



# **Leadership Development Programs and Employee Performance in the Hospitality Industry in Kenya: A Case Study of Serena Hotel Nairobi**

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## **ABSTRACT**

*Employee performance is a critical determinant of service quality in the hospitality industry, where customer satisfaction and repeat business depend heavily on staff efficiency, professionalism, and commitment. However, many hospitality organizations face challenges such as high employee turnover, inconsistent service delivery, and skill gaps, which hinder optimal performance. The study was anchored on relevant theoretical frameworks, including the Social Learning Theory and Resource-Based View Theory, which collectively provided a lens for understanding the dynamics of employee learning, motivational influence and skill investment. A descriptive research design was employed to capture employee perceptions and experiences relating to the leadership initiatives implemented at the hotel. The entire population of 195 employees was targeted through a census approach, ensuring comprehensive representation across departments. Data for the study was obtained through structured questionnaires and analysed using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods with the aid of SPSS Version 26. The reliability of the instrument was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, where all constructs recorded coefficients above 0.79, signifying strong internal consistency. Findings indicated that the leadership development strategies influenced employee performance to varying extents. Mentorship programs demonstrated a positive but statistically insignificant relationship ( $\beta = 0.118, p = 0.066$ ), pointing to potential gaps in their implementation or consistency. On the other hand, succession planning ( $\beta = -0.467, p = 0.010$ ) showed a significant negative impact on performance, suggesting a possible misalignment between these initiatives and employee expectations or the prevailing organizational culture. The study concludes that while leadership development is essential in driving performance, the design, implementation, and perception of such programs critically influence their effectiveness. The findings offer practical insights for HR managers and hospitality leaders aiming to optimize leadership strategies for workforce productivity. The study also adds to the larger body of knowledge regarding the development of talent and the efficacy of leadership in service-oriented industries.*

**Key Words:** Mentorship Programs, Succession Planning Programs, Leadership Development Programs

## **1.0 Introduction**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The hospitality industry contributes to economic development by facilitating the creation of jobs, foreign exchange profits, and overall national growth. Nonetheless, a key element in the industry's performance is the caliber of its human resources, which are influenced by effective leadership development initiatives. Leadership development programs are structured initiatives designed to enhance employees' leadership skills, decision-making ability, and general job performance. Serena Hotel and other hospitality-related organizations depend on these initiatives to maintain competitive advantage and long-term success (Gentry et al., 2024).

Hoang, et al., (2025) research study in Japan revealed that, the hospitality industry is highly dynamic and requires strong leadership to navigate the challenges of customer service, operational efficiency, and workforce management. Leadership development programs are essential for giving staff members the abilities they need to successfully manage teams, improve customer service and propel an organization forward. Businesses in the hospitality industry throughout the world have realized how crucial it is to fund leadership development in order to enhance worker performance. Research indicates that well-structured Leadership Development Programs enhance employees' decision-making capabilities, emotional intelligence, and adaptability, which in turn boost service delivery and guest satisfaction. Various companies have implemented comprehensive leadership training programs that focus on mentorship, cross-functional learning and succession planning, ensuring that employees are prepared for higher managerial roles.

Leadership training has been used by French hotels and restaurants as a means of enhancing customer happiness, employee engagement, and operational efficiency. Lefèvre and Martin (2022) state that leadership development programs in the French hospitality industry place a strong emphasis on developing a service-oriented leadership style. Managers are taught how to motivate their teams by demonstrating empathy, teamwork, and emotional intelligence. In an industry that depends heavily on the customer experience, these leadership traits are crucial. Leaders in the French hospitality industry who receive this kind of training are better able to improve worker performance, which raises job satisfaction, improves service quality, lowers staff turnover, and eventually boosts the establishment's total profitability.

Kenya continues to face persistent challenges in attaining corporate success. This is mostly due to the inadequate effectiveness of leadership inside most businesses, resulting in poor performance (Mutuku, K'Obonyo & Musyoka, 2022). In Kenya, numerous State Corporations have been underperforming as a result of ineffective leadership styles utilized. Due to their inability to carry out their operational responsibilities, the majority have subsequently ceased tasks, leaving them with large loans and a large loss of employment. Government agencies and taxpayers have been burdened by this. Mumias Sugar Company, National Bank, and Uchumi Supermarket are a few illustrations confirming the same. In accordance with Otuko and Chege (2020), numerous entities inside Kenya's State Corporations have documented instances of unethical retail activities like gratuities and large high number of employee turnover. The administration of state-owned businesses has been ineffective, necessitating a reevaluation of leadership approaches towards improving staff performance through fostering growth.

