

The tourism and hospitality career progression pathway

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Abstract

Purpose – The aim of this study was to conduct a comprehensive investigation into declining and emerging occupations and job titles and to develop a national career progression pathway for the tourism and hospitality (T&H) sector.

Design/methodology/approach – Anchored on the Social Cognitive Career Theory, this study used face to face in-depth interviews of 33 industry stakeholders: policymakers, trade association, training providers and beneficiaries (T&H).

Findings – The finding reveals that only the “watchman” occupation was identified as the declining job while majority of the emerging jobs were more related to information technology and environmental occupations (website designers, digital marketers, data analysts, hygienists, and safety and hazard experts).

Practical implications – The findings provide a valuable signal for the growing number of jobs in security services, hygiene and information technology-oriented occupations, which the Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture including practitioners including HR directors and general managers should respond timely to and to these growing needs in order to remain competitive in the sector.

Originality/value – This is the first study in context that responded to a call by industry players to fill in a practical knowledge gap in examining declining and emerging jobs and job titles in the T&H sector. The study provides vocational insights into mapping the entry level requirements for the jobs allied with occupations in the national technical and vocational educational training qualifications framework of Ghana at the national level.

Keywords Career progression pathway, Declining occupation, Emerging occupation, Job titles, Social cognitive career theory, Tourism and hospitality

Paper type Research paper

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A career development path provides employees with an ongoing mechanism to enhance their skills and knowledge that can lead to mastery of their current jobs, promotions and transfers to new or different positions – Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2017, p. 12).

Employability and career development in the tourism and hospitality (T&H) industry has become the key focus for researchers and practitioners, particularly for hotels, restaurants, amusement parks, cruises, events, casinos, parks, entertainment and other tourism-related services (Calinaud, Kokkranikal, & Gebbels, 2021). To this end, employers in the hospitality and tourism sector are directing efforts toward recruiting and selecting industry-specific talents and candidates for jobs in the sector to avert underperformance and turnover rates (Aicher, Buning, & Newland, 2020; Calinaud *et al.*, 2021; Cassel, Thulemark, & Duncan, 2018). The barriers to career development in the T&H industry and hence their mobility in the industry are evident, and have been in the apparent frame of attention (Cassel *et al.*, 2018). For example, Cassel *et al.* (2018) noted that in Sweden, the supply of labour and supply of competence are critical issues facing the sector. Similarly, due to the industry's poor reputation for good jobs, attracting and retaining staff worldwide has always been a challenge (Barron, Maxwell, Broadbridge, & Ogden, 2007; Baum, 2015). Mobility in the T&H industry is particularly alarming because the education levels in the sector are low, the entrance barriers are relatively low compared to other industries, remunerations are low, and it is quite easy to change jobs in the sector because most jobs are mostly temporary, and sometimes seasonal (Hemdi & Nasurdin, 2006). These staff mobility problems pose serious challenges to career development and overall growth of the sector. A few studies have attempted to address the mobility, turnover and career pathway problems in the T&H industry. These studies, however, have largely been conducted in advanced economy contexts (see: Cassel *et al.*, 2018; Chang & Tse, 2015), with set limitations in terms of methodology, theory and scope. This issue presents an apparent evidence gap and practice-knowledge gap. A different study context, such as a developing country context, presents a rare opportunity to investigate career pathways pertinent to the local T&H industry.

According to TIME's 2021 world's greatest places list, Accra (capital of Ghana) is the Number 1 destination in Africa for tourists (Oluwole, 2022). In spite of this gain, Ghana's T&H industry has faced major challenges of fragmented and uncoordinated career pathway progressions that undermine the development of the sector. This suggests the inability of the T&H sector to comprehensively define the occupations in the industry. For example, Ghanaian graduates who enter the T&H labor market are not perfectly aligned and suited to the requirements of the labor market. The T&H labor market, as it is today, is having growth problems. A resource constrained post-COVID-19 scenario unsurprisingly poses an existential threat – calling for a proper retooling and skill-set enhancement for industry players. Currently, an overview of Ghana's T&H industry indicates that tourism is regarded as the fourth income generating sector after gold, cocoa and oil (MOTAC, 2019). In 2018, the industry contributed US\$ 1,947.5 million, which was an increase of 4.9% of Ghana's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (MOTAC, 2019). A report of the World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) (2017) estimates that the sector's contribution to Ghana's GDP will increase by 4.2% to US\$ 4,522.3 million by 2028. In terms of employment, the industry has offered approximately 692,000 direct and indirect jobs, which represented 5.3% of the total national employments in 2017 (WTTC, 2017). This figure is estimated to grow to 807,000 jobs by 2028 (WTTC, 2017).

Although studies in the advanced economies (Murry, Elliot, Simmonds, Madeley, & Taller, 2017; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Tolkach & Tung, 2019; Whitelaw, 2010) have evidenced the importance of labor related and career progressions within the T&H literature, the case of Ghana's career pathway progression is yet to be explored. According to the

literature (Hsu, Xiao, & Chen, 2017; Tolkach & Tung, 2019), the growth of the T&H sector depends on smart recruitment, effective management of talents and career progression. The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive investigation into declining and emerging occupations and job titles as a response to a call by practitioners (ILO, 2020) and researchers to fill a practical knowledge gap in the Ghanaian T&H sector. This study was guided by three specific objectives to fill a practical gap in the T&H literature:

- (1) to examine existing, declining and emerging occupations in the Ghanaian tourism and hospitality sector;
- (2) to examine the entry level requirements for the jobs associated with the occupations in the sector in accordance with the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training Qualification Framework (NTVETQF); and
- (3) to develop national career pathways for possible T&H job progressions from lower to higher qualifications.

