative elements of the study and the data collecting tools were submitted to the management of the chosen banks for subsequent distribution to the employees. These letters furnished the participants with information on the title, the purpose, and the objectives of the study, the procedure for data collection, risks or discomforts, benefits and costs of the study to the participants, and reasons participants may withdraw from the study, as well as information on how anonymity and confidentiality will be ensured (Hennink 2014: 47).

In addition, the letter informed the participants that participation is voluntary and not mandatory and that if they choose to participate in the study, they are not required to answer any questions if they do not wish to and that they are free to stop their participation or leave the discussion at any time without any adverse consequences. This allowed participants to make an informed decision about whether or not to engage in the research (Hennink 2014: 47). The researcher was invited by the management of the banks for

conversations on the contents of the letters of information and the data collection tools, after which the gatekeepers' permission letters were granted to the researcher.

The participants who were interviewed were also informed that the audio of the proceedings would be captured electronically for the researcher to review to verify any ideas that may have been lost in the manual recording of the proceedings. They were again reminded that the researcher would conduct the interview. In executing these responsibilities, the researcher managed the settings and was the only one permitted to record and disseminate the data after the various agreements were established with the participants and their permissions were granted in writing prior to the meetings.

In view of the information supplied in the Letter of Information, the participants made self-determination, which is an exercise of their right to participate or decline involvement in the study without any negative repercussions (Hennink 2014: 47). The participants who agreed to participate in the study were requested to provide written and/or oral consent. For the interview sessions, there were stringent COVID-19 protocols wherein there were 20 distinct interviews for 20 managers at various sites or settings that were large or spacious enough to provide the correct social distancing. Both the interviewer and the interviewee wore face masks.

Anonymity/Confidentiality

In order to maintain anonymity and confidentiality of the participants in the questionnaire, the data collection tools did not feature any items that indicated the identities of the participants and the organisations. Moreover, the data that the participants provided was handled in a manner that was non-attributable and kept away from any unauthorised person or organisation. In ensuring the anonymity of the participants, the researcher assured them that their information or feedback would not be revealed to any other person. Again, the participants were advised that they could withdraw from the research at any time they desired.

For the interview sessions, the researcher requested permission to make audio recordings. In addition, the researcher relied on manual recordings through written notes and, thereafter, presented the written texts to the participants for confirmation purposes.

To encourage and ensure that all the participants participate in the interview, an interview guide was sent to them to enable them to prepare. Moreover, the researcher strictly adhered to the requirements of the Data Protection Act, 2012 (Act 843) in Ghana and the Protection of Personal Information (POPI) Act (Act No. 4 of 2013) in South Africa with respect to the management of personal information of the participants.

Data storage/disposal

The raw data from the questionnaire was downloaded from Google Forms and stored in DUT OneDrive. The audio recordings of the face-to-face interviews were encrypted and stored in the DUT OneDrive. The OneDrive space was password-protected and could only be accessed by the researcher and the supervisor. The data will be stored for 5 years, after which the DUT ITSS will permanently delete it from the database.

4.10 Conclusion

In this methodological chapter, the researcher followed a pragmatic mindset to traverse the intricacy of the study. Deductive reasoning functioned as the primary guiding rationale for both the data collection and analysis, followed by inductive reasoning for the qualitative analysis. This allowed the researcher to explore unknown areas of knowledge on supervision processes, HPEs, promotion practices, employee silence, and employee alienation. Quantitative data were analysed, followed by qualitative data in an explanatory sequential mixed-methods approach. In order to establish a representative sample, cluster and purposive sampling techniques were adopted for data collection using standardised questionnaires and interview guides for quantitative and qualitative data, respectively. Regarding the data analysis, demographic information was painstakingly analysed using SPSS, while the substance of the study was unveiled using PLS-SEM Version 4 for the quantitative data and the content analysis for the qualitative data. This methodological framework provided the researcher with a complete and rigorous method to discover unique insights and contribute to the development of knowledge. In the next chapter, it will show how these methodological choices were employed to display and interpret the data acquired from the field.

CHAPTER 5

DATA PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, a comprehensive account of the data collected through the mixed-methods research design (which combines quantitative and qualitative methods to gain a complete understanding of the research phenomenon) is provided. The chapter is the focal point of the study, where data from multiple sources and perspectives were presented and analysed. Following the process of explanatory sequential mixed methods design, the quantitative data will be presented first. SPSS Version 25 was used to capture the demographic data, while descriptive statistics was used for presentation. In addition, Smart-PLS 4 was used for the assessment of the quality of the model and relationships between the constructs. In total, six objectives and ten hypotheses were derived and analysed from the structural model. The presentation of qualitative data followed that of quantitative data, with content analysis performed to categorise the data into smaller categories and themes; moreover, NVivo Version 14 was used to visualise the data. In this integrated approach, the study aimed to describe not only the patterns, trends, and relationships of the data but also the new perspectives and experiences of the participants. By combining these diverse sources of information, the aim was to provide a comprehensive and solid analysis that meets the goals of the research and facilitates an understanding of the research phenomenon in an even more versatile manner. The chapter begins with the display of the quantitative data, followed by the qualitative results.

5.2 The Response Rates

The quantitative data were collected through two wave time periods. Two hundred and five participants took part in the first wave, representing 83% of the response rate. These participants were requested to participate in the second wave, where 183 of them participated, representing 89.7% of the response rate. After matching the responses for the first and second waves, the data from 183 participants were used for the analysis. This represented a 74% response rate of the 247 sample size, which is considered

reasonable (Hendra and Hill 2019: 5). All 20 supervisors participated in the face-to-face interview, representing a 100% response rate.

5.3. The Respondents' Biographical Data

In this section, respondents' biographical data are presented, highlighting their diverse profiles based on gender, age groups, academic qualifications, employment levels, department, and length of service. Understanding the characteristics of the participants is essential for contextualising and interpreting the findings of the research. By examining these demographic variables, the study explores potential variations and patterns that may influence the perspectives and experiences of the individuals involved. The researcher analysed these demographic attributes to gain a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' demographics and consider how these factors may contribute to the interpretation of the study's findings.

Table 5.1 The respondents' biographical data

Variable	Items	Frequency (n=203)	Percentages (%)
Gender	Male	86	42.4
	Female	117	57.6
Age groups	20-29	49	24.1
	30-39	101	49.8
	40-49	43	21.2
	50 and above	10	4.9
Academic qualification	GCE Advanced level	4	2.0
	SSCE/WASSCE	23	11.3
	Diploma/HND	46	22.7
	First degree	105	51.7

	Master's degree	23	11.3
	Others	2	1.0
Level of employment	Junior	95	46.8
	Senior	95	46.8
	Management	13	6.4
Departments/union	Finance	2	1.0
	Asset control	3	1.5
	Microfinance	10	4.9
	Credit	31	15.3
	Customer service	5	2.5
	Direct sales	3	1.5
	Operations	113	55.6
	Cashier	36	17.7
Length of service	0 to 5 years	79	38.9
	6 to 10 years	69	34.0
	11 to 15 years	34	16.7
	16 to 20 years	16	7.9
	21 and above	5	2.5
Total			

Where GCE = General Certificate Examination, SSCE = Senior School Certificate Examination, and WASSCE = West Africa Senior Secondary Certificate Examination, HND = Higher National Diploma.

Source: Field data, 2023

The demographic information in Table 5.1 summarises the characteristics of the study participants (n=203). In terms of gender, the sample included 86 men (42.4%) and 117

women (57.6%). The majority of the respondents (49.8% or 101) were aged between 30 and 39 years, followed by 20 to 29 years at 24.1% or 49 of the respondents. Furthermore, 21.2% or 43 of the respondents were aged between 40 and 49 years, while 50 years old and above were at the lowest at 4.9% or 10 of the respondents. Based on academic qualifications, the majority of the respondents (105 or 51.7%) were first degree holders, followed by Higher National Diploma (HND) with 46 or 22.7% of the respondents and then Master's degree holders with 11.3% or 23 respondents. Furthermore, 11.3% or 23 of the respondents hold SSCE/WASSCE qualifications.

A greater number of the respondents (95 or 46.8%) were in junior positions and senior positions (95 or 46.8%), while 13 or 6.4% were in managerial positions. In terms of departments or sections, more than 50% of the respondents (113 or 55.6%) were in operations, followed by cashiers with 36 or 17.7%, the credit department with 31 or 15.3%, and microfinance with 10 or 4.9% of the respondents. Finally, the majority of the respondents (38.0% or 79) had a length of service of between 0 and 5 years, followed by 34.0% or 69 between 6 and 10 years, and 16.7% or 34 between 11 and 15 years.

5.4 Quantitative Data Analysis

This section presents the evaluation of the measurement and the structural models following the steps discussed in Sections 4.8.1.1 and 4.8.1.2.

5.4.1 Results of the Assessment of the Measurement Model Criteria

As indicated in Section 4.8.1.1 in Chapter 4, this section verifies the validity and reliability quality criteria of the indicators and the constructs. The section starts with verifying the indicator reliability, followed by the internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, discriminant validity and the model fit criteria.

5.4.1.1 Results of the Indicator Reliability — Factor Loadings

Indicator reliability shows how each indicator contributed to measuring the construct. As per the requirements explained in Section 4.8.1.1.1, a threshold of 0.70 was used to determine the items to be maintained. However, items with loadings below 0.40 were removed, and those between 0.40 and 0.70 were only removed to increase the internal

consistency reliability (composite reliability) or convergent validity. Table 5.2 presents the total number of items used to measure each construct, the number of items removed, and the number that was maintained for each construct.

Table 5.2 Retained Indicators

Construct	Total items	Number of items removed	Number of items maintained
High-performing employees	10	7	3
Promotion practices	8	5	3
Dysfunctional supervision processes	15	11	4
Political skill	17	12	5
Employee silence	5	2	3
Employee alienation	8	4	4

Source: Author (2023)

After deleting all the indicators with loadings below 0.40, those with loadings between 0.40 and 0.70 needed to improve the strengths of the constructs, as shown in Table 5.2. The PLS-SEM algorithm was run again to determine the reliability and validity of the constructs. Table 5.3 presents the retained indicators and their loadings.

Table 5.3 Factor Loadings for the Items

	EA	ES	HPEs	PP	PS	SP
DSP2	0.806					
DSP5	0.787					
DSP6	0.780					
DSP15	0.824					

EA4	0.676		
EA5	0.782		
EA6	0.829		
EA8	0.738		
ES3		0.747	
ES4		0.865	
ES5		0.842	
HPE2			0.879
HPE4			0.764
HPE6			0.825
PP2			0.841
PP6			0.493
PP8			0.755
PS5			0.779
PS12			0.844
PS13			0.840
PS16			0.896
PS17			0.919

Where, DSP = Dysfunctional Supervision Processes; EA = Employee Alienation; ES = Employee Silence; HPE = High-Performing Employee; PP = Promotion Practices; PS = Political Skill

Source: Field data 2023

Table 5.3 presents the outer loadings of the indicators. With the exception of EA4 and PP6 with loadings below 0.70, all the indicator loadings for the retained items for dysfunctional supervision processes, high-performing employees (HPEs), employee silence, employee alienation, and political skill were above the recommended value of 0.70. The items with loadings below 0.70 were retained because, though their outer loadings were below 0.70, they exceeded 0.40 and removing them was not going to increase internal consistency reliability or convergent validity (Hair *et al.* 2021b:77). Thus, all the retained indicators were reliable and satisfactorily measured all the constructs in the study.

5.4.1.2 Results of the Indicator Multicollinearity

Indicator multicollinearity was used to determine whether there is duplication of the questions or the indicators that measure the constructs. As explained in Section 4.8.1.1.2, a VIF value of 3.0 and below indicates an unfeasibility of multicollinearity. Table 5.4 presents the VIF values for all the retained indicators, ranging from 1.064 to 2.949, which are below the ideal threshold of 3.0. This means that multicollinearity was not a problem for the measurement items for this study.

Table 5.4 Multicollinearity Statistics (VIF) for indicators

	VIF
DSP2	1.840
DSP5	1.730
DSP6	1.586
DSP15	1.599
EA4	1.481
EA5	1.297

EA6	1.793
EA8	1.535
ES3	1.297
ES4	1.928
ES5	1.786
HPE2	1.542
HPE4	1.561
HPE6	1.660
PP2	1.186
PP6	1.064
PP8	1.197
PS5	1.874
PS12	2.739
PS13	2.949
PS16	2.928
PS17	2.832

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.1.3 Results of the Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was used to measure how the respondents are consistent in answering the set of questions that measure a particular construct. As indicated in Section 4.8.1.1.3, the statistical techniques used to test the internal consistency reliability of the constructs were Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR).

Cronbach's Alpha Results

Cronbach's alpha assesses whether the questions or indicators are closely related in producing similar results for a construct over time. Section 4.8.1.1.3 explains the alpha values used to determine internal consistency reliability, wherein values above 0.70 are generally considered acceptable and satisfactory (Mohajan 2017: 13). However, alpha values below 0.70 are accepted when certain specific assumptions, explained in Section 4.8.1.1.3, are met. Table 5.5 presents the alpha values of the constructs under study.

Composite Reliability (rho c) Results

Composite reliability (rho c) measures internal consistency reliability, taking into consideration the loadings of each indicator's inherent errors of the measuring instrument, thereby making it a more accurate and preferred choice of reliability according to Dijkstra and Henseler (2015: 300). Section 4.8.1.1.3 explains the threshold values that are used to check rho c. Table 5.5 presents the rho c values for the constructs.

Composite Reliability (rho a) Results

The new reliability coefficient ρ_A (rho a) lies between Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (rho c) and evaluates a construct's weights, not its loadings. Therefore, it is considered a good compromise between the two measures, with a range from 0.70 to 0.95 deemed adequate (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). Table 5.5 presents the ρ_A (rho a) values for the constructs under study.