The hotel sector in Ghana is expanding quickly, and more focus is being placed on how leadership development may improve worker performance. In Ghanaian hotels and resorts, LDPs are now crucial for fostering leadership abilities that handle regional issues and conform to international best practices. Many Ghanaian hospitality companies are spending money on leadership development programs in order to boost employee performance and managerial efficacy, claim Asamoah and Osei (2022). In an industry where teamwork and customer service are essential for success, these programs emphasize critical leadership skills like emotional intelligence, conflict resolution, and strategic decision-making. Managers that participate in these programs are better able to resolve client concerns, boost team morale, and increase operational effectiveness. Because of this, workers under skilled managers typically perform better and are more satisfied with their jobs, which immediately improve customer retention rates.

Leadership development programs have been tailored to address the unique challenges within the country's hospitality sector. Various hospitality colleges in Kenya offers specialized programs aimed at building leadership skills to positively impact departments, employees, and work teams. These programs cover areas such as managing workplace productivity, stress management, teamwork, critical thinking, and business communication, all of which are crucial for effective leadership and enhanced employee performance. In order to create a favorable work environment that improves employee performance, the study emphasized the necessity of leadership development programs that give leaders the know-how to adopt suitable leadership styles (Wanget al., 2025).

## ***1.2 Statement of Problem***

The hospitality industry is inherently service-oriented, relying heavily on the performance and engagement of its employees to deliver exceptional guest experiences. In this context, leadership development programs have emerged as pivotal tools for enhancing managerial competencies, which in turn can significantly influence employee performance (Irving, 2025). Despite the recognized importance of effective leadership, many hospitality organizations face challenges in implementing comprehensive leadership development initiatives. This gap often results in suboptimal employee performance, affecting customer satisfaction. Employee performance is a critical factor in the hospitality industry, as it influences customer satisfaction, operational efficiency, and profitability (Guy, 2025). Serena Hotel has implemented various leadership development programs to enhance employee performance, yet the impact of these initiatives remains unclear. While studies on leadership development and employee performance exist, most focus on general organizational performance rather than the direct impact on employees within the hospitality sector (Guy, et al 2025).

In the hotel sector, employee performance plays a crucial role in determining client happiness, service excellence, and organizational success. In this context, leadership development programs have become strategic tools for enhancing workforce competencies, motivation, and retention (Irving, 2025). Serena Hotel Nairobi, a leading hospitality brand in Kenya, has made significant investments in leadership development initiatives. However, the specific effect of various components of these programs on employee performance remains inadequately explored.

One of the primary issues is the dynamic nature of the hospitality sector, characterized by high employee turnover rates and a diverse workforce. These factors complicate the establishment of consistent leadership practices and the cultivation of a unified organizational culture (Ejaz, et al., 2025). Leadership development programs foster an environment that promotes employee engagement and retention. There is an increasing focus on human-based interactions in hospitality, necessitating leaders who can drive employee performance and manage teams effectively (Wang, et al., 2025). The evolving expectations of guests and the integration of new technologies require leaders who are adaptable and forward-thinking. Traditional management approaches may no longer suffice in addressing these emerging challenges. Leadership development programs that emphasize emotional intelligence, innovation, and strategic thinking are crucial in preparing leaders to meet these demands.

Despite these needs, there is often a lack of investment in leadership development within the hospitality industry. This oversight can lead to a deficiency in effective leadership, resulting in decreased employee morale, increased turnover, and diminished service quality (Ejaz, et al., 2025). Eclat Hospitality emphasizes that investing in leadership development can create a cohesive and effective team better equipped to meet industry demands, ultimately improving communication, increasing employee satisfaction, and reducing turnover. The lack of empirical evidence on how leadership development programs affect employee performance at Serena Hotel creates a research gap. Understanding this relationship is crucial for making informed decisions on training investments and improving human resource policies.

Mentorship programs are often implemented to support professional development and succession grooming. Yet, their effectiveness in enhancing job satisfaction, skill acquisition, and retention within the hospitality context is not clearly understood (Smith, 2025). Research in similar sectors indicates that poorly structured mentorship can result in unclear expectations and limited outcomes (Zhang et al., 2025). Leadership training programs are designed to enhance decision-making, emotional intelligence, and strategic thinking. However, recent findings suggest that in many cases, these programs are generic and fail to address the unique operational challenges within hospitality organizations, reducing their impact on performance (Febrian & Solihin, 2024; Kwarteng et al., 2024). Succession planning is vital for ensuring leadership continuity. Despite this, many hospitality organizations, including

Serena Hotel, often struggle to implement structured talent pipelines that align with employee aspirations, leading to stagnation and dissatisfaction (Warui & Karanja, 2024). Therefore, by assessing the unique impacts of mentorship programs and succession planning on employee performance at the Serena Hotel, this study aims to close these disparities. The results offered practical advice for enhancing human capital tactics in Kenya's hospitality sector.

### **1.3 Objectives of the Study**

- i. To determine the effect of mentorship programs on employee performance in the hospitality industry in Kenya.
- ii. To assess the role of succession planning on employee performance in the hospitality industry in Kenya.

