

**Leading Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized
Enterprises: Understanding the Role of Empowering
Leadership and Organisational Climate**

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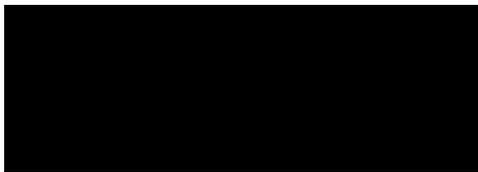
Melbourne, Australia

January 2019



Student Declaration

I, Hoang Truong Giang, declare that the PhD thesis entitled “Leading Innovation in Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises: Understanding the Role of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate” is no more than 100,000 words in length including quotes and exclusive of tables, figures, appendices, bibliography, references and footnotes. This thesis contains no material that has been submitted previously, in whole or in part, for the award of any other academic degree or diploma. Except where otherwise indicated, this thesis is my own work.



Hoang Truong Giang

14th January 2019

Melbourne, Australia

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List of Publications

Peer-reviewed article

Hoang, G, Wilson-Evered, E & Lockstone-Binney, L 2019, Leading Innovation among Tourism Small and Medium Enterprises: Examining the Mediating Role of Climate for Innovation, *Leadership & Organization Development Journal* (accepted on 08/07/2019, in press).

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Hoang, G, Wilson-Evered, E, Lockstone-Binney, L 2017, 'Linking leadership and innovation: A qualitative study of climate for innovation in tourism SMEs', *British Academy of Management Conference 2017*, 5-7 September, Warwick, UK.

Hoang, G, Wilson-Evered, E 2016, 'Exploring the relative contribution of empowering leadership and organisational climate to innovation in SMEs', *British Academy of Management Conference 2016*, 6-8 September, Newcastle, UK.

Conference presentations

Hoang, G, Wilson-Evered, E, Lockstone-Binney, L 2019, 'Leaders influencing innovation: A qualitative study exploring the role of leadership and organizational climate in tourism SMEs', Presentation at *Paper Development Workshop on Organizational and Institutional Change*, 19 June 2019, University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

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Abstract

Innovation is critical for sustainable business performance in the contemporary, global economic and social context. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) are well positioned to innovate because of their potential for rapid adjustment. Although leadership and organisational climate have been identified as playing key roles in innovation, little is known about how such influences play out in SMEs. This study explored the relationship between innovation and empowering leadership and the mediating role of climate for innovation in the context of Vietnamese tourism SMEs. A review of theory and empirical evidence revealed limitations with respect to the concept of empowering leadership and its influence in organisational climate and on subsequent innovation. This study used a sequential exploratory research design to explore these relationships. The systematic literature review (SLR) and qualitative study informed an integrated model of the relationship between empowering leadership, other leadership behaviours, climate for innovation and innovation. The quantitative study tested the model using structural equation modelling (SEM) and found that, contrary to expectations, empowering leadership did not have a direct positive relationship with SME innovation. Instead, the results indicated that empowering leadership influences innovation through the mediating effect of climate for innovation. In addition, the results suggest that where leaders initiate structure among their followers, there is an indirect effect on SME innovation, which is also mediated by a climate for innovation. The findings from this study not only provide deeper understanding of innovation management practices in Vietnamese SMEs, but also contribute new knowledge to the study of innovation and leadership. The results offer significant insights into scholarly debates about regional differences in leadership by demonstrating the way in which leaders shape the context for innovation in a dynamic economy in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the findings have implications for developing and managing innovation in tourism SMEs in Vietnam that may be generalisable to neighbouring economies. Further benefits include building the evidence base for how to leverage the advantages of empowering leadership to deliver innovation outcomes through an explicit climate for innovation in tourism SMEs.

Chapter 1. Introduction

1. Introducing the study

Innovation is considered an important factor in organisational effectiveness and competitive advantage (Slåtten & Mehmetoglu 2014). Organisations seek to be competitive through innovation and continuous improvement of products, processes or services in a competitive market (De Dreu & West 2001). According to Hart et al. (2002), innovation is a form of prosocial behaviour that has an essential impact on the success of an organisation. Typically, innovation is prioritised in organisational strategy to build competitive advantage and guarantee sustained economic survival (Cozijnsen, Vrakking & IJzerloo 2000; Hyland & Beckett 2004). Researchers have identified a range of factors affecting the innovation capability of firms; amongst these are leadership (Chan, Liu & Fellows 2014; Matzler et al. 2008) and organisational climate (West et al. 2003).

Research shows that different forms of leadership are related to innovation (Amabile et al. 2004; George & Zhou 2007). For example, a positive relationship exists between supportive leadership and innovation, and a negative relationship between controlling leadership and innovation (Amabile et al. 2004; Madjar, Oldham & Pratt 2002). In view of broader leadership approaches, empirical studies support the idea that transformational leadership has a positive effect on innovation (Jung, Chow & Wu 2003). Similarly, other leadership approaches have a positive impact on innovation, such as servant leadership (Yoshida et al. 2014), authentic leadership (Cerne, Jaklic & Skerlavaj 2013), and ethical leadership (Chen, A & Hou 2016). However, scarce attention has been paid to the link between innovation and empowering leadership, which is a leadership approach with the potential to influence innovation and creativity (Chow 2017; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010). In considering the evidence that empowering leaders may encourage innovation, scholars have called for a closer examination of empowering leadership and its influence on innovative work (Zhang, X & Bartol 2010).

Empowering leadership involves a transfer of power from senior levels of management to knowledge workers with high autonomy who are able to use initiative and make decisions about daily activities (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp 2005). Correspondingly, such work characteristics require particular forms of leadership. Findings point to empowering leadership as providing an effective approach compared to others such as directive, transactional, and

transformational leadership (Liu, W et al. 2003). Given that leadership is described as a process of influencing others (Yukl 2010), to empower emphasises giving influence to, rather than having influence over, others or situations. Therefore, empowering leadership shows promise as a trigger for innovation, especially in the fluid, fast-paced and competitive tourism sector featuring creative individualism (Chow 2017; Hjalager 2010).

To encourage innovation, the contributing of an organisational climate for innovation has been identified (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011). Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013, p. 362) described organisational climate as “the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the behaviours they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected”. An organisational climate that supports innovation is conceptualised as practices and norms that motivate employees to take initiative, and implement new ideas, processes, or products that benefit the organisations (West et al. 2003). Employees’ perceptions of a positive climate, which provides easy accessibility to organisational resources mediates the effects of leadership on employee creative performance (Scott & Bruce 1994). The presence of such a climate at the group level adds a facilitating edge to empowering leaders in promoting staff performance (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010; Jaiswal & Dhar 2015). However, the indirect effect of empowering leadership on innovation through climate for innovation has received less attention (Anderson, N & West 1998). To address this gap, this thesis explores the mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation.

Research on the relationship between leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is timely (Laforet 2013; Matzler et al. 2008; Ratam & Mazzarol 2003), as they are considered the backbone of economies worldwide. This thesis emphasises the importance of studying the relationship between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation among tourism SMEs in Vietnam for two reasons. First, SMEs play an important role in the economy of Vietnam due in part to their rapid development, both in quantity and quality (Tran, T, Le & Nguyen 2008). Over the years, SMEs have influenced the country’s economic development, represented the majority of Vietnamese companies and contributed significantly to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) every year (Muenjohn & McMurray 2017; Phan et al. 2015). Second, Vietnam is intensely focused on integrating with the global economy, resulting in one of the highest rates of economic growth and poverty reduction worldwide (Vandemoortele & Bird 2013). Consequently, domestic SMEs in Vietnam face increasing competition from foreign direct investment (FDI) companies

and multinational corporations operating in Vietnam, which have demonstrated success through innovation. Following this trend, the importance of innovation escalated, demanding that SMEs in Vietnam create and sustain their competitive advantage by improving their innovation capabilities.

Although leadership effectiveness has been studied in a wide range of countries, the topic has been under-researched in Vietnam (Ralston, Nguyen & Napier 1999). Vo and Hannif (2013) argued that despite some similarities between Vietnam and its neighbouring countries, researchers should not assume that notions of leadership arising from other Asian or Western countries will equally apply to the business context of Vietnam. The economic transition in Vietnam over recent decades has generated further interest in leadership styles as a subject of analysis in the Vietnamese business context (Muenjohn & McMurray 2017; Quang, Swierczek & Chi 1998; Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). Therefore, a study unpacking the relationship between leadership and innovation in the context of Vietnam SMEs has implications for research and practice.

This thesis aims to examine how empowering leadership encourages innovation and enhances a climate for innovation in Vietnamese tourism SMEs. The research results are expected to make theoretical and practical contributions in the management field.

2. Research problem

The previous section discussed the increasing importance of the practice of managing innovation in SMEs. In this section, the research problems and research gaps in the literature are discussed in detail.

2.1 The relationship between empowering leadership and innovation

Empowering leadership has been found to be positively related to creativity in general (Hughes et al. 2018). However, the effects of empowering leadership on innovation has received less attention from scholars (Lee, A, Willis & Tian 2018). Although previous studies have affirmed that empowering leadership encourages internal motivation and the creativity of subordinates and enhances employee creativity (Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006; Vecchio, Justin & Pearce 2010; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010), empirical evidence is scarce on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. This study seeks to go beyond previous studies and address this gap in the literature by employing a mixed-methods approach to investigate the effects of empowering leadership on innovation.

2.2 The mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation

This thesis integrates theoretical frameworks to examine the intervening role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. Despite the theoretical prediction that empowering leadership will be effective in different settings, some contextual variables are deemed to facilitate the effectiveness of empowering behaviours (Zhang, X & Zhou 2014). Leadership, which is considered a dynamic social process, does not happen in a vacuum. Instead, it is developed in an environment where leadership behaviours interact with contextual factors to become effective (Chan, Liu & Fellows 2014; Matić et al. 2017). Similarly, the contingency approach suggests that leadership is enabled by many potential mediators among which the organisational context is a strong contender (Dale & Fox 2008; Pigeon, Montani & Boudrias 2017; Shanker et al. 2017; Yoshida et al. 2014). Leadership behaviours are influential for shaping organisational climate and warrants scholarly attention in different contexts (Chen, A & Hou 2016; Shanker et al. 2017). To extend such understanding, this thesis explores the mediating role of climate for innovation on the association between empowering leadership and innovation in tourism SMEs.

The presence of a climate for innovation is expected to facilitate the effect of leadership by encouraging employees' innovative behaviours to result in implemented innovation. A climate for innovation creates norms and practices, providing autonomy and encouraging employees to formulate new ideas (West et al. 2003). Employees working in a climate for innovation perceive they are empowered to think independently and build on their cognitive and emotional resources to contribute in a creative manner to the organisation's objectives. Empowering leaders invite employees to build on their inner strengths and resources for individual and organisational benefit. Within a climate for innovation, employees interpret the actions of leaders as legitimate, supported and rewarded by the organisation. However, there is limited empirical evidence that climate for innovation mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation (Matić et al. 2017; Xue, Bradley & Liang 2011). Therefore, this study will be the first to investigate the facilitating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation.

2.3 Exploratory research on empowering leadership and innovation

The topic of empowering leadership and innovation has attracted scholarly attention in recent years, whereby most studies employed quantitative methods to examine theoretical-

based models. Very little exploratory research on this topic has been published. Therefore, an exploratory studies has the potential to develop deeper understandings of empowering leadership and its effect on innovation (Sharma & Kirkman 2015). This thesis makes an important contribution by conducting a mixed-methods study to develop a conceptual model highlighting the role of empowering leadership in encouraging innovation. This study uses a sequential exploratory research design, as suggested by Creswell (2014), to identify the variables and develop an integrated model through which to investigate the relationship among empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation. To address the research questions (discussed in the next section), this study was conducted in two phases. The first phase explored how Chief Executive Officer (CEO) report that their leadership behaviours shape the organisational climate of their organisations and how their leadership influences innovation. Next, a quantitative study was conducted to empirically test the model with a larger sample.

This research is one of the first studies investigating empowering leadership using mixed methods and it provides new insights on innovation in SMEs in a developing economy. By focusing on the mediating role of climate for innovation, the thesis provides improved understanding of the role of climate for innovation in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation.

3. Research aims and questions

The aim of this study was to develop broader insight into the relationship between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in the SME context. In pursuit of this overall aim, three research questions were formulated as follows:

RQ1. To what extent does empowering leadership influence innovation in the SME context? (Systematic review, Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

RQ2. What role does empowering leadership play in developing a climate for innovation in the SME context? (Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

RQ3. What is the role of climate for innovation in mediating the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in the SME context? (Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

The first research question (RQ1) is intended to empirically explore: 1) the characteristics that SME managers associate with innovation; 2) the empowerment activities that SME managers substantiate for themselves with regard to encouraging innovation; and 3)

the ways in which senior managers envision and conceptualise turbulence and complexity within their organisation.

After exploring characteristics of a climate for innovation and its leadership from leader perspectives, this study concentrates on the relationship between empowering leadership and climate for innovation. From this perspective, the second research question (RQ2) is intended to provide an empirical investigation of the role played by empowering leadership in developing a climate for innovation. As there is a gap in the literature on the impact of empowering leadership on a climate for innovation (Matić et al. 2017; Xue, Bradley & Liang 2011), this study explored leadership approaches among Vietnamese SMEs. The findings of the qualitative study were used to inform the quantitative research design and the conceptual model. Consequently, an expanded conceptual framework was tested in the quantitative study.

Proceeding from the insight developed into particular relationships between leadership and innovation within the SME context, the final question (RQ3) of this study focused on the mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. Moreover, to ensure the robustness of any identified potential relationships between empowering leadership and innovation performance, this question also enabled an investigation of the effects of other leadership styles that emerged from the qualitative findings. By doing so, this question provided an opportunity to analyse the leadership-innovation relationships in an SME context, thereby broadening the focus of the study to include other than empowering leadership behaviours.

4. Contribution and significance of the research

Whereas several studies have been conducted in the field of leadership and innovation in SMEs, this study is among the first to explore the influence of empowering leadership on innovation SMEs in an emerging economy.

Theoretically, the study makes a significant contribution by exploring the direct effect of empowering leadership on innovation and the mediating role of climate for innovation on this relationship. The research assists in capturing leadership behaviours, with a focus on the empowering leadership approach, relevant to innovation in Vietnamese SMEs. Explicit consideration of the role of leadership, and particularly of daily leadership behaviours to enhance innovative behaviours, may raise the awareness and visibility of these practices. The thesis indicates that leaders from Vietnamese tourism SMEs not only encouraged their subordinates' creativity and innovative behaviours through their own empowering actions, but

also, in some circumstances, by instituting an initiating structure and directive approach. This thesis is among the first to study the link between theories of empowering leadership, innovation and climate for innovation as well as providing evidence of the linkages between initiating structure, climate for innovation and innovations to which some scholars have referred though few have empirically investigated (Gaudet & Tremblay 2017; Judge, Piccolo & Ilies 2004).

The study makes another significant contribution by proposing a grounded conceptual model reflecting the leadership process and its effects on organisational climate and innovation in SMEs. The findings from the mixed-methods study provide new insights into other leadership practices to provide autonomy for employees, enhance teamwork efficiency, and enable appropriate support for implementing new ideas. By suggesting the fine-tuning of leadership in the SME context, the thesis sheds light on those adaptive leadership strategies necessary to generate significant effects on the climate for innovation and on innovation itself; an identified gap in contemporary research evidence.

In practical terms, the findings have important implications for human resource managers seeking to improve creativity and innovation in firms. By developing a reward and incentive system along with leadership and team development programs, human resource specialists can help shape the suitable context for leadership behaviours that stimulate innovation in SMEs. The effects of such initiatives, on both policy development and implementation of appropriate human resource practices and systems, may help shape an organisational climate supportive of leadership for innovation. They may also facilitate resource flexibility and the intellectual capital essential for achieving and maintaining innovative behaviours. Moreover, human resource specialists may provide coaching, discussions, mentoring, or training in supporting employees to nurture new ideas and implement those ideas successfully.

The study contributes significantly to the development of leadership practices and guidelines that will motivate innovation in SMEs. To enable contextual ambidexterity (Havermans et al. 2015), the thesis provides leaders with an understanding of the implications of developing an organisational climate that supports innovation. In addition, the thesis will help leaders understand that they can continually adapt these behaviours to achieve the best fit with climates that support innovation in dynamically changing contexts. Based on the empirical evidence, the thesis provides recommendations for leaders of tourism SMEs. Leaders may learn from the findings that adding other approaches to empowering behaviours will support a

climate for innovation and encourage innovative behaviours to enhance innovation in their organisations.

5. Context of the study

The context or setting in which the study is situated always influences research implementation and findings (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam 2003). An argument can be developed that management research requires contextualisation as it makes studies more precise and interpretation of findings more robust (Rousseau & Fried 2001; Schneider 1982). Contextual differences may cause inconsistent results, and teasing out underlying patterns requires researchers to focus more on the context (Rousseau & Fried 2001). This study was designed to control variability in the context and avoid extrapolating beyond the sample where the data were collected by selecting a single city (Hanoi), business sector (Tourism and SMEs) and cultural orientation (Vietnam).

The research was conducted on tourism SMEs in Vietnam. In this study, the current Vietnamese Government criteria for classifying a tourism firm as an SME was adopted. This is that an SME has no more than 200 employees (Government of Vietnam 2017). SMEs make a significant contribution in Vietnam, representing 97% of companies, employing 51% of the labour workforce and producing about 40% of GDP every year (Phan et al. 2015). Following this trend, the significance of innovation has been increasing, demanding that SMEs in Vietnam create and sustain their competitive advantage through improving their innovation capabilities.

The tourism sector also makes a significant contribution to the Vietnamese economy. According to the World Travel and Tourism Council, the direct contribution of tourism to the Vietnamese economy in 2017 was 9.4% of GDP and 4.6% of total employment (World Travel and Tourism Council 2018). This contribution is forecast to grow in both the short and long term (Martínez-Román et al. 2015). SMEs account for over 80% of Vietnamese tourism firms (Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism 2014).

Notwithstanding increasing interest in the empirical study of innovation, no model has to date been published to explain innovation among tourism SMEs (Martínez-Román et al. 2015). Given notable differences in innovation within service sectors compared to product sectors (Wikhamn, W 2019), and particularly in tourism (Divisekera & Nguyen 2018; Hjalager 2010; Kriz'aj, Brodnik & Bukovec 2014), a specific study of the factors affecting innovation in this setting is timely (Al-Ansari, Xu & Pervan 2014).

6. Thesis structure

This thesis includes a systematic literature review (SLR) and two empirical studies using mixed methods and involving both manager and employee samples. The thesis is structured as follows. This chapter (Chapter 1) has provided an overview of the topic, the research gaps that need to be addressed and the significance of the study.

Chapter 2 provides a brief exploration of the most important theoretical concepts used throughout the thesis. The purpose of the chapter is to present the underlying theoretical premises to answer the three sub-questions in the two chapters reporting the empirical studies (Chapter 5 and 6).

The SLR in Chapter 3 synthesises the current literature on the concept of empowering leadership and presents the contemporary empirical evidence on the link between empowering leadership and innovation.

Chapter 4 discusses the research design, analytic techniques, and the instruments used to measure the central concepts. Additionally, the methodological choices that were made are explained and discussed, with a focus on the reasons for, and implications of, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Chapter 5 presents an analysis of the empirical data derived from managers of tourism SMEs in Vietnam. The qualitative study explores how leaders in tourism SMEs shape the organisational climate of their firms to enhance innovation. This chapter also presents the integrated model that informed the research design of the quantitative study.

Chapter 6 tests the study conceptual model and hypotheses with respect to empowering leadership and SME innovation performance, and explains the mediating role of climate for innovation.

Finally, Chapter 7 discusses the results of the empirical studies, thereby formulating answers to the research questions of this thesis. It also addresses the contributions and limitations of the research and presents theoretical and practical implications.

7. Chapter summary

This introductory chapter has provided an overview of the thesis. The background of the research has been presented, followed by statements of the research problem. Three research questions were proposed in accordance with the research aims. The chapter also

presented a statement of research significance. In the next chapter (Chapter 2), the literature related to the study is presented with the aim of identifying research gaps.

Chapter 2. Literature review

1. Introduction

This chapter outlines omissions in the literature in relation to innovation, organisational climate and leadership in the SME context. First, an argument is developed by briefly reviewing relevant theories of innovation. In addition, an argument is presented for underlying the contribution of innovation in SMEs. Next, the chapter discusses the origins of organisational climate and the distinction between organisational climate and climate for innovation and organisational culture. The chapter also reviews relevant theories of leadership, cross-cultural leadership and leadership in the SME context. Subsequently, the differential impact of a number of leadership styles on innovation is explored. From this review, it is argued that empowering leadership potentially produces a climate for innovation among followers and encourages innovation. However, whether the influence of empowering leadership on innovation is direct or via a mediating mechanism has not been confirmed, and warrants further study. The review of literature in this chapter described theoretical frameworks which inform the empirical study reported in the following chapters. This chapter concludes by emphasising the needs to conduct an SLR on empowering leadership to identify how empowering leaders influence the climate for innovation and stimulate innovation.

2. Innovation

2.1 Definition of innovation

The concept of innovation has a long history and has been conceptualised in several ways by scholars. Economists have described innovation as fundamental technological development that leads to important changes in the cost-quantity relationship, measured through research and development capability (Romer 1990; Solow 1957). The management literature goes beyond this position and considers the meaning of innovation as more than just technology development by defining it as a set of outcomes or activities recognised to be new by an innovating unit (Damanpour & Evan 1984; Rogers 1995; Zaltman, Duncan & Holbek 1973). One of the earliest definitions was provided by Zaltman, Duncan and Holbek (1973, p. 656), who stated that innovation is “any idea, practice, or material artefact perceived to be new by the relevant unit of adoption.” Summarising innovation theories, Borins (2008) described four themes: (1) what is happening at the leading edge of governance and public service; (2)

sustainability of innovations and the innovation life cycle; (3) diffusion of innovations; and (4) innovation and organisational performance.

Innovation comprises three interrelated activities: 1) idea formation, related to the generation of new ideas and the seeking of new methods, techniques, or instruments to advance knowledge and practice; 2) idea promotion that seeks to support innovative ideas and acquire approval for them; and 3) idea realisation, consisting of transforming innovative ideas into realisable applications (Janssen 2000; Kanter 1988; Scott & Bruce 1994). Innovation is often confused with creativity due to the complex nature of the two concepts. This confusion has been discussed in a number of studies (Amabile 1996; Cerne, Jaklic & Skerlavaj 2013; Ekvall 1996; West 2002; West et al. 2003), with recommendations to clarify the definitions of innovation and creativity. In their critical review, Hughes et al. (2018, p. 3) proposed the general definitions of creativity and innovation as follows:

Workplace creativity concerns the cognitive and behavioural processes applied when attempting to generate novel ideas. Workplace innovation concerns the processes applied when attempting to implement new ideas. Specifically, innovation involves some combination of problem/opportunity identification, the introduction, adoption or modification of new ideas germane to organisational needs, the promotion of these ideas, and the practical implementation of these ideas.

Of note, according to Hughes et al. (2018), creativity and innovation are conceptualised independently of any antecedents or potential effects. These definitions confirm that creativity and innovation in the workplace are two distinct but closely related concepts. Creativity refers to idea formulation, whereas innovation relates to the introduction, modification, promotion and implementation of ideas.

2.2 Classification of innovation

Based on different dimensions (i.e., type, magnitude, and form), innovation can be classified as either: (1) technological and administrative innovation; (2) radical exploratory and incremental exploitative innovation; or (3) product/service, process and business model innovation (Rosenkopf & Nerkar 2001). A definition by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) categorised innovation into four groups: product (good or service) innovation, process innovation, marketing innovation, or management innovation (OECD 2005). In this thesis, innovation is classified in relation to its form and focus on product

and process innovations. Research evidence suggests that a firm's competitive advantage depends on both product and process innovations (Chang, Bai & Li 2015; Damanpour & Evan 1984). Product innovation is seen in new outputs or services that are introduced for the benefit of customers and is considered the most critical factor contributing to a firm's competitive advantage (Casadesus-Masanell & Zhu 2012; Paladino 2008). Process innovation includes new tools, devices, and knowledge inputs that enable production and management operations (Chang, Bai & Li 2015). Based on these differentiating characteristics, Gopalakrishnan, Bierly and Kessler (1999) suggested that knowledge related to process innovation is more tacit and complex and therefore more difficult to understand and imitate than knowledge related to product innovation. By contrast, product innovation is often easier to understand and can be seen from the external environment (Von Hippel 1988).

2.3 Innovation in SMEs

Innovation has long been recognised as important for the development of firms of all sizes (Tucker 2002). Innovation motivates firms to implement better business solutions and brings the potential for greater future success (Hult, Hurley & Knight 2004). Scholars have indicated that innovation has a significant effect on the sustainability of firms' competitive advantage (Barney 1991; Porter 1980). Innovation, therefore, reflects the firms' ability to search and apply new and better ideas, practices or material artefacts to achieve improved performance and adaptability to market changes (Blumentritt & Danis 2006; North & Smallbone 2000).

SMEs, particularly in developing markets, not only contribute to (Allocca & Kessler 2006) but also drive innovation outcomes in terms of social advances (Salavou, Baltas & Lioukas 2004). Although smaller firms have less resources, they are considered key engines for innovation and technological development (Clark & Douglas 2014). Notwithstanding being disadvantaged due to economies of scale, scarcer resources, smaller market size and more vulnerability to market changes compared to large companies (Cagliano, Blackmon & Voss 2000; Tether 1998), many SMEs embrace innovation as central to their business development strategies (Wikhamn, B, Wikhamn & Styhre 2016). SMEs benefit from quicker processes to translate innovative ideas to practices and products because of their flexible structures, entrepreneurial focus and less bureaucratic decision-making procedures (Al-Ansari, Xu & Pervan 2014). SMEs with good innovation performance are more dynamic and open to new

ideas; they are receptive and flexible, especially in terms of viewing challenges as learning opportunities rather than obstacles (Noke & Hughes 2010).

A substantial number of theoretical and empirical studies have identified the link between leadership and innovation in large enterprises - although surprisingly few published works have drawn on the SME context (Jaiswal & Dhar 2015; Kenny, B & Reedy 2006; Muenjohn & McMurray 2016). The importance of leadership for innovative practice has been confirmed in SMEs in emerging economies (Al-Ansari, Xu & Pervan 2014; Muenjohn & McMurray 2017). Much is known about the drivers of innovation; however, there is limited research examining the perceptions of senior managers in enhancing innovation by shaping a climate for innovation (Herrera 2016).

3. Organisational climate

3.1 The origins of organisational climate

According to the historical overview written by Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2011), organisational climate has been of interest to academics and practitioners since the 1970s. The concept of climate can be viewed from different theoretical perspectives (Ekvall 1987; Kuenzi & Schminke 2009) and at diverse levels of analysis (James et al. 2007; James, James & Ashe 1990). A review of the literature reveals two streams of enquiry when determining the constructs that comprise organisational climate. First, James, Joyce and Slocum (1988) indicated that organisational climate is an aggregated psychological climate because it shows how individuals perceive their organisation generally. From this viewpoint, a psychological climate is defined as a “set of perceptions that reflect how work environments, including organisational attributes, are cognitively appraised and represented in terms of their meaning to and significance for individuals” (James, Joyce & Slocum 1988, p. 129). James, Joyce and Slocum (1988) argued that when individuals share a common perception of a psychological climate, this is aggregated to become a collective organisational climate. Conversely, Glick (1985) conceptualised climate as an organisational rather than individual attribute, emerging from organisational as well as sociological processes. Organisational climate is referred to as “a generic term for a broad class of organisational, rather than psychological, variables that describe the organisational context for individuals' actions” (Glick 1985, p. 613). In support of the approaches of both Glick (1985) and James, Joyce and Slocum (1988), Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013, p. 362) described organisational climate as “the shared perceptions of and the meaning attached to the policies, practices, and procedures employees experience and the

behaviours they observe getting rewarded and that are supported and expected”. In doing so, the definition developed by Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013) draws on collective perceptions of individuals in relation to aspects of the organisation. In previous work, Schneider and Reichers (1983, p. 21) distinguished psychological climates and organisational climates by identifying that “psychological climates are the meanings an individual attaches to a work context, while organisational climates are the summated, averaged meanings that people attach to a particular feature of the setting”. In this thesis, the approach proposed by Glick (1985) and Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013) is adopted by focusing on the climate for innovation that affects the operation and strategies of SMEs. The effort of the whole organisation is considered salient in creating an organisational climate that stimulates innovation in SMEs (Baer & Frese 2003).

3.2 Organisational climate and organisational culture

Both organisational climate and organisational culture are affected by leadership and can be instrumental in shaping innovation, so distinguishing between these two constructs is appropriate (Ekvall 1996). Organisational culture is defined as “the shared basic assumptions, values, and beliefs that characterise a setting and are taught to newcomers as the proper way to think and feel, communicated by the myths and stories people tell about how the organisation came to be the way it is as it solved problems associated with external adaptation and internal integration” (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013, p. 362). This values orientation sets culture apart from climate.

Organisational culture can encourage innovation (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013; Wallace, Hunt & Richards 1999) and predicts innovation in different contexts (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2011, 2013; Wallace, Hunt & Richards 1999). The crucial distinction between organisational culture and organisational climate is that the latter can be a measurable and observable indicator of the former through the assessment of employee perceptions of procedures, policies and practices (Ahmed 1998; Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013; Zohar & Hofmann 2012). While culture is implicitly evaluated through values, aspects of climate are assessed in terms of both behavioural and attitudinal characteristics (Wallace, Hunt & Richards 1999). Organisational culture and organisational climate are studied differently using different methods, with organisational culture explored mostly in qualitative studies and organisational climate using employee surveys (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013). Organisational culture exists at a more abstract level and is more difficult to measure than organisational climate.

Organisational climate is considered one of the most important aspects in organisational settings as it affects organisational performance (Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013; Zohar & Hofmann 2012). Organisational climate is the focus of the current study, seeking to empirically examine the mediating role of climate, rather than organisational culture, on innovation by understanding behaviours rather than values. The following section considers the characteristics of the climate for innovation.

3.3 Climate for innovation as a domain specific climate

Hunter, Bedell and Mumford (2007) identified that organisational climate is a domain referenced phenomenon that is specific to a context. In support of this idea, Schneider, Ehrhart and Macey (2013) argued that the concept of climate should be studied in a defining context. In the past decades, scholars have examined a number of specific domain climates, for instance, climate for innovation (Amabile 1996; West 1990), safety climate (Zohar & Luria 2005), climate for entrepreneurship (Bergmann et al. 2018), ethical climates (Joe et al. 2018; Wimbush & Shepard 1994) and climate for service (Schneider et al. 2009).

The current study focuses on innovation in SMEs, therefore, organisational climate will be understood as climate for innovation. Climate for innovation refers to “practices and norms supported by an organization that encourage employees to take initiatives, and explore and develop new ideas, processes, or products that benefit the organization” (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010, p. 701). According to psychological climate theory (Schneider, Brief & Guzzo 1996; Schneider, Ehrhart & Macey 2013; Schneider & Reichers 1983), employees tend to respond to the cognition of the environment rather than to an objective environment. Therefore, employees’ innovative behaviours are dependent on their perceptions of the environment. A climate for innovation is predicted to facilitate employees to adapt to changes and adopt innovative behaviours (Ekvall 1996; West et al. 2003; Wilson-Evered & Härtel 2001). In the following section, the relationship between climate for innovation and innovation is discussed in the context of SMEs.