Table 5.5 Construct Reliability Analysis (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability)

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
DSP	0.814	0.828	0.876
EA	0.763	0.800	0.843
ES	0.753	0.755	0.860
HPE	0.772	0.835	0.864
PP	0.516	0.591	0.746

PS	0.913	1.024	0.932
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Source: Field data, 2023

The results for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (ρ_c) and ρ_A or composite reliability (ρ_a) are presented in Table 5.5. The reliability coefficients for all the constructs were above the recommended value of 0.70, with the exception of promotion practices. Though promotion practices (PP) had a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.516, which is below the acceptable threshold, the value for composite reliabilities (ρ_c , 0.746) was above the threshold value of 0.70. Since composite reliability is the preferred alternative to Cronbach's alpha (Dijkstra and Henseler 2015: 300), the construct promotion practices were also deemed to have passed the reliability test.

5.4.1.4 Results of the Convergent Validity

Convergent validity demonstrates a connection between the scores obtained from the indicators used to measure a construct. It is used to check the validity of the items proven to be reliable. As explained in Section 4.8.1.1.4, it is assessed by the AVE across all indicators that measure a construct, and the acceptable threshold for AVE is 0.50 or higher (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 18). Table 5.6 presents the AVE values for all the constructs, ranging from 0.506 to 0.734, thus indicating good convergent validity.

Table 5.6 Construct Convergent validity (AVE)

	Average variance extracted (AVE)
DSP	0.639
EA	0.575
ES	0.672
HPE	0.679
PP	0.506

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.1.5 Results of the Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity determines how different the constructs in a study are from each other. As indicated in Section 4.8.1.1.5, the methods used to assess discriminant validity are HTMT, the Fornell and Larcker criterion, and cross-loadings.

Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) Results

The HTMT criterion determines discriminant validity by comparing the average of the correlations of indicators between different constructs to that measuring the same construct. Section 4.8.1.1.5 explains the statistical requirements, with values less than 0.85 denoting more distinct constructs and values above 0.90 denoting that constructs are very similar (Hair *et al.* 2021b:79). Table 5.7 presents the HTMT values for all the constructs, ranging from 0.115 to 0.460. It should be noted that they are all below the recommended thresholds of 0.85, meaning that all the constructs are conceptually more dissimilar.

Table 5.7 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) - Matrix

	EA	ES	HPEs	PP	PS	SP
DSP						
EA	0.310					
ES	0.752	0.280				
HPE	0.439	0.070	0.460			
PP	0.468	0.208	0.559	0.714		
PS	0.092	0.088	0.146	0.103	0.115	

Source: Field data, 2023

Fornell and Larcker's Criterion Results

The Fornell and Larcker criterion was also used to assess discriminant validity using the recommended AVE value of 0.50 and above, as explained in Section 4.8.1.1.5. Subsequently, Table 5.8 presents the Fornell and Larcker criterion for all the constructs, ranging from 0.712 to 0.857. The values indicated in bold all exceed 0.50, meaning that all the constructs were distinct.

Table 5.8 Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	EA	ES	HPEs	PP	PS	SP
DSP	0.800					
EA	-0.279	0.758				
ES	0.596	-0.231	0.820			
HPE	-0.385	0.010	-0.367	0.824		
PP	-0.324	0.168	-0.357	0.458	0.712	
PS	-0.073	-0.035	0.105	0.101	0.038	0.857

Source: Field data, 2023

Cross-loading Results

Cross-loading explains that each indicator loading should be greater than all of its cross-loadings in order to assess discriminant validity. Table 5.9 presents the values for the cross-loadings for all the constructs; moreover, as highlighted in bold, the indicator loadings for each construct were higher than their cross-loadings.

Table 5.9 Cross-loading Criterion

	DSP	EA	ES	HPE	PP	PS
DSP2	0.806	0.225	0.442	-0.210	-0.228	-0.104
DSP5	0.787	0.203	0.468	-0.197	-0.191	-0.063
DSP6	0.780	0.179	0.425	-0.363	-0.296	-0.009

DSP15	0.824	0.272	0.550	-0.417	-0.304	-0.061
EA4	0.079	0.676	-0.066	-0.045	0.074	0.017
EA5	0.284	0.782	-0.246	0.042	0.174	-0.079
EA6	0.248	0.829	-0.197	0.013	0.120	0.033
EA8	0.152	0.738	-0.117	-0.021	0.109	-0.056
ES3	0.486	-0.085	0.747	-0.274	-0.245	0.074
ES4	0.471	-0.236	0.865	-0.309	-0.331	0.103
ES5	0.506	-0.241	0.842	-0.317	-0.299	0.081
HPE2	-0.425	0.032	-0.361	0.879	0.405	0.084
HPE4	-0.229	0.009	-0.199	0.764	0.340	0.085
HPE6	-0.247	-0.026	-0.312	0.825	0.382	0.084
PP2	-0.323	0.214	-0.300	0.368	0.841	0.002
PP6	-0.067	0.009	-0.177	0.242	0.493	0.123
PP8	-0.233	0.075	-0.268	0.358	0.755	0.008
PS5	0.028	-0.020	0.145	0.067	0.013	0.779
PS12	-0.054	-0.051	0.124	0.057	0.013	0.844
PS13	-0.058	-0.104	0.137	0.035	0.032	0.840
PS16	-0.097	-0.009	0.053	0.088	0.070	0.896
PS17	-0.094	-0.022	0.063	0.127	0.028	0.919

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.1.6 Solutions to Common Method Bias

As explained in Section 4.7.3.3, both procedural and statistical methods were used to deal with the issue of common method bias (CMB). One of the procedural methods that

was used is the temporal separation of data collection into different waves or phases, as noted by Podsakoff, Mackenzie and Podsakoff (2012). The two-wave data collection process was intended to create a temporal separation of data collections for the predictor and criterion variables as a recommended solution for CMB.

Another procedural remedy applied was that the questionnaire was piloted, and the question items were improved by keeping them concise and simple to ensure that the respondents understood them. For example, the statements “*My boss gives me the silent treatment*” were changed to “*My boss ignores me*”, and “*My boss puts me down in front of others*” was changed to “*My boss disgraces me in front of others*”. The participants were also informed in the letter of information that their anonymity and confidentiality were assured and that the data collection instruments did not have any items that would reveal their identity, as well as that of their organisation. In addition, the participants were assured that the information they would provide was for academic purposes and would not be divulged to any other person.

Statistical remedies were also applied to check the existence of CMB. In line with recent studies, Harman’s single-factor test was carried out to check for any CMB in the data (Bhutto *et al.* 2021; Dhir *et al.* 2021; Jabeen *et al.* 2022; Wang *et al.* 2023). The value for the single factor that was obtained registered within the acceptable level of less than 50%, confirming that CMB was not an issue in this study. According to Kock (2017: 253), the existence of CMB can also be determined using the VIF values of the variables, where the threshold value is 3.3. As presented in Table 5.11 under Section 5.2.4.1 below, the VIFs for all the variables in the study ranged from 1.018 to 1.462, and since they were all below the 3.3 threshold, the model was considered free of CMB.

5.4.1.7 Model Fit Results

Model fit was evaluated to determine whether the theoretical model accurately represents the observed data. The tools used to determine model fit in PLS-SEM were SRMR, unweighted least squares discrepancy (d_ULS), geodesic discrepancy (d_G), the normed fit index (NFI) and Chi-square. The recommended thresholds for these tools are presented in Section 4.8.1.1.6. In this study, SRMR and NFI were used to determine the model fit. Table 5.10 presents values for the model fit. It is evident that the SRMR value

is less than 0.08, indicating a good fit between the observed data and the theoretical data. In addition, the NFI values are 0.788 and 0.746, which represent an acceptable fit for the research model. Since the two fit model criteria (SRMR and NFI) met the model fit requirements, the overall model was deemed an acceptable fit (Septiarini *et al.* 2023).

Table 5.10 Model Fit Summary

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.064	0.072
d_ULS	0.967	1.343
d_G	0.382	0.425
Chi-square	485.693	524.759
NFI	0.788	0.746

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2 Results for the Structural Model Evaluation

The evaluation of the structural model covers the results of the relationships among the constructs as hypothesised in the study. The steps enumerated in Table 4.4, under Section 4.8.1.2, were used in assessing the structural model. These steps included structural model collinearity, and the size and significance of the path coefficients and R^2 , f^2 and Q^2 values. The statistical results of these requirements are presented in the following paragraphs.

5.4.2.1 Results for Structural Model Collinearity

Structural model collinearity determines whether two or more predictor constructs are highly correlated. Collinearity among the predictor constructs affects the accuracy of the estimated coefficient. Section 4.8.1.2.1 presented the inner VIF recommended value of 3.0 as the requirement to determine the construct collinearity. Table 5.11 presents the

VIF values of the model, ranging from 1.018 to 1.462. These values all fall below 3.0, indicating that the collinearity problem was not an issue among the predictor constructs in this study.

Table 5.11 Structural Model Collinearity (Inner VIF Values)

	VIF
DSP -> EA	1.232
DSP -> ES	1.232
DSP -> HPE	1.027
HPE -> EA	1.462
HPE -> ES	1.462
PP -> EA	1.453
PP -> ES	1.453
PS -> HPE	1.018
PS x DSP -> HPE	1.032
PP x HPE -> EA	1.292
PP x HPE -> ES	1.292

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2.2 The Results of the Significance of Path Coefficients

The successful outcomes of the constructs' collinearity tests were followed with the consideration of the significance and relevance of the structural model relationships through path coefficients, as well as the model's explanatory and predictive power (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 22). Through bootstrapping, the empirical *t*-values and *p*-values for all path coefficients of the structural model were computed to prove the

ultimate statistical significance, taking into consideration the recommended threshold values of 1.96 for t and 0.05 for p as presented under Section 4.8.1.2.2.

The 10 hypotheses were tested to assess their significance, relevance, and predictive capabilities. These hypotheses were designated into three categories: direct relationships, mediating relationships, and moderating relationships. The test results of the hypotheses are provided in the following paragraphs.

5.4.2.2.1 The Relationship Between the Dysfunctional Supervision Process and High-performing employees

The first hypothesis examined the direct effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs. This hypothesis was stated in an alternative and null form, and is as follows:

H1a: There is a negative relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

H1o: There is no negative relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

The statistical results are presented in Table 5.12. H1 evaluated whether the dysfunctional supervision processes negatively and significantly influence HPEs. The results, as depicted in Table 5.12, confirmed H1_a ($\beta = -0.384$, $t = 7.079$, $p = 0.001$). The negative beta value indicates that a 1% rise in dysfunctional supervision behaviours leads to a 38.4% reduction in HPEs.

5.4.2.2.2 The Relationship Between the Dysfunctional Supervision Process and Employees' Silence and Alienation

The second and third hypotheses (H2 and H3) sought to examine the direct effects of the dysfunctional supervision processes on employee reactions (employee silence and employee alienation). H2 examined the relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence, while H3 examined the relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation. These hypotheses were also stated in an alternative and null form and are as follows:

H2_a: There is a positive relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H2_o: There is no positive relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H3_a: There is a positive relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H3_o: There is no positive relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

The results, as presented in Table 5.12, confirm H2_a that the dysfunctional supervision processes positively and significantly influence employee silence ($\beta = 0.492$, $t = 7.480$, $p = 0.001$). The third direct relationship of interest in this study was positive and indicated a significant impact with regard to the dysfunctional supervision processes on employee alienation. The results, in Table 5.12, again support this relationship ($\beta = 0.296$, $t = 3.917$, $p = 0.001$); hence, H3_a was confirmed. The positive beta values indicate that a 1% increase in dysfunctional supervision processes leads to a 49.2% increase in employee silence and a 29.6% increase in employee alienation.

Table 5.12 Summary of Model Path for H1 to H3

Direct effects	B	M	STDEV	T	P	Decision
DSP -> HPE	-0.384	-0.388	0.054	7.079	0.001	H1 _a = Supported H1 _o = Not supported
DSP -> ES	0.492	0.495	0.066	7.480	0.001	H2 _a = Supported H2 _o = Not supported
DSP -> EA	0.296	0.307	0.076	3.917	0.001	H3 _a = Supported H3 _o = Not supported

NB: β = Beta; M = Sample Mean; STDEV = Standard Deviation; T = T-Statistics; P = P Values; HPE = High-performing Employee; DSP = Dysfunctional Supervision Processes.
Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2.2.3 The Mediating Role of the HPEs

The mediating role of the HPEs was assessed through two hypotheses (H4 and H5). H4 examined the mediating role of the HPEs on the connection between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence. Furthermore, H5 also assessed the mediating role of the HPEs on the connection between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation. These hypotheses were stated in an alternative and null form, and are as follows:

H4_a: HPEs mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H4_o: HPEs do not mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence.

H5_a: HPEs mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

H5_o: HPEs do not mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation.

The results for these hypotheses are presented in Table 5.13

Table 5.13 Mediation Analysis H4 and H5

<i>Indirect effect</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>STDEV</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>P</i>	<i>Decision</i>
DSP -> HPE -> ES	0.054	0.054	0.028	2.009	0.045	H4 _a = Supported H4 _o = Not Supported
DSP -> HPE -> EA	0.066	0.069	0.033	1.979	0.048	H5 _a = Supported

H5 _o = Not supported					
Total effect					
DSP -> ES	0.547	0.549	0.060	9.119	0.001
DSP -> EA	0.230	0.238	0.083	2.765	0.006
Direct effect					
DSP -> ES	0.492	0.495	0.066	7.480	0.001
DSP -> EA	0.296	0.307	0.076	3.917	0.001

NB: β = Original Sample; M = Sample Mean; STDEV = Standard Deviation; T = T-Statistics; P = P Values; HPEs = High-performing Employee; DSP = Dysfunctional Supervision Processes; ES = Employee Silence; EA = Employee Alienation

Source: Field data, 2023

The results in Table 5.13 revealed that the total effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence was significant ($\beta = 0.547$, $t = 9.119$, $p = 0.001$). With the inclusion of HPEs as a mediating variable, the direct impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence was still significant ($\beta = 0.492$, $t = 7.480$, $p = 0.001$). However, the indirect effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence through the HPEs processes was also significant ($\beta = 0.054$, $t = 2.009$, $p = 0.045$). This indicates that HPEs partially mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence; hence, H4_a was supported. The results revealed yet again that the total effect of dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation was significant ($\beta = 0.230$, $t = 2.765$, $p = 0.006$). With the inclusion of HPEs as a mediating variable, the direct impact of dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation was still significant ($\beta = 0.296$, $t = 3.917$, $p = 0.001$). Furthermore, the indirect effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee alienation through HPEs was also significant ($\beta = 0.066$, $t = 1.979$, $p = 0.048$). This implies that HPEs partially mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee alienation; therefore, H5_a was supported.