### **1.4 Research Questions**

- i. How do mentorship programs affect employee performance in the hospitality industry in Kenya?
- ii. To what extent does succession planning affect employee performance in the hospitality industry in Kenya?

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

Policymakers at both government and organizational levels can use the findings to craft policies that encourage investment in employee development programs. In Kenya, where the hospitality is essential in economic development and understanding the link between leadership training and enhanced employee performance could guide policy on national labor standards, career development pathways, and professional qualifications in the sector. The study may also inspire government-backed initiatives that incentivize hotels and resorts to adopt structured leadership training, particularly in regions where employee turnover is high and performance levels are inconsistent. This can contribute to a more robust and sustainable hospitality industry in Kenya, attracting more international tourists and improving the overall service quality across the sector.

The research may contribute to refining leadership development models by providing empirical data that supports or challenges prevailing theories on leadership, employee motivation, and performance. For instance, theories such as Transformational Leadership or Situational Leadership may be tested within the context of Serena Hotel's operations. This study's findings could also fill gaps in the literature on leadership development programs specific to the Kenyan hospitality sector, which is under-researched compared to other global markets.

Industry practitioners, stand to benefit from this study's findings on the effectiveness of leadership development programs. Practical recommendations derived from the study could help improve employee performance by tailoring training programs to specific leadership competencies that drive results in the hospitality industry. Hotel management teams can apply the insights to enhance employee retention and promote higher revenue. This study can help hospitality businesses assess their current training frameworks and identify gaps that need addressing to maximize the potential of their workforce. The results can also encourage hotels to develop long-term leadership succession plans, which are crucial for maintaining operational continuity and fostering a positive organizational culture.

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## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Literature Review**

#### **2.1.1. Social Learning Theory**

Bandura (1977) established that, leadership development programs in hospitality often include mentorship, role modeling, and on-the-job training, making this theory highly relevant. Albert Bandura's Social Learning Theory, which was first presented in (1977), indicated that, people pick up new behaviors and abilities by watching other people, especially in social settings. This theoretical framework is highly applicable to succession planning programs, as it underscores the importance of learning from existing leaders to prepare future ones. By facilitating opportunities for potential successors to observe and interact with current leaders, organizations can ensure the transfer of essential knowledge, skills, and organizational culture, thereby promoting seamless leadership transitions.

Incorporating Social Learning Theory into succession planning involves creating structured mentorship and coaching programs where emerging leaders can engage directly with experienced executives. This approach allows for the modeling of effective leadership behaviors and decision-making processes. As a result, strategies that guarantees stability in management, knowledge, and staff levels when current managers leave must be adopted. Such interactions not only facilitate the acquisition of explicit skills but also impart tacit knowledge crucial for maintaining organizational continuity (Ali and Mehreen, 2019).

According to Saka (2025), Social Learning Theory is highly applicable to leadership development in the hospitality industry. In leadership programs, employees can learn critical leadership skills by observing mentors, managers, or senior leaders. Through role modeling and mentorship, employees can develop effective leadership for success in the hospitality environment. For example, trainees in a hotel setting can learn from observing how leaders handle customer complaints, manage teams, or make critical decisions. These observations, combined with feedback and reinforcement, improve the

employees' performance over time. Thus, leadership development programs that incorporate social learning principles can enhance both individual employee skills and overall team performance in hospitality organizations like Serena Hotel.

### **2.1.2. Resource-Based View Theory**

According to this theory, which was established by Barney (1991), firms may obtain a competitive edge by using resources that are valued, distinct, and inimitable. Programs for leadership development contribute to the creation of human capital as a strategic asset, which enhances worker productivity and gives hotels like Serena Hotel a competitive edge. According to this theory, an organization's distinctive resources and capabilities-which are priceless, uncommon, non-replaceable, and inimitable-are, the source of its long-term competitive advantage (Robb, et. al., 2025). Executive coaching serves as a strategic tool to develop and enhance these internal resources, particularly human capital, by fostering leadership skills, decision-making abilities, and strategic thinking among executives. By investing in personalized coaching, organizations can cultivate leaders who possess distinctive competencies that are difficult for competitors to replicate, thereby reinforcing the firm's competitive positioning.

This theory indicates that an organization's distinct resources and capabilities-which are valued, uncommon, hard to replicate and non-substitutable-are what give it a competitive edge. When it comes to human resources, this theory suggests that human capital-skills, knowledge, and experience of employees-is a crucial resource that can lead to sustainable competitive advantage. Organizations that invest in developing and retaining their human capital can create superior value, enhancing performance and differentiation in the market (Plotkina and Ramalu, 2024).