3.4 Linking climate for innovation and innovation in SMEs

Both theorising and empirical research on climate for innovation have identified a positive association between innovation and climate for innovation (Shanker et al. 2017; Wilson-Evered & Härtel 2001). Climate for innovation influences innovation processes in organisations to contribute to general organisational performance (Kuenzi & Schminke 2009; Wilson-Evered, Härtel & Neale 2004). Climate is a significant aspect in the study of innovation

and organisational performance (Koene, Vogelaar & Soeters 2002; Schneider, Brief & Guzzo 1996). Innovation is dependent on a climate that supports innovation (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011). Although individuals could generate creative and innovative ideas by themselves, their willingness to innovate is contingent on the climate in which they work (Mumford et al. 2008). Innovative organisations typically have climates that support innovation, based on the number of patents achieved, technology development, business strategies and success in introducing new products and services to the market (Ekvall 2002), which differentiates them from stagnant or complacent organisations.

Previous scholars have used theoretical frameworks to identify variables implicated in influencing innovation. For example, Amabile and colleagues (Amabile & Conti 1999; Amabile & Grysiewicz 1989) proposed a theory of intrinsic motivation to develop a model of eight dimensions: work group support, challenging work, organisational encouragement, supervisory encouragement, organisational impediments, freedom, workload pressure, and sufficient resources. Similarly, West and colleagues (Anderson, N & West 1998; Burningham & West 1995; West et al. 2003) developed a theory of team interactions resulting in a four-dimension model of participative safety, support for innovation, challenging objectives, and task orientation. Ekvall and colleagues (Ekvall 1996; Ekvall & Ryhammar 1999) drew on a dispositional framework theoretically grounded in underlying psychological processes to support a nine-dimension model: challenge and involvement, freedom, trust and openness, idea time, playfulness and humour, conflict, idea support, debate, and risk-taking. To integrate these different contexts, Hunter, Bedell and Mumford (2005) built on the work of Lapierre and Giroux (2003) to review the available taxonomies of climate variables. Their analysis showed that more than 90% of the variables appearing in prior taxonomies could be explained by a 14-dimension model: positive peer group, positive supervisory relationships, resources, challenges, mission clarity, autonomy, positive interpersonal exchange, intellectual stimulation, top management support, reward orientation, flexibility and risk-taking, product emphasis, participation, and organisational integration. In a later study by these authors (Hunter, Bedell & Mumford 2007), a meta-analysis of 42 prior studies investigated the effects of these 14 climate dimensions on creativity and innovation. The range of effect sizes achieved for the dimensions was from .51 to .91. The dimensions giving the largest deltas were positive interpersonal exchange ($\Delta = .91$), intellectual stimulation ($\Delta = .88$), and challenge ($\Delta = .85$). Evidently, “an intellectually stimulating environment in which people have challenging work,

and colleagues with who they can exchange ideas, is critical to enable creativity and innovation” (Hunter, Bedell & Mumford 2007, p. 77).

The potential of various measures of climate for innovation to predict innovation and creativity has been studied (Mathisen & Einarsen 2004; Shanker et al. 2017). To assess the validation of such measures, researchers have investigated the relationship between climate dimensions and innovation outputs and outcomes (Bunce & West 1995; Caldwell & O’Reilly III 2003). Further, evidence for the predictive validity of climate assessment has been achieved using a variety of other criteria, comprising expert judgments of products produced (Agrell & Gustafson 1994), innovation adoption (Kitchell 1995), and engagement in entrepreneurial activities. Clearly, a climate measure can provide perceived evidence of innovation but has more weight if perceptions can be translated to actual innovation outcomes (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011). Several empirical studies have focused on the relationship between climate, innovation and other organisational factors such as leadership and firm performance. Hosseini, Azar and Rostamy (2003) used structural equation modelling (SEM) and path analysis to analyse data collected from 158 middle managers from 96 manufacturing Iranian companies. Their study concluded that organisational climate mediated the relationship between middle managers’ technological innovation and organisational factors, including organisational structure, strategies and working environment. Furthermore, a study of 47 German medium-sized enterprises indicated that climates for initiative and psychological safety were significantly associated with firm performance and moderated the relationship between firm performance and process innovation (Baer & Frese 2003).

Researchers have asked to what extent the climate for innovation differs among diverse markets (Hirst et al. 2018). Applying employee involvement theory, Hirst et al. (2008) examined the relationships between climate for autonomy, work demands climate, employee stress and organisational productivity in a cross national study of 51 British and 104 Chinese manufacturing organisations. The authors found that climate for autonomy was positively and negatively related to stress in the Chinese and United Kingdom contexts, respectively. In another study, links between climate for innovation and individual and organisational level factors were found from enterprises in five Asian and European countries (Übius, Alas & Elenurm 2013). Findings showed that climate for innovation differentially predicted individual and organisational level factors in the studied countries. Two climate for innovation factors, commitment and freedom, predicted individual level factors in all five countries. In two studied Asian countries, commitment predicted meaning of work and job satisfaction, whereas in three

European countries the links between factors of the climate for innovation and individual meaning of work and job satisfaction were excluded from the model. The authors suggested future research should evaluate the application of the findings in other contexts, particularly in developing countries (Übius, Alas & Elenurm 2013). This suggestion is congruent with the aims of the current study.

Organisations having successfully developed climate for innovation to create policies and practices that welcome the expression and implementation of new ideas (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010). An organisation supporting innovation plays an important mediating role in stimulating innovative behaviours (Cerne, Jaklic & Skerlavaj 2013). In sum, individuals working in a workplace with a climate that values experimentation and tolerates occasional flaws, exhibit higher levels of creative behaviours (Jaiswal & Dhar 2015). In line with the findings of previous studies, Wang, P et al. (2013) found that a climate for innovation predicted innovation more significantly when the climate for innovation strength was high.

Previous studies have identified that developing a suitable climate for innovation will enhance the innovation capacity of SMEs (Kmieciak, Michna & Meczynska 2012; Popa, Soto-Acosta & Martinez-Conesa 2017). It is important to understand the contribution of senior leaders, who are often the owner of the firm, and their perceptions of how they create a climate to encourage innovation (Mazzarol et al. 2014). Further studies are necessary to explore the deep insights of SME leaders in terms of how they shape the climate for innovation through, for example, idea sharing, trust, creativity stimulation, support for innovation, and openness to change (Scott & Bruce 1994). By incorporating the theoretical views and empirical evidence, the current study proposes that climate for innovation enhances innovation in SMEs.

4. Leadership

4.1 Overview of leadership theories

Although there are many ways to define leadership (Yukl 2010) and a multitude of methodologies to explore leadership in different contexts (Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam 2003), the importance of leadership in organisations is unequivocal (Chen, G & Bliese 2002). Yukl (2010) defined leadership as the process of facilitating personal and mutual efforts to achieve common objectives. De Jong and Den Hartog (2007, p. 44) looked at leadership as “the process of influencing others towards achieving some kind of desired outcome.” Leadership has been recognised for its contribution to the success of work teams

(Kozlowski et al. 2009) and as critical for enterprise innovation. Matzler et al. (2008) concluded that leadership had a strong influence on firm performance and innovation. Given the extant evidence to link innovation and leadership, the current study focuses on the role of leadership in stimulating the emergence of a climate for innovation and its direct and indirect effect on innovation.

Gardner et al. (2010) provided a detailed description of the development of a leadership theory classification scheme. This scheme consisted of 29 categories of leadership theories. Some examples are the complexity theory of leadership, cross-cultural leadership, behavioural approaches, and leadership traits and attributes. Relatively recently, Dinh et al. (2014), based on the work of Gardner et al. (2010), conducted a systematic review of leadership theory trends. Dinh et al. (2014) identified how much the leadership field has developed in recent decades and categorised 66 different leadership theory domains. Their classification showed that since the year 2000, a number of emerging leadership theories have developed in the literature, such as neurological perspectives on leadership and the continued explosion of theories relating to leading for creativity and innovation, toxic/dark leadership, and strategic leadership (Dinh et al. 2014). Moreover, findings suggested that scholars remain interested in some established leadership theories, such as neo-charismatic, information processing, trait, and leader–follower exchange theories. By contrast, there is less interest in leadership theories such as behavioural approaches, contingency theory, and path-goal theory. Generally, Dinh et al. (2014) concluded that the expansion of leadership theories shows the significance of developing and exploring this field of study.

Scholars have unpacked leadership from different viewpoints. For example, Trung et al. (2014) mentioned three aspects of leadership functions: transformational leadership, motivating leadership and culture-building leadership. In transformational leadership, the leader has the ability to influence others by connecting their self-concept to the mission of the organisation or group and by addressing and modifying their values and self-esteem (Kark, Shamir & Chen 2003). Motivating leaders understand followers' demands and satisfy them, recognise differences in people, assign tasks based on their abilities and preferences, and encourage employees to engage in creative activities (Trung et al. 2014). Culture-building leaders create a suitable organisational climate that stimulates creativity and innovation based on a values system, cultural norms and corresponding behaviours (Trung et al. 2014). In connecting leadership to innovation, much of the research has focussed on these latter approaches.

Over recent decades transformational leadership has been studied in relation to innovation. Scholars (Podsakoff et al. 1990; Reuvers et al. 2008; Yukl 2010) sought to streamline and integrate various approaches to leadership, using the transformational theory formulated by Bass (1985). Bass recognised two forms of leadership: transformational and transactional. Transformational leadership, as theorised by Bass (1985), originated from the classification of political transformational and transactional leaders proposed by Burns (1978). In transactional leadership, the relationship of leader-subordinate is developed through bargaining and exchanges between both parties (Howell & Avolio 1993). In transformational leadership, leaders go beyond rewarding for achievement by idealising influence, individualising consideration, intellectually stimulating and inspirationally motivating followers to exceed their personal interests to achieve better collective goals (Bass 1985; Hater & Bass 1988). Such leadership behaviours are considered more complex than constructive and corrective transactions and are crucial to stimulate innovation.

A theoretical exploration by Pearce et al. (2003) extended the transformational-transactional paradigm by proposing five major styles of leadership in contemporary management: aversive leadership; transactional leadership; transformational leadership; directive leadership; and empowering leadership. The main contribution of this exploration was to distinguish aversive, directive and empowering leadership as distinctive leadership styles (Pearce et al. 2003; Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). Aversive leadership comprises negative behaviours such as threats, admonishment, coercion and punishment. More benevolent than aversive leaders, directive leaders express their leadership through directions, command and instruction (Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). According to directive leadership, the leaders make their own decisions and assign specific tasks in a firm and urgent tone but still respect their followers. Empowering leaders, instead of giving orders or direction, usually encourage self-confidence, provide autonomy, motivate self-problem-solving and stimulate positive opportunity thinking among their subordinates (Hao, He & Long 2018; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010). The typology of Pearce et al. (2003) has several advantages, including the way it combines classical leadership views (i.e. transformational and transactional leadership) and contemporary views (aversive, directive and empowering leadership) based on modern empowerment and behavioural theories. Drawing on situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard 1969) and adopting the typology of Pearce et al. (2003), Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009) proposed a strategy of how leaders could develop their own theory of leadership and apply it

in specific circumstances. Their findings suggest that leaders should sometimes direct and sometimes empower their followers, an approach which informs the current study.

Situational leadership theory introduced by Hersey and Blanchard (1969) has recently been reaffirmed as consisting of a set of perspective principles (Blanchard 2018). The original theory proposed a taxonomy of four leadership approaches - directive, coaching, supportive and empowering - and a framework to match each approach with particular circumstances (Blanchard 2018). New employees or learners who have high commitment but low competence would benefit from directive leadership with low supportive and high directive behaviours. For disillusioned learners who have low competence and low commitment, coaching leadership with high supportive and high directive behaviours would be appropriate. For capable but cautious employees, characterised as highly competent but with variable commitment, supportive leadership with high support and low directive behaviours is considered the best approach. Self-reliant performers, characterised by high competence and commitment, benefit most from empowering leadership with low directive and low supportive behaviours. While widely understood, situational leadership theory is surprisingly under-researched. This is due, in part, to difficulties associated with measurement, content and research design within the theory (Thompson & Glasø 2015, 2018).

In sum, the research reviewed in this section suggests that the study of leadership has continued to grow rapidly over past decades, attracting the attention of scholars and practitioners worldwide which has diversified the way the leadership phenomena is understood (Gardner et al. 2010). Leaders can develop their own theory of leadership to apply in particular situations. Empowering leadership is a distinct form of leadership, which theoretically could stimulate innovation. Comparing the evidence reviewed, the tenet of this thesis is that empowering leadership has an important place in contemporary research on innovation. However, a review of the literature on what is distinct about empowering leadership and its connection to innovation warrants objective analysis. Therefore, an SLR on empowering leadership was conducted and reported in Chapter 3, which provides further insights into this approach to leadership.

In the next sections, leadership in different cultures, leadership in SMEs and the links between leadership, innovation and climate for innovation are discussed.

4.2 Leadership in different cultures

Cross-cultural studies of leadership has become a specialised field of leadership study (Gonzalez 2008; Hofstede 1976). Leadership behaviours are generally agreed to be common across cultures, though cultural contingencies at both the national and organisational levels deserve further scholarly attention (House & Javidan 2004). Since the 1960s, research on cross-cultural leadership has grown in both quality and quantity; although gaps remain. First, most of the leadership theories and practices are based on Western concepts and assumptions about human behaviours (Li et al. 2015; Muenjohn & McMurray 2017; Tajasom et al. 2015; Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). Challenges exist in the transferability of such models to other business environments, given differences in context (e.g., historical, institutional, and cultural backgrounds), which significantly affect attitudes and behaviours (Hawkins & Edwards 2014). Further, the applicability of a leadership style developed from a Western perspective to other contexts, including Asia, requires richer exploration (McDonald 2012). Second, previous studies of leadership styles are often conducted in a stable cultural context. Hofstede (1997) proposed that culture is difficult to change. Nevertheless, evidence from transition economies, including Vietnam, indicate that major economic shocks bring about important changes in societies and cultures over several decades (Vo & Hannif 2013). Indeed, Gamble (2001) investigated the transferability of the British flat hierarchical structure into Chinese society and argued that both culture and leadership styles should be perceived as adaptable and subject to change.

Leadership effectiveness has been investigated in a wide range of countries, but Vietnam remains particularly under-researched (Ralston, Nguyen & Napier 1999). For example, the Global Leadership and Organisational Behaviour Effectiveness Research Program (the GLOBE project), which is an empirical study of leader attributes in a cross-cultural context, includes countries in South East Asia and Confucian regions as clusters, but does not include Vietnam (House & Javidan 2004). Some similarities may exist between Vietnam and its neighbouring countries included in the study, but further studies should not assume that notions of leadership arising from South East Asia will work in the business context of Vietnam (Vo & Hannif 2013). Quang, Swierczek and Chi (1998) highlighted the main differences between the leadership attributes that are appreciated in Vietnam compared to other countries in South East Asia. Economic transformations in Vietnam over the last 30 years bring further interest in leadership styles as a subject of analysis in the Vietnamese

business context. Crises involving clashes of cultures, such as wars in recent decades, have likely had cultural impacts (Karsner 2013).

4.3 Leadership in SMEs

In any organisation, the importance of leadership in SMEs is unequivocal (Chen, G & Bliese 2002). In SMEs, the entrepreneur or business person who owns and/or manages an SME is usually the most influential decision-maker within the firm (Yan, L & Yan 2013). SMEs, particularly those led by owner-managers, typically have uncomplicated operational structures, a small number of staff, and bounded business activities (Mintzberg 1979). The business strategies of SMEs mostly reflect the objectives and ambitions of the owner (Covin & Slevinm 1989). This observation was confirmed by Miller (1983), who stated that the leadership style of the entrepreneur, including characteristics and decision-making style, often determines the innovation practices of SMEs.

Leadership and its influence on innovation has been examined in several studies of large firms (Mehra et al. 2006; Mumford & Licuanan 2004; Wallis, Yammarino & Feyerherm 2011), and the senior managers' perceptions of leadership are considered important in promoting innovation. However, scholars have called for investigation of leadership behaviours and their consequences in collectivist and socialist business contexts, particularly in SMEs in emerging economies (Nuttawuth & Adela 2016; Quang, Swierczek & Chi 1998; Vo & Hannif 2013). Understanding what shapes senior managers' perceptions of leadership in small firms can assist in the development of leader practices and support leaders' self-evaluations. This process can result in more effective leadership and enhance firm innovativeness (Hawkins 2015; Schyns, Kroon & Moors 2008; Yan, J & Hunt 2005). Findings from interviews with stakeholders from Vietnamese state-owned companies showed that leadership in the context of Vietnam is a multifaceted, complex, cultural phenomenon, which is significantly different to Western leadership practice in terms of decision-making, responsibility, promotions and appointments (Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). One of the reasons for these differences is the collectivist culture of Vietnam, where individualism was not high amongst leaders. However, this finding may not apply equally to state-owned enterprises and the private sector because of differences between the traditional socialist and rationality-based approaches of the two in Vietnam (Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). Further studies are required to explore the consequences and antecedents of leadership in the private sector, particularly in SMEs, to deepen understanding of this important area.

In the subsequent sections, the relationship between leadership and innovation, and the relationship between leadership and climate are further described.

4.4 Leadership and innovation

The importance of leadership in supporting innovation (Hughes et al. 2018; Newman et al. 2018) is well-established. Leadership supports innovation when it motivates subordinates to work collaboratively to achieve common organisational objectives (Vroom & Jago 2007). Leaders of organisations are responsible for the performance of organisations and influence staff through decision-making and priority-setting (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011).

Analysing leadership for innovation is more specific than considering leadership in a general purpose context (Mumford & Licuanan 2004). Previous studies have examined the role of leadership in supporting and obstructing innovation. Based on a literature review and in-depth interviews with managers and entrepreneurs from a small knowledge-intensive service enterprise, De Jong and Den Hartog (2007) recognised 13 relevant leadership behaviours that motivate innovative behaviour among subordinates, both via their purposeful actions intended to encourage idea generation. The findings showed that six behaviours were believed to relate to only one type of innovative behaviour. These were intellectual stimulation, stimulating knowledge diffusion, organising feedback, rewards, providing resources, and task assignment. The other behaviours of innovative role-modelling, providing vision, consulting, delegating, support for innovation, recognition, and monitoring, were found likely to affect both idea generation and application behaviour (De Jong & Den Hartog 2007).

To test the influences of leadership on sustainable innovation processes, Bossink (2007) analysed data from the Dutch building sector. His study observed managerial behaviours in support of sustainable innovation processes in four building projects. These behaviours were charismatic, instrumental, strategic, or interactive leadership, which contributed significantly to sustainable innovation in building environmentally friendly projects. In other research, Lee, J (2008) explored the influence of leadership and leader-member exchange on innovativeness by using hierarchical regression analysis on data from 201 research and development professionals in Singapore. He concluded that transformational leadership had a direct effect on innovativeness and effectively stimulated subordinates to be more innovative. Furthermore, transactional leadership was found to have a significant negative association with innovativeness (Lee, J 2008). In sum, these findings suggest leadership that primarily promotes

innovation is characterised by intellectual stimulation along with providing feedback, resources, challenges and task clarity.

Contemporary leadership theories suggest different pathways and outcomes of particular leadership styles on innovation. Leadership operates within various work conditions, ranging from distributing responsibilities to create autonomy to providing close and supportive direction and supervision of work. Drawing on path-goal (House & Mitchell 1974) and empowerment (Kirkman & Rosen 1999; Spreitzer 1995) theories, scholars have attempted to compare the effects of empowering leadership and directive leadership on employee innovative behaviours and creativity (Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013; Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012; Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009).

At the individual level, empowering leadership was found to affect employee creativity and innovation by stimulating psychological empowerment (Amundsen & Martinsen 2015; Zhang, S et al. 2018; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010). At team and organisational levels, leaders attempt to allocate responsibility, stimulate self-problem-solving and include followers in decision-making processes that were found to enhance empowerment and further increase innovation and creativity (Hon & Chan 2012; Kirkman & Rosen 1999).

In contrast, directive leadership focuses on giving detailed guidance and excluding followers from decision-making processes (Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013). Directive leaders usually provide less freedom and autonomy to subordinates than that provided by empowering leaders. Although superiors' directiveness has been found to facilitate subordinates' task accomplishment processes with specific directions, directive leadership tends to reduce individual creativity and discourage innovation (Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013; Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012). However, Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009), drawing on situational leadership theory and empirical evidence, argued that directive or empowering leadership can be optimised in specific situations and, in some circumstances, a combination of both approaches may be needed to nurture innovation.

A number of studies have critiqued the effectiveness of empowering leadership when leaders provide too much autonomy. Empowering leadership was found to cause burden and stress on subordinates and reduce their individual creativity (Cheong et al. 2016). This observation is consistent with the too-much-of-a-good-thing theory proposed by Pierce and Aguinis (2013). Supporters of situational leadership theory have confirmed that directive leadership is beneficial where subordinates have low levels of competence need specific

instruction and frequent feedback. In such cases, directive leadership may stimulate innovation. Therefore, Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009) concluded that the influences of empowering leadership and directive leadership on innovation and creativity warrant further study.

An exploration of the extant literature revealed that the evidence for the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in the context of SMEs is limited. However, due to the flat structure of, and the close leader-subordinate relationship in, SMEs, empowering leadership theoretically offers the enabling mechanisms to encourage innovation (Arnold et al. 2000; Sharma & Kirkman 2015). SMEs usually have uncomplicated operational structures, a small number of staff, and bounded business activities (Mintzberg 1979). A study of SMEs in the manufacturing sector in Malaysia found that empowering leadership positively related to knowledge sharing in SMEs (Eze et al. 2013). These scholars argued that employees in SMEs are motivated to share their knowledge and learn from co-workers when they receive reasonable recognition from their empowering leaders, allowing them to become more innovative (Eze et al. 2013). Similarly, findings from SMEs in the electronics and engineering sectors has shown that empowering leadership was significantly associated with innovation (O'Regan, Ghobadian & Sims 2006). By integrating theoretical views of empowering leadership and innovation, the current study argues that empowering leaders promote and encourage innovation in SME settings by enabling autonomy, providing coaching, support, goal clarity and resources.

4.5 Leadership and climate for innovation

There is empirical evidence to support the vital role of leadership in developing and shaping the workplace climate (Amabile et al. 1996; Mumford & Gustafson 1988). Climate is the shared perception of the policies and procedures of the organisation and these are formulated and implemented by the vision and characteristics of leaders (Wilson-Evered, Härtel & Neale 2001). Scott and Bruce (1994) identified the influence of leaders' behaviours on climate for innovation, and demonstrated that interactions between leaders and subordinates contribute significantly to the perceived climate for innovation. Kazama et al. (2002) confirmed Scott and Bruce's results (Scott & Bruce 1994) when they conducted a study on the influence of reflexive senior leaders in British manufacturing firms. The findings showed a relationship between CEO reflexivity and the climate for innovation; specifically, the more reflexive a CEO was rated, the higher the employee-rated climate of innovation and the greater the extent of change in the organisation (Kazama et al. 2002).

Scholars have established the link between leadership and climate formation. During the 1990s and 2000s, when transformational theory was in its ascendancy, transformational leadership was found to have a direct and positive association with, and support for, innovation as well as a direct and positive link with climate for innovation (Jung, Chow & Wu 2003). Jaiswal and Dhar (2015) studied dyads of 372 employees and their direct supervisors and similarly found that transformational leaders contributed to promoting a climate for innovation that stimulated creativity among employees. In sum, this body of research points to the importance of particular leader behaviours in encouraging innovation. These include a leader's transformative approach, which is supportive of a climate for innovation, and his/her ability to perform creatively. An exploration of the link between leadership and climate for innovation in Australia by Sarros, Cooper and Santora (2008) applied latent variable SEM analysis to data from a sample of 1,158 Australian managers using the measure of climate for innovation developed by Scott and Bruce (1994). These authors reported that articulating a vision and providing individual support, as two facets of leadership, were strongly related to climate for innovation, which was operationalised using the support for innovation and resource supply measures developed by Scott and Bruce (1994).

Theoretically, empowering leaders tend to develop an environment in which subordinates believe they possess a high degree of autonomy, participate in decision-making processes, are less constrained by rule-bound aspects, and are self-efficacious in enacting their work (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010). Combined, these features contribute to forming a climate for innovation (Amabile et al. 1996) where employees perceive the setting in which they work is conducive for creativity and innovation. Furthermore, outcomes of empowerment, such as mutual trust and increased collaboration, are important factors for encouraging a climate for innovation in SMEs (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton 2007). Empowered employees have been shown to take a more proactive approach to shaping and influencing their workplace climate (Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason 1997). Evidence from a study of 710 teachers and 55 principals from Turkish elementary schools showed that principals' empowering leadership behaviours were a significant predictor of climate for innovation (Sagnak 2012). The presence of a climate for innovation facilitates the action of empowering leadership on promoting individual decision-making and problem-solving. Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi and Vandenberghe (2010) argued that a climate for innovation encourages flexibility, knowledge sharing, idea expression and change adaptation. Employees who are empowered may create a climate for innovation through their independent thinking, and

develop cognitions and emotions that contribute in an innovative manner to their organisation's objectives (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010). Therefore, from the foregoing review, empowering leadership is expected to positively influence a climate for innovation in the SME context.

4.6 Conceptual model of leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in SMEs

By integrating the theories of leadership, climate for innovation and innovation, this research proposes that empowering leaders promote a climate for innovation and encourage innovation in the SME context. This logical conclusion is theoretically determined in that empowering leaders provide autonomy and involve subordinates in decision-making processes. As indicated above, when they experience a climate for innovation, empowered employees think independently, making contributions in an innovative manner to their organisation's objectives. Together, the theories of leadership and climate for innovation provide the framework for establishing a theoretical link between empowering leadership and innovation in the SME context. The proposed conceptual pathway for the empowering leadership-innovation process is illustrated in Figure 1.

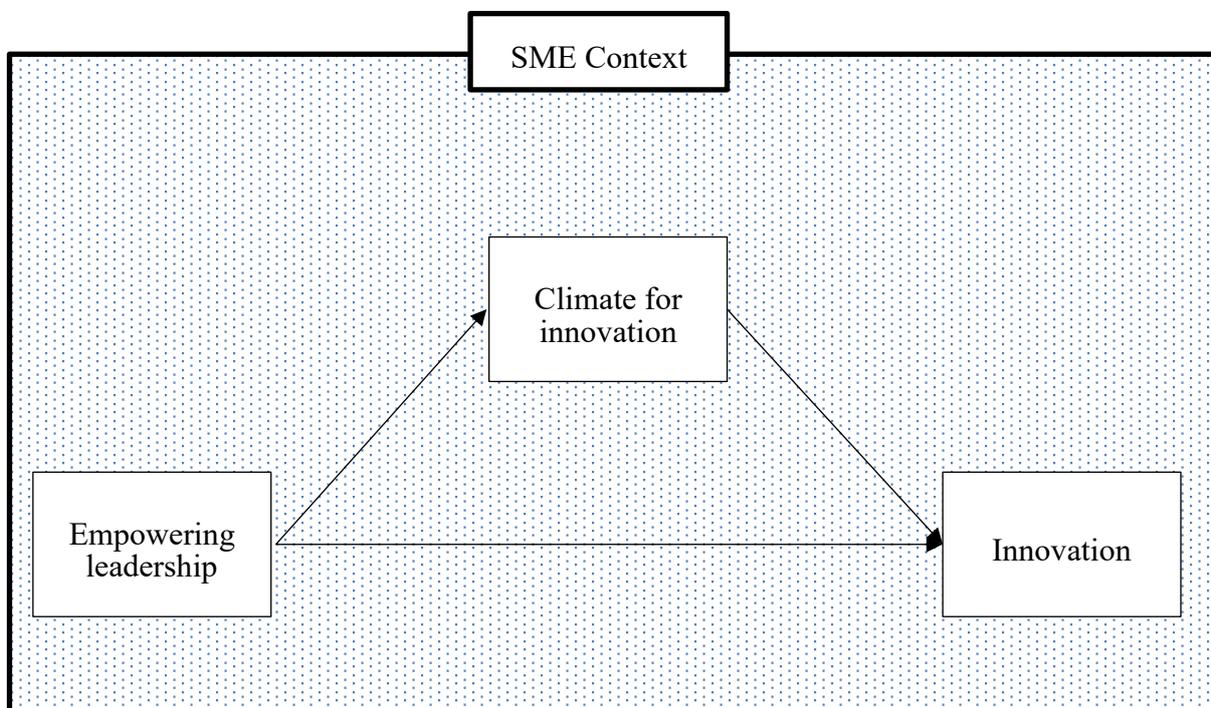


Figure 1. Proposed relationship between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation

The model in Figure 1 illustrates the potential role of climate for innovation in mediating the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. A review of the literature revealed that empowering leaders tend to develop an environment in which employees adapt to changes and adopt innovative behaviours. This interaction, in turn, contributes to stimulating innovation.

Although leadership behaviours are common across cultures, cultural contingencies at both the national and organisational levels may diversify the research results (House & Javidan 2004). An exploration of the literature revealed that leadership effectiveness is under-researched in the context of Vietnam. Consequently, the applicability of an empowering leadership approach developed from a Western perspective to the Vietnamese context requires further exploration (Quang, Swierczek & Chi 1998). The SLR reported in the next chapter examines the concept of empowering leadership, the contexts of empowering leadership studies and the association between this leadership construct with other factors, including innovation. The discoveries from the literature reviewed in this chapter and in the SLR are enhanced by the qualitative phase, which collated the insights of Vietnamese SME leaders on the leadership-innovation process. Discussion then focusses on determining how and to what extent Vietnamese leaders empower their subordinates' innovative thinking. Thereafter, the findings from the qualitative phase are used to inform the conceptual model tested in the quantitative study.

5. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed the concepts of innovation, organisational climate, and leadership as adopted in this thesis. As the context of this study is SMEs, this chapter has also discussed these concepts in relation to the unique features of SMEs. Studies on the factors affecting the management of innovation in SMEs demonstrate connections between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation. Brief consideration was given to the research on leadership and innovation in Vietnam. The review of literature in this chapter identified a number of knowledge gaps and described theoretical frameworks which inform the empirical study reported next.

Because the thesis focuses on empowering leadership, understanding of this construct is warranted. In the next chapter (Chapter 3), an SLR on the empowering leadership concept is presented to examine the known and unknown facets of this leadership approach. The results

of the SLR inform the methodology and research design of the study and contribute to answering the research questions.

Chapter 3. Empowering leadership, context and associations: A systematic literature review (SLR)

1. Introduction

This chapter presents a systematic review of empowering leadership, which is connected to innovation through the creation of autonomy among followers and has attracted the increasing interest of scholars and practitioners. Consistent with the general leadership concept discussed in Chapter 2, particular attention is paid to empowering leadership and its association with innovation in organisational contexts. Situated in the broad field of leadership, this SLR takes a behavioural science perspective to examine current research on empowering leadership and its influences on others' behaviour. Despite a number of different definitions (Yukl 2010) and methodologies used to investigate leadership (Mumford et al. 2008), the topic continues to engage readers (Chen, G & Bliese 2002). Empowering leadership is important to review in depth because of its focus on enabling others towards improvement and innovation.

Leadership that empowers others has assumed particular importance in times of major change and transformation (Hanson 2013). The delayering of organisational structures and the significance of teamwork highlights the role of empowering leadership as a way to share power and decision-making (Arnold et al. 2000; Sharma & Kirkman 2015). Empowering leadership particularly aligns with the trend toward giving employees the autonomy to improve the organisational processes and performance related to their role (Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006). Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) suggested the concept of empowering leadership typically comprises four elements: the importance of the work, participation in making decisions, transmission of confidence in high quality performance, and the mitigation of bureaucratic boundaries. Empowering leaders assign the appropriate level of authority to others so they can make independent decisions and implement actions and change under limited direct supervision (Bass 1985; Jung, Chow & Wu 2003). In addition, empowering leadership paves the way to share power with employees through emphasising their position, increasing autonomy in decision-making, conveying confidence in their abilities and eliminating performance obstacles (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp 2005; Kirkman & Rosen 1999). In short, empowering leadership highlights trends in contemporary dispersed and virtual work contexts,

where sharing power and decision-making is important and its application is worthy of ongoing study (Cheong et al. 2016; Lorinkova & Perry 2017; Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012).