5.4.2.2.4 Moderating Role of Promotion Practices

The moderating role of promotion practices on the relationship between HPEs and employee outcomes was examined through H6 and H7. These hypotheses were also stated in the alternative and null forms and are as follows:

H6_a: Promotion practices moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee silence.

H6_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee silence.

H7_a: Promotion practices moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation.

H7_o: Promotion practices do not moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation.

The results presented in Table 5.14 revealed the significant impact of promotion practices on the relationship between HPEs and employee silence ($\beta = -0.094$, $t = 2.132$, $p = 0.033$). This means that promotion practices have an impact on the relationship between HPEs and employee silence; thus, H6_a was supported. However, promotion practices did not have an effect on the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation ($\beta = -0.006$, $t = 0.093$, $p = 0.926$); therefore, H7_a was not confirmed.

Table 5.14 Moderating Effects of Promotion Practices H6 and H7

Moderating effects	B	M	STDEV	T	P	Decision
PP x HPE -> ES	-0.094	-0.090	0.044	2.132	0.033	H6 _a = Supported H6 _o = Not supported
PP x HPE -> EA	-0.006	-0.006	0.059	0.093	0.926	H7 _a = Not supported H7 _o = Supported

NB: β = Original Sample; M = Sample Mean; STDEV = Standard Deviation; T = T-Statistics; P = P Values; HPEs = High-performing Employee; SP = Dysfunctional Supervision Processes; PP = Promotion Practices.

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2.2.5 Moderating Role of Political Skill

The supervisor’s political skill as a buffer on the impact of the dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs was evaluated through H8. Stated in an alternative and null form, the hypothesis was as follows:

H8_a: Supervisor’s political skill moderates the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

H8_o: Supervisor’s political skill does not moderate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

The results, presented in Table 5.15 below, revealed an insignificant moderating effect of the supervisor’s political skill on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs ($\beta = 0.034$, $t = 0.519$, $p = 0.604$), thereby rejecting H8_a.

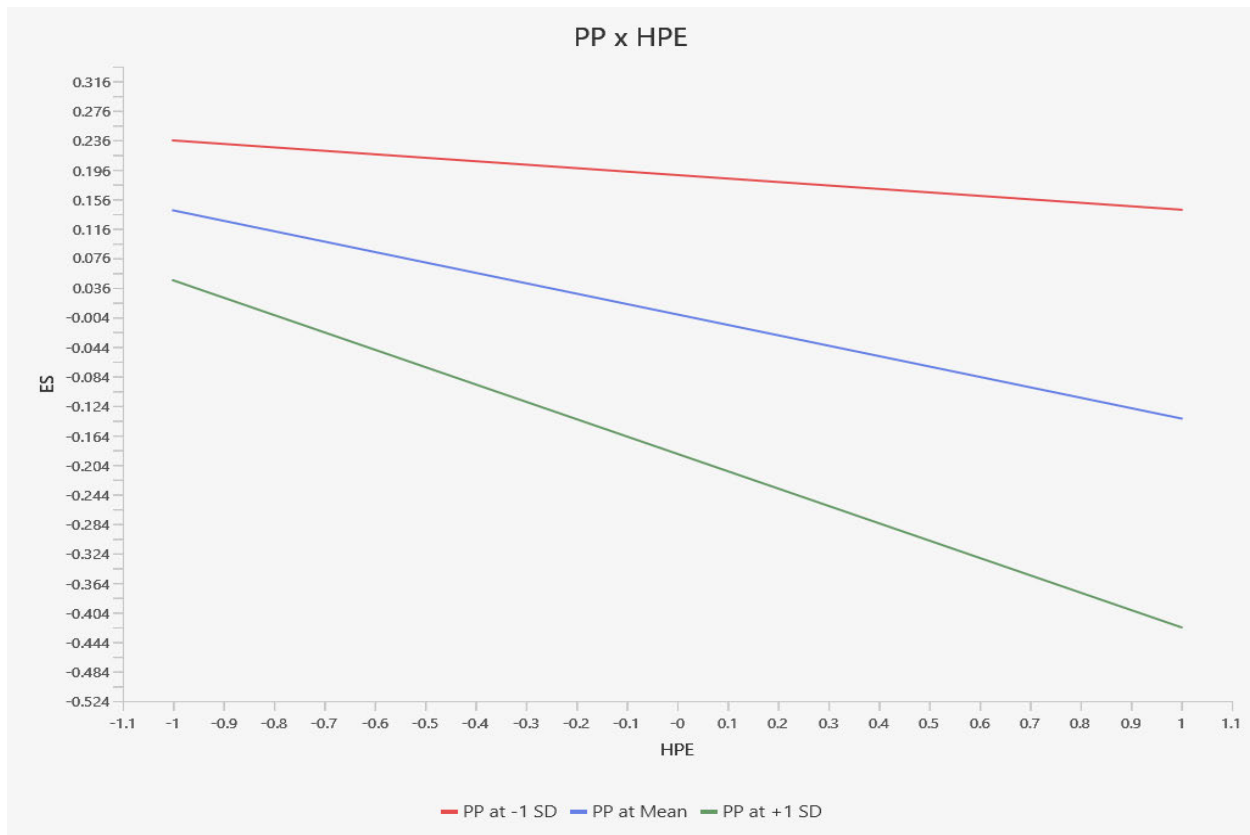
Table 5.15 Moderating effects of political skill H8

Moderating effects	B	M	STDEV	T	P	Decision
PS x DSP -> HPE	0.034	0.033	0.065	0.519	0.604	H8 _a = Not Supported H8 _o = Supported

NB: β = Original Sample; M = Sample Mean; STDEV = Standard Deviation; T = T-Statistics; P = P Values; SP = Dysfunctional Supervision Processes; ES = Employee Silence; EA = Employee Alienation; PS = Political Skill.

Source: Field data, 2023

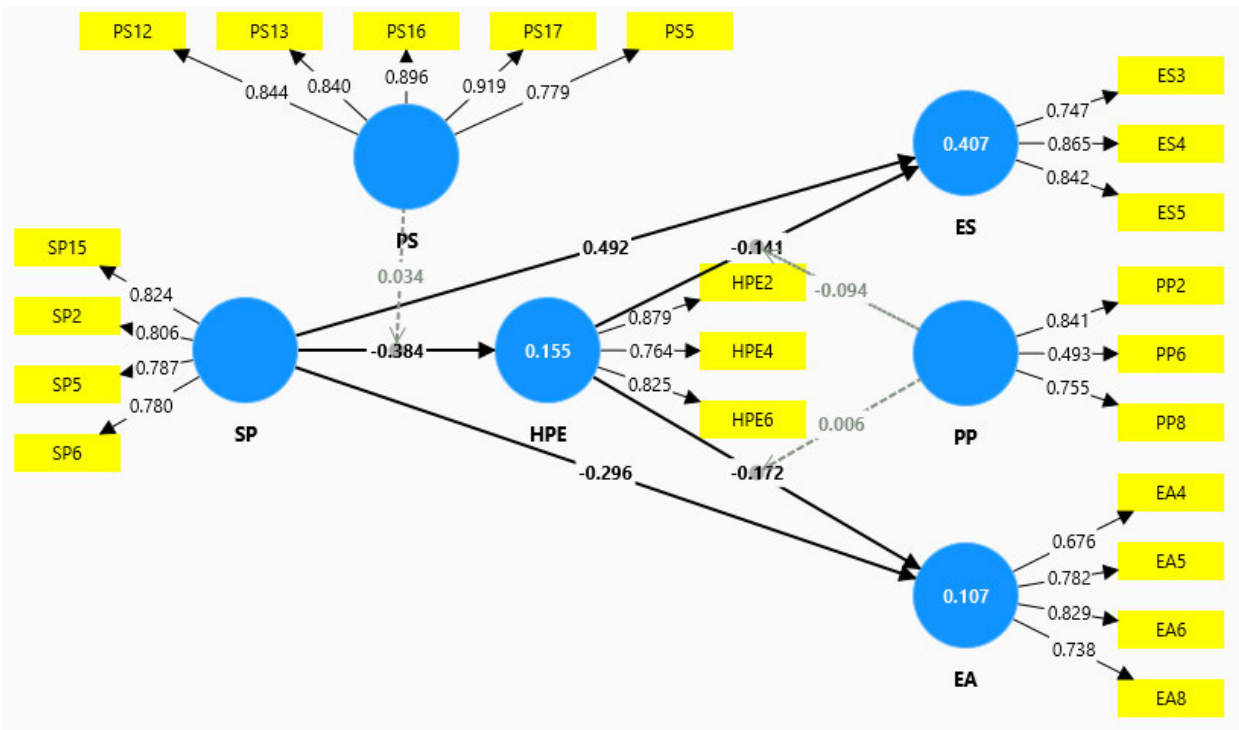
Figure 5.1 Moderating Effect of Promotion Practices (PP x HPEs -> ES)



Source: *Field data 2023*

In order to form a better comprehension concerning the nature of the moderating effects involving promotion practices on employee reactions (employee silence and employee alienation), a slope analysis is presented. The graph, as presented in Figure 5.1, illustrates the overall negative slope, indicating that an increase in HPEs leads to a decrease in employee silence. However, the strength of the impacts depends on the nature of the promotion practices. A weak promotion practice (-1 SD, red line) leads to a minimal impact of HPEs on employee silence. On the other hand, a strong promotion practice (+1 SD, green line) leads to a stronger impact of HPEs on employee silence.

Figure 5.2 A Path Model of the Relationships Between the Main Constructs of the Study



Source: *Field data, 2023*

5.4.2.3 The Results for the Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

R^2 reveals the combined effects of all the exogenous constructs on the endogenous constructs. As explained in Section 4.8.1.2.3, R^2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are considered substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 23). In this study, the endogenous variables, whose explained variances were of interest, were HPEs, employee alienation, and employee silence. Table 5.16 presents an R^2 value of 0.107 for employee alienation, 0.407 for employee silence, and 0.155 for HPEs. This means that dysfunctional supervision processes explain 10.7% of employee alienation, 40.7% of employee silence, and 15.5% of HPEs. These statistics demonstrate the model's acceptable explanatory power.

Table 5.16 Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

	R^2	R^2 adjusted
EA	0.107	0.089

ES	0.407	0.395
HPE	0.155	0.142

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2.4 The Results for the f^2 Effect Size

The f^2 effect size was employed to measure the effect of each exogenous construct on the endogenous construct. Section 4.8.1.2.4 explained the guidelines for assessing the f^2 effect size wherein values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35, respectively, represent small, medium, and large effects of the exogenous latent variable, while an effect size value of less than 0.02 indicates that there is no effect (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 24). In this study, the exogenous latent variables were dysfunctional supervision processes, HPEs, promotion practices, and political skill. The endogenous variables were employee alienation and employee silence. The results in Table 5.17 reveal that dysfunctional supervision practices had a weak effect on employee alienation (0.080 or 8%), a medium effect on HPEs (0.170 or 17%), and a large effect on employee silence (0.332 or 33.2%). Furthermore, HPEs had a small effect of 2.3% (0.023) on employee alienation and silence. Political skill as moderator (PS*DSP) did not have any effect on the impact of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs (0.001 or 0.1%). However, while promotion practices, as a moderator (PP*HPEs), did not have an effect on the impacts of HPEs on employee alienation (0.000 or 0%), it had a small effect on the impact of HPEs on employee silence (0.024 or 2.4%).

Table 5.17 f -square (f^2) Effect Size

	f-square
DSP -> EA	0.080
DSP -> ES	0.332
DSP -> HPE	0.170

HPE -> EA	0.023
HPE -> ES	0.023
PP -> EA	0.018
PP -> ES	0.041
PS -> HPE	0.006
PS x DSP -> HPE	0.001
PP x HPE -> EA	0.000
PP x HPE -> ES	0.024

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.2.5 The Results for Predictive Relevance (Q²)

The predictive accuracy of the model was assessed using the Q² measures. As explained in Section 4.8.1.2.5, Q² values higher than 0.00, 0.25, and 0.50 depict a small, medium, and large predictive relevance of the model (Hair *et al.* 2019: 12). Table 5.18 shows that the predictive relevance was small for employee alienation (0.049) and HPEs (0.120), and medium for employee silence (0.354).

Table 5.18 Predictive Relevance (Q²)

	Q² Values	Decision
EA	0.049	Predictive relevance
ES	0.354	Predictive relevance
HPE	0.120	Predictive relevance

Source: Field data, 2023

5.4.3 Summary of the Findings on Quantitative Data

In summary, all the constructs in the model met the reliability and validity criteria. The quantitative data revealed that the dysfunctional supervision processes negatively and significantly influence HPEs, confirming H1_a. In addition, the dysfunctional supervision processes were revealed to have positive and significant impacts on employee silence and employee alienation, confirming H2_a and H3_a. Furthermore, the results discovered negative impacts of HPEs on employee silence and alienation, supporting H4_a and H5_a. It was also established that HPEs mediated the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and alienation, confirming H6_a and H7_a. Additionally, the moderating role of promotion practices on the impact of HPEs on employee silence was significant, while that on alienation was insignificant, supporting H8_a and rejecting H9_a. Finally, the moderating role of political skill on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs was insignificant, rejecting H10_a.

5.5 Qualitative Data Analysis and Findings

The qualitative data were collected through face-to-face interviews (FTF) with 20 participants. The interview questions pertained to the main constructs or themes of the study, which are dysfunctional supervision processes, HPEs, employee silence, and employee alienation. The steps suggested by Elo and Kyngäs (2008: 109) for qualitative content analysis were employed to identify open coding and create coding sheets and categories, and then abstraction in the form of themes. In order to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the participants and their information, *P* was used to represent participant identification so that *P1* represents participant number one, *P2* depicts participant number two, and so on. In this section, the results of the data were presented in Table 5.19. The results captured the sub-themes, how many participants mentioned the sub-themes, and how many times each sub-theme was mentioned. Subsequent sections present findings for Research Objectives 1 and 2. The purpose of the qualitative data analysis was to provide an additional explanation for the findings obtained from the quantitative research.