Seay and Muscarella (2024) revealed that, in the hospitality industry, the Resource-Based View Theory highlights that employee' skills, especially those acquired through leadership development programs are a critical resource that contributes to organizational success. For example, a leadership development program that cultivates leadership competencies in hotel staff creates a rare resource that competitors cannot easily replicate. By investing in employees' development, hotels like Serena Hotel can gain a competitive advantage in terms of superior customer service, innovative practices, and efficient operations.

## **2.2 Empirical Literature Review**

This section discusses the works of other experts. An overview of previous research and conclusions pertaining to the subject of interest is given by the empirical literature review. It critically evaluates studies on the effect of succession planning and mentoring on worker performance. In order to guide future research and practices in the subject, this section reviews and synthesizes empirical studies in order to identify trends, important discoveries, and gaps in the literature.

### **2.2.1 Mentorship Program**

Smith, (2025) carried out a study and focused on the long-term success of educational and mentorship programs designed to equip women with knowledge to succeed in leadership positions. By examining the enduring outcomes of these initiatives, this study provides the strengths, challenges and areas for improvement in efforts to empower women and promote gender equality. The study established that intersectional leadership development programs is key in filling very critical by virtue, particularly women with diverse background, holistic program design, strong institutional support, and community building effort to foster career advancement and equality is very crucial, also established was importance of mentorship, improvement of data driven and the integration of inter sectionalist into organizational structures. Besides the contribution of the study on the development of literature review, it did not provide a clear policy recommendation, the study lacked context analysis, these gaps will be addressed by the current study by investigating how mentorship affect the performance of the organization and recommending appropriate policies more specifically the hostility sector.

Zhang et al. (2025) study on assessing influence of mentors' cultural competency and organizational inclusion on protégés' job satisfaction in Chinese workplaces, data was gathered from 400 participants; the data was analyzed by adopting hierarchical regression and boots rapping analyses for the establishment of the findings. The study primarily focuses on positive mentoring aspects. While the study emphasizes mentors' cultural competence, it overlooks how protégés' own attitudes toward knowledge sharing might influence the effectiveness of mentoring. Research indicates that protégés' willingness to share knowledge can moderate the relationship between mentoring functions and knowledge-sharing behaviors. Investigating this aspect could offer deeper insights into the reciprocal nature of mentoring. The research centers on traditional mentoring models, potentially neglecting the impact of alternative structures like peer or step-ahead mentoring. Studies have shown that different mentoring types can vary in effectiveness concerning protégés' satisfaction and perceived career success. Exploring these alternative models could provide a broader perspective on mentoring practices in Chinese workplaces.

Kandel, (2025) study investigated the roles of pay, promotion opportunities, and moral recognition in enhancing employee productivity. Kandel, Timilsina, and Basnet's (2025) study offers valuable insights into how compensation and recognition affect employee performance in Nepal's manufacturing sector. The study does not account for the roles of leadership styles and organizational culture in shaping the effectiveness of compensation and recognition strategies. Leadership approaches and the prevailing organizational culture can profoundly impact how incentives are perceived and their subsequent effect on performance. The finding that promotion opportunities did not significantly impact employee performance suggests potential issues with how these opportunities are perceived. Employees may view the promotion process as unfair or lacking transparency, which can undermine motivation. Investigating employees' perceptions of fairness in promotion practices could offer deeper insights into this dynamic.

Kostyuk, and Battisti, (2025) assessed effect of entrepreneurial mentoring on venture performance: a synthesis and conceptual model. Kostyuk and Battisti's (2025) study offers a comprehensive synthesis and conceptual model of the effects of entrepreneurial mentoring on venture performance. However, several areas warrant further exploration. In order to capture a moment in time of the mentoring impacts, the study mostly uses cross-sectional data. This method might not adequately take into consideration how mentoring relationships change over time and how they affect venture performance over the long run. Implementing longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how mentoring influences ventures over different developmental stages. While the study provides a generalized conceptual model, it may not sufficiently consider how contextual factors-such as industry-specific challenges, regional economic conditions, or cultural differences-moderate the relationship between mentoring and venture performance. The research focuses on traditional one-on-one mentoring relationships, potentially overlooking alternative models such as group mentoring, peer mentoring, or virtual mentoring. Exploring these diverse formats could reveal varying impacts on venture performance and offer a more nuanced understanding of effective mentoring practices in different contexts.