Whereas writing on the notion of empowerment extends back to the 1980s, increasing interest in leadership is evident through the 60 or so empirical studies published over the last decade, which focus specifically on empowering leadership. However, despite scholarly attention (Fong & Snape 2015; Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006; Tuckey, Bakker & Dollard 2012; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010), the integration of findings through an SLR is timely. This chapter provides a synthesis of the relevant theories and identifies where, when and how empowering leadership has been empirically studied. The search located just one prior review of the extant literature on empowering leadership, written by Sharma and Kirkman (2015), which focused on the origin of its less positive effects in organisations using a sample of studies published before 2013. Their study set a useful agenda for future research on empowering leadership; however, what was lacking was a description of when and how empowering leadership had been studied and its correlates and consequences. Since the Sharma and Kirkman (2015) review, more than 20 empirical studies on empowering leadership have been published up until 2018, creating the potential to extend understanding of this leadership construct. In this chapter, the SLR method is used to determine the scope and findings of empirical studies, and to appraise the measures, results, and influence of empowering leadership. From this point, a renewed research agenda is proposed.

An SLR is a comprehensive method that has been used in various fields, including leadership studies. These include, for example, transformational leadership (Holly & Igwee 2011; Leithwood & Jantzi 2005), authentic leadership (Saleem 2017) and servant leadership (Parris & Peachey 2013). However, there is no SLR on empowering leadership. To systematically organise and quantify the findings from the extant literature, this chapter first outlines the emergence of empowering leadership theory. Then, the SLR method is described, including details of the search methods, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and sample. In the current systematic review, the following four questions are addressed: (a) How is empowering leadership defined? (b) In what contexts has empowering leadership been empirically examined? (c) What methods have been applied to empirically investigate empowering leadership? Finally, (d) What do the synthesised results emerging from the SLR say about current understandings of empowering leadership?

2. The emergence of empowering leadership research

The period from the 1980s onwards saw growth in recognition of the notion of empowerment as a concept to encourage employee engagement and productivity (Bartunek & Spreitzer 2006). This period featured rapid technological and commercial advances across all sectors (Fernandez & Moldogaziev 2011). Increased empowerment was justified as a means of improving customer-focused orientation, greater flexibility, flattened structures with decentralised decision-making and enhanced efficiencies (Amundsen & Martinsen 2015). Work roles and tasks simultaneously required higher levels of complexity and increased cognitive demands on workers (Humphrey, Nahrgang & Morgeson 2007). Highly skilled and educated knowledge workers play a crucial role (Parker, Wall & Cordery 2001), driving employees to contribute to work decisions, particularly how work should be designed and executed.

The changing landscape in work and empowerment took place in tandem with the emergence of empowering leadership (Pearce et al. 2003). Employee empowerment occupies the central tenet of the theory, which aims to encourage individual inspiration in the workplace through assigning duties and authority to the relevant organisational level (Conger & Kanungo 1988). Accordingly, Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010) defined empowering leadership as a leadership behaviour that shares power with followers.

Theoretical developments were advanced by the standard review of empowering leadership conducted by Sharma and Kirkman (2015), which incorporated four theoretical perspectives: person–situation interactions, followership theory, contingency approaches to leadership, and the too-much-of-a-good-thing effect. Their study also uncovered the negative and unintended results of empowering leadership. However, Sharma and Kirkman (2015) did not describe their method for selecting and analysing the articles that were included in their sample. They reviewed more than 50 articles, including conceptual and empirical studies, published on empowering leadership before 2013. Sharma and Kirkman (2015) called for further study of other aspects of empowering leadership and, in particular, of the outcomes of empirical studies. The authors proposed the need for further development of empowering leadership to explain why, when, and how empowering leadership occurs (Sharma & Kirkman 2015).

The present SLR focuses on research published up until 2018 which empirically investigates where and how empowering leadership had been studied. As such, this study is the first systematic review to provide a synthesis of findings based on empirical studies published in peer-reviewed journals up to and including 2018. The study informs the research agenda on empowering leadership and has practical relevance and impact. The following sections describe the method and analysis of the current SLR of empowering leadership.

3. Method

This study adapts the work of Khan et al. (2003), which provided five clear steps for the conduct of SLRs. The method, inclusion and exclusion criteria for the selection of articles, sample considerations, and the data analysis are described next.

3.1 Systematic literature review (SLR)

SLRs originated from medical and health research and legislation as an approach to inform clinical and policy decisions (Cook, Mulrow & Haynes 1997; Tranfield, Denyer & Smart 2003). This method has been used to examine various topics in disciplines including education (Keating 2017; Perlman et al. 2017), biology (Ansong & Pickering 2013), sport (Maitland, Hills & Rhind 2015) and business management (Crossan & Apaydin 2010; Phillips et al. 2015). The objective, replicable, systematic, and comprehensive nature of the method and its reporting process distinguishes it from traditional literature reviews (Weed 2005). The purpose of SLRs in management is to offer transparency, clarity, accessibility and inclusive coverage on a certain subject matter (Thorpe et al. 2006). An SLR can generally be defined as “a review in which there is a comprehensive search for relevant studies on a specific topic, and those identified are then appraised and synthesised according to a pre-determined explicit method” (Klassen, Jadad & Moher 1998, p. 700). According to Khan et al. (2003), an SLR encompasses five steps: framing questions for a review, identifying relevant work, assessing the quality of studies, summarising the evidence, and interpreting the findings.

The current systematic review places an emphasis on research studies that have investigated the theory of empowering leadership and empirically-related salient concepts. In the process of conducting the review, comprehensive searches of databases were carried out with the aim of ensuring collation of as many studies as possible on empowering leadership to address the SLR questions.

3.2 Search methods

The source of published studies collated for the review comprised 85 electronic databases on a university library system (i.e., Business Source Complete, Scopus and Academic Search Premier). Only English language peer-reviewed journal articles were selected for consideration. The searches were completed in a systematic manner following the order of the databases. As in the SLR by Parris and Peachey (2013), two search rounds were conducted to determine the study sample. The inclusion and exclusion criteria and the sample are described next.

3.2.1 Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The criteria for articles selected for the initial search were that the study (a) be published in a peer-reviewed journal; (b) be in the English language; and (c) use the keyword “empowering leadership”. The year of publication was not a restricting factor in this review. After articles containing the designated keyword were retrieved, they were examined to eliminate duplicates. The external duplicate numbers were recorded and then removed while keeping a running total of new articles found.

Studies were identified on the selected databases using the designated keyword, followed by a second filter search to evaluate the eligibility of these articles against the inclusion criteria. The full-text version of each article was retrieved for those studies that met the criteria. The three criteria to be met for the second screening of articles were that the article: (a) be an empirical study; (b) discuss empowering leadership as the main topical theme; and (c) investigate empowering leadership in an organisational context using either a quantitative, qualitative or mixed approach. As the research objective was to gain an understanding of the empirical study of empowering leadership theory, research designs characterised by a major focus on building models or testing measurement scales were excluded from consideration. The absence of at least one of these criteria in the abstract, results or discussion sections of the study determined the removal of the article from further consideration. An additional source of articles was achieved through a review of the bibliographies of the shortlisted articles.

3.2.2 Sample

Following the search process based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, 416 articles containing the keyword “empowering leadership” were initially selected and then 391 were retained after duplicates were removed.

To ensure that only the studies meeting the requirements were included, all the studies obtained after reading the titles and abstracts were first screened and then those that were not empirical studies and were not published in peer-reviewed journals (i.e., they were conference proceedings, literature reviews, book reviews and conceptual papers) were excluded. After this round, a total of 157 articles were retrieved.

A second screening was conducted to exclude those articles that did not examine empowering leadership as a main topical theme. The assessment of full-text articles narrowed the final sample to 61 empirical studies (as shown in Figure 2). Accepted articles were published between 1999 and 2018. The 61 articles appeared in peer-reviewed journals (n=36 in total), and included 59 quantitative studies, one qualitative study and one mixed-methods study.

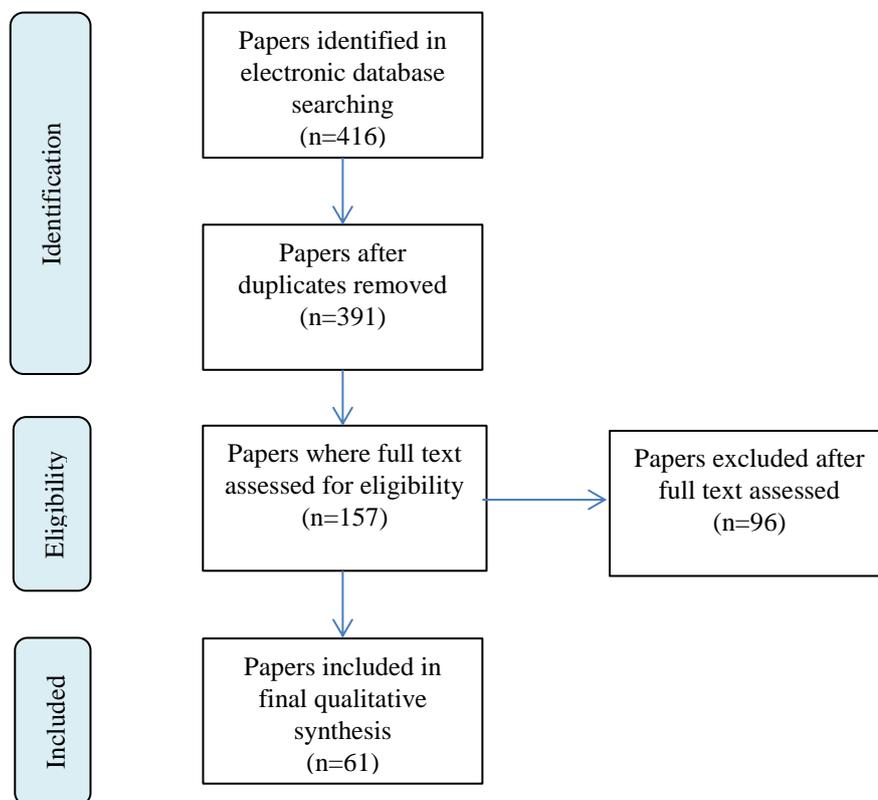


Figure 2. Flow chart of paper search for the SLR on empowering leadership

Table 1 lists the source journals in the sample, the number of articles selected from each journal and the database from which the article was sourced.

Table 1. Database and journals included in SLR

Journal	Database	Article count
Academy of Management Journal	Health Business Elite	4
Administrative Science Quarterly	Health Business Elite	1
Asia Pacific Journal of Management	Business Source Complete	1
Behaviour & Information Technology	Business Source Complete	1
British Journal of Management	Business Source Complete	1
Cornell Hospitality Quarterly	Scopus	3
Educational Administration Quarterly	Scopus	1
Frontiers in Psychology	Scopus	1
Group & Organization Management	Scopus	1
Health Care Management Review	Scopus	1
Human Relations	Scopus	1
Human Resource Management	Business Source Complete	1
Information Systems Research	Health Business Elite	1
Information Technology & People	Scopus	1
International Journal of Hospitality Management	Scopus	1
International Journal of Public Administration	Scopus	2
International Journal of Stress Management	Academic Search Premier	1
Journal of Applied Psychology	PsycARTICLES	3
Journal of Applied Social Psychology	Academic Search Premier	1
Journal of Business and Psychology	Health Business Elite	1
Journal of Business Ethics	Scopus	1
Journal of Knowledge Management	Scopus	2
Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies	Scopus	4
Journal of Management	Health Business Elite	3
Journal of Managerial Psychology	Health Business Elite	1
Journal of Occupational Health Psychology	PsycARTICLES	1
Journal of Safety Research	ScienceDirect	1
Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science	Business Source Complete	2
Knowledge Management Research and Practice	Scopus	1
Leadership & Organization Development Journal	Scopus	2
Management Decision	Scopus	1
Organizational Behaviour and Human Decision Processes	Business Source Complete	2
Personnel Psychology	Business Source Complete	2
Personnel Review	Scopus	1
R&D Management	Business Source Complete	1
The Leadership Quarterly	ScienceDirect	8

3.3 Data analysis

Sixty-one articles were imported to NVivo (Version 11) and manually coded (Creswell & Dana 2000), first for initial themes, then for higher order themes. Using content analysis, the research results from the empirical studies in the sample were categorised in two steps (Cummings et al. 2010). First, the results were classified into thematic categories based on their common attributes (Creswell 2014; Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016; Wallis, Yammarino & Feyerherm 2011). Next, each thematic category was examined to determine the definitions of empowering leadership, contexts for investigating empowering leadership, scales to measure empowering leadership, and the relationship between empowering leadership and other factors in the organisational context. The findings were then synthesised by grouping according to a number of emergent themes: creativity and innovative behaviours, work performance, psychological empowerment, knowledge exchange, and employee job satisfaction. The results of the content analysis are presented in the next section.

4. Findings

The findings of the SLR with respect to each of the four review questions are discussed in turn, beginning with the definition of empowering leadership.

4.1 Defining empowering leadership

The first SLR question, which sought to identify a coherent and agreed definition of empowering leadership, as expected, elicited a number of common words but no single definition. Amongst the definitions drawn from the empirical studies, the most frequently cited were those by Arnold et al. (2000) (n=17), Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) (n=13), and Kirkman and Rosen (1999) (n=9). Indeed, when describing empowering leadership, authors such as Cheong et al. (2016), Chow (2017), Zhang, X and Bartol (2010), cited these three authors. Given the citations and endorsement of Arnold, Ahern, and Kirkman and their colleagues' descriptions of empowering leadership, the ensuing discussion provides an analysis and integration of the concepts used.

The first key concept of empowering leadership is collaboration, which is facilitated by empowering leaders between employees and, as a result, power and decision-making duties are shared among team members (Arnold et al. 2000). In their study, Arnold et al. (2000) argued that the typical behaviour of an empowering leader comprises the following five characteristics: *leading by example*, which implies the commitment of a leader to the

assignment of himself or herself and other team members to attain better outcomes; *coaching*, referring to the activities of guiding members to increase their efficiency and self-reliance; *participative decision making*, which stimulates the contribution of ideas and opinions among team members to group decision-making; *informing*, which encourages company leaders to convey information and thereby ensure team members are more capable of comprehending the mission and expectations of the organisation; and *showing concern*, which refers to displays of sympathy and equal treatment of subordinates (Arnold et al. 2000).

Empowering leadership can be defined as the extent to which leaders show confidence in the capabilities of their subordinates, highlight the importance of their work, enable them to engage in decision-making, and remove any bureaucratic constraints on them (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp 2005; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010). Additionally, according to Kirkman and Rosen (1999), empowering leadership is a team-level stimulus since the behaviours of leaders have an influence over the entire team. This definition accentuates the actions of the leader, specifically in sharing authority or giving a higher sense of responsibility and stronger level of autonomy to employees (Kirkman & Rosen 1999).

To sum up, common behaviours of empowering leaders, according to the three definitions, embrace the notion of creating conditions whereby employees can meaningfully engage in decisions and actions in their work and grow in capability. Such leaders do so through an approach that is considerate, has a coaching orientation, and encourages the sharing of information and authority; they remove bureaucratic barriers as well as provide role models. As with many definitions in the leadership domain, there is no universal consensus on the definition or framework of empowering leadership. However, the three most frequently cited definitions were by Arnold et al. (2000), Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) and Kirkman and Rosen (1999). Although aligned in meaning and the words used to define empowering leadership, as expected, there was no commonly stated definition in the studies reviewed.

4.2 Contexts for investigating empowering leadership

To answer the second question for this SLR, the range of contexts in which empowering leadership was a key focus of investigation were examined. Empowering leadership was investigated in cross-cultural contexts, as well as across a diverse range of work settings. To be specific, of the 61 studies included in the sample, 26 were situated relative to particular countries, with a further five cross-cultural studies included, and two global online surveys.

Overall, empowering leadership has been studied in a number of countries, namely China (n= 14), the United States (n = 11), Taiwan (n = 6), Norway (n = 5), the Republic of Korea (n = 4), Italy (n = 2), Australia (n = 1), Germany (n = 1), Israel (n = 1), Spain (n = 1), The Netherlands (n = 1), Turkey (n = 1), Malaysia (n=1), Canada (n=1), Denmark (n=1), South Africa (n=1), Serbia (n=1), and the United Arab Emirates (n = 1). Among these contexts, and of interest due to contrasting cultures, China and the US were the most common source of research participants.

The analysis showed that empowering leadership has been studied in 13 organisational settings: hospitality (n = 7), manufacturing (n = 6), education (n = 5), service provision (n = 4), public service (n = 4), information technology (n = 4), research and development (n = 3), health care (n = 3), trading (n = 2), energy provision (n = 1), and accounting (n = 1). Notably, empowering leadership was investigated in a cross-sectional context in one third of all studies selected (n = 21). Context is relevant to empowering leadership as, clearly, empowerment has stronger and more relevant application in some knowledge-based settings (e.g., research and development, encouraging creativity and innovation) rather than other environments (e.g., managing emergency/military operations).

4.3 Assessing empowering leadership

The main data collection method of the quantitative studies in this SLR sample was surveys, accounting for all but one study. Of these, 23 measures were used to assess empowering leadership, the two most popular of which included the instrument developed by Arnold et al. (2000) — used in 12 studies - and the Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) instrument — used in 11 studies. The literature is split between Arnold et al. (2000) and Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005), but as of 2018, Arnold has been marginally more widely adopted.

The scale that was developed and empirically validated by Arnold et al. (2000) consisted of 38 items and the five factors of empowering leadership behaviour mentioned previously: leading by example, participative decision-making, coaching, informing, and showing concern (with Cronbach's alpha ranging from .89 to .94 for the five factors). The factors align with the definitions developed by Arnold et al. (2000), which were cited by 17 studies in the sample. Later, Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) developed a 15-item scale ($\alpha = .97$), which is a condensed version of Arnold et al. (2000), to measure empowering leadership

within a single factor. This shortened scale by Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) was used in four studies in the sample.

The Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) instrument ($\alpha = .88$) consisted of 12 items and four factors: enhancing the meaningfulness of the work, fostering participation in decision making, expressing confidence in high performance, and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. The factors in this scale support the empowering leadership definition of Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005). The key difference between the two models and their measures is the focus on concern and coaching of people in Arnold et al.'s approach, whereas Ahearne et al. incorporate confidence in performance and meaningfulness of work.

The next most popular measures were that of Kirkman and Rosen (1999) ($\alpha = .96$), the Pearce and Sims (2002) and Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) scale (Cronbach's alpha was .90 for the leader sample and .94 for the subordinate sample) that were employed in four studies. The following instruments were used in three studies, namely, Robert et al. (2000) scale adapted from Arnold et al. (2000) (Cronbach's alpha varied between countries), Manz and Sims Jr. (1987) instrument ($\alpha = .92$) and the scale of Rappa et al. (2006) ($\alpha = .93$). The instruments developed by Zhang, X and Bartol (2010), Faraj and Sambamurthy (2006), Martinsen (2009), Migneault, Rousseau and Boudrias (2009), Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010), and Hoch (2013) were used in only one study each. Meanwhile, other studies used measures of empowering leadership based on the Arnold et al. (2000) instrument (n=4) or drew on various scales and items to develop their own instrument.

The one qualitative study and the single mixed-methods study in the sample used critical ethnography and interviews, respectively, as the research approach. The authors of the former established the "Developmental Taxonomy of Empowering Principal Behaviour" framework by Reitzug (1994), incorporating three kinds of empowering behaviours: support, facilitation, and possibility. In the latter study, the authors (Ou et al. 2014) conducted 51 interviews to validate the results of their quantitative study, from which no framework was provided.

In sum, 23 measures were used in 60 quantitative studies. Each measure was developed based on a definition of empowering leadership as mentioned above. All the scales' coefficient alpha reliability estimates were above .85, which is acceptable (Arnold et al. 2000). The various measures used by the studies in the sample strengthen the findings for the first SLR question,

which identified that there is no common definition used for empowering leadership. Correspondingly, the current review demonstrated that there is no consensus among scholars in using instruments to examine empowering leadership. Notwithstanding the lack of measurement consensus, there does remain a substantial opportunity to conduct more qualitative studies on empowering leadership and therefore describe the meaning and enactment of empowering leadership across contexts and relationships.

4.4 Consequences of empowering leadership

The findings of the content analysis revealed five emergent themes: creativity and innovative behaviours, work performance, psychological empowerment, knowledge exchange, and employee job satisfaction (see Table 2 for a summary). The process-identified variables associated with empowering leadership are discussed by theme in the next sub-sections.

Table 2. Themes of empowering leadership; antecedents, interactions and outcomes in organisational contexts

Emergent themes*	Number of articles	Exemplary authors
Creativity and innovative behaviours	16	Amundsen and Martinsen (2013); Hon (2012); Zhang, X and Bartol (2010); Zhang, X and Zhou (2014); Zhu and Chen (2016); Hoch (2013); Hao, He and Long (2018); Chow (2017); Günzel-Jensen et al. (2017)
Work performance	15	Cheong et al. (2016); Fong and Snape (2015); Hill and Bartol (2016); Hoch (2013); Humborstad, Nerstad and Dysvik (2014); Lee, Jungwoo, Lee and Park (2014); Hao, He and Long (2018); Kim and Beehr (2017); Govender (2017); Lee, S et al. (2017)
Psychological empowerment	12	Amundsen and Martinsen (2013); Amundsen and Martinsen (2015); Raub and Robert (2010); van Dierendonck and Dijkstra (2012); Zhang, X and Bartol (2010); Pigeon, Montani and Boudrias (2017)
Knowledge exchange	8	Hon (2012); Kuo and Lee (2011); Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006); Wu, C-M and Chen (2015); Xue, Bradley and Liang (2011); Wu, W and Lee (2017); Matić et al. (2017)
Employee job satisfaction	5	Amundsen and Martinsen (2014); Amundsen and Martinsen (2015); Fong and Snape (2015); Tekleab et al. (2008); Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010)

* Note: An article could focus on more than one theme

4.4.1 Creativity and innovative behaviours

The influence of empowering leadership on employee creativity and innovative behaviours was mentioned in the results of 16 of the 61 empirical studies. Empowering

leadership has been credited with boosting creativity and autonomy resulting in better team performance (Chow 2017; Hao, He & Long 2018; Kuo & Lee 2011; Zhang, X & Zhou 2014). In a number of fields, such as business administration, public administration and politics, the significance of empowering leadership has been singled out. Nonetheless, the results indicated that much remains unknown about the mechanisms of empowerment and its consequences. Current interest in ways to encourage autonomy and creativity among individuals and teams is increasing across those societies and sectors where flatter structures are viable. This suggests that empowerment has the potential to play a central role in enhancing team performance related to knowledge-oriented tasks (Lee, Jungwoo, Lee & Park 2014).

Scholars found similar results in terms of a positive relationship between empowering leadership and creativity at both individual and team levels (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013; Hon 2012; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010; Zhang, X & Zhou 2014). Empowering leaders focus on behaviours related to goal orientation and encouraging initiative. They motivate employees to reach their potential and support their self-efficacy (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013; Kim & Beehr 2017). Empowering leadership provides substantial motivational support (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013), stimulates creative self-efficacy (Zhang, X & Zhou 2014), influences self-leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen 2015). Such leadership is positively linked with psychological empowerment, intrinsic motivation and engagement (Hon 2012; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010); all important antecedents of employee creativity (Amabile 1983). At the team level, Hon and Chan (2012) indicated that empowering leadership is associated with team creative efficacy and team self-concordance, which in turn influenced team creativity under the condition of high team task interdependence.

The positive and negative effects of empowering leadership on creativity can be explained by dual tuning theory (George & Zhou 2007), which states that both positive and negative moods contribute to creativity in complementary ways. When employees receive support for creativity from supervisors and the positive mood is high, the negative mood can have a strong, positive relationship to creativity. Creativity reaches the maximum level when employees receive support from the supervisor and both positive and negative moods are high. Therefore, providing empowerment when it does not fit with the context, task or employees' needs or capabilities may have adverse effects.

Empirical evidence from the samples indicated that empowering leadership is associated with employee innovative behaviours and team innovativeness. Data from

supervisors showed that, at the individual level, empowering leadership has a direct effect on innovative behaviours (Hoch 2013). Moreover, empowering leadership is positively associated with shared leadership (Hoch 2013), transformational leadership (Günzel-Jensen et al. 2017), psychological empowerment and affective commitment (Chen, G et al. 2011), which in turn influence innovative behaviours. At the team level, Zhu and Chen (2016) demonstrated that group-focused empowering leadership is crucial for encouraging team innovativeness and team performance through intra-team collaboration. The evidence suggests that empowering leadership stimulates both creativity and innovation at individual and team levels in a range of organisational contexts.

4.4.2 Work performance

The role of empowering leadership in work performance was explored in 15 empirical studies. Empowering leadership is considered to be a motivating leadership style that is related to employee outcomes and team performance. The review findings showed that empowering leadership helped encourage job satisfaction, organisational commitment, in-role and organisational citizenship behaviours (Fong & Snape 2015), built trust in leaders and the organisation, and improved procedural justice, team and leader effectiveness, and team member cooperation (Hoch 2013; Lee, Jungwoo, Lee & Park 2014).

At the team level, empowering leadership was found to have an indirect and positive effect on team performance as a result of the aggregated influence of virtual collaboration among team members (Hill & Bartol 2016). This finding supports previous research that emphasises the significance of geographic dispersion applied to empowering leadership (Arnold et al. 2000; Bell & Kozłowski 2002; Hill & Bartol 2016; Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006). In addition, empowering leadership affected knowledge sharing among team members in teamwork activities, leading to a heightened level of absorptive capacity for good team performance, specifically in information technology projects (Lee, Jungwoo, Lee & Park 2014). That is, the collective results of the studies reviewed suggest that empowering leadership paves the way for knowledge sharing and improves the team's absorptive capacity and, therefore, the sharing of knowledge.

At the individual level, empowering leadership was associated with employee performance in the public sector (Govender 2017). Hao, He and Long (2018) reported that empowering leadership had an indirect positive influence on employee work performance mediated by employees' work harmonious passion, which is a motivational state reflecting

individual autonomous internalisation of work. Similarly, an indirect effect of empowering leadership was found on employees' in-role performance via psychological ownership (Kim & Beehr 2017).

Notwithstanding the positive story so far, a number of researchers have reported that empowering leadership does not always lead to positive work outcomes. Cheong et al. (2016) proposed a two-sided view of the relationship between empowering leadership and work performance. On the one hand, empowering leadership enhanced the self-efficacy and work performance of subordinates through an enabling process; on the other, some empowering behaviours increased job tensions, which in turn reduced the work outcomes of followers. Such findings are in line with the research results of Humborstad, Nerstad and Dysvik (2014), who concluded that followers with low intrinsic motivation experienced high role ambiguity when their leaders' overestimated the expectations of subordinates concerning empowerment. Likewise, Lorinkova, Pearsall and Sims (2013) indicated that, initially, teams led by a directive leader performed better than teams led by empowering leaders, although later on teams led by empowering leaders achieved better outcomes. The latter finding suggests both a temporal dimension as well as individual difference factors relating to motivation, role clarity and self-efficacy are at play when empowering leadership exerts a positive effect.

To add further evidence, Lee, S et al. (2017) identified that the relationship between empowering leadership and individual task performance is curvilinear and moderated by employee learning orientation. These findings provide support for a theory of empowerment known as the too-much-of-a-good-thing effect proposed by Pierce and Aguinis (2013), who argued that the effect arose when a beneficial antecedent reached an inflection point, subsequently leading to undesired results. In other words, too much empowering leadership in the wrong setting may cause unexpected negative work performance by placing too high expectations on employees, thus resulting in strain.

4.4.3 Psychological empowerment

Psychological empowerment should be linked to leadership empowerment given their conceptual similarities. Empowered employees perceive they have the power to deal with problems and situations at work. Psychological empowerment is considered a personal experience of the intrinsic motivation of employees based on cognitions about themselves in relation to their responsibility in the organisation (Spreitzer 1995; Thomas & Velthouse 1990). Empowerment is an experience that is created by the organisational context, especially by

leadership behaviours that empower subordinates (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp 2005; Arnold et al. 2000). In the sample, the association between empowering leadership and psychological empowerment was investigated in 12 studies. Psychological empowerment was considered an important empowering characteristic among subordinates, which had the potential to mediate the effect of empowering leadership on subordinate creativity and work performance (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013, 2015; Fong & Snape 2015; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010). For example, Fong and Snape (2015) tested a multilevel model and found evidence that empowering leadership was associated with psychological empowerment at both individual and group levels. Furthermore, their results showed that psychological empowerment mediated the effect of empowering leadership on outcomes at both levels of analysis. Psychological empowerment was also found in a structural model to mediate or partially mediate the relationships between empowering leadership and behavioural outcomes; being discretionary-empowered behaviours and participation in decision-making (Pigeon, Montani & Boudrias 2017).

Given that empowering leadership improves the employee experience of intrinsic motivation in terms of cognitions of competence, self-determination, impact and meaning (Bowen & Lawler 1992; Fong & Snape 2015), it is likely that psychological empowerment will play a mediating role in these associations. Zhang, X and Bartol (2010) conducted a survey on employees and leaders from an information technology company and concluded that empowering leadership had a significant effect on psychological empowerment, which in turn positively affected both intrinsic motivation and creative process engagement. Moreover, these two variables positively affected creativity. Similarly, the mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relationship between empowering leadership and creativity was supported by the longitudinal study of 212 Dutch prison officers by van Dierendonck and Dijkstra (2012), which was subsequently confirmed by Amundsen and Martinsen (2013). In their later study, Amundsen and Martinsen (2015) identified the major role of psychological empowerment in transmitting the effect of empowering leadership to employees' job satisfaction. These authors also predicted that psychological empowerment could have a partial mediating role between empowering leadership and work effort. This latter result compares with that of the Raub and Robert (2010) study, which identified a direct and strong mediation effect of psychological empowerment on the association between empowering leadership and in-role and affiliative extra-role behaviours in a sample of front-line hotel employees. However, empowerment was not always effective and the relationship between empowering

leadership and psychological empowerment was only significantly positive when leaders enjoyed a high-quality relationship with their superiors (Lorinkova & Perry 2017).

Overall, the foregoing analysis supports the positive contribution of empowering leadership to psychological empowerment as evidenced by empirical studies. Furthermore, psychological empowerment plays an important role in mediating the relationship between empowering leadership and intrinsic motivation, creativity, and work outcomes at both individual and group levels. Mixed interactions were found with psychological empowerment depending on the relationship with leaders, duration of time working together and individual differences among the followers.

4.4.4 Knowledge exchange

The relationship between empowering leadership and knowledge exchange was examined in eight empirical studies in the sample. Empowering leadership was reported to have an indirect association with Knowledge Management System usage (Kuo & Lee 2011). The relationship between empowering leadership, task-technology fit and compatibility was positive, which led to a positive relationship with Knowledge Management System usage. Managerial empowering behaviours encourage the development of an environment in which the sharing of knowledge appears to be more spontaneous (Foss et al. 2009; Singh 2008; Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006), the interaction among employees is stronger, and the sharing of their expertise, experience, and insights through the Knowledge Management System is strengthened. Hon (2012) recommended that managers should increase their level of support to team members, particularly in the form of both tangible advantages (e.g., advice on particular creativity-oriented issues) and psychological advantages (e.g., positive influence from a supportive safety net) to newcomers.