Indeed, investigations of this nature within the tourism literature are important, given the critical roles (income earner, employment generation, foreign exchange earner and investment attracter) the sector plays in the development of any given economy. It is, therefore, imperative to critically examine the status quo, and offer practical yet crucial solutions to policymakers and practitioners. There is also the need to extend our understanding of the Social Cognitive Career Theory (SCCT).

The study contributes to the growing literature on career development in the T&H in three ways. First, this study is among the first to develop a career map and anticipation structure for the T&H industry to fill an evidence gap. Second, the study contributes to the practice-knowledge gap in the literature by heeding to ILO and researchers' calls to solve the turnover, career mismatch (skills anticipation and mismatch), career progression and job satisfaction problems in the T&H industry (Cassel *et al.*, 2018; ILO, 2020). Third, the novelty of the study is hinged on three theoretical contributions. First, the SCCT is extended and applied to fit career development in the T&H sector. Previously, self-efficacy or individual behavior was a major consideration in personal career development. However, in today's dynamic and competitive labor market, the T&H job environment is largely influenced by the national career paths, which is an extension of the SCCT theory. Second, the study reveals that self-efficacy may be enhanced when individuals are subjected to training in specific career pathways. Lastly, the SCCT has been used extensively at the personal and organizational levels. This study attempts to apply the theory to a national career pathway to fully harness the triadic reciprocity of person, behavior and context.

The study is structured in the following ways. First, we present a review of the existing literature on career progression in T&H. Next, we present the data collection and data analysis and then the main findings, discussion, limitation and future research direction. Finally, we present the conclusions and implications of the study.

Literature review

The social cognitive career theory (SCCT)

In general, career theories are usually contingent on environmental, economic and social factors. Hitherto career paths and development were structured by organizations, which were fundamentally a linear progression through the career stages (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001). Earlier, employee success was defined by promotions, allowances, increments and job stability. Traditionally, organizational careers have been conceptualized as linear trajectories where employees progress in their careers in a linear hierarchical structure within the organization. This lifespan development model, which contrasts the "boundaryless career"

model, discusses steady states and linear careers marked by a common work role for life and upward mobility (Arthur & Rousseau, 2001; Eby, Butts, & Lockwood, 2003; Marler, Woodard Barringer, & Milkovich, 2002; Miller & Form, 1951). Given today's fast-paced and volatile organizational environment, scholars are beginning to put together new career development models and theories that explain the dynamic and changing nature of careers in diverse sectors, including the T&H sector.

There has been considerable vitality evident in career development research in the past 40 years. At its inception, Bandura (1986) paved the way by expanding his research on the Social Learning Theory (SLT) to Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). The SCT posits that employees (for example, individuals in the T&H sector) learn through a social complex environment with a dynamic and reciprocal interaction of the individual, environment and behavior. The theory lays emphasis on social influence and its accompanying internal and external social reinforcements. Previous fundamental and related theories have been refined and reconceptualized, and expanded (Holland, 1985; Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994; Super, 1980). As a result, several novel theoretical perspectives have been introduced (Hackett, Lent, & Greenhaus, 1991). The SCCT, an extension of the SCT in the context of career development, helps to "(a) bring together conceptually related constructs (e.g. self-concept, self-efficacy), (b) more fully explain outcomes that are common to a number of career theories (e.g. satisfaction, stability), and (c) account for the relations among seemingly diverse constructs (e.g. self-efficacy, interests, abilities, needs)" (Hackett & Lent, 1992, p. 443).

The SCT is predominantly hinged on the concept of triadic reciprocity. In this model, (1) observable behavior or responses depicted in the forms of actions; (2) personal attributes and physical attributes; and (3) external environment, all work together as interlocking mechanisms that affect each other bidirectionally (Bandura, 1986). Personal attributes in the SCT are linked with a variety of self-reflective, vicarious, self-regulatory and cognitive processes (Bandura, 1986). Each of these mechanisms are assumed to play a vital role in guiding psychosocial functioning, but goal representations, outcome expectations and self-efficacy beliefs are particularly important in the SCCT. The SCCT of career development focuses heavily on the mechanism of personal agency (i.e. self-efficacy appraisals). Self-efficacy refers to "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performances" (Bandura, 1986, p. 391). Specifically, self-efficacy percepts are considered to be responsible for a person's emotional reactions, choice of activities, choice of environment, thought patterns, expenditure and career paths. These personal attributes or beliefs are dynamic, not static, and may be context specific. Together, *person, behavior and context*, affect each other bidirectionally in the SCCT of career development (Hackett & Lent, 1992).

Individuals' environment exposes them to different activities and career paths from childhood to adolescence. These observed experiences expose them to various organizational tasks. Apart from the exposure from this environment, they are differentially strengthened to pursue certain selected activities in which they may excel, thereby receiving the appropriate reward. In other words, people pick career choices in which they view themselves as most efficacious (Lent, Brown, & Hackett, 1994). In the context of the T&H industry, career options are selected by people based on their self-efficacy, particularly personal behavior or traits they exhibit, and the environment in which they find themselves. The application of the SCCT in the T&H sector influences our thoughts in three ways:

First, the T&H job environment is largely influenced by the national career paths available to people. This is because people find it easier applying and selecting jobs that are within their competency areas once the national career pathway has predefined roles. The national career pathways consequently influence individual choice. For example, a room attendant who understands the various career paths available to him/her may develop interest and work (through education and training) toward becoming an interior décor

designer. Second, outcome expectations – an attribute of self-efficacy, may be enhanced when individuals are subjected to training in specific career pathways. Once individuals are taken through job specific trainings, they develop more realistic expectations concerning the prediction of their next job or promotion. This systematic approach to expectation enhances self-efficacy of employees who, in turn, grow more confident in the respective job roles, which translates into better performance. Third, the SCCT has been used extensively at the personal and organizational levels. This study attempts to apply the theory to a national career pathway to fully harness the *triadic reciprocity (person, behavior and context)*. The national career pathway presents a unique opportunity to understand how unique individuals reach specific career contexts, considering the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute a particular course of action required to achieve the desired work outcomes in the T&H sector.