### 2.2.2 Succession Planning Programs

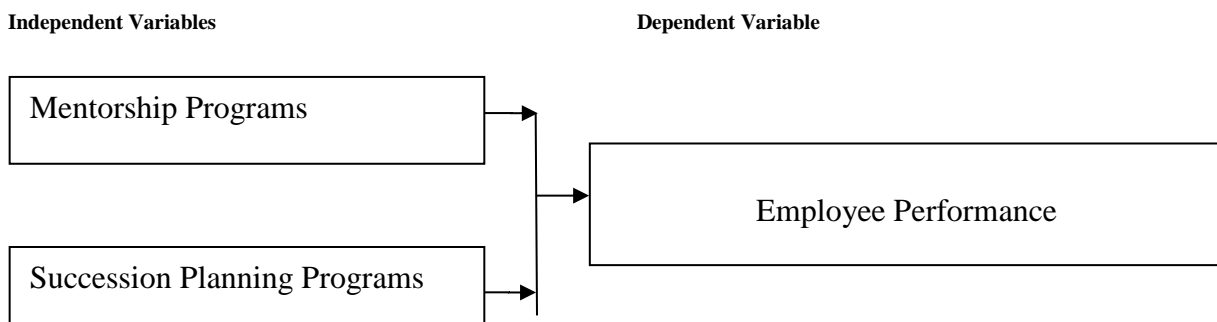
Khare (2025) conducted a study on integrating Sustainable HRM with the UNSDGs, emphasizing role of capacity building and skill development in facilitating Environmental, Social, and Governance implementation within corporate settings. The research primarily aimed to explore the transformative potential of Sustainable HRM in driving ethical business practices and environmental stewardship. The study employed a thorough review of existing literature and case studies to develop a framework that aligns HRM strategies with Sustainable Development Goals objectives through targeted capacity-building initiatives. It underscores the significance of equipping employees with the necessary skills to address global challenges while enhancing an organization's Environmental, Social, and Governance performance. By adopting sustainable human resource management practices, businesses can foster a culture of responsible corporate behavior, strengthen long-term resilience, and improve financial sustainability.

While the study contributes valuable insights to the existing body of knowledge, it acknowledges the need for empirical validation of the proposed frameworks. Future research could explore real-world case studies or longitudinal analyses to assess the practical impact of integrating Sustainable Human Resource Management with Sustainable Development Goals in different organizational contexts. There is a gap in understanding how these strategies can be adapted to industry-specific and regional requirements. Investigating how Sustainable Human Resource Management practices can be customized to align with local economic, cultural, and regulatory environments would offer valuable perspectives for businesses seeking to enhance their sustainability efforts (Warui and Karanja, 2024).

Bhalla (2025) explore how small and medium enterprises can enhance their competitiveness and sustainability by integrating smart technologies with effective talent management strategies. Their study highlights the transformative potential of technologies optimizing business operations, driving innovation, and elevating customer experiences. At the same time, they underscore the necessity of attracting, developing, and retaining a skilled workforce capable of leveraging these advanced tools. The discussion is enriched with real-world case studies and practical strategies that small and medium enterprises can implement to navigate the evolving digital landscape. However, the study does not explicitly outline the research methodology, present specific empirical findings, or identify clear research gaps. A more in-depth examination of the complete chapter would be required to gain a comprehensive understanding of these critical aspects.

In Lagos State, Nigeria, Olajide-Arise and Akinsanya (2023) study used a survey design and simple random sampling technique with responses from 276 diverse participants through administrated questionnaires and descriptive statistics. The findings reveal consensus among participants on the importance of bench strength for productivity and stability. There is recognition that a clear career path motivates employees, while the leadership pipeline contributes to productivity. Common factors contributing to firm performance include goal alignment, internal processes, growth strategies, and organizational structure. The analysis of participant demographics provides valuable context, revealing potential influences on responses. One main gap in the study by Olajide-Arise & Akinsanya is the lack of a comparative analysis across different industry sectors. The study focuses solely on manufacturing companies, which limits the generalizability of its findings to other industries such as finance, technology, or services. Different sectors may have distinct succession planning challenges and impacts on firm performance, and a broader comparative approach could provide more comprehensive insights.

**Figure 1: Conceptual Framework**



**Table 1: Operationalization of the Variables**

Variable	Indicators	Measurement Scale	Tools of Analysis
<b>Mentorship Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mentor-Mentee engagement rate</li> <li>• Mentee development skills</li> <li>• Career Progression of Mentees</li> <li>• Mentee Satisfaction and feedback</li> <li>• Retention &amp; engagement</li> </ul>	Ordinal	Descriptive and inferential analysis
<b>Succession Planning Programs</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership pipeline readiness</li> <li>• Talent retention and career development</li> <li>• Internal promotion opportunities</li> <li>• Timeliness in filling key positions</li> <li>• Employee participation in development programs</li> </ul>	Ordinal	Descriptive and inferential analysis

### 3.0 METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design

The use of descriptive research design was adopted. A descriptive study design is a non-experimental technique for methodically describing a population, circumstance, or phenomena. Instead of addressing the "why" or "how" of a research challenge, it concentrates on providing answers to the "what." Using this design, data is gathered, examined and presented to assist clearly illustrate the state of a subject or problem at the moment without changing any variables (Gamage, 2025).