5.5.1 Impact of Dysfunctional Supervision Processes on HPEs

This section presents the analysis and the findings on the first research objective, which sought to examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on HPEs. A set of questions was asked to elicit responses from the supervisors on the existence of HPEs and their behavioural characteristics. Subsequently, a set of questions was designed to elicit responses from the subordinates on whether their supervisors exhibit hostile or dysfunctional behaviours, examples of the behaviours, and the frequency with which the behaviours occur (See Appendix A2, Sections B and C). The summary of the themes that emerged from the transcription of the interview confirmed that their supervisors engaged in dysfunctional behaviours, and some subordinates exhibited behaviours associated with HPEs in the indigenous banks that were studied. These are presented in Table 5.19 further down below.

Subordinates who were identified as HPEs by the supervisors received a follow-up question, “How do you respond to dysfunctional supervisory behaviours?” Excerpts of the answers are:

P14: *“I normally keep quiet to her insult, because I am trained not disrespect my superiors.”*

P20: *“I hate it when her utterances are insult. When she or other colleagues talk to me or ask me questions, I don’t mind them.”*

P12: *“I have distanced myself from a lot of work activities when she told me I have disappointed her, and she made a mistake giving that task to me.”*

The decision to keep quiet or not to mind colleagues represents a conscious choice not to offer support or share knowledge, which are attributes of HPEs (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015: 581; Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018: 8). HPEs who take such decisions as a response to dysfunctional supervisory behaviours, as shown by these participants (P12, P14, P20), refrain from pursuing their full potential as HPEs, thereby diminishing their performance. This suggests that in the indigenous banking companies that were studied, supervisors’ dysfunctional behaviours reduce the performance of the HPEs.

5.5.2 Impact of the Dysfunctional Supervision Processes on Employee Silence and Employee Alienation

The second research objective examined the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. Subordinates answered questions on whether they have intentionally withheld their thoughts, information, and opinion (employee silence), and felt withdrawn physically and/or mentally (employee alienation) from the work environment (See Appendix A2, Sections D and E). The themes that emerged from the answers show that the workplace environment causes subordinates to adopt employee silence and employee alienation as coping strategies in the indigenous banks that were studied, and are also summarised in Table 5.19 further down.

Follow-up questions enabled the participants to relay the circumstances under which they decided to use the silent and alienated behaviours. The subordinates mentioned the behaviour of the supervisors as reasons for engaging in employee silence and employee alienation. The following are excerpts of the responses:

P17... "If I think the supervisor is not accommodating, I might not share my views with them because he will not take it serious or see it not to be important, which can bring self-inferiority or lower my self-esteem, so I would not even try at all."

P11... "Sometimes your opinion doesn't matter. Some of the supervisor, especially mine, she thinks she knows it all, so whether you suggest anything reasonable or not, she wouldn't take it, so it's better I keep it on myself. Even if I say it, she's not going to take it so I choose to withhold it. If I have the feeling that my contribution wouldn't matter, I don't bother myself; I just be absent-minded whatever discussion that is going on. I just keep quiet and listen."

These responses indicate that supervisors' dysfunctional behaviours encourage subordinates to adopt employee silence as their coping mechanism. The impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee alienation was also explained through the responses of the following participants:

P13.... *“I dissociate myself because my supervisor ignores me.”*

P16.... *“My supervisor likes complaining too much, and I withdraw myself to avoid any confrontation.”*

P9.... *“I was so embarrassed when my supervisor told me I don’t know what I am doing in front of a customer. Since then, I have withdrawn myself from work activities.”*

These responses prove that dysfunctional supervisory behaviours compel subordinates to use employee alienation as their coping mechanism in reaction to ineffective leadership.

Table 5.19 presents the sub-themes that were derived from the transcript of the data to validate the constructs under study. The table captures the total number of participants who mentioned a theme and how often the theme occurred in their responses.

Table 5.19 The Constructs and the Sub-themes

Construct	Themes	Number of times mentioned	Number of participants mentioned
Dysfunctional supervision processes	Harsh words	18	11
	Incompetency	16	8
	Insults and ridicule	15	7
High-performing employees (HPEs)	Less or no supervision	19	7
	Complete assigned duties	15	14
	Willing to help others	11	11

	Respect for colleagues and customers	10	8
	Smart people	6	6
Employee silence	Lack of information	13	11
	Subordinates' suggestions are unimportant	18	15
Employee alienation	Disconnected from events at work	18	15
	Painful and boring daily tasks	13	12
	Conflict avoidance	14	10

Sources: Field data, 2023

5.5.3 Summary of Findings on Qualitative Data

The qualitative findings on Research Objectives 1 and 2 revealed that dysfunctional supervision processes erode HPEs' positive attributes in the indigenous banks that were studied. Additionally, the findings confirmed that dysfunctional supervision processes encouraged the subordinates to adopt employee silence and employee alienation as their coping strategies.

5.6 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter was carried out in the context of the explanatory sequential mixed methods design. Furthermore, combining quantitative and qualitative data led to a

better understanding of the research phenomenon. Starting with the analysis of the quantitative data, the researcher first presented the participants' biographical information, which provided insights into the participants' demographic characteristics. After this, the researcher evaluated the measurement model and assessed the reliability and validity of the indicators, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity and, thereby, confirmed the robustness of the measurement model. Next, the researcher presented the structural model and scrutinised the relationships and effects between the constructs in the research framework. The significant path coefficients and measures, such as R-squared, F-squared, and Q-squared, were used to evaluate the strengths and significance of the relationships. Finally, qualitative data were presented and analysed. The presentation was undertaken using tables and word clouds, while sub-themes of the constructs were identified and analysed to establish the relationships. The next chapter presents the interpretation and discussions of the findings of the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of the study. Guided by the specific objectives of the study, the discussions started with the quantitative outcomes of the direct, mediating, and moderating relationships between the constructs. During this stage of the discussions, the integration of the qualitative outcomes took place on each of the specific objectives, after which the conclusions were drawn.

CHAPTER 6

INTERPRETATION AND DISCUSSIONS OF FINDINGS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the results of the quantitative and qualitative data. In this chapter, the researcher delves into the analysis and interpretation of the results presented in Chapter 5. This study sought to evaluate the context of the dysfunctional supervision processes and employees' reactions in indigenous banks in the Western region of Ghana. A total of 6 research objectives were set out and aimed...

- i. to examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on high-performing employees;
- ii. to examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation;
- iii. to examine the mediating role of high-performing employees in the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence, and employee alienation;
- iv. to investigate the moderating effects of promotion practices on the interaction between high-performing employees and employee silence, and employee alienation;
- v. to explore the moderating effects of supervisors' political skill on the interactions between the dysfunctional supervision processes and high-performing employees;
- vi. to develop a model on the effect of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and alienation, and the dynamic role of HPEs, promotion practices and political skill on these relationships.

To achieve this, an explanatory sequential mixed methods design was employed, which allowed for the combination of both the quantitative and qualitative approaches in an effort to acquire a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. In the quantitative phase, ten hypotheses were developed and tested to address the study's research objectives, and data were collected using survey questionnaires. Similarly, the

qualitative phase encompassed the use of an interview guide to collect data to validate the quantitative results for the study's Research Objectives 1 and 2. The structure of this chapter unfolded with discussions concerning the quantitative outcomes from the primary data. This was validated with the discussions of the qualitative outcomes. The conclusions from the discussions were aligned with the findings from the literature. The following sections provide detailed accounts of the discussions.

6.2 Discussion of the Findings from Primary Data

This study focused on discussing the indigenous or rural banking sector in Ghana, taking into consideration the effects of indigenous cultural practices. It aimed to provide insights into the relationship that dysfunctional supervision processes have with HPEs, employee alienation, and employee silence. In addition, the mediating role of the HPEs on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and alienation was examined. Furthermore, the study investigated the moderating role of supervisors' political skill on the relationship between the dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs. Finally, the moderating role of promotion practices on the impact of HPEs on employee silence and alienation will be presented.

6.2.1 The Impact of Dysfunctional Supervision Processes on HPEs

The study's first research objective was tested using both quantitative and qualitative data. Concerning the quantitative aspect, the objective was tested as a hypothesis, and yielded results showing that $\beta = -0.384$, $t = 7.079$, $p = 0.001$. This indicates that dysfunctional supervision has a significant negative impact on HPEs, confirming the acceptance of H1_a. The negative beta coefficient implies that a 1% increase in a supervisor's dysfunctional behaviours is associated with a 38.4% decline in HPE behaviours. Although HPEs classically demonstrate resilience, the finding suggests that they remain vulnerable to supervisory misconduct. The statistical significance ($t = 7.079$, $p = 0.001$) confirms the robustness of the relationship. Similarly, the findings from the qualitative data revealed that supervisors engage in dysfunctional behaviours by using

harsh words, telling subordinates that they are incompetent, and insulting and ridiculing subordinates. Additionally, some subordinates exhibited high-performing behaviours, including working with less or no supervision, completing assigned duties, helping others, and respecting colleagues and customers. While these attributes make HPEs resilient, they are not immune to the bad behaviours of their supervisors. For example, P20 had this to say:

“I hate it when her utterances are insult. When she or other colleagues talk to me or ask me questions, I don’t mind them.”

This response shows that employees in the indigenous banks that were studied reacted to dysfunctional supervisory behaviours by refraining from high-performing behaviours, such as knowledge sharing and workplace participation.

Findings on Research Objective 1 revealed that HPEs, although highly resilient, are negatively affected by supervisors’ dysfunctional behaviours. This finding concurs with the research conducted by Lee, Sim and Tuckey (2024), who ascertained that toxic leadership hampers job performance. Additionally, De Clercq, Azeem and Haq (2023) demonstrated that contemptuous leaders discourage high-performers from engaging in organisational citizenship behaviours. Finally, Mehmood *et al.* (2024) similarly reported that dysfunctional leadership diminishes employee creativity. Collectively, these studies suggest that dysfunctional supervision leads to a decline in high-performing behaviours.

One possible explanation for the relationship is that HPEs typically set high standards in communication, self-assurance, and aggressiveness towards organisational goals (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015; Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006; Lecat Beausaert and Raemdonck 2018). However, dysfunctional supervision erodes these qualities, leading to reduced morale, high turnover among star performers, and decreased organisational productivity. This confirms the corrosive impact of poor leadership and the capacity to diminish the core competencies of the most capable employees in organisations. The findings, therefore, underscore the need for management in the indigenous banks, as well as other organisations operating in indigenous societies, to prioritise leadership development initiatives that reduce dysfunctional leadership behaviours.

6.2.2 Impacts of the Dysfunctional Supervision Processes on Employee Silence and Employee Alienation

The study's second objective examined the impact of the dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. H2 and H3 were tested, and the results revealed a statistically significant positive relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence ($\beta = 0.492$, $t = 7.480$, $p = 0.001$), supporting H2a_a. The findings indicate that a 1% increase in dysfunctional supervision, such as abusive supervision, leads to a 49.2% increase in employee silence. This underscores the detrimental impact of supervisory misbehaviour in banks operating in indigenous societies. Employees under such supervision are more likely to withhold their concerns, thoughts, viewpoints or recommendations in retaliation or as a form of self-protection. These findings not only corroborate previous research (Islam *et al.* 2022; Lee *et al.* 2022; Wang *et al.* 2020; Xu *et al.* 2020) but also extend the existing literature by highlighting the specific vulnerabilities in the indigenous banking sector. In alignment with Ahmad *et al.* (2023), who discovered a positive association between destructive leadership and employee silence, and Al-Hawari, Bani-Melhem and Quratulain (2020), who reported similar effects for abusive supervision, this research adds empirical weight to the argument that dysfunctional leadership directly encourages employee silence. Hence, there is a need for organisational reforms that promote ethical supervisory behaviours in culturally sensitive environments.

The results from the qualitative investigation also met Research Objective 2 and corroborate the quantitative findings on the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence. The participants for the interview confirmed the existence of dysfunctional supervisory behaviours and employee silence in the indigenous banking sector in Ghana. The subordinates revealed that they remain silent when managers disregard them by failing to invite them to meetings, neglecting to notify them about meeting outcomes, and not giving due consideration to their ideas. For example, P19 had this to say:

“Sometimes you suggest something and the manager ignores you. Sometimes a meeting that we need to get information about, we don’t even get to hear anything about, and then all we hear is this has happened. So, if it happens again, I don’t care. If I say something, they are not going to take it, so why should I even waste my time?”

The study also investigated the influence of the supervision processes on employee alienation. The results ($\beta = 0.296$, $t = 3.917$, $p = 0.001$) confirmed H3a, showing a statistically significant positive relationship, where a percentage increase in dysfunctional supervision corresponds to a 29.6% rise in employees experiencing a sense of detachment from their jobs and organisation. This suggests that when employees perceive a heightened level of dysfunctional supervision, they are more likely to experience disconnection and disengagement from their work environment.

This finding was validated by the results from the qualitative analysis, thereby meeting Research Objective 2, that dysfunctional supervision has an impact on employee alienation in the indigenous banking sector in Ghana. According to the qualitative findings, some employees felt estranged from their work when supervisors exhibited dysfunctional behaviours. For instance, P10 said:

“I still remember the way he spoke very harsh and insulted me. I became embarrassed to the extent that since then I have isolated myself from a lot of things at work.”

These findings are consistent with prior research. Jiang *et al.* (2019), Du *et al.* (2022) and Abalkhail (2022) similarly observed that abusive supervision contributes to employee alienation. Supporting this, Nastiezaie *et al.* (2022) reported a positive association between despotic leadership and work alienation, while Sarwar *et al.* (2022) found a positive impact of punitive supervision on work alienation. Building on these outcomes, the study extends the growing body of evidence highlighting the detrimental effects of dysfunctional leadership behaviours on employee psychological well-being. It emphasises that alienation is sometimes cultivated within the immediate social environment of the workplace, characterised by dysfunctional supervision. This means that organisations cannot meaningfully address employee alienation without first

confronting the deep-rooted supervisory dysfunctions amplified by hierarchical socio-cultural practices.