Career progression in tourism and hospitality

The existing literature (Amissah, Mensah, Mensah, & Gamor, 2020; Armoo & Neequaye, 2014; DeMicco & Forgia, 2020; McGinley & Martinez, 2018; Murry *et al.*, 2017; Kim, Chun, & Petrick, 2009; Tolkach & Tung, 2019; Weber & Ladkin, 2008) has indicated the importance of career progression as a catalyst for human development in the T&H industry. Tolkach and Tung (2019) noted that the industry depends on recruitment and employee career progression. This is also considered relevant in human capital development. Usually, workers are optimistic about career progression in their lifetime. Sheu *et al.* (2010) examine the significant role employees' choice goal plays in the social cognitive career theory context. It was found that choice goal significantly explains self-efficacy and outcome expectations of employees. This finding provides the understanding that people develop goals to pursue academic and career relevant programs that are in-line with their interest, as well as their self-efficacy and outcome expectation. From the organization's point of view, the provision of career progression pathways offers opportunities for employees to have a clear direction and become managers of their own career paths, and motivates them to work hard in achieving higher positions. In addition, clear and concise career pathways may enable employees to choose a path that correlates with their interest and abilities or realign their career path. Using data from the Ghanaian T&H sector, Armoo and Neequaye (2014) found that industry–person congeniality, social benefit factors, opportunity for professional development and job competitiveness were crucial in determining Ghanaian students' choice of career options. This finding referenced that occupational development is a significant factor in explaining choice of career options in the T&H sector. On the other hand, the career literature has indicated some related human resource management elements such as employee competency behavior, employee bonding, citizenship behavior, career decisions and how they affect career progression (Amissah *et al.*, 2020; Chang & Tse, 2015). Yoganathan, Osburg and Bartkowski's (2021) study on employee competency in the tourism sector established that social media competency increases bonding. Competency helps employees to build better and broader connection with others, which enhances bonding in the workplace. This signifies that when bonding exists in an organization, workers are more likely to protect and defend their organizational reputation. In addition, Shehawy (2017) investigated how the tourism education process, tourism employability and job competitiveness using the Egyptian tourism data. The findings showed that there are significant relationships that exist between tourism learning outcome and other indicators (tourism curriculum mapping, design measurements and employability competitiveness). Earlier studies (See: Hall, 2011; Voight & Laing, 2010) have also identified the importance of fertility and reproductive tourism, which are directly connected to productivity of the labor. The recent study of Elbaz, Mathew, Maher, Onjewu and Shehawy (2021) on motherhood fertility found that motherhood desire has a positive influence on attitude, subjective norm and female tourists' revisit intentions and actual behavior. Again, it is important to note that fertility exerts a negative influence on

workforce participation when women have a newborn baby. This has a decreased effect on workforce participation for women who have just become mothers, which has implications for female workers' careers in the T&H sector.

The recent literature defined career progression pathways as a sequence of positions, which might be occupied by workers from the junior to the senior level in any given organization (Gebbers, 2019; Tolkach & Tung, 2019). In the context of this research, the career progression pathway is contextualized as a step-by-step development of employees' career stages, from a lower to a higher rank in T&H organizations or between organizations with similar professions or specialization. This study's definition highlights the fact that the concept of career progression in the T&H study context implies employees will remain at the same job position or make a calculated effort to move up the occupational ladder. O'Leary and Deegan (2005), using data from the career progression of Irish T&H context, found that there is a significant dropout of workers in the T&H sector due to poor remuneration and unfavorable working hours. Similarly, Hakim's (2020) study provided evidence that career development significantly influenced organizational commitment of employees in the tourism sector. The above empirical findings emphasize the importance of career progression in the T&H industry as a catalyst for the sector's development.

Research is still lacking in developing a national career progression pathway for the T&H workforce within the Ghanaian perspective. Hence, it is opportune to conduct a comprehensive career progression pathway assessment, and map occupations and their respective job titles for the Ghanaian T&H sector, which has been neglected in the career progression literature. In all, we present a literature matrix (see: Table 1), which demonstrates how extant studies have investigated career progression in different research contexts.

Research methodology

The focus of this study was to gather primary qualitative data from policymakers, T&H trade related associations, training providers and beneficiaries (T&H businesses). Note that the training providers were selected across the entire country while policymakers, trade associations and beneficiaries were selected in Accra, the capital city of Ghana. We used the purposive sampling method to select the participants to answer questions relating to the national framework that regulates T&H jobs including technical and vocational jobs, qualification requirements or guidelines and possible career progression. In all, this study used in-depth interviews of 33 industry stakeholders (interviewees) out of the 35 participants sampled earlier through face-to-face and telephone interviews to collect data that focused on unearthing the T&H occupations (existing, declining and emerging) and job titles, and further developed occupational pathways' progression taking into consideration all the "eight-levels" of the NTVETQF (See: Figure 1). We followed the recommendation of Saunders *et al.* (2018) to use the strategy gathering rich (quality) and thick (quantitative) data to achieve data saturation and rigor. The sample size of 33 was determined by achieving data saturation, and there was an agreement between the researchers to halt recruiting more interviewees. Table 2 shows the detailed sampled summary of the number of interviewees used for this study and their respective institutions. Purposively, this study interviewed participants from the above institutions on the basis of their deep understanding of the industry.