In addition to the Knowledge Management System usage, scholars found a positive relationship between empowering leadership and knowledge exchange in organisational contexts (Lee, Jungwoo, Lee & Park 2014; Srivastava, Bartol & Locke 2006; Wu, C-M & Chen 2015; Xue, Bradley & Liang 2011). Based on data collected from the tourism and hospitality sectors, Wu, C-M and Chen (2015) found that empowering leadership had a positive relationship with psychological contract fulfilment and knowledge exchange, which in turn were positively related to service performance. Moreover, whereas the relationship between empowering leadership and knowledge exchange was in part mediated by psychological contract fulfilment, knowledge exchange fully mediated the relationship between

psychological contract fulfilment and service performance. At the team level, Srivastava, Bartol and Locke (2006) indicated that empowering leadership was positively associated with both knowledge sharing and team efficacy, and both concepts were positively linked to team performance. Wu, W and Lee (2017) also concluded that empowering leadership encouraged team members' knowledge collecting and donating performance. Meanwhile, Matić et al. (2017) identified that empowering leadership influenced all steps of knowledge sharing from knowledge sharing attitudes and intentions to knowledge sharing behaviours. These findings deepen the previous results obtained by Xue, Bradley and Liang (2011), who confirmed that empowering leadership and team climate significantly and positively influenced individual knowledge-sharing behaviour.

In summary, these studies support the positive contribution of empowering leadership to knowledge sharing attitudes and behaviour at the individual level and knowledge exchange among teams.

4.4.5 Employee job satisfaction

The findings from five studies in the sample indicated that empowering leadership and employee job satisfaction are related (Amundsen & Martinsen 2014, 2015; Fong & Snape 2015; Tekleab et al. 2008; Vecchio, Justin & Pearce 2010). Empirical evidence from the education sector showed that empowering leadership had a positive effect on employee job satisfaction (Vecchio, Justin & Pearce 2010). This relationship was also mediated by psychological empowerment and self-leadership (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013, 2015; Fong & Snape 2015). Empowering leadership rather than leader self-awareness was related to leader effectiveness and employee satisfaction under supervision (Tekleab et al. 2008). Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010) endorsed the value of empowerment by showing that leaders who encouraged greater autonomy and lateral collaboration produced higher satisfaction levels among employees. These observations align with other studies of empowering leadership that demonstrate a positive relationship between empowering leadership and employee satisfaction. In addition, Vecchio, Justin and Pearce (2010) posited that both performance and satisfaction may be affected by empowering leadership by reducing resistance. Empowering leadership may also affect satisfaction levels through the pathway of increased performance. Similarly, Amundsen and Martinsen (2014) found that beyond self-leadership and psychological empowerment, a number of other factors are implicated, such as satisfaction levels at work, work contribution, creativity, and performance. However, studies have also illustrated the

opposite relationship between empowering leadership and job satisfaction. Robert et al. (2000) observed that managerial empowering practices and job satisfaction in national cultures with high power distance have a lower or even negative relationship compared to those with low power distance.

In short, these findings provide a common theme emerging from recent empirical studies, which highlight that empowering leadership enhances job satisfaction among employees in various organisational contexts. However, importantly, some contrasting effects have been observed in high power distance settings.

5. Discussion

5.1 Integrated framework

This SLR collated and summarised the existing peer-reviewed published literature on empowering leadership. It also synthesised the findings of these empirical studies to illustrate associations among empowering leadership and other factors. The current SLR extended the findings of the literature review by Sharma and Kirkman (2015), which focused mainly on the originality and less positive effects of empowering leadership. A different perspective and structured method were employed to review the literature by exploring how empowering leadership was defined, in what contexts it was investigated, and what methods were used to study it. The collective results of these investigations were then summarised. This systematic review was inspired by the study of Parris and Peachey (2013) and followed the clear steps provided by Khan et al. (2003) to guarantee the scientific and non-biased procedure in selecting and analysing articles. The results from this review provide sufficient reasons for researchers and practitioners to understand empowering leadership as a complex, contextual and relevant leadership construct.

Based on the systematic review, an integrated framework is presented which aggregates the key empirical findings (Figure 3) with respect to empowering leadership and its associations with other constructs in a range of organisational contexts. The SLR confirms both the theoretical reasoning and empirical evidence to support the role empowering leadership in predicting psychological empowerment. The latter potentially affects knowledge sharing, employee satisfaction, creativity and innovation, as well as individual and team performance. The model shows that these relationships are influenced by a number of factors; for example, work environment, culture, and autonomy. The indirect relationship between empowering

leadership and innovation presented in this figure further develops high level conceptual model of the empowering leadership-innovation process reported in the previous chapter. Of note however, in some cases, empowering leadership has mixed effects on innovation. Given the topic of whether empowering leadership is always positively related to innovation is debated among scholars, further research is justified.

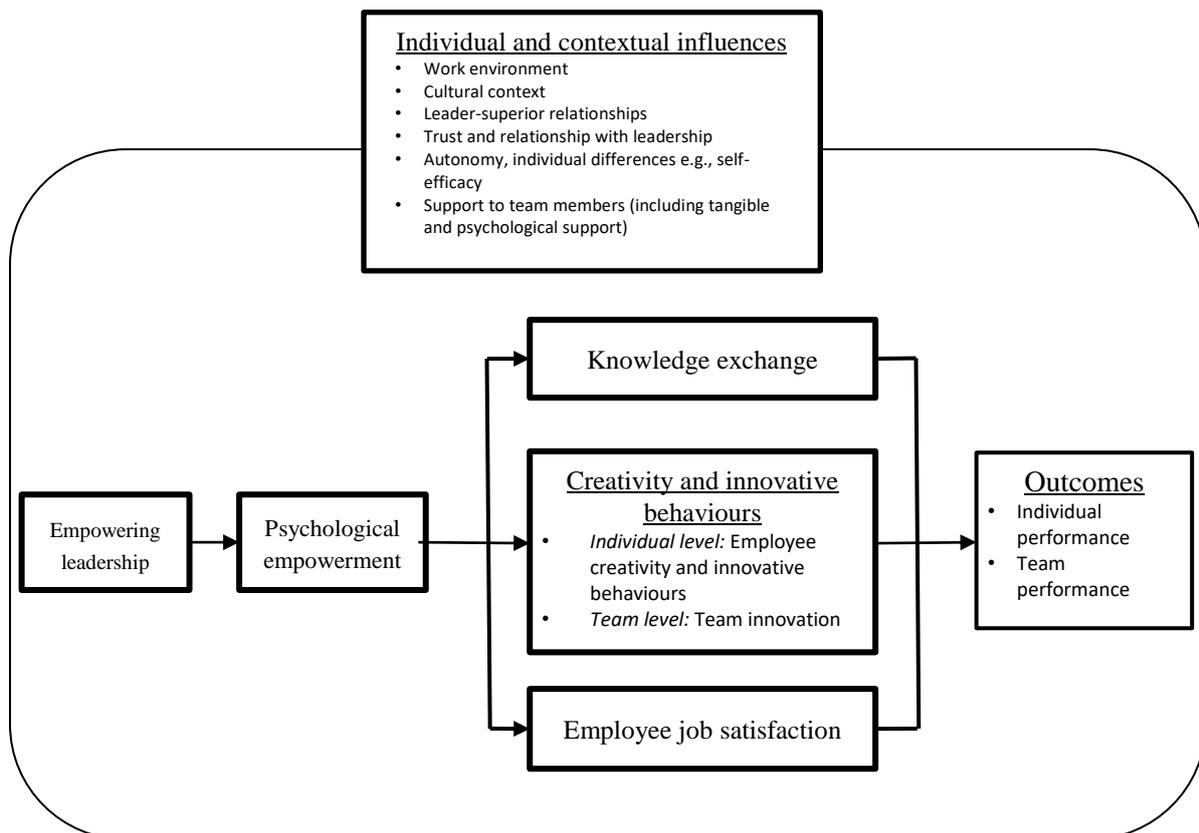


Figure 3. An integrated framework for empowering leadership in organisational contexts

The framework presented in Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. It further develops the proposed model shown in Figure 1 (Chapter 2). This framework reflects the focus of prior studies on the mediating role of psychological empowerment on the relationship between empowering leadership and its associations. No empirical study has been conducted to test the mediating role of climate for innovation in relation to empowering leadership. The model shown in Figure 1 indicates the potential mediating effect of climate for innovation on the empowering leadership-innovation relationship. Combined, the proposed model in Figure 1 and the framework in Figure 3

highlight the importance of empowering leadership in organisational contexts, particularly its role in encouraging innovation.

5.2 Future research agenda

Quantitative research was strongly and appropriately represented among 59 out of 61 studies included in this review. To seek deeper insights into empowering leadership, research using qualitative methods may draw out previously unpublished understandings of the concept, its meaning, lived experience and associations in a range of diverse industry and cultural contexts.

Most of the studies in this review had samples drawn from organisations in relatively developed economies: China, the US, Taiwan, Norway, Italy, the Republic of Korea, Australia, Germany, Israel, Spain, The Netherlands, Turkey and the United Arab Emirates. Future studies are recommended to diversify the contexts by engaging samples from different countries or developing economies, although the difficulties of accessing the leadership population is ever present.

When comparing the results of the current SLR and those of Sharma and Kirkman (2015), empowering leadership not only leads to beneficial outcomes but can also predict negative results for individual and team performance in certain circumstances; indeed, empowerment may cause stress for staff and increase job tensions. A number of studies have explored the less positive effects of empowering leadership, which emerged in support of the too-much-of-a-good-thing theory (Pierce & Aguinis 2013) and dual tuning theory (George & Zhou 2007). Therefore, researchers are encouraged to conduct empirical studies to evaluate the pros and cons of empowering leadership and to identify how much and in what ways it is appropriate for leaders to empower their subordinates. In addition, they should explore whether empowering leadership works in conjunction with directive leadership, as suggested by Martin, Liao and Campbell (2012) and Lee, S et al. (2017), or indeed with other leadership approaches. It is possible that a tipping point exists when empowering leadership in different contexts no longer has the desired effect. Such findings have been identified in charismatic leadership (Vergauwe et al. 2018), so research sensitive to curvilinear effects are warranted.

5.3 Limitations

While this SLR was conducted in a disciplined manner, some limitations may exist. First, the search process was limited to indexed journals that the author could access through a

university library system and were peer-reviewed in the English language. For that reason, this SLR cannot claim to cover non-indexed journals or dissertations since they were ineligible against the predefined inclusion criteria. With the broad interest in empowering leadership, there are possibly more empirical studies carried out in other languages that can confirm, clarify or dispute the findings of the current SLR. Second, the methods and findings of the studies were supported by an assessment procedure to increase the accuracy level of the evaluation phase. Nevertheless, the attempt to aggregate results of both qualitative and quantitative data analyses (featured in only two studies) may have limited the ability to adequately examine all methodological concerns when integrating the results. Finally, a meta-analytic study would be useful if sufficient data are available to assess the effect sizes of empowering leadership on factors such as those reported in this SLR. Such an approach could partial out the most influential factors on and as a result of empowering leadership.

6. Conclusion

The findings of this SLR provide an improved understanding of the definitions of empowering leadership, show the diversity of cultures, contexts, and research foci in which empowering leadership has been investigated, and identify instruments used to measure this leadership construct. This chapter synthesised empirical studies on empowering leadership across multidisciplinary study areas, including hospitality, education, health care, manufacturing, information technology, research and development, energy and others. The chapter addressed four questions related to the empirical research on empowering leadership.

A specific perspective and review method was adopted to summarise the existing literature on the empowering leadership approach, consistent with the general leadership concept presented in Chapter 2. The systematic review provided a structured understanding of empirical research, examining empowering leadership and its associations in various organisational contexts, including the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. The study of empowering leadership has received increasing attention from scholars and opportunities remain for further work to address the gaps and limitations noted in this thesis. To conclude, by developing and promoting empowering leadership, organisations can stimulate creativity, innovation and firm performance through various individual and group mechanisms of sharing power, decision-making and building trust. The mixed effects of empowering leadership suggest the need for studies to compare contrasting leadership approaches on both processes and outcomes of individual and group performance. Exploratory

studies are warranted to investigate the influence of empowering leadership on innovation, particularly among SMEs. The SLR findings revealed the lack of evidence on the mediating effect of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. To bridge this gap in the literature, a qualitative study (Chapter 5) was conducted to explore the insights of Vietnamese SME leaders about their actions in shaping a climate for innovation and stimulating innovation. A quantitative study (Chapter 6) then tested the mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation.

The SLR findings also indicated that empowering leadership has not been researched in Vietnam. Therefore, assumptions cannot be made that these associations will be confirmed in the Vietnamese context. Differences between the leadership attributes that are appreciated in Vietnam compared to those in other countries and the clashes of culture as a result of wars and economic renovation in recent decades all potentially influence the expression of leadership in Vietnam. In response to the call of Sharma and Kirkman (2015) to diversify the context of empowering leadership research, the qualitative study reported in the next chapter explored the perceptions of Vietnamese leaders on empowering leadership and how their leadership behaviours influence both a climate for innovation and employee innovation. Following the latter, the quantitative phase, using data collected from employees working in Vietnamese SMEs, examined the relationships proposed in the conceptual model.

The next chapter (Chapter 4) describes the methodology for the present research and provides evidence for the measurement of associations between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in the Vietnamese SME context.

Chapter 4. Methodology

1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodology of the thesis to explore the role played by empowering leadership and a climate for innovation among tourism SMEs in Vietnam. The reasons for and implications of using both qualitative and quantitative methods and details of the mixed-methods research design are addressed.

The first section of this chapter explains the research paradigm and the reasons for choosing a mixed-methods design. Then, the detailed steps of the qualitative and quantitative methods are described. The final section presents a conclusion and consideration of the methodological limitations.

2. Research paradigm

A research paradigm is defined as a “worldview with different philosophical assumptions associated with that point of view” (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009, p. 84). However, a paradigm can also be seen as “a set of basic beliefs that deals with ultimates or first principles” (Guba & Lincoln 1994, p. 107). A research paradigm allows researchers to recognise the philosophical assumptions and knowledge to guide their study and achieve their research aims (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011).

Guba and Lincoln (1994) suggested three types of questions to use when addressing research paradigms. The first question is about ontology, which relates to the nature of being. The second question is about epistemology, which is the way that the knower (researcher) knows about the object being researched. The last question refers to methodology, which is the process of the research. Preferences for choosing methodology and research methods are typically based on the ontological and epistemological foundations of the researcher (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). Additionally, scholars recommended two more worldview elements: axiology, which relates to the role of values; and rhetoric, relating to the language of research (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). These viewpoints contribute to shaping the process of conducting research (Creswell 2015a; Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). In addition, Creswell (2014) highlighted four categories of worldviews that are widely known in literature: post-positivism, constructivism, participatory, and pragmatism.

Post-positivism or post-positivist assumptions represent a research paradigm that is aligned to quantitative approach. The post-positivism worldview, which is sometimes called the scientific method, determines hypotheses from theory and existing empirical evidence, identifies cause and effect outcomes, focuses on variables and collects data to verify the theory (Creswell 2014). The constructivism or social constructivism paradigm is often identified with qualitative methods and represents the subjective perspectives of research participants. The social constructivist paradigm seeks to develop understandings of the individual's worldview, then formulate the theory and define theory patterns (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). The participatory paradigm is associated with the qualitative approach and is linked with politics and political issues to encounter social oppression at whatever levels it happens (Mertens 2003). The notion of the participatory paradigm is subjective-objective and the paradigm requires the researcher to participate in the know through four types of knowing: experiential, propositional, presentational and practical (Heron & Reason 1997). The pragmatism paradigm is related to mixed-methods research in which the researchers freely draw from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions (Creswell 2014). The ontology and epistemology of pragmatist researchers are based on their intended consequences. While using mixed methods, pragmatist researchers establish the purpose for mixing and justifying why qualitative and quantitative data needs to be mixed in the first place.

Multiple paradigms can be used to discover a particular research issue (Creswell 2014; Greene & Caracelli 1997). In addition, depending on the research aims and research questions, researchers can decide the most appropriate paradigm for their study (Creswell & Dana 2000). For instance, post-positivist researchers tend to choose an explanatory design for their research due to its quantitative focus, while constructivist researchers prefer to use qualitative methods for exploratory studies (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011).

The research paradigm for this study was chosen based on the proposed research questions and aims. Considering the features of the four paradigms, this study adopted the pragmatism paradigm and employed a mixed-methods approach. The pragmatism paradigm is a suitable philosophical position for a mixed-methods approach in which the researcher employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyse data in a single study (Creswell 2015b; Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). The mixed-methods approach is considered to provide better understandings of the research problem (Creswell 2014) and goes beyond a single approach (i.e., qualitative or quantitative) by utilising the advantages and limiting the disadvantages of each approach. In addition, the combination of both methods

creates complementarity and enhances the effectiveness of the research model in answering the research questions (Johnson, Onwuegbuzie & Turner 2007).

The pragmatism paradigm leads researchers to use mixed-methods approaches to unpack research problems that cannot be addressed by a single approach (Doyle, Brady & Byrne 2009). In this study, the constructivism paradigm guided the qualitative method in collecting, analysing and interpreting data to generate a better understanding of leadership behaviours and their influence on innovation in SMEs. Semi-structured and in-depth interviews were employed to collect qualitative data and thematic data analysis used to analyse the emergent narratives. The qualitative method was conducted first as an exploratory study to identify the leadership behaviours of SME owners and senior managers and to understand how their leadership styles shaped organisational climate and encouraged innovation. As the SLR identified, there is a lack of qualitative studies exploring empowering leadership and none has been conducted in the context of Vietnam. Therefore, the qualitative study was vital in exploring leadership behaviours and examining the perceptions of top leaders in respect of empowerment and innovation. The qualitative study was expected to contribute to the theory of empowering leadership by evaluating its effects on innovation in the SME context. Another aim of this study was to develop a research framework reflecting the association of empowering leadership and innovation, coupled with the mediating role of climate for innovation. The post-positivism paradigm leads to the adoption of a quantitative approach to test the hypotheses based on quantitative data collected from a survey of SME employees. As this positivist element was part of a pragmatic paradigm, its quantitative design was informed by the results of the qualitative phase as well as theory and empirical evidence. The worldview of pragmatism adopted in this thesis allows for the application of methods that fit together. Both the findings and insights that emerged from the interviews in the qualitative phase and the results from the survey provided by the quantitative phase informed the general findings and contributed to the practical and theoretical outcomes of this thesis.

3. The rationale for mixed-methods research

A mixed-methods design was chosen for the current research for several reasons in line with Stentz, Plano Clark and Matkin (2012). Creswell (2014) emphasised the benefits of integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches in mixed-methods designs; therefore, this study took full advantage of and minimised the limitations of each approach. The purpose of the study design was to develop more comprehensive and reliable understandings, enhance result validity, and investigate contextualised understandings from two levels: leaders

(qualitative) and followers (quantitative). In leadership and innovation studies, qualitative and quantitative approaches provide the opportunity to analyse contemporary leadership styles and combining quantitative and qualitative approaches supports new discoveries in the area of existing leadership theories (Stentz, Plano Clark & Matkin 2012). Further, the choice of mixed methods has the potential to uncover new interpretations about interactions, influences of culture and important elements of the leadership-climate-innovation associations (Northhouse 2013).

Mixed-methods research is defined as “an approach to inquiry involving collecting both quantitative and qualitative data, integrating the two forms of data, and using distinct designs that may involve philosophical assumptions and theoretical frameworks” (Creswell 2014, p. 32). Mixed-methods design has received increasing interest from scholars and this methodological approach is being employed more widely (Tashakkori 2009). The combination of qualitative and quantitative methods in a single study offers better understandings of the research questions (Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009). In addition, a mixed-methods study is considered to be more persuasive as it involves both texts and numbers (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011). In support of using mixed methods, Greene, Caracelli and Graham (1989) proposed five reasons for mixing qualitative and quantitative research: triangulation, complementarity, development, initiation, expansion. Moreover, a mixed-methods design is considered the most appropriate approach for addressing complex research questions that are unable to be answered by a single method (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011).

Mixed methods were employed in this study because the phenomenon of leadership motivating innovation has been researched mainly using quantitative methods, generalising from theory-based models of leadership originally developed for large firms in the Western context (Hughes et al. 2018). However, we cannot assume that leadership will have the same impact on innovation in SMEs in the Asian context (Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). As discussed in the literature review and based on the findings of the SLR, this thesis took an exploratory approach to study the influence of leadership on innovation in SMEs, considering the mediating role of climate for innovation. In addition, scholars have called for further studies in exploring the effects of leadership approaches on innovation in tourism, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (Divisekera & Nguyen 2018; Hjalager 2010; Kriz̃aj, Brodnik & Bukovec 2014). Consequently, with the aim of deepening understanding of this issue, this study employed a qualitative approach, interviewing leaders from tourism SMEs to obtain new insights into how the behaviours of such leaders develop a climate for innovation

and nurture innovation. The qualitative findings, together with existing literature, were used to propose an integrated model, to identify variables and inform the questionnaire, which was designed to measure leadership-innovation in the SME context. The quantitative phase of this research not only allowed for the confirmation of previous studies' findings on the determinants of innovation, but also served as a way to test the newly-developed integrated model reflecting the relationship between leadership, innovation and climate for innovation in the SME context. More importantly, this study employed mixed methods to provide an insightful consideration of the research problem and to address complex research questions that could not be answered by a single method.

4. Mixed-methods design approaches

Scholars have raised an important issue in employing mixed methods with respect to the ordering of qualitative and quantitative studies and which approach answers which research question (Bryman 2006; Creswell 2015a; Franco & Matos 2015; Stentz, Plano Clark & Matkin 2012). Four criteria are used to classify mixed-methods designs: implementation, priority, stage of integration, and theoretical perspective (Creswell et al. 2003). Based on these criteria, mixed-methods designs can be categorised as sequential or concurrent research. Concurrent designs are conducted based on parallel data collection and analysis of both qualitative and quantitative phases and are categorised in three forms: triangulation, nested, and transformative designs. The findings of both qualitative and quantitative studies in a concurrent design are compared at the end of the research. In a sequential design, researchers collect either qualitative or quantitative data first, followed by the other method in the second phase. There are three types of sequential design: explanatory, exploratory, and transformative.

Taking on board the foregoing discussion, this study used exploratory sequential mixed methods (Creswell & Plano Clark 2011; Teddlie & Tashakkori 2009) to answer the research questions. In this exploratory design, priority was given to the qualitative method and the research results from the first phase were used to inform the subsequent quantitative study. The findings of the qualitative phase informed the final content (in addition to theory driven scales) of the questionnaire to best fit the sample and context. Following analysis, a conceptual model was developed, which is discussed in Chapter 5. This emergent model pointed to additional concepts and indicated the need to adapt and add constructs to the theoretically-informed quantitative study, discussed in Chapter 6.

The mixed-methods examination in the current study comprised in-depth interviews with CEOs of Vietnamese tourism SMEs, designed to explore the leader views of how they influence innovation. The interviews drew out the interpretations and sense-making of the leaders (Weick 1993). This first phase aimed to result in a rich, context-aware exploration of the phenomena of leadership and the role of leadership for building organisational climate and supporting innovation in SMEs (Stentz, Plano Clark & Matkin 2012). Subsequently, questionnaires informed by the qualitative phase were used to collect data from employees working in Vietnamese SMEs. The combination of expert interviews and statistical analysis demonstrated a fruitful application of mixed-methods research (Venkatesh, Brown & Bala 2013). The qualitative and quantitative methods used in this study and the advantages and potential disadvantages of each method are discussed next.

Figure 4 below shows the sequence of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis in this mixed-methods study.

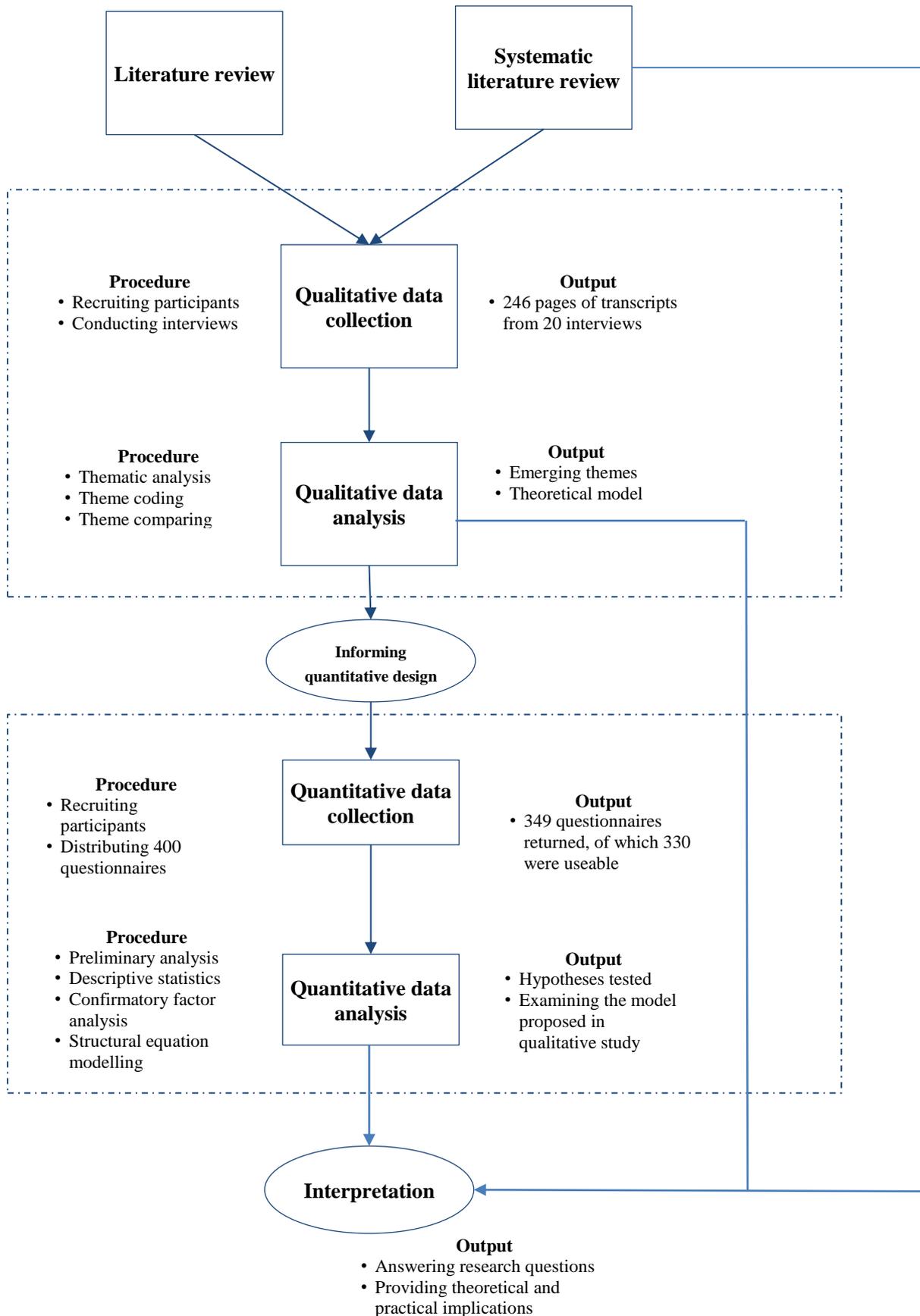


Figure 4. Stages of the research design

5. Research methods

5.1 Qualitative research methods

Qualitative research is a productive method for uncovering relationships (Babbie 2004). For this reason, qualitative methods were applied to examine the role of leaders in developing a climate for innovation and encouraging innovation within the SME context (Noke & Chesney 2014). Specifically, this study intended to explore: 1) the characteristics that top managers associate with a climate for innovation; 2) the leadership activities that top managers identify within themselves in terms of creating a climate for innovation; and 3) the ways in which top managers encourage employee creativity and innovation.

5.1.1 Design

In-depth interviews were chosen as the tool of enquiry as they enable “a more accurate and clear picture of a respondents position or behaviour” (Ghauri & Gronhaug 2002, p. 101). They also enable participants to clarify and elaborate their answers. The interviews were conducted in late 2016.

Because Vietnamese was the first language of the participants and the researcher, all interviews were conducted in Vietnamese. All the correspondence, consent forms, and information sheets were translated into Vietnamese, attached to the original English documents. The conversion of the interview questions (English to Vietnamese and then back again into English) was done by two different bilingual experts to ensure the conversion quality using the back-translation procedure (Brislin 1970).

5.1.2 Participants

Participants were 20 CEOs in charge of tourism SMEs in Vietnam. All were both CEOs and founders or co-founders and were at different stages of their careers. They were invited to participate via their listed office phone number on their company website. All companies were located in Hanoi, the capital city of Vietnam, where there is a high concentration of tourism companies (Ministry of Culture Sports and Tourism 2014). The selected companies ranged in size from eight to 60 employees, meeting the Vietnamese Government criteria for an SME. All participants were university graduates and had been working in the tourism sector for at least three years. The CEOs' ages ranged from 25 to 60 years. Of the 20 CEOs interviewed, six were women (30%) and 14 were men (70%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Summary of participants in qualitative phase

Code name	Age	Gender	Education	Firm age	Number of employees	Business type
CEO 1	45-50	Male	Bachelor Degree	8	12	Tour operation
CEO 2	30-35	Female	Bachelor Degree	10	50	Hospitality
CEO 3	40-45	Male	Bachelor Degree	5	11	Airline agency and tour operation
CEO 4	35-40	Female	Bachelor Degree	7	10	Tour operation
CEO 5	35-40	Male	Bachelor Degree	10	23	Event planning and tour operation
CEO 6	30-35	Male	Bachelor Degree	13	20	Tour operation
CEO 7	45-50	Male	Bachelor Degree	3	14	Tour operation
CEO 8	45-50	Male	Bachelor Degree	15	60	Transportation and tour operation
CEO 9	55-60	Male	Bachelor Degree	5	13	Tour operation
CEO 10	40-45	Female	Bachelor Degree	4	11	Event planning
CEO 11	25-30	Male	MBA	5	46	Tour operation
CEO 12	30-35	Female	Bachelor Degree	12	12	Tour operation
CEO 13	45-50	Male	Bachelor Degree	9	15	Event planning and tour operation
CEO 14	35-40	Male	Bachelor Degree	11	15	Tour operation
CEO 15	35-40	Male	Bachelor Degree	6	31	Tour operation
CEO 16	30-35	Male	Bachelor Degree	4	18	Tour operation
CEO 17	35-40	Female	Bachelor Degree	13	50	Event planning and transportation
CEO 18	35-40	Female	MBA	6	40	Tour operation, transportation and restaurant
CEO 19	30-35	Male	Bachelor Degree	4	8	Tour operation
CEO 20	25-30	Male	Bachelor Degree	3	50	Tour operation

5.1.3 Interview protocol

Semi-structured interviews were used to access participants' perceptions of their leadership style, how they formed and developed the organisation climate of their company, and how they managed innovation. The interviews were guided by a 10-question interview protocol (see Appendices 4 and 5 for the English and Vietnamese versions), which included open-ended questions such as: "What is innovation in respect of your organisation?" "What do you think it is that makes your company innovative?" Finally, they were asked; "To what extent do you welcome new ideas and implement changes in your organisation?" In terms of their leadership approach, the interviews continued with questions such as: "How would you describe your leadership style?" "How do you enable your staff to work well for your business?" and "How do you think your leadership affects others to be creative and innovative?" As for organisational climate, the interviewees were asked questions such as: "Could you describe the working environment here that encourages creativity and innovation?" "How does your leadership impact the workplace climate in your company?" "What, if any, encouragements do you offer to promote employee innovation? What works best?" The interviews took place at each CEO's place of work, at a time convenient to them, and lasted on average between 30 and 45 minutes. All interviews were audio-recorded with participant consent.