6.2.3 Findings on the Mediating Role of HPEs

The third objective of the study was to evaluate the mediating role of HPEs on the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee reactions, specifically employee silence and employee alienation, within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana. Two hypotheses, H4 and H5, were developed and tested. The result indicated that HPEs partially mediated the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and both employee silence ($\beta = 0.054$, $t = 2.009$, $p = 0.045$) and employee alienation ($\beta = 0.066$, $t = 1.979$, $p = 0.048$), thereby supporting H4_a and H5_a.

The positive and statistically significant indirect effects suggest that while dysfunctional supervision directly creates an environment that encourages employee silence and alienation, the presence of HPEs mitigates these impacts to a certain extent. Dysfunctional supervision exhibited in the form of abusive supervision, punitive supervision, supervisor undermining, and petty tyranny (Balwant 2021: 82; Tepper 2007: 263-264) typically suppresses open communication. Consequently, employees perceive a violation of social exchange relationship, prompting defensive reactions such as silence, where individuals withhold ideas, facts, and views (Dyne *et al.* 2003: 1360), and alienation, where employees perceive themselves as strangers and discontinuing all communication with both themselves and other colleagues (Fromm and Anderson 2017:135).

However, HPEs, through their exemplary behaviours including honesty, support for colleagues, and knowledge sharing (Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018:8), create an environment of psychological safety, trust, and openness. These positive behaviours encourage colleagues to speak up, engage and participate actively in workplace activities in the presence of a negative supervisory climate. The partial mediation implies that although HPEs can weaken the adverse effects of dysfunctional supervision on employee silence and alienation, they do not eliminate them entirely. Dysfunctional supervisory

behaviours continue to have a direct detrimental effect, but the presence and behaviours of HPEs provide a meaningful buffer.

These findings align with prior research on factors that mediate the impact of dysfunctional leadership on employee silence and alienation. For instance, Ahmad *et al.* (2023) found that job tensions mediated the relationship between despotic leadership and subordinates' silent behaviour. Similarly, Sabino, Cesário and Antunes (2024) reported that loyalty mediated the influence of toxic leadership on defensive silence and prosocial voice. Liu, Sun and Dube (2021) also identified emotional exhaustion as a mediator between abusive supervision and voice behaviour. Moreover, Hawass (2022) revealed that employees perceived organisational obstruction and dehumanisation mediated the association between self-centred leadership behaviours and alienation.

6.2.4 Findings on the Moderating Effect of Promotion Practices

The fourth objective focused on the moderating role of promotion practices as relating to the impact it has on HPEs when it comes to employee silence and alienation. H6 and H7 were tested, and the result indicated a statistically significant moderating effect of promotion practices on the relationship between HPEs and employee silence ($\beta = -0.094$, $t = 2.132$, $p = 0.033$), confirming H6_a. The negative beta coefficient suggests that the relationship becomes stronger (more negative) when promotion practices are perceived to be fair and merit-based. This finding implies that when organisations implement fair, transparent, and realistic promotion practices that recognise and reward employee performance (Bußwolder, Dregert and Letmathe 2019; García-Izquierdo, Moscoso and Ramos-Villagrasa 2012; Ngan and Tze-Ngai Vong 2019), the influence of HPEs on reducing employee silence is amplified. In environments where fair promotion systems are in place, employees are more likely to view the workplace as just and supportive. Consequently, HPEs who model openness, honesty, and mutual support (Kehoe, Lepak and Bentley 2018:8) become even more effective in encouraging their peers to share ideas and engage in constructive dialogue rather than remaining silent. The finding suggests that organisations seeking to reduce employee silence must not only encourage high-performing cultures but also ensure that promotion practices are transparent, merit-based and trusted by employees.

This finding is congruent with the findings of previous studies on the impact of promotion practices in organisations (Aminuddin and Yaacob 2011; Bowra *et al.* 2012; Evangeline and Thavakumar 2015; Janjua and Gulzar 2014; Moncarz, Zhao and Kay 2009). For example, Lestari *et al.* (2023) reported a favourable relationship between promotion practices and employees' professional growth, while Ratemo, Bula and Felistus (2021: 173) discovered that job promotion practices augmented employee responsibilities in Kenya.

The study also examined whether promotion practices moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation. However, the results indicated an insignificant moderating effect ($\beta = -0.006$, $t = 0.093$, $p = 0.926$), suggesting that promotion practices, as implemented within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana, neither strengthened nor weakened the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation, thereby rejecting H7_a. Among the factors that could account for this outcome is the possibility that promotion practices in the sector are perceived as inconsistent, politicised, or lacking transparency, thus diminishing their credibility among employees. When promotion decisions are viewed as unfair or unrelated to actual performance, they may fail to cultivate a sense of the organisational justice necessary to amplify the positive behaviours exhibited by HPEs. These findings do not substantiate prior research on the effect of promotion practices on employee outcomes. For instance, Abdullahi, Raman and Solarin (2022) found that promotion practices influence employee performance. Similarly, Xie and Yang (2021) reported that employees' perception of promotion practices influences task performance.

6.2.5 Findings on the Moderating Effects of Political Skills

Objective 5 explored the moderating role of supervisors' political skill in the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs, tested through H8. The result ($\beta = 0.034$, $t = 0.519$, $p = 0.604$) did not support H8_a, indicating that political skill does not significantly moderate the relationship. Although politically skilled supervisors are theorised to use subtle, persuasive tactics to elicit desired responses (Ferris *et al.* 2005:

129; Ferris *et al.* 2007: 292), the empirical evidence from this study did not confirm this assumption.

One possible explanation is that while politically skilled individuals are adept at aligning their goals with those of others (Brouer, Chiu and Wang 2016: 5), this skill may be insufficient to offset the detrimental effects of dysfunctional supervision. Alternatively, the impact of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs may be too strong, overriding any potential buffering effects of political skill. This suggests that political skill alone is insufficient to mitigate the negative outcomes of poor supervisory practices.

This finding contrasts with extant research on political skill as a moderator. For instance, Sanhokwe and Chinyamurindi (2023) found that political skill moderated the connection between job engagement and workplace resilience. Similarly, Chang *et al.* (2023) reported that managers' political skills influenced the link between environmental uncertainty and employees' self-learning behaviour. Gardiner and Debrulle (2021) also discovered that political skill moderated the connection between maverick conduct and unethical decision-making.

6.2.6 The Models' Explanatory Power

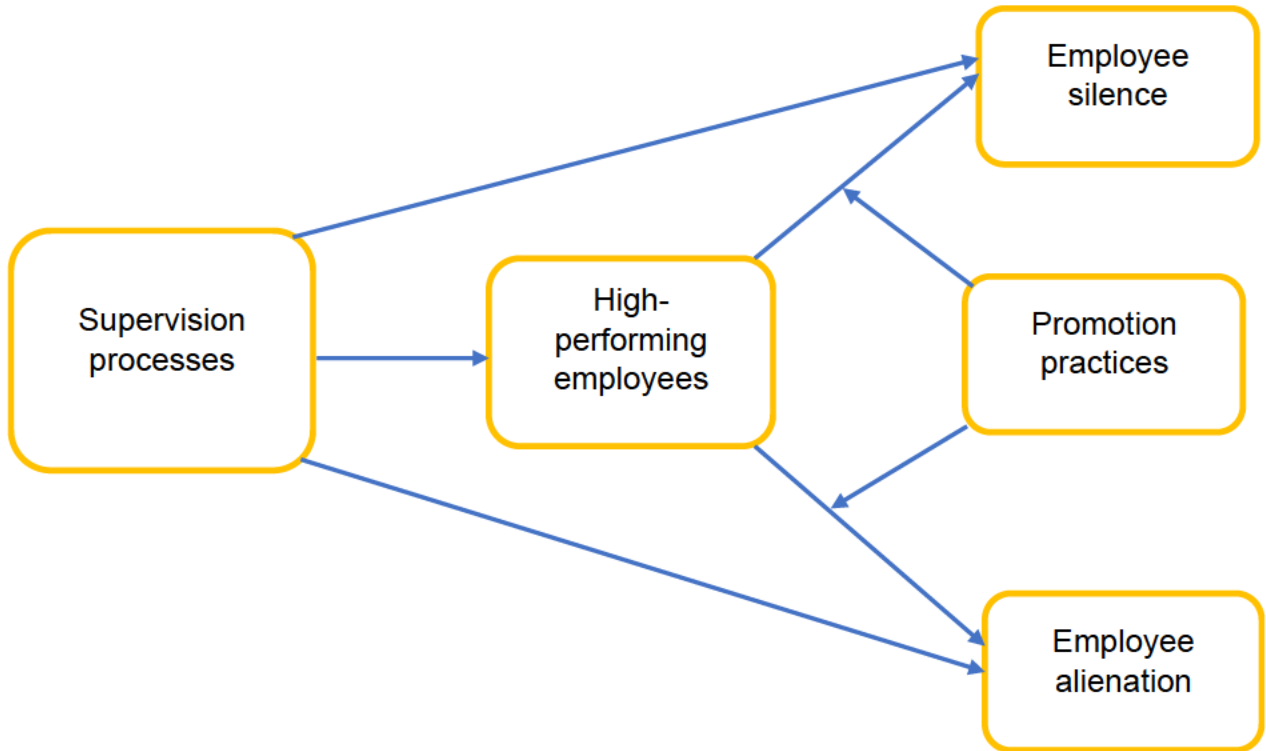
The strength of the combined explanatory power of the exogenous variables in the model was weak for HPEs and employee alienation and moderate for employee silence, as shown by the respective R^2 values of 0.155, 0.107, and 0.407 in Table 5.18. In addition, the strength of the impact of dysfunctional supervision was medium for employee silence and small for employee alienation and HPEs, as shown by the respective f^2 values of 0.332, 0.080, and 0.170 in Table 5.19 (Sarstedt, Ringle and Hair 2021: 24). Furthermore, HPEs had a minimal impact on employee silence and alienation as depicted by f^2 values of 0.023 for both endogenous variables. These results suggest that, in the indigenous banking sector in Ghana, some other variables not captured in the study may have a more substantial impact on employee reactions than the exogenous variables in the model. For example, hierarchical socio-cultural practices of the indigenous or rural communities entrust decision-making in the hands of those in leadership positions and

demand that subjects and subordinates revere those who occupy leadership positions (Slade Shantz *et al.* 2020: 21, 28; Van der Geest 1997: 535-536). These demands may overshadow the perceptions of the existence of dysfunctional supervision and make the effects less harmful. With this observation in mind, subordinates in the banks that operate in these indigenous communities may not severely exhibit employee silence and employee alienation as reactions to poor or ineffective leadership.

6.2.7 Discussion of the Model Within the Context of Dysfunctional Supervision Processes

The final objective was to develop a model illustrating the role of dysfunctional supervision processes in the indigenous banking sector in Ghana, focusing on the consequences and mediating and moderating effects. To achieve this, the relationships among the supervision processes, HPEs, employee silence, and employee alienation were examined. As established in the preceding sections, dysfunctional supervision processes had a significant negative impact on HPEs. Additionally, dysfunctional supervision processes showed significant positive effects on employee silence and alienation, supporting the proposed hypotheses. The mediating role of HPEs on the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence and alienation was also confirmed. However, the data did not support the moderating role of supervisors' political skill in the relationship between dysfunctional supervision and HPEs. Similarly, promotion practices did not moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation, although a moderating effect on employee silence was confirmed. Based on these findings, the proposed model was revised and is presented in Figure 6.1.

Figure 6.1 Proposed Model for Management



Source: *Researcher's own depiction*

6.3 Summary of the Study Discussions

In summary, the study's results from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses was able to provide insights into the complex relationships amongst the supervision processes, HPEs, employee silence, and employee alienation. The results revealed that HPEs mediated the interplay between dysfunctional supervision processes and employee silence and employee alienation. While no moderating impact of political skill was found, promotion practices moderated the impact of HPEs on employee silence but not on alienation.

6.4 Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed the quantitative and qualitative outcomes for the study objectives. Following the procedures for the explanatory sequential mixed design, the quantitative outcomes were discussed first and corroborated by the qualitative outcomes. Thereafter, the final outcome for each objective was aligned with the findings from extant literature. Finally, the revised model for the supervision processes discussed in Objective 6 was presented. The next chapter, which is the final chapter, presents the summary of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the discussions of the findings from the quantitative results, followed by those of the qualitative results for the study's research objectives. The preceding chapters have thoroughly examined many aspects of the topic "supervision processes and employee reactions: a study of selected indigenous banks in the Western region of Ghana". This chapter presents the culmination of the research, starting with a summary of each chapter, a summary of the findings concerning the objectives, contributions of the study, useful recommendations for both researchers and practitioners, highlights of the limitations of the study, and the conclusion.

7.2 Summary of Chapters

This thesis was divided into seven chapters, each covering specific stages in the research process. The summary of each chapter is presented in the following sections.

7.2.1 Summary of Chapter 1

Chapter 1 introduced the context of the supervision processes. It commenced by outlining the economic challenges businesses face and established effective supervision as a key remedy. The roles of supervisors and subordinates in the supervision process were discussed, with attention to hierarchical socio-cultural practices that may promote dysfunctional supervision in Ghana's indigenous or rural banking sector. The chapter also presented the associations among HPEs, employee silence, employee alienation, political skill, and promotion practices within the context of dysfunctional supervision. Additionally, it outlined the study's general and specific objectives, hypotheses, justification, synopsis of literature and methodology, and the definition of key terms.

7.2.2 Summary of Chapter 2

Chapter 2 presented the conceptual framework and defined the key constructs of the study. It began by examining supervision as a concept, followed by the exploration of

management functions as the foundation of supervision processes, leading to supervisory relationships and supervision outcomes. Both the functional and dysfunctional supervision outcomes were discussed, with an emphasis placed on the dysfunctional dimension that represented the core of the study. Additionally, major constructs, such as HPEs, employee silence, employee alienation, promotion practices, and political skill, were explained through the lens of Kelley's (1992) followership typology.