In this study, the job title is regarded as a rank or position of an employee, while occupation is the task or core function performed by an employee. Following Creswell's (2014) definition, an in-depth interview is a technique designed to elicit information from an interviewee's perspective on a research topic. The key industry players or stakeholders interviewed for this study were categorized into four groups based on the final outcome of the study where a comprehensive career progression pathway was to be mapped in consultation with the industry players. The categories include policymakers (government ministries,

Table 1.
Compilations of the
relevant literature used
for this study

Author/year	Objective	Methodologies	Key findings	Implications
Yoganathan et al. (2021)	To links employees' social media competence to an increase in online brand citizenship behavior and reduction in feelings of psychological contract violation toward their employer's brand	A quantitative online survey using Qualtrics in collection of data from 309 participants in the UK. The mediation analysis utilizing the Haynes Process macro	The result showed that social media competence increases bonding. Also bonding of country increases employee online brand citizenship, while social media competence does not have a statistically significant indirect effect on online brand citizenship behavior via bridging.	Social media practitioners and HR need to provide appropriate training in order to achieve competitive advantage through employees protecting their organizational reputations in an increasingly digitalized environment
Rogerson (2016)	To examine the nature of tourism development and flows that are occurring outside South African cities	A conceptual study that adopted a descriptive analysis of secondary data from Global Insight Tourism (2001 to 2012) using average and percent	Findings reveal that whereas tourism destinations outside the cities account for 43.5% of total tourism trips, these areas capture only 31% of total tourism spending. Furthering tourism flows outside the cities are strongly dominated by domestic rather than international travelers	The study provides implications for local tourism authorities to highlight the particular need for policy innovation in respect of maximizing the opportunities from the critical mass of domestic Visiting Friends and Relatives (VFR) travelers in much of small town and rural South Africa
Shehawy (2017)	To explore quality of tourism educational process on tourism employability and job competitiveness	A cross-sectional data from 504 Egyptians (tourism academic staff and employees) using the SEM to test H related hypotheses	Findings show a significant relationship between tourism learning outcomes and other indicators (tourism curriculum mapping design measurements, employability competitiveness, etc.)	Government, tourism related businesses, institutions and practitioners must pay attention to enrich the needed knowledge, experience and practical skills in the tourism employment fields
Sheu et al. (2010)	To explain the factors that shape educational and vocational interests and choices	The study used meta-analytic path analyses to synthesize data (from 1981 to 2008) relevant to SCT's interest and tested the choice hypotheses	Findings showed that choice goals as being partially mediated by self-efficacy and outcome expectations rather than producing only direct linkages to goals	HR practitioners and career professional to provide interventions that will help individuals secure new supports or harness existing ones that may facilitate goals indirectly by bolstering self-efficacy and outcome expectations of employees

(continued)

Author/year	Objective	Methodologies	Key findings	Implications
Elbaz <i>et al.</i> (2021)	To explore the relationship between participants' motherhood desire and travel intention and behavior through the mediating roles of attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control	A quantitative research method focusing on mediation analysis employing 138 females (questionnaires) utilizing SEM in testing the developed hypotheses	Findings manifested in three ways: motherhood desire has a positive influence on attitude, subjective norm and perceived behavior control; positive effect of TPB dimensions on actual behavior is subject to females' intention to visit Egypt for fertility tourism; and attitude partially mediates the link between motherhood, tourists' revisit intention and tourists' actual behavior	Managers and practitioners in Egypt's fertility treatment sector require cross-cultural competence. Also, visa to visit Egypt should be flexible or simplified for other nationalities in order to expand the fertility treatment market
Chang and Tse (2015)	To understand the initial career decisions of graduates from a hospitality and tourism management (HTM) program in Hong Kong	A mixed method of longitudinal data (2002 to 2010) and face to face interview were used. The ANOVA and the content analysis were utilized, respectively	Quantitative findings: More than half the graduates' first jobs were in HTM and that hospitality electives and industry-specific programs contributed to their choice of such employment. Qualitative findings: Compared with jobs in other sectors, HTM jobs pay significantly less	Managers and practitioners should design better HTM programs that will inspire more students to join the industry on graduation
O'Leary and Deegan (2005)	To investigate negative consumer-brand relationships by developing a "Brand Hate" concept	Applied a longitudinal data complimented with survey instrument on current and previous employments in the sector	The finding shows that there is a significant drop-out rate from employment in the tourism and hospitality industry in Ireland, which is particularly obvious among women. Further, the results reveal poor remuneration and unsuitable working hours as the major issues in need of redress	Government and tourism related agencies should assist in the provision of tourism and hospitality programs as well as tourism employers, particularly in an Irish context where there is an ongoing shortage of skilled workers in the sector

(continued)

Table 1.

Author/year	Objective	Methodologies	Key findings	Implications
Tolkach and Tung (2019)	To evaluate the career patterns and global mobility trajectories of hospitality and tourism graduates that are relevant for global knowledge and local talent management encountered by the hospitality and tourism industry in managing the labour challenges it faces presently and will face in the coming years	Social media network data, which is OPN using the Microsoft Power BI in creating a visualization of global mobility, and ANOVA and <i>t</i> -test were used for the quantitative dataset Secondary data adopted and using percentages in reporting the unemployment rate	The results highlighted a network of worldwide mobility from hospitality and tourism graduates of the five selected institutions The results showed that the Canadian hospitality and tourism industry is facing an ever-increasing labor demand shortage	Managers and practitioners should learn more on knowledge transfer and talent management that can be impacted by the global graduate movements. Next, educational institutions should consider internationalization of curriculum, staff and students to enhance global employment Policymakers, managers and practitioners should develop stronger organization cultures that align with employee needs
Murry <i>et al.</i> (2017)	To explore the challenges encountered by the hospitality and tourism industry in managing the labour challenges it faces presently and will face in the coming years	The paper draws on quantitative research with 2,620 managers working in four- and five-star hotels and first-class holiday villages in Antalya A conceptual study that uses the existing literature and experiences of expert articles on the subject matter	This research reveals that tourism managers are working in jobs that are appropriate to their field of interest The findings show that university graduates who focus on the intersections of hospitality to healthcare (H2H) will be rewarded with challenging and lucrative careers	The results provide evidence suggesting that employers need to manage their tourism workforce well. Further, tourism managers should plan their career and put them into action Hotel and hospitality business managers should offer industry internships with hands-on learning in the hospitals, healthcare and medical centers
Anafarta and Cizel (2003)	To examine the level of career planning, and what personal and organizational factors are affecting career development of hotel managers in Turkey			
DeMicco and Forgia (2020)	To examine how to create a satisfying experience for the patient/guest that can lead to long-lasting loyalty			
McGinley and Martinez (2018)	To investigate the effects of work-life conflict (WLC), actual and perceived progression or leave the industry altogether	A two-stage quantitative research data collection was done	In Study 1 the finding indicates that there is a positive relation between WLC and turnover among change intentions and career change intentions 2 job seekers (perceived managers) expect higher WLC in their future career	The study offers employers and managers and policymakers a clear career path progression to motivate and reduce labor turnover