#### 3.2 Target Population

This comprises a comprehensive list of all items, people, or entities from which a researcher can gather information (Sekaran and Bougie, 2013). A total of 195 employees from Serena Hotel Nairobi was our target population.

#### 3.3 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sampling technique refers to the process of selecting individuals who took part in a study (Saunders, 2024). This research employed a stratified random sampling approach to ensure that all relevant groups within the target population were adequately represented. By applying this method, the study was able to enhance the likelihood of capturing a broad range of respondents and improving the representativeness of the findings. To determine the appropriate sample size of 66 respondents, the formula proposed by Nassiuma (2017) was applied.

#### 3.4 Instruments

Questionnaires, which are organized list of inquiries intended to elicit data from participants for studies, polls, or evaluations were adopted to collect data. A questionnaire's goal is to collect accurate and pertinent information on a particular subject while maintaining consistency and making analysis simple (Bryman, 2016).

#### 3.5 Pilot Study

A total of 20 respondents, from the Boma Hotel, Nairobi participated in the pilot study. The researcher checked content validity to determine whether the questionnaire covered all aspects of the concept or construct being studied. Construct validity was checked to assess whether the questionnaire truly measures the theoretical construct it was intended to measure.

##### 3.5.1 Validity Test

The validity of an instrument determines how well it measures what it is intended to measure. To determine whether the instrument is more accurate in gauging the degree of correctness or soundness of the concepts presented in the research tool and whether it is relevant, expert judgment was employed.

### 3.5.2 Reliability Test

When a research tool consistently yields consistent and reproducible results, it is said to be reliable. It gauges how well a test or tool produces consistent results when used repeatedly under the same circumstances. Cronbach's alpha, which measures internal consistency is one generally used technique for evaluating reliability. To guarantee the dependability of an instrument, a reliability coefficient with a range of 0 to 1 and a threshold of 0.7 or higher is typically regarded as appropriate (Taber, 2017).

### 3.6 Data Analysis and Presentation

The study adopted a quantitative approach in data analysis. Data was coded and validated using Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 26. Subsequent analysis involved the application of descriptive, inferential, and frequency-based techniques. Inferential analysis was conducted through both regression and correlation tests, while descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were employed to explore relationships among the study variables. The results of the analysis were presented in tabular form for clarity and ease of interpretation.

### 3.8 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations addressed in this study included ensuring participants' privacy, obtaining informed consent, maintaining anonymity and confidentiality and guaranteeing voluntary participation.

## 4.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presented the study findings, beginning with the response rate of the participants and the reliability of the research instruments. The results were displayed in tables using frequencies and percentages for clarity. Furthermore, the findings were compared with the existing literature to determine whether they aligned with or diverged from the conclusions of other scholars. The chapter also highlighted the limitations encountered during the research process and concluded with a summary of the key points.

**Table 2: Reliability Test Analysis**

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Number of Items considered
Mentorship Programs	0.875	5
Succession Planning Program	0.796	5
Employee Performance	0.789	5

A pilot study involving 10% of the total respondents was carried out to examine the validity and reliability of the research instrument. The internal consistency of the questionnaire was measured using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient ( $\alpha$ ), a commonly applied statistic that evaluates the degree of correlation among items in a scale (Taber, 2018). Consistent with established methodological guidelines, an alpha value of 0.70 and above is generally regarded as acceptable; values above 0.80 reflect strong reliability, while those exceeding 0.90 indicate a very high level of reliability.

**Table 3: Response Rate Analysis**

Description	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Sampled Population	66	100.00
Questionnaires Returned	63	95.45
Valid (Correctly Filled) Questionnaires	62	93.93
Invalid/Incomplete Questionnaires (Excluded)	1	2

From the targeted sample of 66 respondents, 63 completed questionnaires were received, yielding a response rate of 95.45%. After data coding and cleaning, 62 questionnaires were found to be correctly filled, representing 93.94% of the sampled population. This high response and usable rate is considered excellent for quantitative research and ensures the validity of the subsequent analysis (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2019). Data cleaning is a critical step in the research process to eliminate incomplete or inaccurate responses, thus improving the accuracy and credibility of the results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**Table 4 Mentorship Programs**

	SA	A	N	D	SD
To what extent do you agree that regular interactions with your mentor have positively influenced your professional growth	58.6	18.8	4.3	10.2	8.1
Effective has the mentorship program been in enhancing your leadership and problem-solving skills	69.4	19.4	2.7	3.8	4.8
Since participating in the mentorship program, employees have experienced career growth in terms of promotions, new responsibilities or skill advancement	63.4	18..8	8.1	8.1	1.6
Employees are satisfied with the support and guidance provided by your mentor throughout the program	71.5	11.8	7.0	6.5	3.2
Participation in the mentorship program has influenced decision making process and employees have remain committed to the organization	62.4	18.3	5.4	8.1	5.9