7.2.3 Summary of Chapter 3

Chapter 3 examined the theoretical foundation of the study, focusing on leader-member exchange (LMX) theory, norm of reciprocity, and social support theory. The discussions included definitions, dimensions, applications, and the relevance of these theories to the study's constructs. An empirical review followed, summarising the purpose, methodology and findings of previous research, which helped contextualise the constructs and identify research gaps. These insights informed the development of the study's hypotheses. The chapter concluded by presenting the conceptual model of the study.

7.2.4 Summary of Chapter 4

Chapter 4 covered the methodological decisions that were made to achieve the purpose of the study. The chapter explained the research philosophy and pragmatism as the philosophical choice. The research approach followed and the reasons were provided for employing a deductive approach for the study. The chapter continued with the explanation of the research design in which the quantitative, qualitative and mixed-methods research were explained. Explanatory sequential mixed-methods were chosen, and the purpose was provided. Diverse types of research strategies were explained, and a cross-sectional survey was employed. Moreover, a questionnaire was used to collect the quantitative data, while an interview schedule was used to collect the qualitative data. The chapter elucidated on PLS-SEM as a tool to analyse quantitative data. The explanation of the measurement model assessment was carried out, highlighting the indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and the model fit. This was followed by an explanation of the structural model, starting with collinearity, significant path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2) and the

predictive relevance (Q^2). Content analysis was also explained as a tool for analysing qualitative data. The chapter concluded with the various ethical issues and procedures.

7.2.5 Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter presented the results, starting with the demographic profile of the participants. It then assessed the measurement model to ascertain whether the threshold criteria were met. Various tables summarised the results to depict the indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent and discriminant validity, and model fit. Structural model results were also presented in table format. Subsequently, it was shown that H1_a, H2_a and H3_a, H4_a, H5_a, H6_a, H7_a, and H8_a were supported, while H9_a and H10_a were not. The chapter concluded with an evaluation of the models' explanatory power. Tables and figures were also utilised to present the qualitative results, while the findings were used to validate the quantitative findings for Research Objectives 1 and 2.

7.2.6 Summary of Chapter 6

The discussions of both the quantitative and qualitative findings were presented in Chapter 6. The discussions were based on the study's specific objectives, starting with the quantitative findings. This was followed by a validation with qualitative findings and alignment with the findings from extant literature. The conclusions from the discussions were as follows: dysfunctional supervision diminished the performance of HPEs and encouraged subordinates to adopt employee silence and employee alienation as their coping strategies; HPEs mediated the relationship between dysfunctional supervision on both employee silence and employee alienation; supervisors' political skill did not moderate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision and HPEs; and promotion practices moderated the relationship between HPEs and employee silence but not alienation. The chapter also presented the revised conceptual framework.

7.3 Summary of the Findings of the Study

The primary aim of this study was to examine the context of various dysfunctional supervision processes and employees' reactions in selected indigenous banks in the Western region of Ghana. This aim was addressed through seven specific objectives with

ten hypotheses. Following the explanatory sequential mixed-methods, the quantitative results and findings were presented first, followed by the qualitative results and findings from Chapter 5. The discussion of the findings and the extent to which the qualitative findings validate the quantitative findings for each objective was undertaken in Chapter 6. The following sections provide a summary of the findings for each objective.

7.3.1 Impact of Dysfunctional Supervision on HPEs

The first objective examined the impact of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs. The findings from the quantitative analysis revealed a significant negative relationship, indicating that dysfunctional supervision undermines key attributes of HPEs, including honesty, integrity, open communication, mutual support, and commitment to organisational goals (De Waal and Oudshoorn 2015; Heijde and Van der Heijden 2006; Lecat Beausaert and Raemdonck 2018). The findings from the qualitative analysis corroborated this result. Thus, both the quantitative and qualitative findings confirm that, in the indigenous banking sector in Ghana, poor leadership has eroded the core competencies of top performers, leading to reduced morale and decreased organisational productivity.

7.3.2 Impact of Dysfunctional Supervision Processes on ES and EA

The second objective of the study was to examine the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and employee alienation. The results showed that employees subjected to dysfunctional supervision, such as abusive supervision, petty tyranny, and supervisor undermining, are more likely to adopt employee silence by withholding their concerns, thoughts, viewpoints, or recommendations. Similarly, the heightened perceptions of dysfunctional supervision encouraged subordinates to adopt employee alienation as a coping strategy by increasing their feelings of disconnection and disengagement from the work environment. These findings align with existing literature on the detrimental effects of bad leadership on employee reactions.

The outcome from the qualitative analysis validated the quantitative outcomes. This is because during the face-to-face interviews, the participants expressed that they tend to remain silent when their supervisors ignore or disregard them by not inviting them to contribute to a meeting. Again, the qualitative outcomes proved that dysfunctional

supervision processes encouraged employee alienation. This was echoed by the responses from some interview participants who articulated their isolation from work activities due to harsh words and insults that they suffered from their supervisors.

7.3.3 Mediating Role of High-performing Employees

The third objective was to determine whether HPEs mediate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision and employee outcomes, specifically employee silence and employee alienation. The quantitative outcomes proved that HPEs mediate the impact of dysfunctional supervision on employee silence and alienation. The positive and significant indirect effects indicate that while dysfunctional supervision (manifested through abusive supervision, punitive supervision, supervisor undermining, and petty tyranny) directly promotes employee silence and alienation, the presence of HPEs mitigates these effects to some extent. Although the positive attributes of HPEs do not entirely eliminate the influence of dysfunctional supervision, they do create an environment of safety, trust, and openness, which discourages silence and alienation by encouraging colleagues to express ideas, share information, and actively participate in workplace activities. Therefore, when HPEs encounter dysfunctional supervisory behaviours, their positive attributes are eroded, leading to an increase in employee silence and employee alienation.

7.3.4 Moderating Effects of Promotion Practices

The fourth objective examined whether promotion practices moderate the effect of HPEs on employee silence and alienation. The results revealed that promotion practices strengthened the role HPEs play in reducing employee silence and not employee alienation. This finding implies that when promotion practices are perceived as just, fair, and transparent, employees are more likely to view their career progression positively. Consequently, they are motivated to reciprocate prosocial behaviours exhibited by HPEs by reducing silence and participating more actively in organisational activities.

However, promotion practices did not strengthen the influence of HPEs in reducing employee alienation within the indigenous banking sector in Ghana. A possible explanation could be that promotion practices in the sector are perceived as inconsistent,

politicised, or untransparent, thereby undermining their credibility among employees. Alternatively, interpersonal dynamics and the immediate work environment shaped by HPEs might be more influential in moulding employees' sense of belonging and engagement than broader organisational promotion practices.

7.3.6 Moderating Effects of Supervisors' Political Skill

The fifth objective sought to assess the moderating role of supervisors' political skill on the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs. This finding indicates that supervisors' political skill does not buffer the negative effects of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs. A possible explanation is that, although political skill is typically associated with enhanced interpersonal effectiveness (Ferris *et al.* 2005; Ferris *et al.* 2012), it may be insufficient in offsetting the detrimental effects of dysfunctional supervision. Alternatively, the adverse influence of dysfunctional supervision on HPEs may be so strong that it overrides any potential moderating role of political skill.

7.3.7 Model for Supervision Processes

Based on the outcomes of the five research objectives, the proposed model on the supervision processes was revised. The updated model was presented in Section 6.2.7, where Figure 6.1 illustrated that in the indigenous or rural banking sector in Ghana, HPEs link dysfunctional supervision processes to employee silence and employee alienation. Additionally, promotion practices moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee silence but not employee alienation.

7.4 Implications of the Study

This study offers theoretical, methodological and managerial contributions, as detailed in the following sections.

7.4.1 Theoretical Contributions

The study contributes to the leadership literature by expanding the comprehensive cognition of leadership at the operational level within organisations. Grounded on LMX

theory, social support theory, and the norm of reciprocity, it offers new theoretical insight into how dysfunctional supervision processes directly affect HPEs, employee silence, and employee alienation, as well as how HPEs influence employee silence and alienation. Additionally, the study extends the existing research by demonstrating the mediating role of HPEs in the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and both employee silence and alienation. It further addresses the limited literature on the moderating role of promotion practices in the context of dysfunctional supervision, showing that promotion practices strengthen the impact of HPEs on reducing employee silence. Finally, the study makes a novel contribution by examining these relationships within indigenous organisational settings.

7.4.2 Methodological Contributions

This study provides important methodological contributions to leadership and organisational behaviour research. A review of the literature on the usage of explanatory sequential mixed-methods research in investigating the context of supervision processes yielded limited literature. This is because most of the studies on this subject solely adopted either quantitative or qualitative approaches. Therefore, in adopting the explanatory sequential mixed-methods, this study contributes to the methodological literature in that it combined both quantitative and qualitative research designs in understanding the context of supervision processes in the indigenous institutions. A quantitative research design was employed to objectively and systematically measure the relationships among constructs, ensuring that findings could be statistically validated and generalised to similar organisational contexts.

Moreover, the study contributes to the literature on the usage of cross-sectional research in investigating negative or dysfunctional supervision. Although this strategy limits the ability to deduce a connection between variables over a period of time, it is appropriate for explanatory research and provides a snapshot of patterns and relationships among constructs. In order to ensure representation across the geographical and organisational spread of employees in Ghana's indigenous banking sector, the study employed cluster sampling. This technique facilitated efficient data collection while maintaining diversity and generalisability. By focusing on indigenous institutions, the research also addressed

the underrepresented context in the leadership literature, thereby enriching the methodological contribution. Finally, the use of robust statistical techniques, particularly PLS-SEM, to test and analyse complex relationships (including the mediation effect of HPEs and moderation effects of political skill and promotion practices) contributed to advancing this methodological practice in the context of emerging economies.

7.4.3 Practical Contributions

The outcomes of this study provide significant practical contributions for organisations, particularly in emerging economies and the indigenous banking sector in Ghana.

First, the finding that dysfunctional supervision substantially increases employee silence and alienation underscores the urgent need to address negative supervisory behaviours. Diverse forms of dysfunctional supervision (e.g., abusive supervision, punitive supervision, supervisor undermining, and petty tyranny) erode trust and suppress employees' willingness to share ideas, views, and information, and remain psychologically connected to their work. Organisations should prioritise leadership development programmes, including regular training, supervisory assessments, and the establishment of a transparent or apparent accountability mechanism, so as to promote ethical, supportive, and transformational supervisory practices.

Second, the partial mediation effect that was found implies that while HPEs can alleviate some adverse impacts, they cannot fully neutralise the influence of dysfunctional supervisory behaviours. Therefore, organisations should not solely rely on HPEs to remedy a toxic work environment. Comprehensive interventions aimed at strengthening supervisor-employee relationships must, therefore, complement efforts to empower HPEs.

Third, the study emphasises the importance of transparent and fair promotion practices in reinforcing the positive influence of HPEs on reducing employee silence. Organisations should ensure that promotion decisions are founded on fair and forthcoming performance criteria. When employees perceive that career opportunities are distributed equitably, they are more likely to collaborate, as well as share information and posit ideas.

Management should also proactively recognise and reward HPEs who exemplify openness, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. Linking such behaviours to career progression signals to employees that speaking up and supporting colleagues are valued and rewarded. Essentially, this approach motivates HPEs to sustain their positive behaviours and encourages others to emulate them.

Finally, by focusing on indigenous institutions within Ghana's banking sector, the study furnishes context-specific insights to guide local human resource practices. Given that indigenous institutions often operate under distinct cultural, structural, and economic conditions compared to multinational corporations, leadership training and employee engagement initiatives should be culturally and contextually tailored.

In summary, the findings advocate a holistic organisational approach that simultaneously addresses dysfunctional leadership, empowers positive role models such as HPEs, and embeds supportive structures to promote cooperation, trust, and employee inclusion.

7.5 Recommendations of the Study

Based on the findings and implications of this study, several practical recommendations are proposed for organisational leaders, HR practitioners, and policymakers within the indigenous banking sector and similar organisations.

7.5.1. Develop and Enforce leadership Accountability Mechanisms

Given that dysfunctional supervision processes directly prompt or foster employee silence and alienation, organisations should establish clear policies to monitor, assess, and correct negative supervisory behaviours. Regular 360-degree feedback, anonymous reporting channels, and leadership performance appraisals should be employed to identify dysfunctional behaviours early and implement corrective actions.

7.5.2 Promote and Leverage HPEs as Role Models

Since HPEs were found to partially alleviate the impact of dysfunctional supervision, organisations should recognise, support, and strategically position HPEs to influence team dynamics positively. Therefore, leadership development programmes should

incorporate HPEs into mentoring and peer-coaching initiatives so as to enhance collective resilience against negative supervisory climates.

7.5.3 Review and Revise Promotion Practices

Although promotion practices did not moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee alienation, organisations should not disregard their broader influence. Transparent and merit-based promotion systems should be implemented to enhance fairness perceptions, improve morale, and reinforce positive employee behaviours, even if they do not directly buffer alienation in the presence of HPEs.

7.5.4 Institutionalise Peer Support Systems

Considering that the role of social support buffers the effects of dysfunctional leadership, formal peer support programmes should be established. These may include mentorship circles, companionship for new employees (e.g., the buddy system), and peer coaching schemes to encourage solidarity and support in challenging supervisory climates.

7.5.5 Strengthen Leadership Selection and Training Processes

Selection criteria for supervisory roles should prioritise interpersonal competencies, such as empathy, integrity, and supportiveness, rather than solely technical expertise. Moreover, leadership training should specifically address the dangers of dysfunctional leadership, such as abusive and punitive supervision, and promote transformational leadership practices.

7.5.6 Address Cultural and Contextual Factors

Since the study was conducted within indigenous Ghanaian banks, leaders should consider cultural tones that might influence employee reactions to supervision. As such, interventions must be culturally sensitive, recognising collectivist orientations and the high value placed on hierarchy and authority in organisational settings in Africa. This will ensure that interventions are not only effective but also sustainable within the sector's unique socio-cultural environment.

7.6 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

The study acknowledges several limitations that offer opportunities for future research. Addressing these limitations can enhance the accuracy, applicability, and depth of understanding the topic.