(continued)

Author/year	Objective	Methodologies	Key findings	Implications
Weber and Larkin (2008)	To understand the background and strategy of lecturers teaching graduates to advance their career	An Internet quantitative survey of 342 respondents on career development employing the one-way ANOVA analysis	Findings show that there are statistical differences in perceptions for the importance of short-term career goals between academics from Europe versus North America	Junior academics should have sufficient appraisals and concrete strategies that will aid them in their career development in the sector
Atef and Al-Balushi (2017)	To assess receptiveness for tourism and hospitality as a career path among tourism students in Oman	Quantitative data were collected using the questionnaire, and analyzed using the <i>t</i> -test and ANOVA	The finding suggests that nearly 41% of the students will not continue working in tourism and hospitality for some time	The results provide universities and the tourism industry, including practitioners and manager, insights into better understanding of students' future employment intentions
Alagaraja and Arthur-Mensah (2013)	To explore trends and changes in technical vocational education and training (TVET) in Ghana	The study draws on a case study approach with in-depth interviews and analysis of archival records on TVET practices in Ghana	The study finds evidence that the TVET curriculum should enhance students' employability and reflect labor market needs	Human resource and development should research and identify ways to support training development and education. HRD professionals must tap into local, regional and national training systems such as TVET to develop and enhance skills needed for the sector
Amissah <i>et al.</i> (2020)	To explore students' perception of careers in the hospitality and tourism industry and their intention to pursue careers in the T&H sector	Quantitative data collected from 441 tourism and hospitality students utilizing <i>t</i> -test and ANOVA	Findings suggest that there is a statistically significant decrease in students' perceptions from important career factors to what they believe the industry will offer	The study offers that industry practitioners should work closely with academics and other stakeholders to establish a more favorable image of the industry by providing reliable and positive information when students are on internship programs with these hospitality and tourism establishments

Table 1.



Figure 1.
National TVET
qualifications
framework

departments and agencies), employer and trade associations (members of Ghana Tourism Federation (GHATOF)), training providers (hotel, tourism and catering training institutes, master craft persons and other relevant training institutions) and beneficiary partners (selected small, medium and large size tourism and hospitality companies/businesses).

In order to explore the research objectives in a consistent manner, the researchers developed a comprehensive interview guide including probing questions based on the three specific objectives proposed by the funding partners of the project, namely existing, declining and emerging jobs; entry qualifications; and possible career pathways development. All the participants responded to Question 1 to 6, and the remaining questions were stakeholder specific (see [Appendix](#)). First, the researchers presented a draft of the research instruments for this study to the industry players at a workshop where comments and suggestions were provided. Secondly, the revised questions were scrutinized by four tourism and hospitality experts from industry and academia appointed by the funding partners of the project.

Each participant was interviewed in English language by the researchers at an agreed location most convenient (e.g. offices and homes) for the interviewee. The interviews were conducted between October 9 and 16, 2020, using digital recorders, allowing for a word-by-word transcription of each interview that lasted approximately 40–65 minutes. A follow-up was done by phone for clarifications and more information when necessary. The transcriptions were analyzed using the qualitative content analysis to examine patterns in the occupations identified in the industry. We followed the recommendations made in the existing literature ([Mayring, 2000](#); [Schreier, 2012](#)) to conduct the content analysis for this study. First, we read the transcriptions over and over for content familiarity, keeping in mind the specific objectives of the study. Second, with the help of NVivo 12, we separately employed “in vivo coding”, which allows the researchers to derive codes from the actual words of the interviewees in the data itself. This form of coding is useful when the researcher interacts with the interviewees on particular issues. For example, we were interested in specific jobs and job titles in the Ghanaian T&H sector. Interestingly, the researchers individually coded the data in order to check whether we have obtained the same conclusions after reviewing the same data. This guarantees data validation, credibility, dependability and confirmability, which are considered as strategies for ensuring trustworthiness in qualitative

N ^o	Policymakers	Trade associations (GHATOF)	Training providers	Beneficiaries (tourism and hospitality businesses)
1	Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture	Ghana Progressive Hotels Association (GHAPRHA)	Seven public institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KNUST • UCC • GIMPA • HTU • ATU • KTU • HOTCATT 	Nine hospitality businesses including guest houses and Airbnb outlets (3), Star 1 and 2(3), 3–5 star (3)
2	Ministry of Education – Vocational Training Unit	Travel and Tourist Agents Association	Four private institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudential Solution • Galaxy College • Zenith University College 	Two tourism businesses including tour guide firm (1), and travel agent (1)
3	Ghana Tourism Authority	Chefs Association of Ghana	VTF/PRECEVID Vocational Training for Females/Presbyterian Center for Vocational Instructors' Development	
4	Ministry of Local Government	Ghana Tourism Society		HITT-SNV Ghana
5		African Travel Association (ATA) Ghana Chapter		
Total	4	6	11	12 <i>Grand total = 33 interviewees</i>

Note(s): KNUST: Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology
 UCC: University of Cape Coast
 GIMPA: Ghana Institute of Management and Public Administration
 HTU: Ho Technical University
 ATU: Accra Technical University
 KTU: Koforidua Technical University
 HOTCATT: Hotel, Catering and Tourism Training Institute
 HITT-SNV: High Impact Tourism Training
 GHATOF: Ghana Tourism Federation

Table 2.
Number of
interviewees sampled

research (Lazaraton, 2017; Shenton, 2004). Third, the identified codes were processed into three specific categories such as existing occupation, declining occupation and emerging occupation. Finally, the categories were developed into the three main themes: information technology jobs, environmental jobs and job titles.