The results of the survey indicate overwhelmingly positive perceptions of the mentorship program among employees at Serena Hotel. Out of 186 respondents, 77.4% (35 agreeing and 109 strongly agreeing) acknowledged that regular interactions with their mentors positively influenced their professional growth. Only a small portion, 18.3%, disagreed or remained neutral. This high level of agreement suggests that mentorship has been instrumental in supporting career development and guiding employees through professional challenges. When asked whether the mentorship program enhanced leadership and problem-solving skills, 88.8% (36 agreeing and 129 strongly agreeing) responded affirmatively, indicating that the program has been effective in cultivating essential soft skills needed in the dynamic hospitality sector. Similarly, career growth outcomes such as promotions and new responsibilities were acknowledged by 82.2% of participants, demonstrating that mentorship has had tangible impacts on upward mobility and skills acquisition. Furthermore, the satisfaction with mentor support was particularly strong, with 83.3% of respondents expressing agreement or strong agreement. This suggests that mentors are not only accessible but also offer quality guidance that is perceived as valuable and consistent. In terms of organizational commitment, 80.7% of participants agreed that the mentorship program positively influenced their decision-making and loyalty to the hotel.

**Table 5 Succession Planning Programs**

	SA	A	N	D	SD	The
Serena Hotel effectively retains top talent by providing a supportive work environment and career growth opportunities	67.2	10.2	7.0	10.2	5.4	
The hotel has a strong pipeline of employees who are prepared to take on leadership roles when needed	76.3	9.1	4.3	7.5	2.7	
Employee actively participates in employee development programs and training sessions provided by my organization	72.1	14.0	6.5	5.9	1.1	
Serena Hotel effectively retains top talent by providing a supportive work environment and career growth opportunities	67.5	10.2	7.0	10.2	5.4	
Employee actively participates in employee development programs and training sessions provided by my organization	72.6	14.0	6.5	5.9	1.1	

findings from the Likert scale responses demonstrate a strong relationship between succession planning practices and employee performance at Serena Hotel. On the statement that the hotel effectively retains top talent by providing a supportive work environment and career growth opportunities, (67.2%) strongly agreed and (10.2%) agreed. This indicates that Serena Hotel's retention strategies, which emphasize a good working environment and avenues for career advancement, play a crucial role in motivating employees and minimizing turnover. Only a small proportion of respondents expressed neutrality (7.0%) or disagreement (15.6% combined for disagree and strongly disagree), suggesting that the perception of effective talent retention is widely shared among staff. Similarly, the statement that the hotel has a strong pipeline of employees prepared to take on leadership roles when needed attracted overwhelming support, with 76.3% strongly agreeing and 9.1% agreeing. This implies that succession planning at Serena Hotel has been effectively institutionalized, ensuring leadership continuity and minimizing disruptions in operations. Very few respondents disagreed (10.2% combined), highlighting that leadership readiness is one of the hotel's strengths. Such a robust pipeline suggests that the hotel invests significantly in grooming internal talent for higher responsibilities, thereby enhancing overall organizational performance. On employee participation in development programs



and training sessions, the results were also very positive, with 72.1% strongly agreeing and 14.0% agreeing that they actively engage in such initiatives. Only a small fraction remained neutral (6.5%) or disagreed (7.0% combined). This finding underscores importance Serena Hotel places on continuous learning and professional development. Participation in training programs further strengthens the succession planning process by preparing employees for career progression and leadership roles. Taken together, these results highlight that succession planning practices at Serena Hotel are perceived positively by employees, particularly in terms of talent retention, leadership pipeline development & employee engagement in training. These practices contribute significantly to improved employee performance, as staff feel supported, valued, and prepared for future responsibilities. The relatively small percentages of neutral or dissenting responses indicate that while the system is largely effective, there may be isolated gaps that management could address to ensure inclusivity and consistency in succession planning strategies.

**Table 6: Model Summary**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.617 <sup>a</sup>	.381	.367	3.33932

a. Predictors: (Constant), , Mentorship Programs, Succession Planning Program

The regression model summary offers useful insights into the link between leadership development programs and employee performance at Serena Hotel. The correlation coefficient (R) of 0.617 suggests a moderate to strong positive association between the independent variables, mentorship programs and succession planning and the dependent variable, employee performance. This finding implies that enhancing these leadership initiatives is likely to result in noticeable improvements in employee performance. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) of 0.381 indicates that approximately 38.1% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the two leadership development components under study. While this demonstrates a meaningful effect, it also shows that 61.9% of the variation is influenced by other factors not captured in the model. The adjusted  $R^2$  value of 0.367 refines this estimate by accounting for the number of predictors, thereby providing a more reliable measure of the model's explanatory power. This suggests that even after taking into consideration the model's complexity, these leadership initiatives continue to account for 36.7% of the variation in employee performance, highlighting the importance of the programs being examined.