First, the findings were grounded in leader-member exchange theory, social support theory, and the norm of reciprocity (Cullen, 1994; Gottfredson *et al.* 2020: 3; Gouldner, 1960; Martin *et al.* 2010: 37; Michael *et al.* 2006: 470; Orrick *et al.* 2011: 500). While these frameworks supported the study's hypotheses, they did not fully capture all theoretical perspectives relevant to dysfunctional supervision and employee reactions. Future research could incorporate additional theories (e.g., the stressor-emotion model of CWB, social learning theory, the dual-process model (DPM), self-control theory (SCT), and job-demand model (Camps *et al.* 2020: 497; Eissa, Lester and Gupta 2020: 3; Khan, Qurantulain and Crawshaw 2017: 6; Kim, Lee and Yun 2020: 243; Waldman *et al.* 2018: 3) to provide a more holistic view.

Second, although validated measures from Tepper (2000: 189-190), Tangirala and Ramanujam (2008: 50-51), Nair and Vohra (2009: 302) and Ferris *et al.* (2005: 149-150) were used, these instruments may not fully capture the complexity of the constructs. Hence, future studies should consider alternative operationalisations or develop new measurement tools that are better aligned with the various evolving theoretical frameworks.

Third, the use of self-reported data introduced the potential for social desirability or common method bias (CMB), despite efforts to mitigate it (Section 5.2.2). In order to improve data accuracy, future research should integrate multiple sources, such as supervisor ratings and subordinates' objective performance measures.

Fourth, while the findings of the direct and indirect relationships were significant (H1 to H7), the R^2 and F^2 values indicate that factors other than HPEs, employee silence, employee alienation, political skill, and promotion practice play a greater role in the existence, prevalence, and severity of dysfunctional supervision in Ghana's indigenous banking sector. Future research should consider using low-performing employees as the

dependent variable of dysfunctional supervision. Additionally, researchers should explore additional boundary conditions and contextual variables, such as organisational culture, market conditions, and individual differences.

Fifth, the cross-sectional survey, which captures data at a single point in time, limits causal interpretations over a period of time. Longitudinal studies are, thus, recommended to better examine the evolving dynamics among dysfunctional supervision and employee reactions, providing deeper insights into temporal patterns and causal relationships.

Finally, as the study focused solely on indigenous banking institutions in Ghana, generalisability is limited. Future studies should expand to different industries, such as insurance, and broader contexts to compare relationships across sectors, helping to identify industry-specific patterns and contextual influences.

7.7 Conclusion of the Study

In our ever-changing and evolving economic environment, businesses are presently facing turbulence and challenging economic conditions (Bank of England 2024; Bank of Ghana 2024; Central Bank of Nigeria 2024; Department of Statistics South Africa 2024; European Central Bank 2024; U. S. Bureau of Labour Statistics 2024). While the economies of developing countries have been severely affected, the situation has been rather precarious in indigenous communities. Organisational survival, therefore, necessitates managers who can implement effective management processes (Leonard and Trusty 2016) and a workforce composed of HPEs who respond positively to supervision processes (Webster *et al.* 2022). Against this backdrop, the study aimed to evaluate dysfunctional supervision processes and employee reactions in selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana.

Six specific objectives and ten hypotheses were developed based on a meticulous review of existing literature. The study adopted explanatory sequential mixed-methods using a questionnaire for the quantitative data and interviews for the qualitative data. PLS-SEM was used to analyse the quantitative data and explore the relationship between the constructs, while content analysis was employed for the qualitative data analysis (aided by NVivo Version 14 to support the findings from the quantitative data analysis).

The findings have provided valuable insights into the intricate relationships amongst dysfunctional supervision processes as an independent variable, HPEs as a mediator and employee reactions (i.e., employee silence and employee alienation) as the dependent variables. The main findings are as follows:

- Dysfunctional supervision processes negatively impact HPEs and positively impact employee silence and alienation.
- HPEs positively impact employee silence and alienation.
- HPEs partially mediate the impact of dysfunctional supervision processes on employee silence and alienation.
- Promotion practices moderate the relationship between HPEs and employee silence but not employee alienation.
- Supervisor's political skill does not moderate the relationship between dysfunctional supervision processes and HPEs.

These findings offer valuable insights into the intricate relationships amongst constructs and carry significant theoretical, methodological, and practical implications.

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S/N	Please indicate the extent your boss uses these behaviours on you.	5	4	3	2	1
SP1	My boss ridicules me.					
SP2	My boss tells me my thoughts or feelings are stupid.					
SP3	My boss ignores me					
SP4	My boss disgraces me in front of others.					
SP5	My boss invades my privacy.					
SP6	My boss reminds me of my past mistakes and failures.					
SP7	My boss doesn't give me credit for jobs I put in more effort					
SP8	My boss blames me to save himself/herself embarrassment.					
SP9	My boss breaks promises he/she makes.					
SP10	My boss expresses anger at me when he/she is mad for another reason.					
SP11	My boss makes negative comments about me to others.					
SP12	My boss is rude to me.					
SP13	My boss does not allow me to interact with my co-workers.					
SP14	My boss tells me I am incompetent.					
SP15	My boss lies to me.					

SECTION C - Employee Silence

Numbers 1-5 represents the words attached:

1= Never, 2= Rarely, 3= Sometimes, 4= often, 5= Always

S/N	Please indicate the extent you engage in these behaviours at work.	5	4	3	2	1
ES1	I chose to remain silent when I had concerns about my work.					
ES2	Although I had ideas for improving my work, I did not speak up.					
ES3	I said nothing to others about potential work problems I noticed.					
ES4	I remained silent when I had information that might have helped prevent an incident in my work					
ES5	I kept quiet instead of asking questions when I wanted to get more information about my work in my unit.					

SECTION D - Employee Alienation

Numbers 1-5 represents the phrases attached:

1= definitely false, 2= probably false, 3 = neither false nor true, 4= probably true, 5= definitely true

S/N	Please indicate the extent these statements relate to you at work.	5	4	3	2	1
EA1	I do not enjoy work; I just put in my time to get paid.					
EA2	Facing my daily tasks is a painful and boring experience.					

EA3	Work to me is more like a chore or a burden.					
EA4	I feel disconnected from myself.					
EA5	I often wish I am doing something else.					
EA6	Over the years I have become disillusioned about my work.					
EA7	I do not feel like putting my best effort at work.					
EA8	I do not feel connected to the events in my workplace.					

SECTION E - Political Skill

Numbers 1-5 represents the statements attached:

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

S/N	Please indicate the extent these statements relate to your boss at work.	5	4	3	2	1
PS1	My boss spends a lot of time and effort at work networking with others.					
PS2	At work, my boss knows a lot of important people and he/she is well-connected.					
PS3	My boss is good at using his/her connections and networks to make things happen at work.					
PS4	My boss has a large network of colleagues and associates whom he/she can call on for support when he/she really needs to get things done.					
PS5	My boss is good at building relationships with influential people at work.					
PS6	My boss deems it important that people believe he/she is sincere in what he/she says and does.					
PS7	When communicating with others, my boss tries to be genuine in what he/she says					

PS8	My boss tries to show a genuine interest in other people.					
PS9	My boss always seems to instinctively know the right thing to say or do to influence others.					
PS10	My boss has good intuition about how to present himself/herself to others.					
PS11	My boss is particularly good at sensing the motivations and hidden agendas of others.					
PS12	My boss pays close attention to people's facial expressions.					
PS13	My boss understands people very well.					
PS14	It is easy for my boss to develop a good rapport with most people.					
PS15	My boss is able to make most people feel comfortable and at ease around him/her.					
PS16	My boss is able to communicate easily and effectively with others.					
PS17	My boss is good at getting people to like him/her.					

Section F - Promotion Practices

Numbers 1-5 represents the statements attached:

1 = Unimportant, 2 = Of little importance, 3 = Of average importance, 4 = Somewhat important, 5 = Very important

S/N	Please rate the extent to which the following different candidate criteria are important in making promotion decisions in your organisation.	5	4	3	2	1
PP1	Seniority					

PP2	Ability/skills					
PP3	Prior performance					
PP4	Individual reputation					
PP5	Personality					
PP6	Person-organisational fit					
PP7	Organisational politics					
PP8	Potential					

Section G - High-performing employees

Numbers 1-5 represents the statements attached:

1= strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3= undecided, 4= agree, 5= strongly agree

<u>S/N</u>	Please indicate the extent these statements relate to you at work.	<u>5</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>
HPE1	I adequately complete assigned duties					
HPE2	I fulfil responsibilities specified in job description					
HPE3	I help others who have been absent					
HPE4	I help others who have heavy work loads					
HPE5	I assist supervisor with her/his work (when not asked)					
HPE6	I take time to listen to co-workers' problems and worries					
HPE7	My attendance at work is above the norm					
HPE8	I give advance notice when unable to come to work					
HPE9	I conserve and protect organisational property					
HPE10	I do not take underserved work breaks					

APPENDIX A2

Interview Guide for face-to-face Interview

SECTION A - Biodata

1. Sex Male [] Female []
2. Age Group 20-29 [] 30-39 [] 40-49 [] 50 and above []
3. Highest Academic Qualification
G.C.E 'O' level [] SSCE/WASSCE [] HND [] Degree []
Masters []
Other, Please state.....
4. Category of Staff: Senior []
5. How long have you worked in this organisation?
 - a) 0 to 5 years [] b) 6 to 10 years [] c) 11 to 15 years [] d) 16 to 20 years []
 - e) 21 to and above []

SECTION B - High Performing Employees

1. Are there employees within your branch who consistently out-perform other employees? Yes/No
 - a. If yes, can you identify any behavioural characteristics of these employees that are different from the rest of the employees in the organisation?
 - b. If no, what reasons may account for that?

SECTION C – Dysfunctional Supervision

1. Have you ever felt that your supervisor's verbal and nonverbal behaviours were hostile?
 - a. If so, can you give examples of such behaviours?

- b. How often does he/she exhibit such behaviours?
- c. If not, what accounts for this?

SECTION D - Employee silence

- 1. Have you ever intentionally withheld (refused to share) your thoughts, information, and opinion on issues that will improve (related to) work and work organisation?
 - a. If so, could you give examples of circumstances in which you decided to put up this behaviour?
 - b. If not, what accounts for this?

SECTION E - Employee alienation

- 1. Have you ever felt withdrawn physically, mentally or both from the social interaction in the work environment?
 - a. If so, how do you express this feeling, or what thoughts, reasoning or behaviour of yours can explain this feeling?
 - b. If not, what accounts for this?

APPENDIX B1



LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDY

Title of the Research Study : Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Mr Philip Mensah

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr Obianuju Ebele Okeke-Uzodike (PhD)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Hello, My name is Philip Mensah, a lecturer at Takoradi Technical University and a Ph.D student at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. I am currently doing research on employee reactions to supervision processes and kindly invite you to voluntarily partake in this research.

Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the context of supervision processes and employees' reactions in selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana. Specifically, this study examine the relationship between high-performing employees and supervision processes, examine the relationship between supervision processes and employee silence and alienation, determine how supervisors' perceived promotion practices affect the relationship between high-performing employees and supervision processes, evaluate the effect of supervisors' political skills on how supervision processes relate with employee silence and alienation, and develop a model on how supervision processes can be used as a mechanism to enhance the relationship between high-performing employee and employee reactions within the indigenous banking sector.

In your decision to participate in this research, you have the right to ask as many questions as you wish to enable you fully understand the research. You are also entitled

to discuss the research with your family and friends and are under no obligation to commit at this stage. For this purpose, a copy of the Letter of Information document is given to you to take home to study.

Outline of the Procedures:

The instrument for the data collection for the quantitative study is an online structured questionnaire with a link for the subordinates of your branches. The researcher will want to request for the link to be put on the company's official page to be accessed by the employees. However, if this request is not appropriate for the company, any means of sending the link to the employees that is appropriate to the company will be accepted by the researcher. When the employees will receive the link and click on it, the title page of the questionnaire include concise details on the research and informed consent, stating that participation is voluntary and participants have the option to withdraw at any point during the questionnaire response process. Upon reviewing the information, the employees have choice to click "NO" in order to discontinue their participation in the study and this will prevent them from accessing the questionnaire items. By clicking on "YES", the employees will affirm their consent to participate in the study and obtain access to the questionnaire items. After finishing the tasks, they will click on the "submit" option situated at the bottom of the last section of the questionnaire, resulting in their responses being automatically submitted. The employees will require approximately 15 minutes to fully respond to the questionnaire.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participants:

The items in the questionnaire will not elicit for any information that will create discomfort, compromise them, diminish their self-esteem or cause them to be embarrassed or regret. There are no potential risks or discomfort to the participants.

Reasons Participants may withdraw from the Study:

The employees are assured that participation in the research is voluntary, and that if they participate in the study, they do not have to answer any questions if they prefer not to, and that they are free to stop their participation or leave the discussion at any time without any adverse consequences. Moreover, the researcher may also terminate the research early in certain circumstances beyond his control, as well as withdrawing an employee

based on inappropriate behaviour, or some other circumstances that will demand withdrawing of employees from the study.

Benefits:

The participants will not have any direct benefit. However, there will be indirect benefit if the outcome and recommendations shared with their organisations are implemented.

Remuneration:

There is no direct benefit and remuneration for participation in the research.

Costs of the Study:

The only cost participants may incur is the cost of the internet data to answer about 15 minutes online questionnaire or participate in a focus group discussion.

Confidentiality:

To ensure anonymity and confidentiality, the data collection instruments will not have any item that will reveal the identity of the respondents and the organisations. Moreover, the data the participants will provide will be processed in a manner that will be non-attributable.

Results:

The researcher will publish the results in peer reviewed journals, present results in the form of papers in local and international conferences, as well as Webinars that are relevant to the focus of the study. In addition, the researcher will also be guided by Durban University of Technology guidelines to convey the results to the participants through the Human Resource Department.

Research-related Injury:

There is no expected physical, social, psychological, and economic harm to the participants.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings

The raw data from the questionnaire will be stored in a flash drive or the supervisors DUT cloud, and monitored by the supervisor for 5 years and then the supervisor will permanently delete from the database

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:(Supervisor and details)

Please contact the researcher, Mr Philip Mensah on +233 27 1209682 or at 22175074@dut4life.ac.za, my supervisor, Dr Obianuju Ebele Okeke-Uzodike on +27 71

605 7174 or at obianujoo@dut.ac.za, or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Acting Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

APPENDIX B2



LETTER OF INFORMATION FOR QUALITATIVE STUDY

Title of the Research Study : Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana

Principal Investigator/s/researcher: Mr Philip Mensah

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s: Dr Obianuju Ebele Okeke-Uzodike (PhD)

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Hello, My name is Philip Mensah, a lecturer at Takoradi Technical University and a Ph.D student at the Durban University of Technology, South Africa. I am currently doing research on employee reactions to supervision processes and kindly invite you to voluntarily partake in this research.