This study adhered to the COVID-19 protocols in the data collection stages. The COVID-19 protocols of social distancing of at least two meters apart, use of a face mask, avoidance of handshakes, hand washing and use of hand sanitizers as recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO, 2020) were observed during the entire period of the field research. The sample comprised 23 males (69.7%) and 10 females (30.3%). Averagely, all the interviewees had working experience in the industry of ten years and above. In all, the findings and the proposed national career pathways were validated at a workshop based on the inputs received from key stakeholders such as the employers and employees of the sector.

Findings

The findings revealed six subsectors within the Ghanaian T&H sector, proposed as “travel and tour”, “lodging”, “catering”, “events”, “education and training” and “arts and culture”, which were useful in mapping occupations and their respective job titles. Tables 3–8 showed occupations and job titles plotted according to the “eight levels” qualification framework (minimum to maximum levels), which responded specifically to Objective 2 of this study (entry level requirement of occupations associated with the T&H sector). Table 9 presented the national career progression pathways for the sector, which specifically addressed

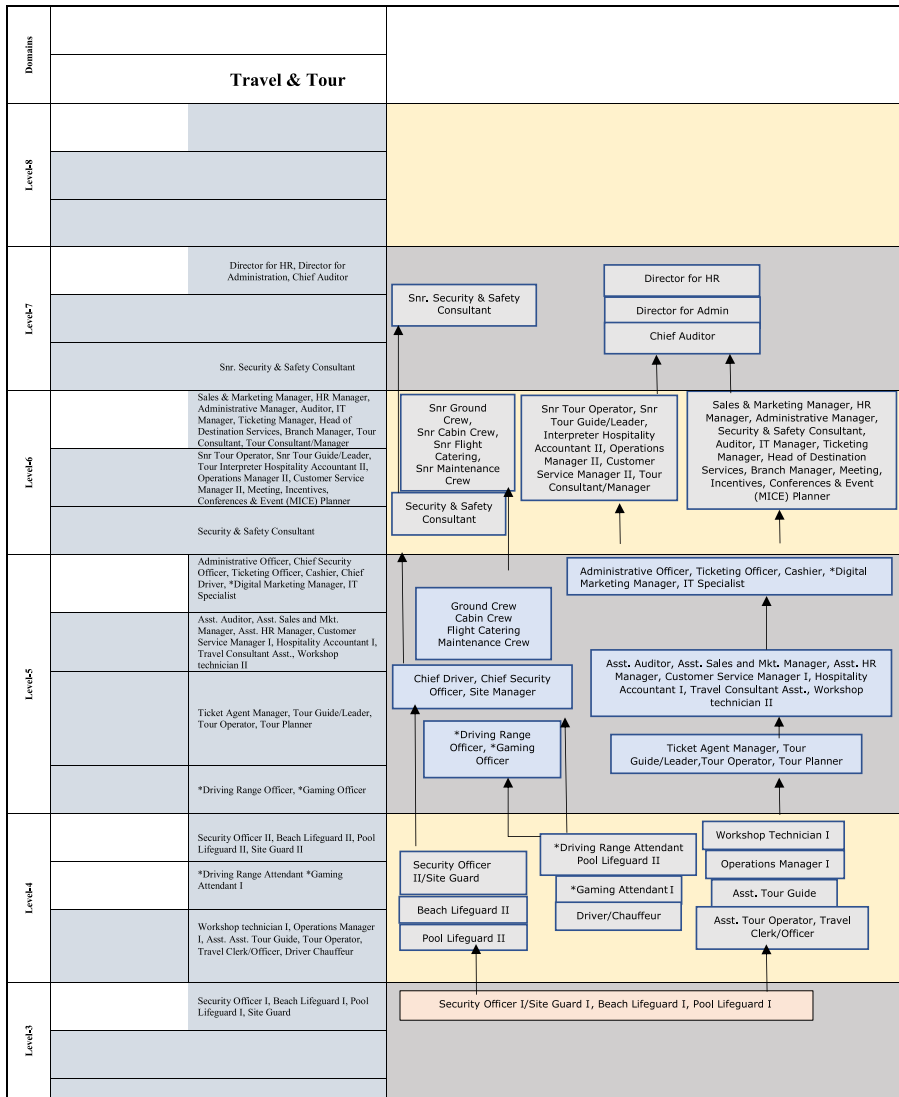


Table 3.
Entry level requirement for travel and tour related occupations

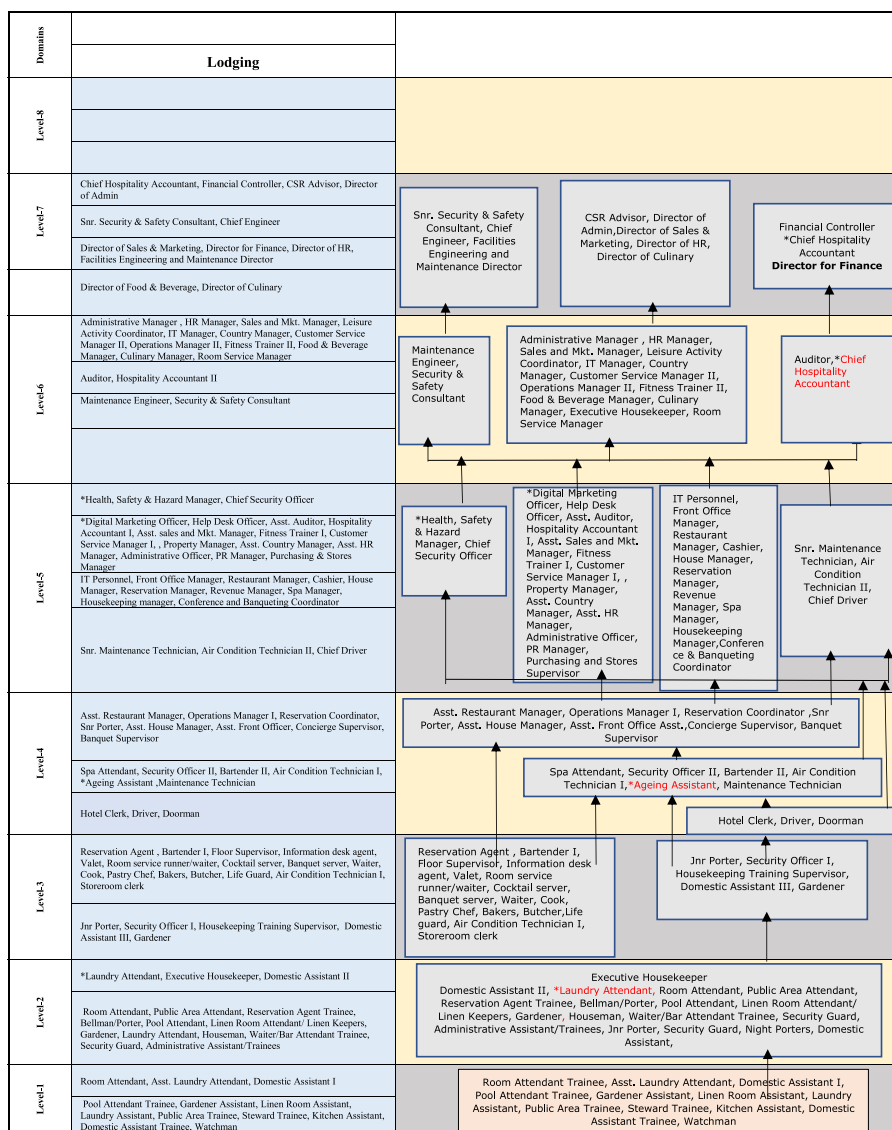


Table 4.
Entry level
requirement for
lodging related
occupations

Objective 3. In summary, the key findings of the study revealed that “watchman” (Table 5) was found to be the only declining job in the Ghanaian T&H sector; whereas the emerging jobs were website designers, digital marketers, data analysts, hygienists, and safety and hazard experts, which were labeled in red texts in Tables 3–8.

In general, the majority of the interviewees were not aware of a single national document that defines occupations, job titles, job descriptions and career progression for the sector in Ghana. Some of the experiences captured are as follows:

Domains	Catering	