The standard error of the estimate was 3.33932, suggesting that the model's predicted values of employee performance differ from the actual observed values by an average of about 3.34 units. While this represents some level of prediction error, it is acceptable within the context of social science research, where human behaviour is influenced by multiple interacting variables. Overall, the model suggests that leadership development programs play a substantial role in enhancing employee performance at Serena Hotel, supporting the investment in such initiatives as a strategic approach to improving organizational outcomes.

**Table 7: Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)**

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1241.293	4	310.323	27.829	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	2018.347	181	11.151		
	Total	3259.640	185			

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

b. Predictors: (Constant), Mentorship Programs, Succession Planning Program

The regression results presented in the ANOVA table provide valuable insights into the significance and explanatory strength of the model assessing the relationship between leadership development programs and employee performance at Serena Hotel. The Regression Sum of Squares, valued at 1241.293, reflects the proportion of variation in employee performance explained by the independent variables, mentorship programs and succession planning. Compared to the Total Sum of Squares of 3259.640, this indicates that the model accounts for a considerable share of the observed variation in performance. Conversely, the Residual Sum of Squares of 2018.347 represents the unexplained variation, attributable to other factors outside the model. With 4 degrees of freedom for regression and 181 for residuals, the corresponding mean squares are 310.323 for regression and 11.151 for residuals. The resulting F-statistic of 27.829 is relatively high, demonstrating that the variation explained by the model is significantly greater than the unexplained variation. The associated significance value (Sig. = 0.000) falls well below the 0.05 threshold, confirming that the overall model is statistically significant and provides strong evidence of a meaningful relationship between leadership development initiatives and employee performance. This means that the relationship between the leadership development programs and employee performance is highly statistically significant, and there is a very low probability that these results occurred by chance.

**Table 8: Regression Coefficient**

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	9.236	2.282		4.047	.000
	Mentorship Programs	.118	.064	.111	1.846	.066
	Succession Planning Program	-.467	.180	-.412	-2.595	.010

a. Dependent Variable: Employee Performance

The regression coefficients table provides a detailed view of how each leadership development program individually contributes to employee performance at Serena Hotel, controlling for the others. The constant (intercept) value is 9.236, which suggests that when all the independent variables-Mentorship Programs and Succession Planning Program are held at zero, the baseline level of employee performance would be 9.236. This forms the starting point of the model before accounting for the influence of the predictors.

The Mentorship Programs variable shows a positive coefficient of 0.118, indicating a small positive impact on employee performance. However, the p-value of 0.066 suggests that this result is not statistically significant at the 0.05 level, though it is marginally close. With a Beta of 0.111, mentorship still appears to have a modest positive effect and might yield stronger results if enhanced or better aligned with employee needs.

The Succession Planning Program also shows a negative coefficient of -0.467 and is statistically significant with a p-value of 0.010. This result suggests that, as implemented, succession planning may currently not be producing the intended benefits for employee performance. It could point to gaps in communication, fairness, or clarity of the succession process, potentially demotivating staff who may feel overlooked or uncertain about advancement. In conclusion, this model reveals that, succession planning currently show unexpected negative effects, indicating areas that may require re-evaluation and redesign. Mentorship programs appear promising but may need improvement to achieve statistically significant impact. These insights are crucial for refining leadership development strategies to better support employee growth and organization performance.

## Conclusion

This study examined the effect of leadership development programs on employee performance, focusing on Serena Hotel, Nairobi. In the hospitality sector, where service delivery depends heavily on employee motivation and effective team management, leadership development plays a critical role. The research specifically assessed mentorship programs and succession planning as structured initiatives within the organization. Findings revealed that mentorship was widely accepted by employees, with 88.8% acknowledging its contribution to leadership and problem-solving skills. However, regression analysis indicated only a positive but statistically insignificant effect on performance, suggesting possible gaps in consistency or program structure. Similarly, while 76.3% of employees recognized the existence of a leadership pipeline through succession planning, results showed a statistically significant negative effect on performance, pointing to possible flaws in transparency, fairness, or implementation. Overall, the study highlights that while leadership development initiatives are vital for growth; their success depends on proper design, delivery, and employee perception. Succession planning appeared to hinder performance when poorly executed. These findings underscore the need for organizations in the hospitality industry to continually refine their leadership development strategies to ensure they support both employee growth and organizational objectives.

## Recommendations

The negative perception of the succession planning process indicates a need for greater transparency and fairness. Management should involve employees in succession discussions, clarify criteria for advancement, and communicate openly about potential career pathways to reduce mistrust and demotivation. To enhance the effectiveness of mentorship, a structured approach is recommended. Clearly defined goals, regular check-ins, and formal training for mentors can help mentees derive more value from these relationships. Matching mentors and mentees based on goals or compatibility could also improve outcomes.

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