5.1.4 Data analysis

The contents of the interviews were transcribed in preparation for coding and analysis. The coding followed the procedure suggested by Creswell (2014) and continued until saturation was reached (Spiegel et al. 2016). Initial manual coding was followed by the use of NVivo (Version 11). After importing all transcripts into NVivo, they were manually coded (Creswell & Dana 2000); firstly, for initial themes then for higher order themes. The initial coding of the data using both NVivo codes (interviewees' terminology) and extant theory (academic terminology) informed the naming and attribution of codes (Hsieh & Shannon 2005). All interviews were re-read to identify relationships between expected and unexpected emergent themes and constructs related to leadership, climate and innovation (Creswell 2014; Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016; Wallis, Yammarino & Feyerherm 2011). The higher and lower order themes were finalised, and their links considered. Any remaining ambiguities were resolved (Spiegel et al. 2016), resulting in the conceptual model illustrated and discussed in Chapter 5.

5.2 Quantitative research methods

Quantitative research is well-suited to testing and explaining relationships (Babbie 2004), which justifies the approach used to explore the relative contribution of empowering leadership and climate for innovation on innovation in Vietnamese SMEs. The quantitative investigation examines the mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in SMEs. This section presents the methods of the quantitative investigation. The analysis of the quantitative study are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.2.1 Sample and procedures

The data for this study were collected from the employees of tourism SMEs in Hanoi. The questionnaire was translated from English to Vietnamese and then back again to English by two bilingual experts to guarantee translation quality (Brislin 1970). Tourism SMEs were contacted using an online public list that included 661 tourism companies; 37 of them decided to participate in this study. Among them, 18 companies had participated in the qualitative study. Initially, the researcher contacted the CEO of each tourism company personally and delivered an information sheet about the study, identifying the need and significance of the research. If the CEO agreed to participate, they provided a list of their full-time and part-time employees for data collection purposes. By way of follow-up, the researcher visited each company to explain the significance of the study and the survey procedures to all participants. The completed questionnaires were returned directly to the researcher by post or in person, without the managers' participation or direct knowledge of who participated.

Altogether, 400 questionnaires were delivered in person to the employees of 37 tourism SMEs in Vietnam. After one month, 349 questionnaires were returned, giving a response rate of 87.3%. However, 19 of these questionnaires were discarded due to incomplete or disengaged responses. Disengaged responses could be recognised when participants selected only one answer throughout the questionnaire. The researcher identified these questionnaires and removed them from the returned sample, resulting in 330 useable questionnaires (82.5%).

5.2.2 Measures

Existing scales measuring the concepts of interest were used to create the employee survey. All items were measured on a five-point Likert response scale, ranging from "1 = strongly disagree" to "5 = strongly agree". The survey scales have been found to be reliable and valid in previous studies.

Five items were used to assess *empowering leadership*, developed by Martin, Liao and Campbell (2012), and adapted from Ahearne, Mathieu and Rapp (2005) and Arnold et al. (2000). These included items such as “My supervisor explains the overall goals we are trying to achieve” and “My supervisor gives employees the freedom to work on their own” ($\alpha = 0.82$). A five-item scale, adapted from Martin, Liao and Campbell (2012), was used to measure *directive leadership* ($\alpha = 0.89$). Items included, “My supervisor checks to be sure employees follow proper procedures” and “My supervisor clearly explains the way work should be done”. *Initiating structure* was assessed using a 15-item scale developed by Halpin (1957) ($\alpha = 0.83$), which included items such as “My supervisor makes his/her attitudes clear to the group”, “My supervisor criticises poor work”, and “My supervisor encourages the use of uniform procedures”.

To assess *climate for innovation*, the 16-item organisational climate scale developed by Scott and Bruce (1994) was adopted ($\alpha = 0.92$). A sample item was “Creativity is encouraged here”.

The measures for *innovation* were adopted from Paladino (2008), measuring product innovation ($\alpha = .87$), and Wang, CL and Ahmed (2007), measuring process innovation ($\alpha = .79$). These are used to assess the innovativeness of new products or services introduced to the market and the introduction of new managerial elements and production methods within firms. Sample items included, “The quality of this new product is superior to that of our competitors”, and “We are constantly improving our business processes”.

5.2.3 Control variables

Following previous research (Chang, Bai & Li 2015; Gyu Park et al. 2017), several key variables deemed to be related to innovation were controlled. These were gender, age, work experience, and education level.

6. Ethics approval

Ethical approval was obtained from the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) for both the qualitative and quantitative phases of the research (Ethics approval number: HRE16-196 on 13/09/2016, see appendix 1). The VUHREC assessed this study based on its design, methodology, participant recruitment, the language and content of the interview protocol and the survey questionnaire. Consent from participants was collected and participants acknowledged that their participation was voluntary and that they could

withdraw from the study at any time. The participants were also given the contact information of the researcher and his supervisor to report any issues relating to the research. The consent form, letter of invitation and information sheet for participants are included in Appendices 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8.

7. Conclusion

This study used a mixed-methods design to investigate the potential relationships between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in SME contexts. While the main purpose of this research was not to compare the results of qualitative and quantitative studies, similarities between the studies increase confidence in the results. The findings have been generalised in an analytical way by exploring, testing, and explaining relationships regarding the role that empowering leadership and climate for innovation play in innovation within SME contexts. The study relied on analytic generalisation by drawing implications from data to a given population and linking the research results from multi-sources to existing theories.

The two empirical studies differ with regard to conceptual range. Although each of the two studies focused on the role that leadership behaviours play in encouraging innovation within SME contexts, the theoretical framework underlying these studies varied, as will be discussed in Chapters 5 and 6. The analysis presented in Chapter 5 was used to explore connections between leadership activities on the part of top managers and the climate for innovation at the organisational level. From the analysis, a revised conceptual model was proposed, identifying variables for inclusion in the quantitative study. The qualitative findings indicated that leaders from Vietnamese tourism SMEs not only encouraged their subordinates' creativity and innovative behaviours via empowering behaviours, but also, in some cases, by instituting initiating structure and directive approaches. Consequently, in Chapter 6, relationships between three leadership behaviours (empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure) and innovation are examined. Chapters 5 and 6 both draw out conceptual synergies based on data derived from the literature reviews and qualitative and quantitative studies.

Chapter 5. Leaders influencing innovation: An exploration of the role of leadership and organisational climate within tourism SMEs

1. Introduction

In Chapter 1 it was noted that domestic SMEs in Vietnam are facing increasing competition from FDI companies and multinational corporations operating in Vietnam, which have demonstrated success through innovation (Nguyen, QA, Sullivan Mort & D'Souza 2015; Nguyen, TV & Bryant 2004). Therefore, Vietnamese SMEs must improve their competitiveness through the innovation of products and processes. Innovation is prioritised in SME strategy to build competitive advantage and guarantee sustained economic survival (Dung et al. 2017). In recent decades, scholars have identified a range of factors affecting the innovation capability of firms in general and SMEs in particular; amongst these are leadership and organisational climate (Ahmed 1998; Baer & Frese 2003; Wilson-Evered & Härtel 2001; Wilson-Evered, Härtel & Neale 2001; Yan, L & Yan 2013).

As already indicated, most leadership and innovation studies have been conducted in advanced Western economies (Yoshida et al. 2014). Critically, given the concepts of leadership and innovation may be experienced differently in emerging Asian economies compared to the Western context (Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016), it is important to understand the way in which these concepts are construed and experienced. This nuanced understanding can be achieved through a rich qualitative approach. Consequently, this study canvassed the views of leaders of SMEs in tourism, a fast-paced industry in Vietnam, to explore how they encouraged innovation and an innovative work climate. In line with the aim of the study, the specific research questions addressed in this qualitative exploration are as follows:

RQ1. To what extent does empowering leadership influence innovation in the SME context?

RQ2. What role does empowering leadership play in developing a climate for innovation in the SME context?

In the following section, findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 SME CEOs in the Vietnamese tourism sector are presented.

2. Findings

The analysis of qualitative data resulted in the themes and sub-themes that comprise Table 4. Six main themes emerged from the data: providing autonomy and freedom for subordinates; welcoming and supportive of new ideas; communication, inspiration and knowledge sharing; teamwork and collective decision-making; developing rewards and incentive systems; and comfortable working conditions. These main themes were subdivided into two or more sub-themes. Also, included in Table 4 are the number of comments and respondents categorised into each sub-theme and their exemplary comments. Next, the main themes are discussed in turn.

Table 4. Themes, sub-themes, number of comments and number of respondents

			N = 20	
Theme	Sub-theme	Number of comments	Number of respondents	Exemplary comments
<i>Providing autonomy and freedom for subordinates</i>	Providing autonomy	53	18	<i>sense of autonomy, freedom, work independently, reach in their own way, empower</i>
	Result-oriented	16	12	<i>results-oriented, reach the goal, achieve the overall goal, control the results</i>
	Stimulating employees' intrinsic motivation for innovation	54	10	<i>give employees enough motivation to work better, voice their opinions, believe in their potential success</i>
	Trust in staff ability	12	8	<i>laying the ground for employees, promote their abilities, believe in their potential</i>
<i>Welcoming and supportive of new ideas</i>	Welcoming new ideas	37	17	<i>welcome new ideas, willing to welcome, confident in the chance of success, ideas are welcomed prior to being approved</i>
	Leader's motivation in implementing innovative ideas	40	11	<i>willing to change, desire to change, interested in change</i>
	Facilitating idea implementation procedures	25	12	<i>encouraged to request or raise their voices, be implemented without any obstacles, no limit on ideas or work implementation</i>
	Coping with difficulties in implementing innovation	38	14	<i>have an open discussion as to difficulties they are facing, be implemented without any obstacles</i>

	Supporting subordinates in realising ideas	45	8	<i>encourage, providing financial support and opportunities, provide training for employees</i>
Communication, inspiration and knowledge sharing	Explaining the meaningfulness of work	6	5	<i>If there is anything unclear, I will have a private discussion with the employee, explain the meaning of work, value the moving-forward working style</i>
	Sharing knowledge	18	11	<i>pave the way for sharing knowledge</i>
	Inspiring subordinates	32	15	<i>inspire and encourage</i>
	Thirst for knowledge	18	7	<i>welcome the opinions of people on sharing knowledge</i>
	Effective communication with staff	58	17	<i>warm communication style, friendly style, good social cognition</i>
Teamwork and collective decision-making	Teamwork and collective decision-making	23	12	<i>ideas can be analysed mutually, frequent meetings, encourage meetings, discussed openly</i>
	Directing staff in completing tasks	35	15	<i>ask them to apply immediately, show how better it is</i>
Developing rewards and incentive systems	Monetary rewards	45	14	<i>bonus to their salary, cash, various financial rewards</i>
	Non-monetary rewards	31	7	<i>praise from me or from middle managers</i>
	Combination of monetary and non-monetary rewards	19	10	<i>necessary to have both mental and financial reward</i>
Comfortable working conditions	Building up organisational culture	25	9	<i>create comfortable workplace climate</i>
	Comfortable working environment	29	13	<i>flexible working time, well-balanced</i>
	Mental supports	59	15	<i>help them to refresh themselves, both physically and mentally, enable people to work more comfortably</i>
	Equipment, facilities and other supplies	14	6	<i>spacious office, the office must have sufficient facilities</i>

2.1 Providing autonomy and freedom for subordinates

In the present study, 18 out of 20 leaders used the words “autonomy”, “freedom”, or “work independently” to explain their strategy of motivating employees to take control of their own decision-making. Participants noted they were tending to use less direction and provide

greater freedom for their subordinates. They exhibited an approach to stimulating innovation and creativity so that employees could work in their own ways with limited control from supervisors. Eight participants used “autonomy” or “freedom” as a preliminary tool for motivating employee creativity and innovative behaviours. The following statements illustrate the strategies used by leaders to promote autonomy among their employees to stimulate their innovative behaviours.

“My leadership style allows employees to bring into play their sense of autonomy to the best of their abilities. I stay away from forcing them to do every single thing. However, the end purpose is to achieve the overall goal with the successful contribution of each employee.” (CEO 15)

“In order for employees to perform better and be more innovative, the leader should empower them. Not only does this reduce the workload of managers, but it also increases their sense of autonomy in every assignment.” (CEO 4)

“In my opinion, I am responsible for laying the ground for employees, enabling them to promote their abilities, instead of micro-managing them. That is, I do not force them to imitate servilely everything. By contrast, they are encouraged to foster their creativity and voice their opinions, rather than following a specific working style.” (CEO 16)

Many participants had tried to develop autonomy among their staff. Simultaneously, they sought to improve organisational productivity by encouraging their staff to complete work activities with a view to recognising errors and opportunities for improvement. They provided employees with the ability to engage in difficult but potentially rewarding innovative processes. Twelve out of 20 participants were results-oriented, meaning they paid greater attention to the work performance outcomes of their employees rather than the method by which they completed tasks. For example:

“I set goals for [employees] to reach in their own way. I am results-oriented, which means I do not pay attention to how each of them manages to attain it. That is, whether they can reach the goal or not is what I care about.” (CEO 20)

However, some participants noted that while autonomy was provided, they still supervised subordinates using technology or reporting systems to ensure that their staff used their time wisely. For example, CEO 16 stated:

“As aforementioned, I require daily reports, for instance, one is responsible for this task and how it has progressed so far. I provide full autonomy for him/her, but still control the result every day. If he/she is encountered with any difficulties, he/she should discuss directly with me, so that we can come up with a solution.” (CEO 16)

2.2 Welcoming and supportive of new ideas

A prominent theme to emerge from the interviews was the role played by the leaders in welcoming employees' new ideas and providing support to implement them. The leader's attitude in appreciating subordinates' new ideas played an important part in determining their creativity and innovative behaviours. The leaders acknowledged that the implementation of new ideas into practice might be risky and costly, but they also stated that when new ideas were raised, their first action would be to recognise staff effort. Subsequently, the leader and subordinate could work together to evaluate the feasibility of realising the idea. The leaders in the study were aware that if they did not recognise the new idea, the subordinates' motivation for innovation would be diminished. Typically, ideas were welcomed and discussed before deciding on their implementation. This orientation is evidenced by the statements below.

“I highly welcome new ideas and believe in their potential success. Based on my expectation and pursuit of excellence, plus my sense of commitment, I am confident in the chance of success.” (CEO 1)

“In terms of new ideas, I am willing to welcome all, and then I filter those that are best-suited to our operational model to put into practice. These ideas can vary, from product advertising to customer approach or marketing tools to support sales activities.” (CEO 15)

“I encourage all of my employees to generate new ideas to improve their work continually. They are fostered to request or raise their voices on any new project, even non-related to travel and tourism. All of these ideas can be analysed mutually later in the company.” (CEO 20)

The process from idea formation to idea realisation and innovation appears to require much support from the CEO. This requirement was clearly evident in the following participant quotes.

“I think providing financial support and opportunities for employees to attend training and development courses will enable them to enhance their creativity and build their expertise.” (CEO 7)

“I believe it’s best to provide training for employees so that they have sufficient knowledge to realise their ideas creatively.” (CEO 4)

“Despite the small size of my company, new ideas are welcomed prior to being approved by the director. If the ideas are great, they will be implemented without any obstacles.” (CEO 17)

2.3 Communication, inspiration and knowledge sharing

Interactionist and interpersonal practices, including inspiring, communicating and sharing knowledge, were included in participants’ responses when referring to their strategies for managing innovative behaviours among subordinates. The analysis showed that most of the leaders were not directly involved in their employees’ work; however, they wanted to communicate with their subordinates to listen to and understand their difficulties. In such cases, the leaders showed understanding and inspired staff with motivational talks. For example, the participants stated:

“When I put forward, discuss or implement the decisions, I will inspire and encourage all the subordinates in my company to do their best.” (CEO 1)

“If the leader is just interested in change but not willing to or has no desire to change, he/she will not be suited to the entire organisation and able to inspire employees. Employees can feel whether the change is positive or not to the organisation, not just for the leader only.” (CEO 11)

“I embrace a warm communication style with subordinates. I think with the present size of the company, my leadership style will be adjusted to be more suitable for the environment. Employees also agree that I have a friendly style, have a good social cognition and take into consideration the situation of each person to support their development.” (CEO 19)

The leaders also shared their experience and knowledge to help employees solve problems creatively. The participants emphasised that sharing knowledge and experience was more like suggesting or advising, which was different from directing employees. The purpose of these interactions was to help employees find a creative solution, underlined by a sense of

subordinate creativity and innovation. In some cases, when the subordinates did not have the ability to find solutions for difficult issues, the leader became involved or formed a team to support them. For example:

“I really encourage meetings where sales staff and I can have an open discussion as to difficulties they are facing, the degree of difficulties, opportunities and challenges of approaching clients and so on. This will pave the way for sharing knowledge among leaders and employees and training each other, which proves to be beneficial for all.”
(CEO 3)

2.4 Teamwork and collective decision-making

The analysis revealed that teamwork, discussion and collective decision-making with the participation of leaders and subordinates emerged as prominent themes in relation to stimulating innovative behaviours and improving innovation in SMEs. Thirteen out of 20 participants referred to the use of meetings and group discussions, and eight participants to the use of collective decision-making in difficult situations, as strategies for formulating new ideas and finding creative solutions. Four of these participants stated that they used all three strategies in their efforts to gather employees' new ideas and to decide on the implementation of such ideas. For instance, CEO 18 affirmed:

“I would like to leverage the innovative behaviours of every member of the company as much as possible. In general, every person is entitled to voice his/her opinion, and there is no limit on ideas or work implementation. Everything is discussed openly and collective opinions are more than welcomed.” (CEO 18)

Moreover, the CEOs explained that they could not control all the issues in their businesses themselves. Therefore, when an idea was offered, the leader often collected subordinate feedback prior to making a decision about its implementation. CEO 3 described this process as follows:

“I really welcome the opinion of people on new ideas, putting forward a business solution, proposing changes to improve business efficiency and so on in any meetings. After selecting the ideas, I will conduct more research myself. Prior to putting them into practice, I will ask for collective ideas of employees again. If this receives unanimously positive feedback, I will go ahead. In my opinion, no leaders can cover every single aspect and handle everything on their own. Listening to other people of different functional expertise will contribute greatly to the final decision.” (CEO 3)

In addition, the participants emphasised the importance of teamwork when individuals faced challenges. The leaders played an important role in encouraging their employees to seek support from other team members, as evident in the following comment:

“Whenever an employee faces a challenging situation, he/she is encouraged to share with his/her colleagues to receive any support possible. In case the situation proves to be out of reach for employee levels, the director will help solve the problem. This will enable everyone to discuss and share ideas on the problem, and the director will base on the collective ideas to make the final decision.” (CEO 4)

2.5 Developing rewards and incentive systems

All participants used rewards and incentives to encourage innovation in their SME. Most confirmed that monetary rewards were vital to acknowledge the innovative contributions of subordinates. However, seven out of 20 CEOs indicated that while monetary incentives worked best in the short-term, non-monetary incentives (e.g., thank you emails, promotion opportunities, staff awards and/or share ownership) were more efficient over the long-term. In addition, 10 participants reported that a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives was the most effective method for encouraging innovation. For example:

“Certainly, when employees put forward a good idea, I always have support. First, I can show direct support, such as praise from me or from middle managers. Second, I can introduce the employee and his or her ideas on the intranet. Besides that, I offer some financial reward for that employee. I think it is necessary to have both mental and financial reward, without one of which the encouragement is not efficient at all. The financial reward varies, from cash (500,000 – 1 million VND) or a special dinner.” (CEO 11)

“Presently, I am using bonuses to their salary as the reward system. In the near future, I intend to offer a free holiday with their family members during their annual leave. This will help them to refresh themselves, both physically and mentally.” (CEO 5)

A good reward and incentive system, according to the participants, had spill-over effects. When an employee was praised for his or her innovative behaviour, it was considered likely to encourage other employees to raise their own ideas. For instance, CEO 1 observed:

“If one puts so much innovation into work with a high level of efficiency plus few errors, his/her accomplishment is definitely recognised. I think the combination of both

financial and non-monetary rewards will have the greatest impact on motivating employees to perform better. The rewarded person can be a role model for others to follow suit.” (CEO 1)

2.6 Comfortable working conditions

All participants described an ideal working environment that helped boost innovation and creativity. Twelve out of 20 participants suggested that the physical environment, for instance, working spaces, equipment, and technology, and the behavioural environment, such as rules, regulations, and relationships between subordinates and subordinates or subordinates and leaders, were important in fostering a climate for innovation. In many cases, the leaders emphasised the importance of flexible working hours, reduced regulations and simplified working procedures as ways of facilitating the process of bringing new ideas into practice. Exemplar comments are provided below.

“I try to create a comfortable workplace climate. [...] While people do not feel under strict control, they are actually well-managed.” (CEO 20)

“In terms of space, I think it should be comfortable and inspiring to everyone, which I have not managed to do yet.” (CEO 20)

“My company innovation may not be new in other countries. However, I think, the first change we can make is the working time to which employees pay a great deal of attention. This will be more flexible for employees and can create a more comfortable working environment for them. I believe everyone has been pretty satisfied about this change.” (CEO 8)

“I think the working environment should be well-balanced. Firstly, it should be comfortable, where employees are able to work rather than feel forced to work. Therefore, we should focus on developing an enjoyable climate among top leaders, managers and other staff. A frustrated environment will not foster any creativity and innovation, I believe.” (CEO 11)

The participants also highlighted the importance of organising recreational activities (e.g., a company annual holiday and monthly parties), as such activities played a key role in strengthening the relationship between all company employees. Promoting social interaction assisted in making staff more comfortable and encouraged relationships that led to innovation.

The leaders tended to create an atmosphere in which the individuals sensed connectedness to the leader and other staff as a family. For example:

“‘Work hard, play hard’ is the main theme of our company culture. Play hard means once we achieve our target or finish a large project successfully, we do relax by taking a trip or simply just hanging out together. This strengthens the special bond among each other, especially between the staff and managers. There we can exchange our honest feedback so that we can draw lessons for ourselves, which will make the whole company like a real family.” (CEO 1)

3. Discussion

This qualitative stage of the study set out to explore leaders’ approaches to developing organisational climate in order to stimulate innovation in tourism SMEs. The research questions for this phase of the study were: *RQ1. To what extent does empowering leadership influence innovation in the SME context?* and *RQ2. What role does empowering leadership play in developing a climate for innovation in the SME context?*

The findings provide specific answers for these research questions in terms of leadership, climate and preferred practices and conditions to promote innovation. In brief, the results suggest that five key elements of leader behaviour were used: providing autonomy and freedom for subordinates; welcoming and being supportive of new ideas; communication, inspiration and knowledge sharing; teamwork and collective decision-making; and developing rewards and incentive systems. In this section each finding is discussed with reference to the literature.

Communication between leaders and subordinates and knowledge sharing are vitally important for stimulating innovation in SMEs. When subordinates proposed new ideas, many of the leaders confirmed that they were open to discussing them further. In addition, the leaders in the study built close relationships with their subordinates to encourage opportunities for them to voice their opinions, with the potential of leading to employee-driven innovation. This finding is in line with leader-member exchange theory, in which good communication and a positive relationship between leaders and employees contributes significantly to employee creativity and innovation (Graen & Uhl-Bien 1995). As the structure of an SME is simpler than that in large firms, senior executives are more likely to work and communicate directly with the staff. Such proximity means their behaviours and attitudes are influential in guiding innovation oriented behaviours of subordinates, a finding supported by the current study.

The literature review identified leadership constructs that potentially encourage innovation in general. The interviewees' perspectives were integrated with those empirical observations to shine a light on the relationship between leadership and innovation among Vietnamese SMEs. Drawing on situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard 1969) and empirical findings from the qualitative research, this research thesis contends that Vietnamese leaders of tourism SMEs not only encourage their subordinates' creativity and innovative behaviours via empowering behaviours but also by instituting initiating structure and directive approaches. Empowering leadership includes inspiring, providing autonomy and involving subordinates in decision-making (Ahearne, Mathieu & Rapp 2005; Arnold et al. 2000). Initiating structure involves a task and results-oriented focus and ensuring employees know what is expected of them (Gaudet & Tremblay 2017; Lambert et al. 2012). Directive leadership comprises expressing leadership through direction and instructions (Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012; Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009).

Table 5, developed based on the empirical findings and the literature, shows the identified leadership styles and complementary evidence of the participants' responses.

Table 5. Leadership behaviours encouraging innovation in SMEs

Category of leadership behaviours	Example of responses
Empowering leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing autonomy • Stimulating employees' intrinsic motivation for innovation • Trust in staff ability • Facilitating idea implementation procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allowing employees to bring into play their sense of autonomy to the best of their abilities</i> • <i>Empowering employees so they could perform better and be more innovative.</i> • <i>Increasing employees' sense of autonomy in every assignment</i> • <i>Believing in employees' potentials</i> • <i>Encouraging employees to request or raise their voices</i>
Directive leadership	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directing staff in completing tasks • Teamwork and collective decision-making • Coping with difficulties • Effective communication with staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Asking staff to apply ideas immediately</i> • <i>Requiring daily reports, one is responsible for this task and how it has progressed so far</i> • <i>Having discussion as to difficulties employees are facing</i> • <i>Having frequent meetings to assign tasks</i>
Initiating structure	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Result-oriented • Supporting subordinates in realising ideas • Explaining the meaningfulness of work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Controlling the result every day</i> • <i>I am results-oriented, which means I do not pay attention to how each of them manages to attain it.</i> • <i>Whether they can reach the goal or not is what I care about</i> • <i>Providing training for employees so that they have sufficient knowledge to complete the tasks.</i>

Informed by the empirical results, a revised high-level conceptual model was formulated reflecting the leadership process and its effect on climate for innovation and innovation in SMEs. This advances the proposed conceptual model presented in Chapter 2 (Figure 5). Two new constructs, directive leadership and initiating structure, were added to the revised model to reflect the leadership-innovation process of Vietnamese SME leaders. This study has considered the theoretical views of Hersey and Blanchard (1969) and Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009), as well as the taxonomy proposed by Blanchard (2018), to explore leadership styles related to SME innovation.

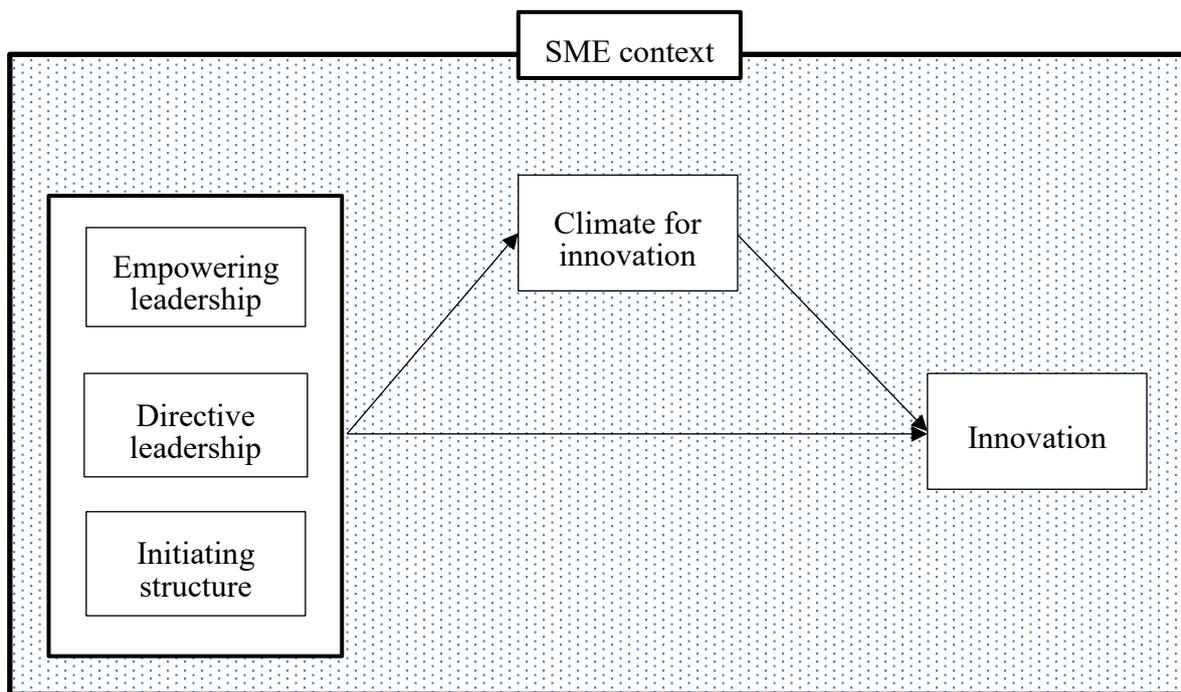


Figure 5. The proposed associations among leadership, organisational climate and innovation in Vietnamese tourism SMEs from the qualitative study

The revised model proposes that the leaders of SMEs draw on a combination of leadership approaches to directly encourage innovation, including empowering, directing, and initiating structure. These leadership behaviours also play an important role in establishing a climate for innovation. Together, these approaches encourage innovation in SMEs (Baer & Frese 2003; Chan, Liu & Fellows 2014; Ekvall 1996; Isaksen & Akkermans 2011; Shanker et al. 2017). Empowering leadership has been positively related to employee innovative behaviours and innovation in general cases (Hughes et al. 2018). However, the effects of directive leadership and initiating structure on innovation and creativity are inconclusive. On the one hand, directive leadership and initiating structure have some disadvantages. These types of leadership show less flexibility, can result in staff dissatisfaction, along with deviant

behaviours and low innovation among employees (Ball, Trevino & Sims 1994; Neubert et al. 2008; Pearce et al. 2003; Podsakoff et al. 2006). On the other hand, the theoretical view of Sims, Faraj and Yun (2009) suggested that directive leadership and initiating structure are appropriate where there are clear tasks and objectives and when the leader is considerably more experienced than the subordinates, which may be typical of the SME context. In addition, directive leadership was found to enhance proactive behaviours for work units (Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012). Initiating structure has been effective in development projects, in which incremental innovations and modifications of existing products are prioritised and leaders tend to direct tasks to achieve product development (Keller 2006). Therefore, the conceptual model extends current theory on the effects of empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure. It proposes that the combination of these leadership behaviours is necessary to encourage innovation and foster a climate for innovation in SMEs.

Although leaders in individual cultures ideally take responsibility and are accountable for any decision-making (House & Aditya 1997), teamwork and collective decision-making play an important part in Vietnamese SMEs. This could be explained by the Vietnamese collectivist culture (Tran, D, Fallon & Vickers 2016). Although SME leaders have the most influence within their firm (Yan, L & Yan 2013), Vietnamese leaders often do not show their power or strictly control their subordinates. The results of the current study suggest that the leaders in Vietnamese tourism SMEs tended to develop a comfortable environment by means of creating a family atmosphere, organising recreational and team-building activities with a view to increasing the morale and productivity of their employees (Butler 1988). They also gave their subordinates opportunities to voice their opinions about company issues and participate in decision-making. Carrying the responsibility of being leaders, they were the final decision-maker and determined chosen strategies after discussion with staff. This observation is consistent with the work of Tran, D, Fallon and Vickers (2016) on the leadership behaviours of Vietnamese leaders in large state-owned enterprises. This concluded that Vietnamese leaders prefer to rely on collective opinions rather than acting and leading the organisation by themselves. Based on the foregoing discussion, leaders in SMEs can play the role of team member as well as a supporter in solving difficult issues, depending on the requirements of the situation.

An analysis of the narratives of leaders shows their tendency to provide autonomy for their subordinates and pay more attention to their work outcomes rather than their work processes. Staff who work in an environment where freedom and support for innovation are

perceived to exist are able to experience greater free-will and take more control of their own ideas and work processes, enhancing their innovativeness (Amabile et al. 1996; Shanker et al. 2017). However, some participants argued that more autonomy does not always result in better performance because there are employees who do not use their time wisely. This observation is in line with Pierce and Aguinis (2013) too-much-of-a-good-thing theory of empowerment, which arose when a beneficial antecedent reached an inflection point causing undesired results. Therefore, the question of when to empower, when to direct and when to initiate structure for employees in SMEs is worthy of exploration (Hughes et al. 2018; Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009).