Level-8		
Level-7	*Food & Beverage Director	*Food & Beverage Director
Level-6	HR Manager, Administrative Manager, Marketing Manager, Accountant II, Restaurant Manager, Financial Controller	*Sommelier, *Hygienist, HR Manager, Restaurant Manager
	Sommelier, *Hygienist	*Food & Beverage Manager, Accountant II, Financial Controller, Administrative Manager
	Executive Chef	Executive Chef, Marketing Manager
Level-5	*Food & Beverage Supervisor, Restaurant Manager, *Digital Marketing Manager, Asst. Administrative Manager, Asst. Mkt. Manager, Purchasing & Stores Officer	Accountant I, Restaurant Manager, Purchasing & Stores Officer
	Cashier, Accountant I	Cashier, *Digital Marketing Manager, Asst. Administrative Manager
	Master Chef, Pastry Chef, Lead Cook, Catering Manager	Master Chef, Pastry Chef, *Lead Cook, Asst. Mkt. Manager
Level-4	Bar/Banquet/ Restaurant Supervisor, Operations Manager I, Administrative Officer, Kitchen Supervisor	*Food & Beverage Supervisor, Catering Manager, Bar/Banquet/Restaurant Supervisor, Operations Manager I, Administrative Officer
	Sous Chef, Asst. Food & Beverage Officer	Sous Chef, Food & Beverage Officer, Kitchen Supervisor
Level-3	*Supervisor-Stewarding, Chef de partie, Hors d'oeuvre cook, Food Caller/Aboyeur, Order Takers, Food Counter Assistants, Butcher	Chef de partie, Hors d'oeuvre cook, Food Caller/Aboyeur, Order Takers, Food Counter Assistants, Butcher, *Supervisor-Stewarding, Security Guard, Bouncer, Head Waiter/Waitress, Host/Hostess
	Head Waiter/Waitress, Host/Hostess	
	Security Guard, Bouncer	
Level-2	Cook II, *Kitchen Steward	Cook II, Snack Bar/Coffee Shop Trainee Waiter/Waitress trainees, Bar stewards, Banquet staff, Gardener, Waiter/Waitress trainee
	Waiter/Waitress, Snack Bar/Coffee Shop Trainee, Waiter/Waitress Trainees, Bar Stewards, Banquet Staff, Gardener	
Level-1	Cook I, Catering Assistant	Cook I, Catering Assistant
	Waiter/Waitress trainee	Dishwasher, Kitchen Porter, Cook Trainee, Pantryman, Restaurant Assistant, Groundsman/Gardener Assistance, Kitchen Assistant, Short order cook

Table 5.
Entry level
requirement for the
catering related
occupations

I don't think there is anything like that [. . .]