Research is a systematic search or enquiry for generalized new knowledge. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the context of supervision processes and employees' reactions in selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana. Specifically, this study examine the relationship between high-performing employees and supervision processes, examine the relationship between supervision processes and employee silence and alienation, determine how supervisors' perceived promotion practices affect the relationship between high-performing employees and supervision processes, evaluate the effect of supervisors' political skills on how supervision processes relate with employee silence and alienation, and develop a model on how supervision processes can be used as a mechanism to enhance the relationship between high-performing employee and employee reactions within the indigenous banking sector.

In your decision to participate in this research, you have the right to ask as many questions as you wish to enable you fully understand the research. You are also entitled

to discuss the research with your family and friends and are under no obligation to commit at this stage. For this purpose, a copy of the Letter of Information document is given to you to take home to study.

Outline of the Procedures:

The instrument to collect data for the qualitative study is. There will be face-to-face interview sessions and focus group discussions on zoom for managers/supervisors of selected branches. The interview will take place at the appropriate place and time convenience to the interviewees and Covid-19 protocols will be strictly adhered to.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participants:

The items in the interview schedule will not elicit for any information that will create discomfort, compromise them, diminish their self-esteem or cause them to be embarrassed or regret. There are no potential risks or discomfort to the participants.

Reasons Participants may withdraw from the Study:

The employees are assured that participation in the research is voluntary, and that if they participate in the study, they do not have to answer any questions if they prefer not to, and that they are free to stop their participation or leave the discussion at any time without any adverse consequences. Moreover, the researcher may also terminate the research early in certain circumstances beyond his control, as well as withdrawing an employee based on inappropriate behaviour, or some other circumstances that will demand withdrawing of employees from the study.

Benefits:

The participants will not have any direct benefit. However, there will be indirect benefit if the outcome and recommendations shared with their organisations are implemented.

Remuneration:

There is no direct benefit and remuneration for participation in the research.

Costs of the Study:

The only cost participants may incur is the cost of the internet data to answer about 15 minutes online questionnaire or participate in a focus group discussion.

Confidentiality:

Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants for the interview are assured in that the interview schedule will not have any item that will reveal the identity of the respondents and the organisations. Moreover, the researcher will not divulge the information they will provide to any other person.

To ensure confidentiality and anonymity for the participants for the focus group discussions, the researcher will be the host and the convenor for the FGDs that will take place on zoom for some other managers, and will control the settings which will allow for only the researcher to record and share the data. In order to achieve this, the video links of the participants will be switched off to avoid showing their faces and no introduction of their names and places of work will be done. Participants will be required to use designated numbers instead of names to log in for the discussion and they will be addressed only by their designated numbers. In a situation where the names of the participants are collected, they will be kept secure to protect their identities and they will be informed on how their identities will be protected. In addition to these measures, participants will be required to sign a non-disclosure agreement to prevent them from discussing issues discussed at the focus group outside the focus group.

Results:

The researcher will publish the results in peer reviewed journals, present results in the form of papers in local and international conferences, as well as Webinars that are relevant to the focus of the study. In addition, the researcher will also be guided by Durban University of Technology guidelines to convey the results to the participants through the Human Resource Department.

Research-related Injury:

There is no expected physical, social, psychological, and economic harm to the participants.

Storage of all electronic and hard copies including tape recordings

The raw data from the questionnaire, interview and focus group discussions will be stored in a flash drive or the supervisors DUT cloud, and monitored by the supervisor for 5 years and then the supervisor will permanently delete from the database

Persons to contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:(Supervisor and details)

Please contact the researcher, Mr Philip Mensah on +233 27 1209682 or at 22175074@dut4life.ac.za, my supervisor, Dr Obianuju Ebele Okeke-Uzodike on +27 71 605 7174 or at obianujuo@dut.ac.za, or the Institutional Research Ethics Administrator on 031 373 2375. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Postgraduate Support on researchdirector@dut.ac.za.

APPENDIX C



CONSENT

Full Title of the Study: Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana

Names of Researcher/s: Philip Mensah

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Mr Philip Mensah, about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: _____.
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (Participant Letter of Information) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.
- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerised system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

AUGUSTINA MENSAH

Full Name of Participant

Date

21-02-2022

Time

11:31AM

Signature

LOWE

.TD.

I, Philip Mensah, herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Philip Mensah

17th February 2022

Name of student

Date

Signature

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)

Date

Signature

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)

Date

Signature

APPENDIX D: Full Ethical Clearance



11 November 2022

Mr P Mensah
Faculty of Business Studies
Takoradi Technical University
P.O. Box 256
Takoradi
Ghana

Dear Mr Mensah

Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana
Ethical Clearance number IREC 103/22

The DUT-Institutional Research Ethics Committee acknowledges receipt of your final data collection tool for review.

We are pleased to inform you that the data collection tool has been approved. Kindly ensure that participants used for the pilot study are not part of the main study.


In addition, the DUT-IREC acknowledges receipt of your gatekeeper permission letter.

Please note that **FULL APPROVAL** is granted to your research proposal. You may proceed with data collection.

Any adverse events [serious or minor] which occur in connection with this study and/or which may alter its ethical consideration must be reported to the DUT-IREC according to the DUT-IREC Standard Operating Procedures (SOP's).

Please note that any deviations from the approved proposal require the approval of the DUT-IREC as outlined in the DUT-IREC SOP's.

Yours Sincerely


Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC



Institutional Research Ethics Committee
Research and Postgraduate Support Directorate
2nd Floor, Berwyn Court
Gate 1, Steve Biko Campus
Durban University of Technology

P O Box 1334, Durban, South Africa, 4001

Tel: 031 373 2375

Email: lavishad@dut.ac.za

http://www.dut.ac.za/research/institutional_research_ethics

www.dut.ac.za

7 March 2023

Mr P Mensah
Faculty of Business Studies
Takoradi Technical University
P.O. Box 256
Takoradi
Ghana

Dear Mr Mensah

Application for Amendment of Approved Research Proposal

Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana

Ethics Clearance Number: IREC 103/22

I am pleased to inform you that your application for amendment to the data collection tool has been approved.

Yours Sincerely

Prof J K Adam
Chairperson: DUT-IREC

APPENDIX E1: Gatekeeper's Permission

AHANTAMAN RURAL BANK PLC


TEL.NO.0312091033

OUR REF: ARB/HO/HRM/2022/416

YOUR REF:.....

E-mail: info@ahantamanbank.com.gh

Website: www.ahantamanbank.com.gh


THE PROGRESSIVE BANK

P.O. BOX 41
AGONA NKWANTA
VIA TAKORADI.

24th August, 2022.

**The Head
Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology
South Africa**

Dear Sir/Madam,


RE-GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The above subject is in response to a request by Mr. Philip Mensah, who is a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Management Sciences of Durban University of Technology, South Africa, and conducting a research on a topic "Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in Western Region of Ghana".

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Mensah has been granted permission to collect primary data from employees of Ahantaman Rural Bank Plc. We are satisfied with the information contained in his letter of information and the items in his research instruments, and are happy to provide him with all the support in his data collection.

Please, do not hesitate to contact undersigned in case you may need further clarification.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,


**JEROME MILARY ANNAN
(AG. HEAD HUMAN RESOURCE)
For: Chief Executive Officer**

BRANCHES:

Axim: 020-2070079	Tanokrom: 020-2070088	Apowa: 020-2070085	Agona: 020-2070084	Nsuaem: 020-2070087
Sekondi: 020-2070086	Kojokrom: 020-2070077	Kwesimintsim: 020-2070083	Abura: 020-2070078	AdumBanso: 050-1266864
Anaji: 020-2070082	Holy Child: 020-2070080	Tarkwa: 020-2070076	Effia: 050-1258744	

APPENDIX E2: Gatekeeper's Permission



LOWER PRA RURAL BANK PLC

P. O. Box 18, SHAMA, Western Region, Ghana.
Tel.: (233-31) 20 92290, (233-31) 20 97299, 0277 751 510
E-mail: info@lowerpraruralbank.com / Website: www.lowerpraruralbank.com

Our Ref. LPRB/OT/22-08/592

August 17, 2022

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology
South Africa

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The above subject is in response to a request by Mr. Philip Mensah, who is a Ph.D student in the Faculty of Management Sciences of Durban University of Technology, and conducting a research on a topic " Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana."


This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Mensah has been granted permission to collect primary data from the employees of Lower Pra Rural Bank Plc.

We are satisfied with the information contained in his letter and the items in his research instruments, and are happy to provide him with all the support in his data collection.

Please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned in case you will require further information.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully


Isaac Kwamina Afful
Chief Executive Officer

DIRECTORS: — Mr. Isaac Kwamina Van-Ess (*Chairman*), Mr. Peter K. Mensah, Ms Felicia Dawoo
Ms. Beatrice E. Ansah-Eshon, Dr. Eric Cobbinah

APPENDIX E3: Gatekeeper's Permission



**NZEMA MANLE
RURAL BANK PLC.**

Head Office: Aiyinasi
P. O. Box 43, Aiyinasi
Western Region.

031 209 23 69
info@nzemamanleruralbank.com

1st August 2022.

Department of Entrepreneurial Studies and Management
Faculty of Management Sciences
Durban University of Technology
South Africa.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: GATEKEEPER PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

The above subject is in response to a request by Mr. Philip Mensah, who is a Ph.D. student in the Faculty of Management Sciences of Durban University of Technology, and conducting a research on a topic "Supervision processes and employee reactions: A review of selected indigenous banks in the Western Region of Ghana."

This letter serves to confirm that Mr. Mensah has been granted permission to collect primary data from the employees of Nzema Manle Rural Bank. We are satisfied with the information contained in his letter of information and the items in his research instruments, and are happy to provide him with all the support in his data collection.

Please, do not hesitate to contact the undersigned in case you will require further information.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

AGENCIES: Awiebo | Aiyinase | Axim | Asasetre | Boinso | Elubo | Eikwei Jema | Takoradi | Gwira Aiyinase

www.nzemamanleruralbank.com

APPENDIX F: Editor's Letter



Certificate of Editing

This certification is a validation that the designated document has been edited
by *Gephart and Gephart (Pty) Ltd. (SATI Membership: 1000536)*

PhD Thesis: *Supervision Processes and Employee Reactions: A Study of
Selected Indigenous Banks in the Western Region of Ghana*

Author: *Philip Mensah*

Date: *21 July 2025*

Institution: *Durban University of Technology*

This English language document has been professionally edited according
to accepted standards regarding syntax, punctuation, appropriate wording, spelling,
and clarity, as well as making suggestions involving language accuracy.

However, we are not responsible for expressed content within the said document as
this is the author/authors responsibility. Also, the responsibility of implementing
the recommended language changes rests with the author/authors of the document.

Sincerely,

David B. Gephart
Principal Proofreader and Editor



Language Editors

6 Anna Neuhling Pohl St.
Langenhovenpark, Bloemfontein
Free State, South Africa, 9301
Ph: 0793936977 | 0793941726
Email:
docs@gephartandgephart.com
Web:
www.gephartandgephart.com

APPENDIX G: Turnitin Report

SUPERVISION PROCESSES AND EMPLOYEE REACTIONS: A STUDY OF SELECTED INDIGENOUS BANKS IN THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA

by Philip Mensah

Submission date: 21-Aug-2025 02:42AM (UTC+0200)
Submission ID: 2418204432
File name: 22175074_-_PHILIP_MENSAH_THESIS_-_CHAPTERS_1-7.docx (650.88K)
Word count: 55012
Character count: 326773

SUPERVISION PROCESSES AND EMPLOYEE REACTIONS: A STUDY OF SELECTED INDIGENOUS BANKS IN THE WESTERN REGION OF GHANA

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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APPENDIX H: Proof of Registration 2024



PROOF OF REGISTRATION To Whom It May Concern

09-Feb-2024

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

Surname:	MENSAH	First Names:	PHILIP
Student Number:	22175074	Qualification:	DPBAD1 D PHIL MAN SCIENCES (BUS AD)
Registration Year:	2024	Offering Type:	Durban Campus Full-time
Block:	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	Period of Study:	Study period 3
Department:	ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES & MGMT	Faculty:	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								6210.00
RPDB631	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT AND DISSERTATION (3RD REG)		P0	A	D1	2024	11	N	0.00
								Subtotal:	6210.00
								Total:	6210.00

* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 49443.00

Please verify and rectify the above registration details with the Faculty Office to avoid academic and financial penalties before the dates published in the General handbook.

Faculty Officer

APPENDIX H: Proof of Registration 2025



PROOF OF REGISTRATION To Whom It May Concern

07-Feb-2025

It is hereby confirmed that the under mentioned person is a registered student at DURBAN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY.

Surname:	MENSAH	First Names:	PHILIP
Student Number:	22175074	Qualification:	DPBAD1 D PHIL MAN SCIENCES (BUS AD)
Registration Year:	2025	Offering Type:	Durban Campus Full-time
Block:	POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS	Period of Study:	Study period 4
Department:	ENTREPRENEURIAL STUDIES & MGMT	Faculty:	FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT SCIENCES

Subject	Description	PreReq/Exp	Block	Class Group	Offering Type	Exam Year	Exam Month	Cancel	Amount
	Registration Fees/Levies								6500.00
RPDB641	P0 POST-GRAD ANNUAL REGISTRATIONS RESEARCH PROJECT AND DISSERTATION (4TH REG)		P0	A	D1	2025	11	N	0.00
								Subtotal:	6500.00
								Total:	6500.00

* Subjects with Requisites will be cancelled if the requisite rules are not met in mid-year exams. Refer to Department handbook.

Outstanding Balance: 56479.00

Please verify and rectify the above registration details with the Faculty Office to avoid academic and financial penalties before the dates published in the General handbook.

Faculty Officer