Most participants in the study confirmed that they were results-oriented, which meant they paid more attention to the outcomes of their employees' work effort than the way they completed tasks. To achieve a desired outcome, leaders built supportive and rewarding systems to stimulate the creativity and innovation of their employees. The qualitative findings showed that Vietnamese leaders sought to develop an organisational climate in which innovation was encouraged by providing a combination of approaches. These processes include supportive leadership to encourage employees towards the achievement of collective and agreed goals without micro-management.

With respect to working conditions in the organisations, the qualitative results largely align with research recognising the importance of working conditions as a predictor of motivation among team members (Gällstedt 2003). Moreover, findings identified the role of leaders in improving the physical environment and creating a comfortable working atmosphere for employees.

The results of the qualitative study were used to inform the quantitative research design based on the emergent conceptual model illustrated in Figure 5. Specifically, the expanded model includes two additional leadership approaches to supplement empowerment; directive and initiating structure. These three constructs will be examined in the quantitative phase.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has presented findings from semi-structured interviews conducted with 20 SME CEOs in the Vietnamese tourism sector. The aim of this part of the study was to explore how leaders shape the organisational climate of their firms to enhance innovation. The findings indicate that SME leaders in the tourism sector tended to influence an organisational climate that provided employee autonomy and support for innovation. They did this through a number of leadership approaches, including empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating

structure. They also used daily interaction-based practices to promote the innovative behaviours of employees and developed reward systems to maintain a focus on innovation in their organisations. The next chapter (Chapter 6) presents the hypothesis development and results of the quantitative study.

Chapter 6. Leading innovation among tourism SMEs: Examining the mediating role of climate for innovation

1. Introduction

Leadership is one of the most consequential contextual influencers of employee creativity and innovation (Newman et al. 2018), as supported by a wealth of empirical studies. Research indicates that leaders play an influential role in stimulating innovation in large firms. In the context of SMEs, the link between leadership and innovation requires consideration of different contexts (Muenjohn & McMurray 2017), such as providing autonomy and daily interaction-based practices (Matzler et al. 2008). Leader behaviours cannot be automatically assumed to influence innovation in SMEs in the same way as in large firms. Empirical evidence suggests the ambiguous influence of leaders who can both stifle employee creativity and spark innovation (Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012). There has been little theory-building or empirical examination of specific leader behaviours that encourage or inhibit innovation through shaping a climate for innovation in SMEs (Morrison 2011). The qualitative study of senior managers and owners of SMEs discussed in Chapter 5 resulted in the development of a revised conceptual model of the interactions between leadership, climate for innovation and innovation. Theoretically, this model provides tentative understanding of the role of diverse and contradictory leadership behaviours, including empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure, in developing a climate for innovation and enhancing innovation in SMEs. The rationale for the quantitative phase of this study is grounded in empirical examination of the relative contribution of leaders' empowering, directing and initiating structure for employees to encourage a climate for innovation and innovation.

Understanding which behaviours leaders should enact to develop a climate for innovation among employees advances leadership research. The quantitative phase of this study, discussed in this chapter, examined how three foundational models of leader behaviour - empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure - influence and comparatively affect innovation in SMEs. These three leadership styles are empirically linked to performance at the organisational, team and individual levels. For example, Peterson (1997) studied directive leadership, Judge, Piccolo and Ilies (2004) initiating structure, and Fong and Snape (2015) empowering leadership, although only the latter was found to influence

innovation. As directive leadership and initiating structure styles contrast with empowering leadership in terms of the amount of direction versus autonomy provided by a leader, it is likely that directive leadership and initiating structure will have less positive or negative effects on innovation.

Empirical studies jointly investigating these three distinct leadership styles have identified that they differentially influence team performance (Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013; Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012). Therefore, in terms of the importance of SMEs, the typical characteristics of founder-managers, and the proximity to their staff, examination of the influence of these three leadership styles simultaneously on innovation is timely. Similarly, the way in which a climate for innovation in the context of these contrasting leadership approaches shapes the innovation performance of SMEs will improve nuanced understanding of influential intermediary processes.

The purpose of this phase of the study was twofold. First, the effects of empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure on innovation and climate for innovation were examined. Based on the literature (House & Mitchell 1974; Kirkman & Rosen 1999; Spreitzer 1995; Thomas & Velthouse 1990) and empirical evidence, this study proposed that initiating structure, and directive and empowering leadership would be related to innovation and a climate for innovation in SMEs. However, potentially only empowering leadership would have a positive effect while the other two leadership styles would negatively affect innovation. Second, based on the theory of climate for innovation (Ekvall 1996), this study examined how a climate for innovation mediates the relationship between these leadership styles and innovation in SMEs. Of interest is the relative influence of different leadership styles directly and indirectly on innovation and the way in which a climate for innovation exerts its influence. This study evaluated these relationships using a sample of 330 employees working in Vietnamese tourism SMEs. The hypothesis development is now discussed with each hypothesis situated relative to current evidence and noted research gaps in the extant literature.

2. Hypotheses development

2.1 Leadership and innovation

Recent studies have indicated the importance of using different leadership approaches (Günzel-Jensen et al. 2017). The findings presented in Chapter 5 showed that SME CEOs used

a mix of leadership strategies comprising elements of empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure. Although similarities existed in the leadership of the three cohorts, especially in light of the emphasis on inspiration, communication, knowledge sharing, teamwork and collective decision-making, these leadership styles would likely have different effects on innovation and other aspects of SME operations (Baer & Frese 2003; Gaudet & Tremblay 2017).

This section discusses the role of empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure on innovation in the integrated model illustrated in Chapter 5 and develops hypotheses based on extant theorising and empirical findings. The relationships between the leadership types, climate for innovation and innovation are illustrated in Figure 6.

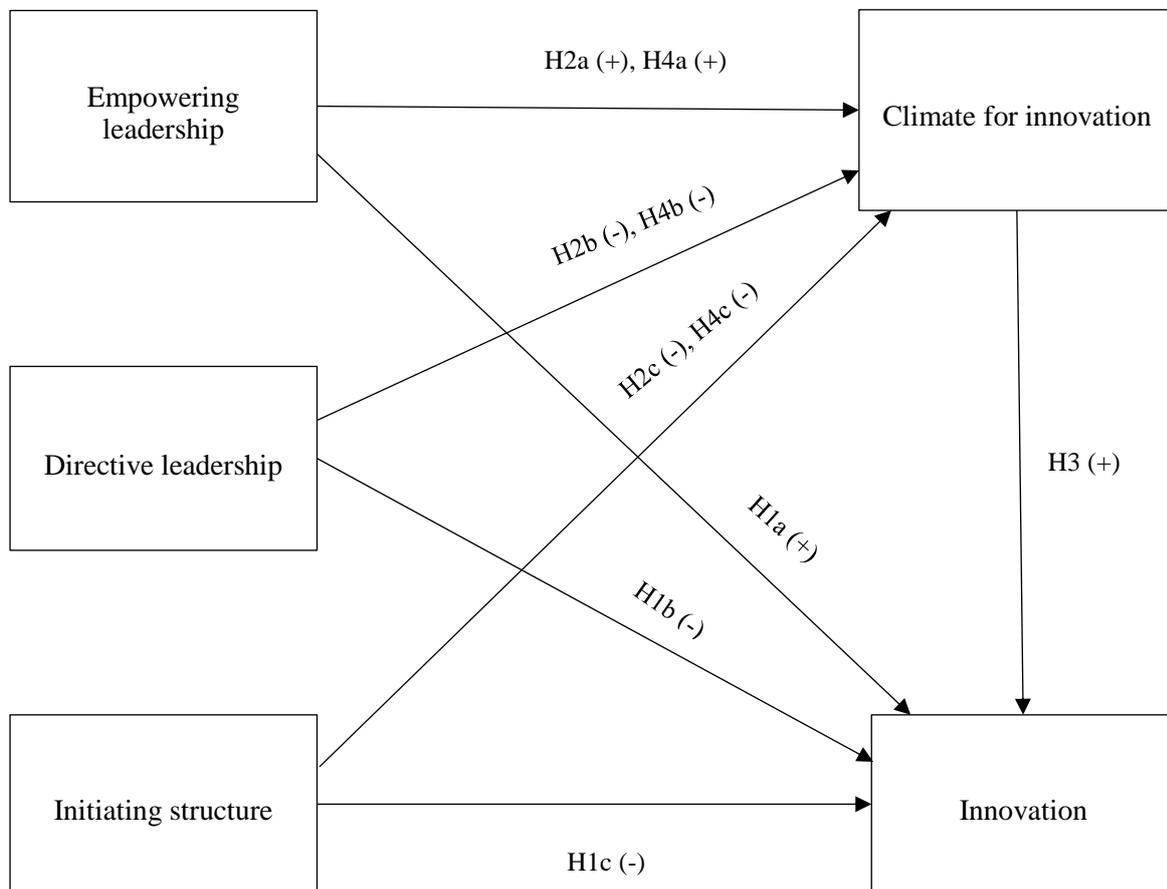


Figure 6. Model of the relationships among the study variables

2.1.1 Empowering leadership and innovation

As discussed in Chapter 3, empowering leadership has been credited with enabling creativity and autonomy, resulting in better team performance (Chow 2017; Hao, He & Long

2018; Kuo & Lee 2011; Zhang, X & Zhou 2014). Similar results in terms of a positive relationship between empowering leadership and creativity at both individual and team levels have been found (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013; Hon 2012; Zhang, X & Bartol 2010; Zhang, X & Zhou 2014). Empowering leadership focuses on leader behaviours related to goal orientation and encouraging initiative, motivating employees to reach their potential and supporting their self-efficacy (Amundsen & Martinsen 2013; Kim & Beehr 2017).

Although more empowering leadership does not always result in better outcomes, and it has two faces, enabling and burdening (Cheong et al. 2016); most empirical evidence indicates that empowering leadership is positively associated with employee innovative behaviours and team innovativeness. At the individual level, empowering leadership has been found to have a direct effect on innovative behaviours (Hoch 2013). At the team level, group-focused empowering leadership has been found to be crucial for encouraging team innovativeness and team performance through intra-team collaboration (Zhu & Chen 2016).

Based on the foregoing evidence, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1a: Empowering leadership positively relates to innovation in SMEs.

2.1.2 Directive leadership and innovation

Directive leadership is necessary for achieving a short-term goal and is more salient when leaders are more experienced than their subordinates (Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). Existing literature on directive leadership has mainly focused on its impacts on individual performance and employee behaviours (Chiaburu, Diaz & Pitts 2011; Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013; Martin, Liao & Campbell 2012). Little is known about the role of directive leadership in innovation processes and outcomes (Anderson, N & West 1998).

Highly directive leadership teams achieve the best in-role performance, compared to teams led by other leadership approaches (Cruz, Henningsen & Smith 1999; Somech 2005). Directive leaders (Hogan, Curphy & Hogan 1994; Sagie 1996) tend to encourage teams to reach challenging goals and achieve better performance. Furthermore, directive leadership is important at the start of the innovation processes. West et al. (2003) and Lorinkova, Pearsall and Sims (2013) emphasised the importance of directing the right processes and procedures required to encourage innovation and creativity. By contrast, creativity studies have argued that authoritative or controlling behaviours from leaders tend to have negative effects on employee creativity and, thereafter, innovation (Amabile et al. 2004). It is argued that directive leadership, like aversive leadership, leads to low flexibility and less innovation amongst

employees (Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). Directive leaders tend to reduce team members' confidence (Peterson 1997), which in turn prevents them from being innovative (Parker & Collins 2010). These research findings suggest that directive leadership can be useful in the early stages of establishing the right procedures to support innovation. However, generally, directive leaders discourage followers' innovative behaviours notwithstanding their role in setting structures for innovation. Given some debates in the empirical evidence, in the current study it was expected that directive leadership would be negatively associated with innovation in Vietnamese tourism SMEs. Therefore, the following hypothesis was developed:

H1b: Directive leadership negatively relates to innovation in SMEs.

2.1.3 Initiating structure and innovation

Initiating structure concerns the extent to which leaders are oriented toward attainment of objectives; define and organise their own role and those of their subordinates to attain these objectives; and establish precise methods and clear communication channels (Gaudet & Tremblay 2017; Judge, Piccolo & Ilies 2004). A meta-analysis by Judge, Piccolo and Ilies (2004) and a study by Burke et al. (2007) offer a different view of initiating structure, suggesting it is positively linked to group or team productivity. Initiating structure is also highlighted as an element that enhances work outcomes and effectiveness at individual and team levels (Gaudet & Tremblay 2017).

The relationship between initiating structure and innovation has received some attention; by initiating structure (Neubert et al. 2008), a message is sent from leaders to employees that might encourage a prevention focus rather than a promotion focus (Higgins 1997). In practice, employees avoid doing wrong, as explained by the regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997). The regulatory focus theory posits that being goal-oriented within a promotion focus enhances growth, success and achievement, compared with a prevention focus, which prefers security, duty and obligation (Higgins 1997). The latter orientation is present when employees seek security, pay attention to losses, or the fulfilment of obligations. This tendency predicts in-role performance and deviant behaviour. Consequently, employees who are prevention focused tend to be more conservative and less creative and innovative (Forster, Friedman & Liberman 2004; Zhou, Hirst & Shipton 2012). However, no known research has specifically examined the relationship between initiating structure and innovation in SMEs. Based on the link between employee creativity, autonomy and innovation, it is hypothesised that:

H1c: Initiating structure negatively relates to innovation in employees of SMEs.

2.2 Leadership and climate for innovation

The role of leadership in developing and shaping workplace climate has been empirically demonstrated (Amabile et al. 1996; Mumford et al. 2008). Climate is the shared perception of the policies and procedures of an organisation and these are formulated and implemented by the vision and characteristics of leaders (Wilson-Evered, Härtel & Neale 2001). Leader behaviour was found to affect climate for innovation and the interaction between leaders and subordinates contributes significantly to the perceived climate for innovation (Scott & Bruce 1994). Kazama et al. (2002) confirmed the Scott and Bruce (1994) findings in a study of the influence of reflexivity among senior leaders of British manufacturing firms. Similarly, leadership was found to contribute to promoting a climate for innovation that stimulated creativity among employees (Jaiswal & Dhar 2015). In sum, this body of research points to the importance of particular leader behaviours in encouraging innovation, which includes leader's transformational approach, creating a supportive climate for innovation, and their ability to perform creatively.

As discussed in Chapter 2, empowering leadership creates an environment where employees perceive they possess a degree of autonomy, have power in decision-making, are less constrained by rule-bound aspects, and are self-efficacious in enacting their work. Combined, these features contribute to forming a climate for innovation (Amabile et al. 1996). In addition, outcomes of empowerment, such as mutual trust and increased collaboration, are important factors for a climate for innovation in SMEs (Brunetto & Farr-Wharton 2007). Empowered individuals have been shown to take a more proactive approach to shaping and influencing their workplace climate (Spreitzer, Kizilos & Nason 1997). Therefore, it is hypothesised that:

H2a: Empowering leadership positively relates to a climate for innovation in SMEs.

Directive leadership reinforces employees' behaviours of adherence to rules and procedures, which is necessary to improve in-role performance (Somech 2005). Meanwhile, leaders who initiate structure clarify what to do to complete tasks, define expectations and emphasise expectations and consequences for their subordinates. In a climate developed by leaders who initiate structure, subordinates will be aware of which behaviours could be punished or rewarded (Neubert et al. 2008). In this sense, employees are encouraged to strictly follow procedures and there is limited opportunity to discuss new ideas (Somech 2005).

Expressing new ideas is perceived to be risky as it signifies changes to established organisational structures (Albrecht & Hall 1991). The freedom to break the rules is vital for employees to formulate new ideas and propose novel solutions to problems (Mikdashi 1999). The aspects of a climate for innovation, such as risk-taking, debate, freedom and trust, are unlikely consequences of directive leadership and initiating structure. Indeed, the latter tends to negatively influence a climate for innovation (Shanker et al. 2017).

Building on the foregoing findings, it is hypothesised that:

H2b: Directive leadership negatively relates to employees' perceptions of a climate for innovation in SMEs.

H2c: Initiating structure negatively relates to employees' perceptions of a climate for innovation in SMEs.

2.3 Climate for innovation and innovation

Both theory and empirical evidence support the concept of climate for innovation. Climate for innovation has been confirmed as an intervening variable of the innovation process in organisations and contributes to general organisational performance (Kuenzi & Schminke 2009). Climate for innovation is therefore a significant variable in the study of innovation and organisational performance (Koene, Vogelaar & Soeters 2002; Schneider, Brief & Guzzo 1996). Innovation is dependent on a climate that supports innovation (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011). Although individuals could generate creative ideas by themselves, their willingness to innovate is contingent on the climate in which they work (Mumford & Gustafson 1988). Innovative organisations typically have a climate that supports innovation, which differentiates them from complacent organisations, based on the number of patents achieved, technology development, business strategies and success in introducing new products and services (Ekvall 2002).

A climate for innovation also plays an important role in encouraging innovation in SMEs. Firms that have a strong climate for innovation stimulate creative thinking and risk-taking (Oke, Prajogo & Jayaram 2013). A study of German SMEs found that climates for initiative and psychological safety were significantly associated with firm performance and moderated the relationship between firm performance and process innovation (Baer & Frese 2003). Organisations that have successfully developed a climate for innovation create policies and practices that welcome the expression and implementation of new ideas (Charbonnier-

Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010). An organisation supporting innovation plays an important mediating role in stimulating innovative behaviours (Cerne, Jaklic & Skerlavaj 2013). In sum, individuals working in a climate that values experimentation and tolerates occasional flaws, exhibit higher levels of creative behaviours (Jaiswal & Dhar 2015). Therefore, it is reasonable to propose that a climate for innovation will have a positive relationship with innovation. Based on the above argument, the following hypothesis was developed:

H3: Climate for innovation has a positive relationship with innovation in SMEs.

2.4 The mediating role of climate for innovation

Behavioural researchers interested in the relationship between leadership and innovation (Liu, D, Liao & Loi 2012) report that leaders develop a climate for innovation that mobilises organisational resources and motivates individuals to work toward creative outcomes (Jung, Chow & Wu 2003; Moghimi & Subramaniam 2013). The relationship between leadership and organisational climate has led scholars to investigate the indirect effect of leadership on innovation through a climate for innovation (Wang, P et al. 2013). Employees' perceptions of a positive climate are characterised by easy access to organisational resources, which mediates the effect of leadership on employee creative performance (Scott & Bruce 1994). The existence of such a climate at the group level has been found to facilitate a competitive edge, with leaders promoting the creativity of their subordinates (Charbonnier-Voirin, El Akremi & Vandenberghe 2010; Jaiswal & Dhar 2015).

Although limited evidence has reported the intervening effect of climate for innovation on the relationships between three leadership styles in this study and innovation, there is extant empirical evidence for the role of organisational climate to mediate the relationship between leadership and innovation. Zhang, X and Bartol (2010) synthesised theories of leadership, empowerment, and creativity using survey data from professional employees and their supervisors in a large information technology company in China. Their study found that a psychological empowerment climate mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and innovative behaviours. In a study of 333 salespeople from a pharmaceutical company in North America, Mulki, Jaramillo and Locander (2009) identified that initiating structure is related to ethical climate which in turn affects job satisfaction and job performance. These scholars also argued that directive leadership contributes in formulating an ethical climate which results in better firm performance through increasing employees' job

satisfaction, effort and job performance (Mulki, Jaramillo & Locander 2009). Notwithstanding the type of leadership used, a climate for innovation was expected to have a mediating role, leading to the following hypotheses:

H4a: Climate for innovation mediates the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation.

H4b: Climate for innovation mediates the relationship between directive leadership and innovation.

H4c: Climate for innovation mediates the relationship between initiating structure and innovation.

3. Preliminary analysis

3.1 Data screening and cleaning

Three-hundred and thirty questionnaires were examined for accuracy and missing value identification (Pallant 2016). Missing data, which is a common issue in quantitative research (Tabachnick & Fidell 2012), were replaced by series means following the suggestion of Hinton, McMurray and Brownlow (2014).

3.2 Normality

The residuals were examined for normality via normal probability plotting and detrended normal probability plotting to test the data normality. Scores on each variable should be normally distributed and a reasonably straight line denotes a normal distribution (Pallant 2016). An investigation of the normal probability plot of all constructs, including empowering leadership, directive leadership, initiating structure, climate for innovation and innovation, showed that there was no significant deviation from normality in the data. A further investigation of the detrended probability plot also showed that the data distributed normally without any clustering of scores evident in the output (Pallant 2016).

3.3 Descriptive statistics

The participants' demographics are presented in Table 6. The analysis showed that 14.5% of the sample SMEs were micro small firms (1-10 employees), 47.6% were classified as small sized firms (10-50 employees), and 37.9% were medium sized (50-100 employees). The majority of the respondents were aged between 23 and 40 years (87%). Regarding the

respondents' levels of education, 87.9% held a university or postgraduate degree. The majority of respondents (92.7%) were full-time employees. In terms of experience, 44.5% indicated that they had less than two years' experience working for the current company, 31.2% had from two to five years and 24.2% had more than five years of experience working in their current firm. Of the 330 respondents, 75% were female and 25% were male. This gender distribution reflects the female-male ratio (3:1) in the population of workers in the Vietnamese tourism industry (World Bank 2011).

Table 6. Participants' demographics

Profile	Employees' details (n=330)	Frequency	%
Gender	Female	249	75.5
	Male	81	24.5
Age	18-22	28	8.5
	23-30	160	48.5
	31-40	127	38.5
	41-50	13	3.9
	Over 50	2	0.6
Education	Secondary/High school certificate	6	1.8
	Tertiary diploma or certificate	34	10.3
	Undergraduate degree (bachelors)	264	80.0
	Postgraduate degree (masters/doctorate)	24	7.3
	Others	2	0.6
Employment	Working full-time (40 hours/week or more)	306	92.7
	Working part-time (20 hours – 39 hours/week)	17	5.2
	Working casual (less than 20 hours/week)	4	1.2
	Others	3	0.9
Work duration	Less than 2 years	147	44.5
	2-5 years	103	31.2
	More than 5 years	80	24.2
Firm size	0-10 employees	48	14.5
	11-50 employees	157	47.6
	51-100 employees	125	37.9

Table 7 shows the means, standard deviations and correlation matrices of all variables. All the values exceeded the benchmark of 0.50 and the square of the correlation between constructs (Bianchi, Glavas & Mathews 2017). Although these results did not eliminate the threat of method variance, it did provide evidence that inter-item correlations were not driven purely by method bias (Gyu Park et al. 2017).

Because innovation at the individual level varies with both employee differences and firm characteristics, participant gender, age, work experience, educational level and firm size were included as control variables. As shown in Table 7, gender, educational level and firm size were correlated with some of the outcome variables. Specifically, gender was correlated with innovation, educational level was correlated with empowering leadership and firm size was correlated with innovation. Therefore, the effects of gender, educational level and firm size were controlled in the mediation model (Qian et al. 2018).

Table 7. Means, standard deviations and correlation matrices

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Gender	Age	Education	Experience	Size	Empowering	Directive	Structure	Climate	Innovation
Gender	1.25	0.43										
Age	2.40	0.73	-0.011									
Education	2.95	0.52	-0.103	0.033								
Experience	1.80	0.81	0.039	.477**	0.003							
Size	2.23	0.69	0.042	0.1	0.104	.141*						
Empowering	3.81	0.60	-0.025	0.043	.119*	0.023	0.017	(0.72)				
Directive	3.86	0.57	-0.047	-0.06	0.052	-0.012	-0.03	.590**	(0.76)			
Structure	3.71	0.49	0.012	0.057	0.03	0.023	-0.04	.641**	.665**	(0.87)		
Climate	3.85	0.49	0.048	0.02	0.033	-0.042	0.007	.323**	.211**	.171**	(0.75)	
Innovation	3.60	0.52	.149**	0.035	-0.024	-0.008	.125*	.261**	.217**	.368**	.367**	(0.84)

Notes: N = 330. Reliability coefficients for the scales are shown in parentheses along the diagonal. *p < .05; **p < .01

3.4 Common method variance

Common method variance was assessed using a number of scale anchors to avoid simple annotation from respondents (Podsakoff et al. 2003). In addition, independent and dependent variables were separated and different types of questions asked for each to accelerate a specific response for a particular item (Podsakoff et al. 2003). Moreover, the questionnaire included reversed items (See Appendix 8, Part 3, Question 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 16) to reduce repetitive response bias (Bianchi, Glavas & Mathews 2017). This procedure was used to satisfy the statistical contention of common method bias, identified by Bianchi, Glavas and Mathews (2017). In addition, exploratory factor analysis, applying the procedure of Podsakoff and Organ (1986), was used to assess common method variance. Five constructs – empowering leadership, directive leadership, initiating structure, climate for innovation and innovation – in the pooled sample were factor analysed utilising a principal components method with varimax rotation. The results showed that there were nine factors justified and there was no general factor. These

nine factors were named and showed good internal consistency with the five constructs of the theoretical model. Therefore, it is confirmed that common method variance was not sufficient to invalidate the findings (Gyu Park et al. 2017).

4. Results

The hypothesised model was investigated using SEM with AMOS 24. A two-step analysis was adopted from Anderson, JC and Gerbing (1988) to test the model. First, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was conducted to investigate the convergent validity of the construct measures. Next, SEM was performed based on the measurement model to examine how the hypothesised model fit the data (Gyu Park et al. 2017). Items were averaged for empowering leadership, directive leadership, initiating structure, climate for innovation and innovation and each dimension was treated as a separate indicator of their corresponding constructs in the SEM analyses (Bianchi, Glavas & Mathews 2017; Gyu Park et al. 2017). The results of the data analysis are presented below.

4.1 Factor analysis

A CFA step was conducted to assess the measurement model and to confirm whether the measures load on their respective *apriori* defined constructs (Browne & Cudek 1993). The baseline five-factor model (i.e., empowering leadership, directive leadership, initiating structure, climate for innovation, and innovation) yielded a good fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 844.475$; comparative fit index [CFI] = 0.907; incremental fit index [IFI] = 0.908; root mean square error of approximation [RMSEA] = 0.047). These statistics meet the suggestion of Browne and Cudek (1993), who identified that a satisfactory model fit can be inferred when CFI and IFI are greater than 0.90 and the RMSEA is lower than 0.08. To establish internal consistency and reliability, all Cronbach's α coefficients exceeded the optimal level of 0.7. The composite reliability values for each factor were above the acceptable threshold level of 0.7 (Hair et al. 2010). The values for the average variance extracted were above the threshold of 0.5, indicating convergent validity (Hair et al. 2010). These results support the discriminant validity of the measures.

Against this baseline model, four alternative models were tested, which were formulated based on the theoretical similarities of the constructs, to confirm if construct measures loaded on respective prior-defined constructs (Browne & Cudek 1993; Gyu Park et al. 2017). Model 1 was a four-factor model with directive leadership and initiating structure

combined into one factor. Model 2 was a two-factor model with empowering leadership merged with directive leadership and initiating structure to form a single factor. Model 3 was a two-factor model with empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure combined into one factor, while climate for innovation and innovation merged into another factor. All of the four constructs were combined into a single factor to form Model 4. Table 8 shows that the hypothesised model fit the data better compared to the other simplified models. The χ^2 s were significantly different between the hypothesised model and the alternative models. To conclude, the constructs of empowering leadership, directive leadership, initiating structure, climate for innovation and innovation are statistically distinct. The results of CFA are presented in Table 8.

Table 8. Comparison of measurement models

Models	Factors	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Baseline model (hypothesised model)	Five factors	844.475	485		0.907	0.908	0.047
Model 1	Four factors: directive leadership and initiating structure were combined into one factor	895.653	489	51.178*	0.895	0.896	0.05
Model 2	Three factors: empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure were combined into one factor	960.397	492	115.922*	0.879	0.88	0.054
Model 3	Two factors: empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure were combined into one factor; climate for innovation and innovation were combined into one factor	1105.923	494	261.448*	0.842	0.843	0.061
Model 4	One factor: all the variables were combined into one factor	1839.408	495	994.933*	0.652	0.655	0.091

Notes: n=330. CFI, comparative fit index; RMSEA, root-mean-square error of approximation; IFI, Incremental Fit Index *p<0.01.

4.2 Tests of hypotheses

The structural modelling results showed that the hypothesised model fit the data well ($\chi^2 = 844.475$, $df = 485$, $p < 0.01$; CFI = 0.907, IFI = 0.908, RMSEA = 0.047). A series of nested model comparisons were then conducted to evaluate how the alternative model fit with the data in comparison with the hypothesised model (Anderson, JC & Gerbing 1988). Paths were specified from empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure to climate for innovation and from climate for innovation to innovation. This model also had direct paths from empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure to innovation.

The hypothesised model was compared with an alternative model, which represented a full mediating role of climate for innovation. In the alternative model, the three direct paths from empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure to innovation were deleted. Table 9 shows the model fit indices of the two models. The model fit indices suggest that the difference between χ^2 s was significant ($p < 0.01$) and that the hypothesised model fit the data better than the alternative model (Gyu Park et al. 2017).

Table 9. Structural equation model comparisons

Models	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
Partially mediating (hypothesised) model	844.475	485		0.907	0.908	0.047
Fully mediating model (alternative)	854.573	488	10.098	0.905	0.906	0.048

The general structural model with standardised path estimates is shown in Figure 7 (See Appendix 11 for a diagram of structural equation modelling).

H1a proposed that empowering leadership would be positively related to organisation innovation. This was not supported ($\beta = -0.314$, $p < 0.01$). In contrast, empowering leadership was found to have a negative relationship with organisation innovation. Nevertheless, H2a specified that empowering leadership positively relates to climate for innovation. The results supported this hypothesis ($\beta = 0.312$, $p < 0.05$).

H1b stated that directive leadership would be negatively related to organisation innovation. This was not supported ($p > 0.05$). Similarly, H2b, which stated that directive leadership negatively relates to climate for innovation, was not supported ($p > 0.05$).

H1c, which specified that initiating structure would be negatively related to organisation innovation, was not supported ($\beta = 0.234, p > 0.05$). H2c proposed that initiating structure was negatively related to climate for innovation. This was not supported although initiating structure was ($\beta = 0.013, p < 0.05$) positively related to climate for innovation.

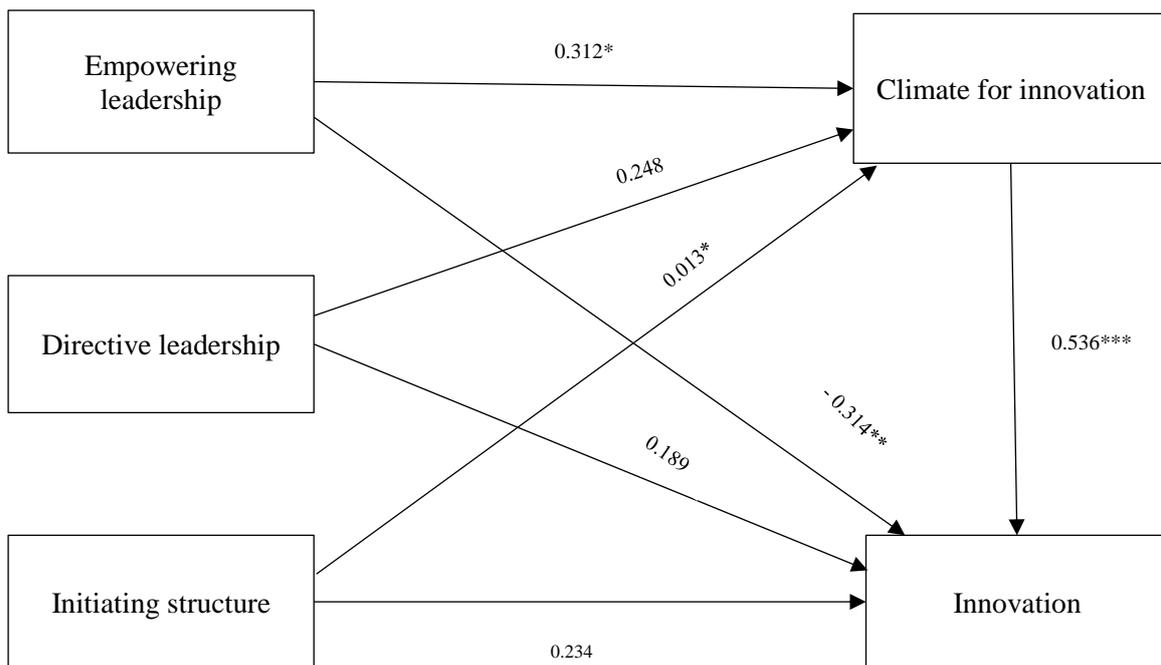


Figure 7. The overall structural model with standardised path estimates.

Note: * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

H3, which proposed that climate for innovation has a positive relationship with innovation, was supported ($\beta = 0.536, p < 0.001$).

To assess the mediating role of climate for innovation on the relationship between the three leadership approaches and innovation, the procedure of Kenny, DA, Kashy and Bolger (1998) and Cheong et al. (2016) was adopted. Specifically, a mediation effect exists if the independent variable significantly relates to the mediator, and also the mediator significantly relates to the dependent variable, although the dependent variable may not directly relate to the independent variable (Cheong et al. 2016).

In H4a it was expected that climate for innovation would mediate the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. The structural coefficients of a partial

mediation model indicated that empowering leadership had a positive relationship with climate for innovation ($\beta = 0.312, p < 0.05$) and, in turn, climate was related positively to innovation ($\beta = 0.536, p < 0.000$). However, empowering leadership related negatively to innovation ($\beta = -0.314, p < 0.01$). As the total indirect effect of empowering leadership on innovation via climate was positive and significant, H4a was therefore supported.

H4b stated that climate for innovation mediates the relationship between directive leadership and innovation. The structural coefficients of a partial mediation model indicated that neither the relationship between directive leadership and innovation and the relationship between directive leadership and climate was significant. Therefore, H4b was not supported.

H4c stated that climate for innovation mediates the relationship between initiating structure and innovation. The structural coefficients of the hypothesised, partially mediated model indicated that the relationship between initiating structure and climate for innovation was significant ($\beta = 0.013, p < 0.05$), whereas the relationship between initiating structure and innovation was not significant ($p > 0.05$) and, in turn, climate for innovation related positively to innovation ($\beta = 0.536, p < 0.001$). Although the direct relationship between initiating structure and innovation posited by H2c was not supported, the total indirect effect of initiating structure on innovation via climate was positive and significant. Therefore, H4c was supported.

5. Discussion

This chapter has investigated the way in which three individual leadership styles - empowering, directive, and initiating structure - affected climate for innovation and together influenced innovation. Based on data collected from 330 employees working in tourism SMEs in Vietnam, the results showed that empowering leadership had a positive effect on climate for innovation, although it had a negative direct effect on individual perceptions of innovation. Furthermore, climate for innovation mediated the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation. In addition, leaders who initiate structure had a significant influence on climate for innovation but did not have a direct effect on innovation. Climate for innovation fully mediated the relationship between initiating structure and innovation. No significant relationship was found between directive leadership and climate, or between directive leadership and innovation.

This quantitative phase of the study enriches the current literature in several ways. First, it has examined the role of three common leadership approaches in innovation. This thesis

addressed a gap in the literature by taking both managers and employees views of leadership, climate and innovation in tourism SMEs. Moreover, the study developed and investigated a model that combined the direct and indirect effects of leadership behaviours and climate for innovation on innovation in SMEs in an emerging economy in the Asia-Pacific region. Third, the results report a mediated model in which empowering leadership did not have a positive direct relationship with SME innovation. Instead, the research findings indicate that empowering leadership influences innovation via the support of a climate for innovation. In addition, the results suggest that initiating structure had an indirect effect on SME innovation, which is mediated by a climate for innovation.

6. Conclusion

Leadership has a critical influence on innovation and this study has explored how leaders encourage innovation through developing a climate for innovation in SMEs. Based on the integrated model developed in Chapter 5, the quantitative phase of this study examined the influence of three leadership approaches (empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure) on innovation and investigated the mediating role of climate for innovation on these relationships. This quantitative analysis sheds light on the means by which these diverse approaches affect innovation in SMEs. By doing so, the findings answer the research questions of this thesis. When leading subordinates in SMEs, leaders are required to understand how empowerment, direction and initiating structure work in stimulating innovation, and how these leadership behaviours shape the organisational climate. The study found that empowering leadership and initiating structure had a positive relationship with innovation via a climate for innovation. Chapter 7 presents the answers to the three research questions of this thesis, and the theoretical and practical contributions of the findings are discussed.

Chapter 7. General discussion

1. Introduction

The overall aim of this research was to develop greater insight into the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in SMEs, and especially clarifying the role of climate for innovation. As the fields of leadership and innovation research continue to expand, and in times of major change and transformation, understanding the specific approaches of leaders that empower others is pertinent. Due to the ongoing flattening of organisations and the significance of teamwork, empowering leadership offers potential enabling mechanisms (Arnold et al. 2000; Sharma & Kirkman 2015). In this final chapter, the research questions of this thesis are addressed along with the implications of the findings for research and practice. Limitations of this research are described, followed by suggestions for a future research agenda and recommendations.

Across the systematic review and two empirical phases of the study that comprise this thesis, findings confirm the importance of empowering leadership and climate for innovation in SMEs' innovative performance. Specifically, the systematic review of 61 empirical studies, as presented in Chapter 3, revealed that empowering leadership affects psychological empowerment, which in turn encourages employees' creative and innovative behaviours and increases outcomes at individual and team levels. Moreover, the qualitative findings indicated that climate for innovation plays an important role in stimulating the positive effect of empowering leadership on innovation in the SME context (Chapter 5). The findings showed that SME leaders in the tourism sector tended to influence an organisational climate that provided for autonomy and supported innovation through a number of leadership approaches. They also used daily interaction-based practices to drive the innovative behaviours of employees and developed reward systems that encouraged innovation in their organisations. In addition, the qualitative phase of the study provided important insights on the leadership styles of SME leaders in Vietnam, who not only encouraged their subordinates' innovative behaviours through empowering behaviours but also, in some circumstances, by instituting an initiating structure and directive approach. The findings presented in Chapter 6 revealed a negative direct effect of empowering leadership on innovation but supported a positive association between empowering leadership and innovation enabled through a climate for innovation. Chapter 6 also presented evidence to support an association between initiating structure and innovation mediated by climate for innovation. Therefore, the results of this

research expand and deepen findings reported in previous studies. These findings offer a comprehensive framework for understanding the influence of leaders' empowering, directing and initiating structure on innovation among employees in tourism SMEs, and confirm the mediating role of climate for innovation.

2. Answering the research questions

RQ1. To what extent does empowering leadership influence innovation in the SME context? (Systematic review, Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

RQ2. What role does empowering leadership play in developing a climate for innovation in the SME context? (Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

RQ3. What is the role of climate for innovation in mediating the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in SME context? (Qualitative study and Quantitative study)

2.1.1 The influence of empowering leadership on innovation in SMEs (RQ1)

Empowering leadership is related to employee innovative behaviours and innovation. The findings of the SLR (Chapter 3) and both empirical phases of the study (Chapter 5 and Chapter 6) demonstrated the influence of empowering leadership on innovation in SMEs.

The SLR found that empowering leadership is related to employee innovative behaviours and team innovativeness. In addition, the qualitative findings suggested that leadership plays an important role in encouraging innovation. Specifically, communication between leaders and subordinates and knowledge sharing were considered key factors in stimulating innovation in tourism SMEs. When subordinates proposed new ideas, leaders believed they should be open to discussing them further. In addition, the leaders in the study built close relationships with their subordinates to encourage opportunities for them to voice their opinions, with the potential to create employee-driven innovation. As the structure of SMEs is simpler than that in large firms, senior executives may work and communicate directly with staff. Working in such proximity, the behaviours and attitudes of leaders are influential in guiding the innovation behaviours of subordinates; a finding supported by the current study.

The qualitative analysis set out to explore leaders' approaches to developing an organisational climate to stimulate innovation in tourism SMEs. The qualitative findings indicated that leaders from Vietnamese tourism SMEs not only encouraged innovation through their own empowering actions but also by instituting an initiating structure and directive

approach. Despite being the final decision-maker, SME leaders often determined chosen strategies after discussions with their staff. This observation is in line with the work of Tran, D, Fallon and Vickers (2016) on the behaviours of Vietnamese leaders in large state-owned enterprises, which suggested that these leaders prefer to rely on collective opinions rather than acting and leading the organisation by themselves. As a result of these findings, it seems clear that leaders in SMEs can play the role of team member and supporter in solving problems in their organisation, depending on the situation.

The qualitative analysis indicated that more autonomy does not always result in better performance as some employees do not use their time productively or too much empowerment can cause tension (Cheong et al. 2016). This observation was confirmed by the quantitative results, which showed that empowering leadership had a negative direct effect on innovation. The result reasonably reflects the too-much-of-a-good-thing effect (Pierce & Aguinis 2013), which arises when a beneficial antecedent reaches an inflection point causing undesired results. Nevertheless, empowering leaders can motivate innovation through developing an organisational climate that supports innovation. Furthermore, when SME leaders use initiating structure, such behaviour was found to be positively related to innovation again through the mediating effect of climate for innovation. The quantitative results support the qualitative findings by confirming that the combination of empowering leadership and initiating structure in SMEs likely results in innovation.

2.1.2 The role of empowering leadership in developing a climate for innovation in SMEs (RQ2)

Although SME leaders have the most influence within their firm (Yan, L & Yan 2013), Vietnamese leaders typically do not use power to strictly control their subordinates. Instead, they develop a climate for innovation to encourage employees' innovative behaviours. The qualitative findings indicated that the leaders in Vietnamese tourism SMEs tended to develop a comfortable environment by means of creating a family atmosphere, organising recreational and team-building activities with a view to increasing the morale and productivity of their employees (Butler 1988). They also gave subordinates opportunities to voice their opinions about company issues and participate in decision-making. In addition, SME leaders tended to allow their subordinates autonomy and paid more attention to their work outcomes rather than their work processes. Staff who work in an environment where freedom and support for innovation are perceived to exist are able to experience greater free-will and take more control

of their own ideas and work processes, enhancing their innovativeness (Amabile et al. 1996; Shanker et al. 2017).

The quantitative phase of the study assessed the influence of diverse leadership styles (empowering leadership, directive leadership, and initiating structure) on the organisational climate of SMEs. The findings revealed that empowering leadership and initiating structure were positively related to a climate for innovation, whereas directive leadership was not associated with a climate for innovation.

2.1.3 Climate for innovation as a mediator in the relationship between empowering leadership and innovation in SMEs (RQ3)

Leaders in SMEs developed supporting and rewarding systems to stimulate the creativity and innovation of the employees. This finding aligns with the team interactions theory developed by West and his colleagues (Anderson, N & West 1998; Burningham & West 1995; West et al. 2003), which theorises a four-dimensional model: (1) participative safety; (2) support for innovation; (3) challenging objectives; and (4) task orientation. Similar to the dimensions indicated by these scholars, the current study found that Vietnamese leaders tended to develop a climate for innovation. Within this climate, innovation was encouraged by providing support for subordinates and a focus on employees achieving collective and agreed goals without micro-managing how they achieved those goals. Vietnamese leaders in SMEs focussed on outcomes rather than processes which contrasts with West and colleagues' research. However at the same time, these leaders work on processes such as incentives and rewards, encouragement and participation which aligns with their findings. The results demonstrates that attention to processes, such as reward and recognition systems, support for and openness to new ideas, incentives and goal setting, along with goal congruence were clearly given attention by the CEOs in the study.

The quantitative analysis found that empowering leadership had a negative effect on innovation in the SME context. However, empowering leaders can enhance innovation through creating a climate for innovation. The findings support the conclusions of Cheong et al. (2016) that empowering leadership has two faces, enabling and burdening. This observation can also be explained by drawing on other theories. First, the too-much-of-a-good-thing theory identifies the negative effects of over-empowerment (Pierce & Aguinis 2013). Second, dual tuning theory (George & Zhou 2007) states that both positive and negative moods contribute to creativity in complementary ways. To exploit the advantages of empowering leadership,

however, the findings suggest that firms should focus on building a climate for innovation given its strong relationship with innovation. With respect to the working conditions in organisations, the qualitative findings largely align with the research recognising the importance of working conditions as a predictor of motivation among team members (Gällstedt 2003). Moreover, the study identified the importance of attentive leadership in improving the physical environment and creating a comfortable working space for employees.

3. Theoretical contributions

The theoretical contribution of this study is threefold. First, the SLR collated and summarised the existing peer reviewed articles on empowering leadership and synthesised the findings of these empirical studies to highlight associations among empowering leadership and other factors. The SLR provided insightful findings on empowering leadership in the organisational context. A sound and structured method to review the literature has been applied to investigate how empowering leadership was defined, in what contexts it has been examined, what methods have been used, and what the associations are of empowering leadership and other factors. The SLR results provide deep understandings of empowering leadership as a complex, contextual and useful leadership approach. In addition, this study resulted in the development of an integrated framework that aggregated the key empirical findings with respect to empowering leadership and its associations with other constructs in a range of organisational contexts.

Second, the association between leadership and innovation in SMEs was explored using a qualitative method. This methodological approach contrasts with most of the empirical studies reviewed in Chapter 3, which showed very few scholars used qualitative methods to study empowering leadership. The role of leadership in developing organisational climate and enhancing innovation in tourism SMEs is not fully understood in the current literature (Al-Ansari, Xu & Pervan 2014; Matzler et al. 2008). A high-level conceptual model was proposed, which combined the theories of leadership, organisational climate and innovation with the insights from a sample of CEOs of Vietnamese SMEs. The main theoretical contribution of the qualitative study was the exploration of how leaders develop organisational climate to provide a supportive environment in which to stimulate innovation in SMEs. This included such factors as autonomy, support for innovation, incentives and reward systems, and supportive working conditions. Although the leadership behaviours identified in this research phase are not new, the study explored how these behaviours were used in concert with each other, sometimes as conflicting sets of simultaneous practices. Consequently, the study contributes to current

knowledge of the role of diverse leadership behaviours in creating an organisational climate resulting in innovation.

In addition, the findings enrich the literature by explaining how leadership works in the Vietnamese tourism SME business context, where teamwork and collective decision-making play an important part in the process of implementing innovation. In addition to contributing to the empowering leadership literature, the current research also extends the theories of leadership. In particular, this study adds to the notion of empowering and directive leadership as the focus of situational leadership theory (Hersey & Blanchard 1969), which highlighted that a particular leadership style should be matched to specific external circumstances. The qualitative findings of this study add empirical support to situational leadership theory by indicating that Vietnamese leaders not only empower their subordinates but also initiate structure and sometimes directing. The latter is achieved by clarifying task responsibilities and what is expected of subordinates and, in particular circumstances, by being directive. More importantly, the research suggests that leaders in tourism SMEs tend to provide freedom and autonomy for their subordinates rather than forcing them to follow rules and regulations. However, the question of when to empower, when to direct and when to initiate structure for employees is important and requires further study with larger sample sizes and in different contexts.

Third, this study contributes to the literature by expanding broaden knowledge of SME innovation, assessing the role of diverse leadership behaviours that emerged from the qualitative findings, literature reviews and empirical studies. The results confirm the contributory role of organisational climate on the innovative performance of SMEs. The model developed from the qualitative analysis of leadership behaviours was empirically tested using a sample of 330 employees from Vietnamese tourism SMEs. The results of the quantitative study contribute to the literature by expanding the existing research on SME innovation, assessing the way in which diverse leadership styles and organisational climate influence perceptions of innovation performance of SMEs. The findings enrich the literature by indicating the contribution of empowering leadership, directive leadership and initiating structure to innovation in SMEs. The quantitative analysis discussed in Chapter 6 investigated the relationship between multiple leadership styles, climate for innovation and innovation in the context of SMEs, which addresses a significant gap in the literature. The quantitative findings identify that empowering leadership has negative effects on innovation in the SME

context. Empowering leaders, however, can encourage innovation through developing a climate for innovation.

The quantitative findings address a number of critical voids in the literature. First, while the findings support seminal research study by Cheong et al. (2016) that identified both pros and cons, this study provides deeper understanding of empowering leadership. The findings indicate that empowering leadership has both positive and negative influence on innovation in a SME context; however, empowering leaders can enhance innovation through creating a climate for innovation. To exploit the advantages of empowering leadership, the findings suggest that firms must build a climate for innovation given its strong relationship with innovation.

The thesis extends behavioural theories of leadership by responding to the call of Judge, Piccolo and Ilies (2004) for more research into the behavioural approach, including initiating structure, which is labelled as a “forgotten but not gone” (Lambert et al. 2012, p. 913) leadership construct. This thesis is the first empirical research conducted to examine the role of initiating structure in innovation. The results suggest that initiating structure had a significant effect on the climate for innovation in the SME context and enhances innovation by encouraging a climate for innovation in Vietnamese SMEs. This finding rejects the hypothesis (H1c) and previous studies suggesting that initiating structure may obstruct innovation and creativity (Neubert et al. 2008). However, this result is consistent with previous empirical studies that identified that initiating structure predicted performance at all levels: individual, team and organisation (Gaudet & Tremblay 2017; Judge, Piccolo & Ilies 2004; Lambert et al. 2012).

Directive leadership may prevent employees from initiating innovative behaviours in Western contexts (Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). However, the relationship between directive leadership and innovation was found to be insignificant in the SME context of Vietnam. The current study did not support the relationship between directive leadership and climate for innovation. The quantitative results confirm the intervening role of climate for innovation on the relationship between empowering leadership and initiating structure and innovation. These results are consistent with the current evidence, which implies that climate for innovation is vital in encouraging innovation and facilitating the process of turning leaders’ aspirations to implemented innovation (Ekvall 1996; Isaksen & Akkermans 2011; Jaiswal & Dhar 2015; Matić et al. 2017). A climate for innovation, which includes risk-taking, debate, freedom and

trust, enables team members to raise original ideas and find new ways to solve problems (Ekvall 1996; Isaksen & Akkermans 2011).

4. Practical contributions

Innovation is important for firms of all sizes, including SMEs. To enable employees' innovative behaviours and improve innovation performance, leaders of SMEs can develop an organisational climate that promotes innovation through arguably contrasting leadership styles; empowering in conjunction with a goal setting approach (initiating structure). In addition, leaders can combine these behaviours to achieve fit with climates that support innovation, depending on the needs and focus of the tourism business, which fluctuates by season and in response to competition. The findings suggest that Vietnamese SME leaders who want to develop a climate for innovation, use daily interaction-based practices to manage the innovative behaviours of employees and enhance innovation in their organisations. Such interactions affect the processes by which climate is created. So while leaders say they do not focus on procedures and instead focus on the outcomes of innovation, in practice they focus in a detailed way to encourage the processes that support a climate for innovation (consideration, support for new ideas, involvement in decision-making, consultation, open communication, teamwork, autonomy and encouraging debate) (Isaksen & Akkermans 2011; Jaiswal & Dhar 2015).

Precise consideration of the role of leadership, and particularly of daily leadership behaviours to enhance innovative behaviours, may raise the awareness and visibility of these practices. This approach may result in new insights about other leadership practices to provide autonomy for employees, enhance teamwork efficiency, and provide appropriate support for applying new ideas. However, as indicated by the quantitative findings, too much empowerment could have a negative effect on innovation. SMEs are encouraged to develop a management system where their employees are empowered but still have initiated structure to use their time wisely. By fine-tuning leadership in the SME context, it may be shown that adaptive leadership strategies have significant effects on the climate for innovation and subsequently, innovation itself.

To enable contextual ambidexterity (Havermans et al. 2015), leaders should develop an organisational climate that supports innovation. In addition, they can continually adapt these behaviours to achieve fit with climates that support innovation. The insights from the quantitative findings allow SME managers to decide when to empower and when to initiate structure for employees. The findings highlight that empowering leadership and initiating

structure do not work by themselves in supporting innovation; therefore, it is necessary to integrate a climate for innovation in SMEs. Managers, particularly in the tourism sector, while showing confidence in their employees, can require a vision for innovative performance. Managers should provide regular training to their employees, to improve their skills and enable them to develop a creative approach to their work. In addition, the research findings showed that empowering leadership can have both a positive and negative effect on innovation; therefore, the leaders of SMEs need to implement support systems to develop confidence and capability in employees to reduce the burden caused by empowering leadership. Leaders should be conscious of the negative effects of empowering behaviours and exploit the positive effects on innovation. The careful balancing of employee autonomy with empowerment, while providing them with structure, to obtain the positive effects (Argyris 1998) reflects a combination of leadership approaches. Furthermore, initiating structure is important for SMEs, particularly when the leader is substantially more experienced than the subordinates, and when short-term objectives and compliance are more important than long-term human resource development (Sims, Faraj & Yun 2009). This approach is even more applicable for SMEs in emerging markets that often recruit young employees with few years of experience (Bianchi, Glavas & Mathews 2017). Therefore, SMEs should have detailed job descriptions and set clear objectives for employees, provide incentives, rewards and initiate organisational structures to support a climate for innovation.

SME leaders could contribute to building a creative workplace and enhance innovation by developing reward and incentive systems along with leadership and team development programs. They may also establish the procedural and nurturing context where leadership stimulates innovation in SMEs. The strategies on both policy development and implementation of fair and equitable human resource practices and systems develop a trusting organisational climate supportive of leadership for innovation (McDonald 2010). At the same time, this approach should facilitate resource flexibility and intellectual capital development essential for achieving and maintaining innovative behaviours to ensure business sustainability. Furthermore, human resource specialists may provide coaching, discussions, mentoring, or training in supporting employees to nurture new ideas and apply them successfully.

The SLR in Chapter 3 identified growing interest of empowering leadership in diverse organisational contexts as well as an increasing need to understand how leaders should empower their subordinates effectively. On the evidence collated, empowering leaders enable employee creativity, improve group performance, influence psychological empowerment,

stimulate knowledge exchange and increase employee job satisfaction. Given contrasting findings, the question of when to empower, when to direct and when to provide structure for employees is worthy of further exploration. Many claims have been asserted in the literature about the associations and the role of empowering leaders in achieving desirable outcomes at individual, group and organisational levels. The SLR emphasised that the implementation of empowering leadership is complex and involves much effort from organisational management (Humborstad, Nerstad & Dysvik 2014; Spreitzer 2008). More empowering leadership does not always guarantee stronger positive effects because empowering leadership has dual influences; both enabling and burdening (Cheong et al. 2016). Therefore, empowering leaders must not only provide autonomy for subordinates but also support them to cope with difficulties in completing complex tasks. Moreover, empowering leaders ideally also maintain good relations with their own leaders, which in turn affects their influence on psychological empowerment (Lorinkova & Perry 2017).

Regarding policy, two potential implications were provided from the SLR presented in Chapter 3. First, policy-makers are encouraged to disseminate supportive and enabling mechanisms through systems and structures, as well as funding and guidelines. This will reinforce the psychological empowerment of employees and lead to employee creativity. Such a condition is crucial for an enterprising business culture and entrepreneurial economy through small business development. Second, human resource departments should enhance employee capability through development programs that build the necessary skills and self-efficacy across the organisation so that employees complete their job roles with autonomy. Finally, the review in Chapter 3 highlights the importance of informed managerial perspectives on empowering leadership to drive an integrated approach, which will take advantage of and limit the negatives associated with empowering leadership.

5. Limitations and future research

This study has a number of limitations. First, the sampling drew on the views of 20 tourism leaders and 330 employees in SMEs in the area of Hanoi, the Capital of Vietnam. Therefore, wider generalisations beyond the tourism industry and SMEs in Vietnam are not possible. Future quantitative studies are recommended to provide a broader exploration of the influence of leadership on organisational climate and innovation in SMEs. The integrated model developed from the exploratory findings of the current study could be empirically tested to investigate its postulated associations. This would help answer the important questions of

when to empower, when to direct and when to initiate structure for employees in order to foster a climate of innovation.

A number of recommendations for further research emanate from the findings of the current study. For example, replicating the study in other developing countries and other sectors in the Asia-Pacific region, where SMEs are focusing on innovation and creativity, would improve the generalisability of the results (Muenjohn & McMurray 2017; Tajasom et al. 2015). In addition, scholars can explore how variables other than organisational climate might act as moderators or mediators in further clarifying the influence of leadership approaches on innovation in the SME context.

Some scholars might consider the fact that data was collected at different points in time is a methodological limitation of the current study (Keller 2006; Lorinkova, Pearsall & Sims 2013). When the qualitative data were collected, CEOs from Vietnamese tourism SMEs provided information on their leadership activities at that point in time. The process of developing enhanced innovativeness is ongoing, particularly in some fast-developed SMEs. The quantitative data was collected three months later, based on the qualitative results, by which stage the context might have changed. However, the literature suggests that collecting data at a single point in time may trigger a threat to internal validity (Babbie 2004), as heavy dependence on a cross-sectional research design challenges the likely direction of causality (Jilke, Van de Walle & Kim 2016). Therefore, it is recommended that research should be longitudinal in nature, with data collected at different time periods.

The quantitative phase had some methodological limitations. While using data collected from SME employees is an appropriate testing ground to evaluate innovation and leadership theories, a negative relationship between empowering leadership and innovation and no relationship between directive leadership and innovation was found. This was contrary to research evidence and expectations. In attempting to explain this surprising result, it seems that the sample characteristics, mainly female employees, and the use of a single industry, influenced the findings (Kriz'aj, Brodник & Bukovec 2014; Reuvers et al. 2008; Slåtten & Mehmetoglu 2014). In addition, the SME context might have limited the generalisability of the specific findings to other organisational settings. Notwithstanding the contextual influences, the theoretical implications of the current research remain convincing.

To guide future scholars when conducting SLRs, there are a number of aspects worthy of attention in terms of the quality of qualitative and quantitative research in the management

field. As SLRs first emerged from the medical field, where formulaic controlled trial studies are often carried out, critical appraisal tools can be applied to the research methods and research protocols reported to ensure consistency (Cook, Mulrow & Haynes 1997; Tranfield, Denyer & Smart 2003). However, in the management field, diverse approaches to qualitative inquiry, quantitative methods and cross-sectional studies bring more questions about the integrity of the approaches and affect confidence in the findings. Therefore, a comprehensive meta-analysis would be useful for further validation of the construct of empowering leadership and its antecedents and outcomes. This method could tease out the precise quantum of the effect of empowering leaders (Parris & Peachey 2013). Furthermore, randomised control and intervention studies are warranted to more accurately assess and confirm the findings reported in the literature and perhaps compare empowering with other leadership behaviours (Moore et al. 2015).

The SLR findings suggest that extending the field could include likely mediating and moderating variables between empowering leadership and individual, team and firm outcomes, particularly innovation. Such research could enhance understanding of the antecedents and outcomes of empowering leadership in a range of organisational and cultural contexts. Specifically, leaders should consider other factors, such as climate for innovation, when use empowering behaviours to encourage their employees. Similarly, hierarchical studies would be useful to see if empowering leadership and the lived experience of empowerment is dispersed top-down from senior to junior levels of organisations (Lee, MCC, Idris & Delfabbro 2017). In addition, future studies could extend understanding of the role of empowering leadership in encouraging innovation by testing other situational factors, such as attributes of the relationship between the leader and the employee. The study of how context affects individuals and their relationship with others is also a significant area for future study.

Possible areas for further research taking account of the Asian context might include examining power distance, leader-member exchange, communication, trust, and support for new ideas. Together with the concept of individualism–collectivism, power distance between leaders and subordinates could influence the divergent mechanisms of empowering leadership (Cheong et al. 2016). Therefore, future studies are recommended to investigate the divergent mechanisms of empowering leadership in different cultural contexts.

Summary

Leading and encouraging innovation play important roles in organisational success. This study proposed a theoretical framework and empirically examined the relationship between empowering leadership, climate for innovation and innovation in Vietnamese SMEs. Through the exploratory investigation with senior managers of Vietnamese tourism SMEs, this study proposed an integrated model and implications for both practitioners and scholars in developing a climate for innovation and motivating innovation in SMEs. The findings derived from the quantitative study not only provide deeper understandings of the innovation managing practice in Vietnamese SMEs, but also contributed new knowledge to the study of innovation and leadership. The results offer significant insights to scholarly debates by revealing findings from a dynamic economy in the Asia-Pacific region. In particular, the findings have implications for developing and managing innovation in tourism SMEs in developing countries. Further benefits ensue in terms of building the evidence base for how to leverage the advantages of empowering leadership to deliver innovation outcomes through a sustainable climate for innovation among tourism SMEs.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ethics Approval

Quest Ethics Notification - Application Process Finalised - Application Approved

quest.noreply@vu.edu.au

Tue 13/09/2016, 3:45 PM

Elisabeth.Wilson-Evered@vu.edu.au;

Giang Truong Hoang

Inbox

Dear PROF ELISABETH WILSON-EVERED,

Your ethics application has been formally reviewed and finalised.

- » Application ID: HRE16-196
- » Chief Investigator: PROF ELISABETH WILSON-EVERED
- » Other Investigators: MR Truong Giang Hoang
- » Application Title: Unpacking The Relative Influence of Empowering Leadership and Organizational Climate on Innovation in Tourism Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)
- » Form Version: 13-07

The application has been accepted and deemed to meet the requirements of the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007)' by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee. Approval has been granted for two (2) years from the approval date; 13/09/2016.

Continued approval of this research project by the Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee (VUHREC) is conditional upon the provision of a report within 12 months of the above approval date or upon the completion of the project (if earlier). A report proforma may be downloaded from the Office for Research website at: <http://research.vu.edu.au/hrec.php>.

Please note that the Human Research Ethics Committee must be informed of the following: any changes to the approved research protocol, project timelines, any serious events or adverse and/or unforeseen events that may affect continued ethical acceptability of the project. In these unlikely events, researchers must immediately cease all data collection until the Committee has approved the changes. Researchers are also reminded of the need to notify the approving HREC of changes to personnel in research projects via a request for a minor amendment. It should also

be noted that it is the Chief Investigators' responsibility to ensure the research project is conducted in line with the recommendations outlined in the National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) 'National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007).'

On behalf of the Committee, I wish you all the best for the conduct of the project.

Secretary, Human Research Ethics Committee

Phone: 9919 4781 or 9919 4461

Email: researchethics@vu.edu.au

Appendix 2: Information to interview participants involved in the research

[VU LOGO]

INFORMATION TO INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Leading Innovation in SMEs: The Roles of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate”.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Mr. Giang Hoang as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered from College of Business, Victoria University, Australia.

Project explanation

Innovation is ever more critical for sustainable business performance in a globally changing economic and social context and particularly in Asia-Pacific in the tourism sector. Most tourism business can be classified as small to medium enterprises (SMEs) which are arguably enabled to innovate through their potential for rapid adjustment and therefore make substantial contributions to the wealth of societies and national economies. Leadership has known impact on innovation; though little evidence exists for the link between innovation and empowering leadership in the tourism sector. Given the tourism sector encourages and is dependent on creative work and innovation for sustainable performance, the way in which leaders empower employee creativity and the implementation of new products, processes or services is an important topic for research. This study explores the associations among empowering leadership, organisational climate and innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed SMEs. The results are expected to have important implications for developing and managing innovative SMEs in the Vietnamese tourism sector as well as provide learnings for other Asia-Pacific nations.

What will I be asked to do?

Participation involves being interviewed by Mr. Giang Hoang from Victoria University, Australia. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. The interview will be audio taped and subsequent transcribed.

What will I gain from participating?

The study seeks to provide valuable insights in relation to empowering leadership, organisational climate and innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed SMEs. A summary report with implications for tourism businesses will be made available to participants. If I am interested, I will email the researchers to ask for a copy of the report.

How will the information I give be used?

The information I give will be used for a mixed-methods study which is a part of the PhD project conducted by Mr. Giang Hoang, under the supervision of Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered.

I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There are negligible potential risks from participating in this project.

How will this project be conducted?

A mixed-methods approach will be used to investigate the aims of the study. First, qualitative data will be collected from 20 semi-structured interviews with leaders in Vietnamese SMEs in tourism industry. That data will be used to understand the experience of innovation and organisational climate in the tourism context in Vietnam and then inform the quantitative methods. Questionnaires will be distributed 300 staff in Vietnamese tourism SMEs to test the hypotheses.

Who is conducting the study?

Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered, College of Business, Victoria University, Australia
(Elisabeth.Wilson-Evered@vu.edu.au)

Giang Hoang, PhD Candidate, College of Business, Victoria University, Australia
(Giang.Hoang1@live.vu.edu.au)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 3: Consent form for interview participants involved in the research

[VU LOGO]

CONSENT FORM FOR INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We invite you to be a part of a study into the impacts of empowering leadership and organisational climate on innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The results of this study are expected to provide relevant implications and recommendations for SMEs to improve their innovation capacity in particular and their competitive advantage in general.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I,, of
.....,

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study “*Unpacking the Relative Influence of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate on Innovation in Tourism SMEs*” being conducted at Victoria University by Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered and PhD Candidate Giang Hoang.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Mr. Giang Hoang and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- My participation in this project is voluntary. I understand that I will not be paid for my participation. I may withdraw and discontinue participation at any time without penalty.
- I understand that most interviewees will find the discussion interesting and thought-provoking. If, however, I feel uncomfortable in any way during the interview session, I have the right to decline to answer any question or to end the interview.
- Participation involves being interviewed by Mr. Giang Hoang from Victoria University. The interview will last approximately 30-45 minutes. Notes will be written during the interview. An audio tape of the interview and subsequent dialogue will be made. If I don't want to be taped, I will not be able to participate in the study.
- I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

- Staff and other managers from my company will neither be present at the interview nor have access to raw notes or transcripts. This precaution will prevent my individual comments from having any negative repercussions.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:.....

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered +61402385647

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 4: Interview protocol (in English)

PART 1. PARTICIPANT'S BACKGROUND

Question 1: To begin, can you please tell me about your background? (Employment; years of service; education level; size; type; sector, products, services)

PART 2. INNOVATION IN THE ORGANISATION

Question 2: What is innovation in respect of your organisation? Tell me about the last new thing or innovation your company developed.

Question 3: What do you think that makes your company innovative?

Question 4: To what extent do you welcome new ideas and implement changes in your organisation? Can you give me an example please (what, when, how... and what was the result)?

Question 5: In your opinion, what are some benefits and challenges of leading innovative business practices?

PART 3. LEADERSHIP APPROACH

Question 6: How would you describe your leadership style; what practices and behaviours do you use as a leader? How do you enable your staff to work well for your business?

PART 4. LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON INNOVATION AND CREATIVITY

Question 7: How do you think your leadership affects others to be creative and innovative? Please provide an example if you can.

Question 8: In your opinion, what characteristics of a leader make an organisation more innovative?

PART 5. LEADERSHIP IMPACT ON WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Question 9: Could you describe the working environment here that encourages creativity and innovation? Are there particular groups or teams or departments that are more innovative? Please describe their workplace and what makes them innovative?

Question 10: How does your leadership impact the workplace climate/environment and culture in your company? What systems, rewards, incentives and encouragements do you offer to encourage employees' innovation? What works best?

Appendix 5: Interview protocol (in Vietnamese)

PHẦN 1. THÔNG TIN CƠ BẢN

Câu 1. Để bắt đầu, Anh/Chị vui lòng cho biết một số thông tin cơ bản? (vị trí vai trò của anh/chị, tên doanh nghiệp, năm thành lập, quy mô doanh nghiệp, hình thức kinh doanh, sản phẩm và dịch vụ cung cấp)

PHẦN 2. ĐỔI MỚI SÁNG TẠO TRONG DOANH NGHIỆP

Câu 2. Anh/chị nghĩ sao về đổi mới sáng tạo trong doanh nghiệp? Vui lòng kể tên một thứ mới hoặc những đổi mới sáng tạo mà doanh nghiệp Anh/Chị đã thực hiện.

Câu 3. Theo Anh/Chị thì những yếu tố nào giúp cho doanh nghiệp mình đổi mới sáng tạo?

Câu 4. Anh/Chị đón nhận các ý tưởng mới và áp dụng các ý tưởng đó vào hoạt động của doanh nghiệp ở mức độ nào? Vui lòng cho biết một số ví dụ (ý tưởng gì, khi nào, và kết quả ra sao)

Câu 5. Theo Anh/Chị, có những lợi ích và khó khăn gì khi thực hiện đổi mới sáng tạo trong doanh nghiệp?

PHẦN 3. LÃNH ĐẠO TRONG DOANH NGHIỆP

Câu 6. Anh/Chị vui lòng mô tả về phong cách lãnh đạo của mình? Anh/Chị thường có những thói quen và hành vi gì thường dùng trong khi lãnh đạo? Anh/Chị làm thế nào để nhân viên làm việc hiệu quả?

PHẦN 4. ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA LÃNH ĐẠO ĐỐI VỚI ĐỔI MỚI SÁNG TẠO

Câu 7. Cách Anh/Chị lãnh đạo ảnh hưởng đến sự đổi mới sáng tạo của nhân viên như thế nào? Vui lòng cho biết một số ví dụ.

Câu 8. Theo Anh/Chị, người lãnh đạo cần có những đức tính nào để giúp doanh nghiệp đổi mới sáng tạo hơn?

PHẦN 5. ẢNH HƯỞNG CỦA LÃNH ĐẠO ĐỐI VỚI MÔI TRƯỜNG LÀM VIỆC

Câu 9. Anh/Chị có thể mô tả một môi trường làm việc giúp thúc đẩy sự đổi mới sáng tạo? Trong doanh nghiệp của Anh/Chị, có nhóm nào làm việc giàu tính sáng tạo hơn các nhóm khác không? Nếu có, vui lòng mô tả môi trường làm việc của nhóm đó và theo Anh/Chị điều gì đã giúp nhóm đó sáng tạo hơn?

Câu 10. Cách lãnh đạo của Anh/Chị ảnh hưởng tới môi trường làm việc/văn hóa của doanh nghiệp như thế nào? Anh/Chị có các phần thưởng, sự khích lệ, động viên gì để giúp nhân viên làm việc sáng tạo hơn? Trong cách khích lệ đó, cách nào hiệu quả nhất?

Appendix 6: Information to survey participants involved in the research

[VU LOGO]

INFORMATION TO SURVEY PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

You are invited to participate

You are invited to participate in a research project entitled “Unpacking the Relative Contribution of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate to Innovation in Tourism SMEs”.

This project is being conducted by a student researcher Mr. Giang Hoang as part of a PhD study at Victoria University under the supervision of Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered from College of Business, Victoria University, Australia.

Project explanation

Innovation is ever more critical for sustainable business performance in a globally changing economic and social context and particularly in Asia-Pacific in the tourism sector. Most tourism business can be classified as small to medium enterprises (SMEs) which are arguably enabled to innovate through their potential for rapid adjustment and therefore make substantial contributions to the wealth of societies and national economies. Leadership has known impact on innovation; though little evidence exists for the link between innovation and empowering leadership in the tourism sector. Given the tourism sector encourages and is dependent on creative work and innovation for sustainable performance, the way in which leaders empower employee creativity and the implementation of new products, processes or services is an important topic for research. This study explores the associations among empowering leadership, organisational climate and innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed SMEs. The results are expected to have important implications for developing and managing innovative SMEs in the Vietnamese tourism sector as well as provide learnings for other Asia-Pacific nations.

What will I be asked to do?

You are requested to answer questions in the questionnaire. The questionnaire will ask your options regarding innovation, organisational climate and leadership in your organisation. The survey will take approximately 10 minutes to complete.

What will I gain from participating?

The study seeks to provide valuable insights in relation to empowering leadership, organisational climate and innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed SMEs. A summary report with implications for tourism businesses will be made available to participants. If I am interested, I will email the researchers to ask for a copy of the report.

How will the information I give be used?

The information I give will be used for a mixed-methods study which is a part of the PhD project conducted by Mr. Giang Hoang, under the supervision of Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered.

I understand that the researcher will not identify me by name in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure. Subsequent uses of records and data will be subject to standard data use policies which protect the anonymity of individuals and institutions.

What are the potential risks of participating in this project?

There are negligible potential risks from participating in this project.

How will this project be conducted?

A mixed-methods approach will be used to investigate the aims of the study. First, qualitative data will be collected from 20 semi-structured interviews with leaders in Vietnamese SMEs in tourism industry. That data will be used to understand the experience of innovation and organisational climate in the tourism context in Vietnam and then inform the quantitative methods. Questionnaires will be distributed 300 staff in Vietnamese tourism SMEs to test the hypotheses.

Who is conducting the study?

Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered, College of Business, Victoria University, Australia
(Elisabeth.Wilson-Evered@vu.edu.au)

Giang Hoang, PhD Candidate, College of Business, Victoria University, Australia
(Giang.Hoang1@live.vu.edu.au)

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the Chief Investigator listed above.

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 7: Consent form for interview participants involved in the research

[VU LOGO]

CONSENT FORM FOR SURVEY PARTICIPANTS INVOLVED IN RESEARCH

INFORMATION TO PARTICIPANTS:

We invite you to be a part of a study into the impacts of empowering leadership and organisational climate on innovation in Vietnamese tourism focussed small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The results of this study are expected to provide relevant implications and recommendations for SMEs to improve their innovation capacity in particular and their competitive advantage in general.

CERTIFICATION BY PARTICIPANT

I,, of
.....,

certify that I am at least 18 years old and that I am voluntarily giving my consent to participate in the study “*Unpacking the Relative Influence of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate on Innovation in Tourism SMEs*” being conducted at Victoria University by Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered and PhD Candidate Giang Hoang.

I certify that the objectives of the study, together with any risks and safeguards associated with the procedures listed hereunder to be carried out in the research, have been fully explained to me by Mr. Giang Hoang and that I freely consent to participation involving the below mentioned procedures:

- Survey.

I certify that I have had the opportunity to have any questions answered and that I understand that I can withdraw from this study at any time and that this withdrawal will not jeopardise me in any way.

I have been informed that the information I provide will be kept confidential.

Signed:

Date:

Any queries about your participation in this project may be directed to the researcher Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered +61402385647

If you have any queries or complaints about the way you have been treated, you may contact the Ethics Secretary, Victoria University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office for Research, Victoria University, PO Box 14428, Melbourne, VIC, 8001, email Researchethics@vu.edu.au or phone (03) 9919 4781 or 4461.

Appendix 8: Questionnaire (in English)

Dear participants,

I am Giang Hoang, a PhD student of the College of Business at Victoria University, Australia. I am supervised by Professor Elisabeth Wilson-Evered and Associate Professor Leonie Lockstone-Binney. My study has been approved by The Human Ethics Committee at Victoria University (Ethics Approval Number: HRE16-196).

The aim of this questionnaire is to collect data for my doctoral study “*Unpacking the Relative Influence of Empowering Leadership and Organisational Climate on Innovation in Tourism SMEs*”. We believe the results will provide relevant implications and recommendations for SMEs to improve their innovation capacity in particular and their competitive advantage in general. Your company and you have been selected as part of a representative sample of Vietnamese tourism SMEs. We recognise the value of your time and sincerely appreciate your opinions as they are critical to the success of our study to discover new understandings.

The data collected will be used for research purposes only. All the information provided in this questionnaire will be kept confidential and the findings will be presented in such a way that you and your institution cannot be identified.

If you agree to participate in my study, please complete this questionnaire. It will take you approximately 10 minutes.

Thank you for your participation.

Sincerely,

Giang Hoang

PhD Candidate

College of Business

Victoria University, Australia

PART 1: DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND DETAILS

Firstly, we would like to collect some background information. Please answer the following questions by choosing one of the options or entering information in the space provided.

1. Gender

Female

Male

2. Age range

18-22

23-30

31-40

41-50

Over 51

3. What is your nationality?

Vietnamese

Other (Please specify):

.....

4. What is your current employment status?

Working full-time (40 hours/week or more)

Working part-time (20 hours – 39 hours/week)

Working casual (less than 20 hours/week)

Other (Please specify):

.....

5. How long have you been working in this company?

Less than 2 years

2-5 years

More than 5 years

6. What is your highest education level?

Secondary/High School Certificate

Tertiary Diploma or Certificate

Undergraduate Degree (Bachelors)

Postgraduate Degree (Masters/Doctorate)

Other (Please specify):

.....

7. How many people does your company employ?

0-10 employees

11-50 employees

51-100 employees

More than 100 employees

8. What type of tourism business is your company?

- Hosted accommodation
 - Tour operator
 - Cultural, arts & heritage
 - Events
 - Other (Please specify):
-

PART 2: LEADERSHIP BEHAVIOURS

Please tick the appropriate number to each statement to indicate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements:					
	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Uncertain	Agree	Strongly agree
1. My supervisor explains the overall goals we are trying to achieve.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
2. My supervisor teaches employees how to solve problems on their own.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
3. My supervisor shares important responsibilities with his/her employees.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. My supervisor gives employees the freedom to work on their own.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
5. My supervisor lets employees make important decisions.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
6. My supervisor monitors employee performance.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
7. My supervisor checks to be sure employees follow proper procedures.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
8. My supervisor clearly explains the way work should be done.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

9. My supervisor shows employees how to solve problems.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
10. My supervisor corrects poor performance.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
11. My supervisor makes his/her attitudes clear to the group.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
12. My supervisor tries out his/her new ideas with the group.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
13. My supervisor rules with an iron hand.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
14. My supervisor criticises poor work.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
15. My supervisor speaks in a manner not to be questioned.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
16. My supervisor assigns group members to particular tasks.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
17. My supervisor schedules the work to be done.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
18. My supervisor maintains definite standards of performance.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
19. My supervisor emphasises the meeting of deadlines.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
20. My supervisor encourages the use of uniform procedures.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
21. My supervisor makes sure that his/her part in the organisation is understood by all group members.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

22. My supervisor asks that group members follow standard rules and regulations.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
23. My supervisor lets group members know what is expected of them.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
24. My supervisor sees to it that group members are working up to capacity.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
25. My supervisor sees to it that the work of group members is coordinated.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

PART 3: CLIMATE FOR INNOVATION

This section asks you about your organisation. Listed below are some statements with which you rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements. For each statement below, please circle a number that best describes your thoughts:

Very little extent	Little Extent	Some extent	Great Extent	Very Great Extent
1	2	3	4	5

		Please circle a number				
1.	Creativity is encouraged here	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Our ability to function creatively is respected by the supervisor	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Around here, people are allowed to try to solve the same problems in different ways	1	2	3	4	5
4.	The main function of members in this organisation is to follow orders, which come down through channels	1	2	3	4	5

5.	Around here, a person can get in a lot of trouble by being different	1	2	3	4	5
6.	This organisation can be described as flexible and continually adapting to change	1	2	3	4	5
7.	The best way to get along in this organisation is to think the way the rest of the group does.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	A person cannot do things that are too different around here without provoking anger	1	2	3	4	5
9.	People around here are expected to deal with problems in the same way	1	2	3	4	5
10.	This organisation is open and responsive to change	1	2	3	4	5
11.	The people in charge around here usually get credit for others' ideas	1	2	3	4	5
12.	In this organisation, we tend to stick to tried and true ways	1	2	3	4	5
13.	This place seems to be more concerned with the status quo than with change	1	2	3	4	5
14.	The reward system here encourages innovation	1	2	3	4	5
15.	This organisation publicly recognises those who are innovative	1	2	3	4	5
16.	The reward system here benefits mainly those who don't rock the boat	1	2	3	4	5

PART 4: TOURISM INNOVATION

We would like to know about innovation in your organisation. For each statement, please check if you agree or disagree using a rating scale from “1 – Strongly Disagree” to “5 – Strongly Agree”.

1	2	3	4	5
Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

How much do you agree with the following statements?

Please tick a circle to indicate your response

	1	2	3	4	5
1. The quality of this new product is superior to that of our competitors	<input type="radio"/>				
2. This product design (in terms of functionality and features) is superior to that of our competitors	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Overall, we have an advantage over our competitors in terms of this new product we offer our customers	<input type="radio"/>				
4. This new product is minor improvements in a current technology	<input type="radio"/>				
5. This new product incorporates a large new body of technological knowledge	<input type="radio"/>				
6. The applications of this new product are totally different from the applications of our main competitors' products	<input type="radio"/>				
7. We are constantly improving our business processes	<input type="radio"/>				
8. Our company changes production methods at a great speed in comparison with our competitors	<input type="radio"/>				
9. During the past five years, our company has developed many new management approaches	<input type="radio"/>				
10. When we cannot solve a problem using conventional methods, we improvise on new methods	<input type="radio"/>				

Can you give an example of recent innovations in your firm?

.....

.....

.....

.....
.....
.....

Is there an innovation you'd like to introduce but have not received support or not yet suggested to anyone? If yes please describe.

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Is there anything you wish to add about you, your leader or innovation in your company

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Thank you for completing the survey. The information you have provided is valuable for our research.

Appendix 9: Questionnaire (in Vietnamese)

Kính thưa các anh chị,

Tên tôi là Hoàng Trường Giang. Hiện nay tôi là Nghiên cứu sinh dưới sự hướng dẫn của Giáo sư Elisabeth Wilson-Evered và Phó Giáo sư Leonie Lockstone-Binney tại khoa Kinh Doanh trường Đại học Victoria, Australia. Nghiên cứu của chúng tôi có tên gọi: “*Ảnh hưởng của phong cách lãnh đạo trao quyền và môi trường làm việc đối với khả năng đổi mới sáng tạo của các doanh nghiệp nhỏ và vừa trong ngành du lịch*”, đã được phê duyệt bởi Ủy ban Đạo Đức Nghiên Cứu của Đại học Victoria (Mã số: HRE16-196).

Bảng câu hỏi khảo sát dưới đây nhằm mục đích thu thập dữ liệu cho luận án tiến sĩ của tôi. Từ kết quả nghiên cứu đạt được, chúng tôi sẽ đề xuất một số giải pháp giúp nâng cao khả năng đổi mới sáng tạo và năng lực cạnh tranh của các doanh nghiệp nhỏ và vừa. Vì vậy chúng tôi rất mong muốn nhận được sự tham gia của các anh chị vào nghiên cứu này.

Ý kiến mà anh chị đưa ra trong bảng khảo sát dưới đây góp một phần quan trọng vào sự thành công trong nghiên cứu của chúng tôi và đồng thời làm giàu thêm kiến thức cho ngành quản trị kinh doanh. Toàn bộ thông tin mà anh chị cung cấp sẽ chỉ được dùng vào mục đích nghiên cứu và được giữ bảo mật tuyệt đối. Đồng thời trong các báo cáo sau này, tên anh chị và tên công ty cũng sẽ được giữ hoàn toàn dưới dạng ẩn danh.

Nếu anh chị đồng ý tham gia, xin vui lòng hoàn thành bảng câu hỏi dưới đây. Thời gian hoàn thành bảng hỏi là khoảng 10 phút.

Chân thành cảm ơn sự tham gia của các anh chị.

Hoàng Trường Giang

Nghiên cứu sinh

Khoa Kinh Doanh

Đại học Victoria, Australia

Điện thoại: 01272318669

Email: gianght.r2@gmail.com

PHẦN 1: THÔNG TIN CƠ BẢN

Đầu tiên xin anh chị cho biết một số thông tin cơ bản về bản thân và công ty.

1. Giới tính

- Nữ
 Nam

2. Độ tuổi

- 18-22
 23-30
 31-40
 41-50
 Trên 51

3. Quốc tịch của anh chị là gì?

- Việt Nam
 Quốc tịch khác (Vui lòng nêu cụ thể):
.....

4. Trình độ học vấn cao nhất của anh chị là gì?

- Tốt nghiệp Trung học cơ sở hoặc Trung học phổ thông
 Tốt nghiệp Trung cấp hoặc Cao đẳng
 Tốt nghiệp Đại học
 Tốt nghiệp sau đại học (Thạc sĩ hoặc Tiến sĩ)
 Khác (Vui lòng nêu cụ thể):
.....

5. Tình trạng hợp đồng lao động của anh chị là gì?

- Làm việc toàn thời gian (40 giờ/tuần hoặc hơn)
 Làm việc bán thời gian (20-39 giờ/tuần)
 Nhân viên không thường xuyên (ít hơn 20 giờ/tuần)
 Khác (Vui lòng nêu cụ thể):
.....

6. Anh chị đã làm việc tại công ty này trong bao lâu?

- Ít hơn 2 năm
 2-5 năm
 Nhiều hơn 5 năm

7. Công ty anh chị có bao nhiêu nhân viên?

- 0-10 nhân viên
 11-50 nhân viên
 51-100 nhân viên
 Hơn 100 nhân viên

8. Dịch vụ chính mà công ty anh chị cung cấp là gì?

- Dịch vụ lưu trú
 - Dịch vụ lữ hành
 - Văn hóa, nghệ thuật và di sản
 - Tổ chức sự kiện
 - Khác (Vui lòng nêu cụ thể):
-

PHẦN 2: LÃNH ĐẠO

Anh chị đồng ý với những nhận định dưới đây về lãnh đạo của mình ở mức độ nào? Vui lòng chọn một ô duy nhất cho mỗi câu.

	Rất không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Trung lập	Đồng ý	Rất đồng ý
1. Quản lý của tôi giải thích cho nhân viên về mục tiêu chung mà chúng tôi cần cố gắng đạt được.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
2. Quản lý của tôi hướng dẫn nhân viên cách tự giải quyết các vấn đề khó khăn.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
3. Quản lý của tôi chia sẻ những trách nhiệm quan trọng của mình với nhân viên.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
4. Quản lý của tôi cho nhân viên được tự do thực hiện công việc theo cách riêng của mình.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
5. Quản lý của tôi để cho nhân viên tự đưa ra các quyết định quan trọng.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
6. Quản lý của tôi giám sát kết quả làm việc của nhân viên.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
7. Quản lý của tôi kiểm tra xem nhân viên có thực hiện đúng quy trình hay không.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
8. Quản lý của tôi giải thích rõ ràng cho nhân viên về cách hoàn thành công việc.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
9. Quản lý của tôi chỉ cho nhân viên cách giải quyết các vấn đề khó khăn.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
10. Quản lý của tôi chữa lỗi sai cho nhân viên.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

11. Quản lý của tôi bày tỏ quan điểm rõ ràng với các thành viên trong nhóm.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
12. Quản lý của tôi thử nghiệm các ý tưởng mới với nhóm của chúng tôi.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
13. Quản lý của tôi kiểm soát mọi thứ hết sức chặt chẽ với “bàn tay sắt”.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
14. Quản lý của tôi phê bình khi nhân viên làm việc kém.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
15. Quản lý của tôi có cách nói khiến nhân viên khó đưa ra thắc mắc.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
16. Quản lý của tôi giao việc cụ thể cho từng thành viên trong nhóm.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
17. Quản lý của tôi lên kế hoạch để đảm bảo nhân viên hoàn thành công việc.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
18. Quản lý của tôi duy trì tiêu chuẩn hoàn thành công việc rất rõ ràng.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
19. Quản lý của tôi luôn nhấn mạnh việc hoàn thành công việc đúng hạn.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
20. Quản lý của tôi khuyến khích các nhân viên làm theo một quy trình giống nhau.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
21. Quản lý của tôi đảm bảo rằng tất cả các thành viên trong nhóm đều hiểu rõ vai trò của mình trong công ty.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
22. Quản lý của tôi yêu cầu các thành viên trong nhóm tuân theo các quy định chung.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
23. Quản lý của tôi nói cho nhân viên biết rằng nhân viên được kỳ vọng những gì.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
24. Quản lý của tôi muốn đảm bảo rằng các thành viên trong nhóm làm việc hết khả năng.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>
25. Quản lý của tôi đảm bảo rằng công việc của mỗi thành viên đều được điều phối rõ ràng.	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	5 <input type="checkbox"/>

PHẦN 3: MÔI TRƯỜNG LÀM VIỆC

Trong phần này, chúng tôi muốn tìm hiểu ý kiến của anh chị về môi trường làm việc trong công ty. Anh chị vui lòng khoanh tròn mức độ đồng ý của mình đối với những nhận định dưới đây.

Mức độ rất thấp	Mức độ thấp	Mức độ trung bình	Mức độ cao	Mức độ rất cao
1	2	3	4	5

		Hãy khoanh tròn câu trả lời				
1.	Ở đây chúng tôi được khuyến khích sáng tạo.	1	2	3	4	5
2.	Khả năng làm việc sáng tạo của chúng tôi được coi trọng bởi người quản lý.	1	2	3	4	5
3.	Tại đây, mọi người được phép giải quyết các vấn đề giống nhau theo những hướng khác nhau.	1	2	3	4	5
4.	Nhiệm vụ chính của nhân viên trong công ty là thực hiện các công việc do cấp trên giao từ trên xuống dưới.	1	2	3	4	5
5.	Nhân viên ở đây có thể bị gặp rắc rối nếu tỏ ra khác biệt so với những người khác.	1	2	3	4	5
6.	Công ty này rất linh động và liên tục thích ứng với thay đổi.	1	2	3	4	5
7.	Cách tốt nhất để giữ mối quan hệ tốt trong công ty này là suy nghĩ theo cách mà những người khác thường làm.	1	2	3	4	5
8.	Tại đây, nếu một người làm việc quá khác so với những người xung quanh thì chắc chắn sẽ bị khiển trách.	1	2	3	4	5
9.	Ở đây mọi người được mong muốn giải quyết các vấn đề theo cách giống nhau.	1	2	3	4	5
10.	Công ty này rất mở và phản ứng nhanh với sự thay đổi.	1	2	3	4	5
11.	Những người phụ trách ở đây thường xuyên ghi nhận ý tưởng của người khác.	1	2	3	4	5
12.	Trong công ty này, chúng tôi thường làm việc theo các phương pháp đã được kiểm nghiệm là đúng.	1	2	3	4	5

13. Công ty này có vẻ muốn giữ nguyên hiện trạng hơn là mong muốn thay đổi.	1	2	3	4	5
14. Các chính sách khen thưởng trong công ty khuyến khích đổi mới sáng tạo.	1	2	3	4	5
15. Công ty tuyên dương công khai những nhân viên có đổi mới sáng tạo.	1	2	3	4	5
16. Các chính sách khen thưởng ở đây chủ yếu có lợi cho những người không gây ra xáo	1	2	3	4	5

PHẦN 4: ĐỔI MỚI SÁNG TẠO TRONG DU LỊCH

Anh chị vui lòng cho biết mức độ đồng ý với các nhận định dưới đây về tình hình đổi mới sáng tạo trong công ty anh chị. Thang đánh giá từ cấp độ “1 – Rất không đồng ý” cho tới “5 – Rất đồng ý”

1	2	3	4	5
Rất không đồng ý	Không đồng ý	Trung lập	Đồng ý	Rất đồng ý

Vui lòng đánh dấu (✓) vào câu trả lời

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Sản phẩm mới của chúng tôi có chất lượng vượt trội hơn hẳn so với đối thủ cạnh tranh.	<input type="radio"/>				
2. Sản phẩm của chúng tôi được thiết kế tốt hơn hẳn so với sản phẩm của đối thủ cạnh tranh (xét về các tính năng và đặc điểm cơ bản).	<input type="radio"/>				
3. Nhìn chung, chúng tôi có lợi thế hơn hẳn đối thủ cạnh tranh về những sản phẩm giới thiệu tới khách hàng.	<input type="radio"/>				
4. Sản phẩm mới của chúng tôi chỉ có sự đổi mới nhỏ so với mặt bằng chung hiện nay.	<input type="radio"/>				
5. Sản phẩm mới của chúng tôi sử dụng rất nhiều công nghệ mới hiện nay.	<input type="radio"/>				
6. Sử dụng sản phẩm mới của chúng tôi có trải nghiệm hoàn toàn khác với sản phẩm của các đối thủ cạnh tranh.	<input type="radio"/>				
7. Chúng tôi liên tục cải thiện quy trình làm việc trong doanh nghiệp.	<input type="radio"/>				
8. Công ty của chúng tôi thay đổi phương pháp sản xuất kinh doanh với tốc độ nhanh hơn nhiều so với các đối thủ cạnh tranh.	<input type="radio"/>				

9. Trong vòng 5 năm qua, công ty của chúng tôi đã phát triển rất nhiều phương thức quản lý mới.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
10. Khi chúng tôi không thể giải quyết các vấn đề khó khăn theo phương pháp truyền thống, chúng tôi lập tức sử dụng ngay phương pháp mới.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>

Anh chị vui lòng cho biết một ví dụ về đổi mới sáng tạo gần đây trong công ty?

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Có bao giờ anh chị mong muốn thực hiện đổi mới sáng tạo mà không nhận được sự hỗ trợ từ phía công ty? Nếu có, vui lòng cho biết cụ thể hơn.

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Anh chị có ý kiến gì khác về lãnh đạo và đổi mới sáng tạo trong công ty mình không?

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Chân thành cảm ơn anh chị đã dành thời gian hoàn thành bảng khảo sát.

Thông tin anh chị cung cấp rất có giá trị với nghiên cứu của chúng tôi.

Appendix 10: Sample interview transcript coding screen in NVivo

The screenshot displays the NVivo software interface for coding an interview transcript. The main window shows a transcript with several paragraphs of Vietnamese text. Some text is highlighted in yellow, indicating it has been coded. The interface includes a menu bar (FILE, HOME, CREATE, DATA, ANALYZE, QUERY, EXPLORE, LAYOUT, VIEW), a toolbar with various icons, and a left sidebar with 'Nodes' and 'Sources'. A central 'Nodes' list shows a grid of nodes with columns for 'Name', 'Source', and 'Reference'. The main text area contains the following transcript:

mẫu thuẫn với sự sáng tạo và phát triển thì mình sẽ phải liên tục, mình sẽ phải cân balance.

Hỏi: Thế theo anh, có những yếu tố nào thúc đẩy doanh nghiệp của mình đổi mới sáng tạo hơn?

Trả lời: Mình nghĩ yếu tố đầu tiên đấy là người lãnh đạo, có nghĩa là cái người lãnh đạo, người đứng đầu của tổ chức thì liên tục phải có một tư duy cần phải phát triển. Chứ còn nếu mà cái người lãnh đạo họ chỉ nghĩ là họ muốn ở cái mức tầm này thôi, thì nó cũng sẽ như thế thôi. Thế nếu mà ví dụ những người lãnh đạo mà họ không có một cái tầm nhìn, hoặc là họ không có một cái khát khao mong muốn thì mình nghĩ rằng rất là khó. Đấy là yếu tố mà mình nghĩ là quan trọng.

Hỏi: Ngoài ra thì còn yếu tố gì khác thôi thúc anh phải đổi mới sáng tạo không?

Trả lời: Thực ra thì còn những yếu tố khác nhưng bản thân mình nghĩ không nhiều lắm.

Hỏi: Thế anh đón nhận các ý tưởng mới và áp dụng các ý tưởng đó vào hoạt động của doanh nghiệp ở mức độ nào?

Trả lời: Bên mình thì tất cả các bộ phận, ví dụ từ sales, từ marketing, từ điều hành thì mình đều yêu cầu các họ là liên tục đi tìm những cách làm mới. Và

The status bar at the bottom indicates: 1044 Items, Nodes: 69, References: 69, Read-Only, Line: 100, Column: 12.

Appendix 11: Diagram of structural equation modelling