Training provider

[. . .] not really. What I remember is the new Ghana Tourism Authority law, which I think made a provision that managers should be licensed; even that one has not seen light of the day.

Trade association

At the moment I will say "Yes" and "No", because we have National Hospitality Act, which helps to set up a hospitality and build the capacity of employees. However, most hospitality companies in

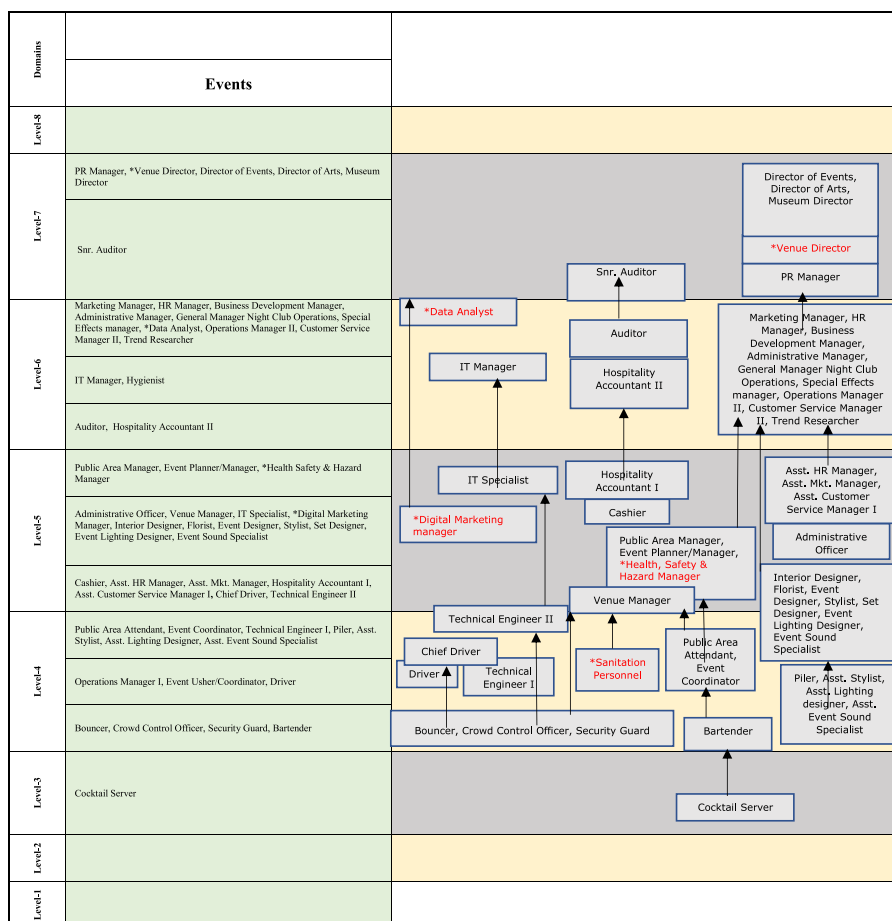


Table 6.
Entry level
requirement for events
related occupations

Ghana operate as private individuals, and the career progression in the public sector cannot be aligned with what they have.

Policymaker

Declining or emerging occupations and job titles

Correspondingly, the result of the first objective showed the declining and emerging jobs and titles.

Interestingly, “watchman” as a job occupation was found to be the only declining job and was replaced with more defined tasks as “security personnel”. The emerging jobs and job titles identified in the Ghanaian T&H sector were labeled in red texts in Tables 3–8; while the declining job is colored with a yellow background in Table 5. The interview revealed that two key occupations, namely “sommelier” and “executive chef”, are not common professions within the Ghanaian labor market. This implies that the services of expatriates are engaged mostly in the highly recognized hospitality institutions. In addition, “hospitality accountant”

Domains		Education and Training	
Level-8	Professor, Chief Res Associate		Professor
	Associate Professor, Principal Res Associate		Associate Professor
	Senior Lecturer/Senior Res Associate		Senior Lecturer
	Lecturer, Research Associate		Lecturer
	Director for Finance, Director for Audit	Director for Finance, Director for Audit	
Level-7	Snr. Auditor	Snr. Auditor	Asst. Lecturer
	Director of IT		Director of IT
	Director of Administration		Director of Admin
Level-6	Marketing Manager, Administrative Manager, HR Manager, Business Development Manager, Instructor II, Trainer II, Teacher II	IT Manager	Instructor II, Trainer II, Teacher II
	IT Manager	Auditor	BD Devpt. Manager
	Auditor, Hospitality Accountant II	Hospitality Accountant II	HR Manager
Level-5	Asst. HR Manager, Asst. Mkt. Manager, Administrative Officer, *Digital Marketing Officer		*Digital Marketing Officer
	IT Specialist, Instructor, Trainer, Teacher	Instructor I, Trainer I, Teacher I	Administrative Officer
	Cashier, Hospitality Accountant I	Cashier, Hospitality Accountant I	Asst. Mkt. Manager
Level-4	Tutor		Asst. HR Manager
Level-3			
Level-2			
Level-1			

Table 7.
Entry level
requirement for
education and training
related occupations

was mentioned as a profession, which is highly recommended for the sector but are less in supply in the T&H sector, although there is high demand. This is because the majority of the accountants in the sector possess general accounting skills, which, to some extent, might not be fully relevant to the industry. This study finds the following extracts to support declining or emerging occupations and job titles:

I can see one emerging job “hospitality accountants”. Like hospitality accounting, which has not been popularized in our part of the world. Mostly, we use “financial accountants” to support the sector. Our institutions should train more “hospitality accountants” who will be able to manage the sector effectively. [...] one of the declining job titles in this country now is “watchman” which literally

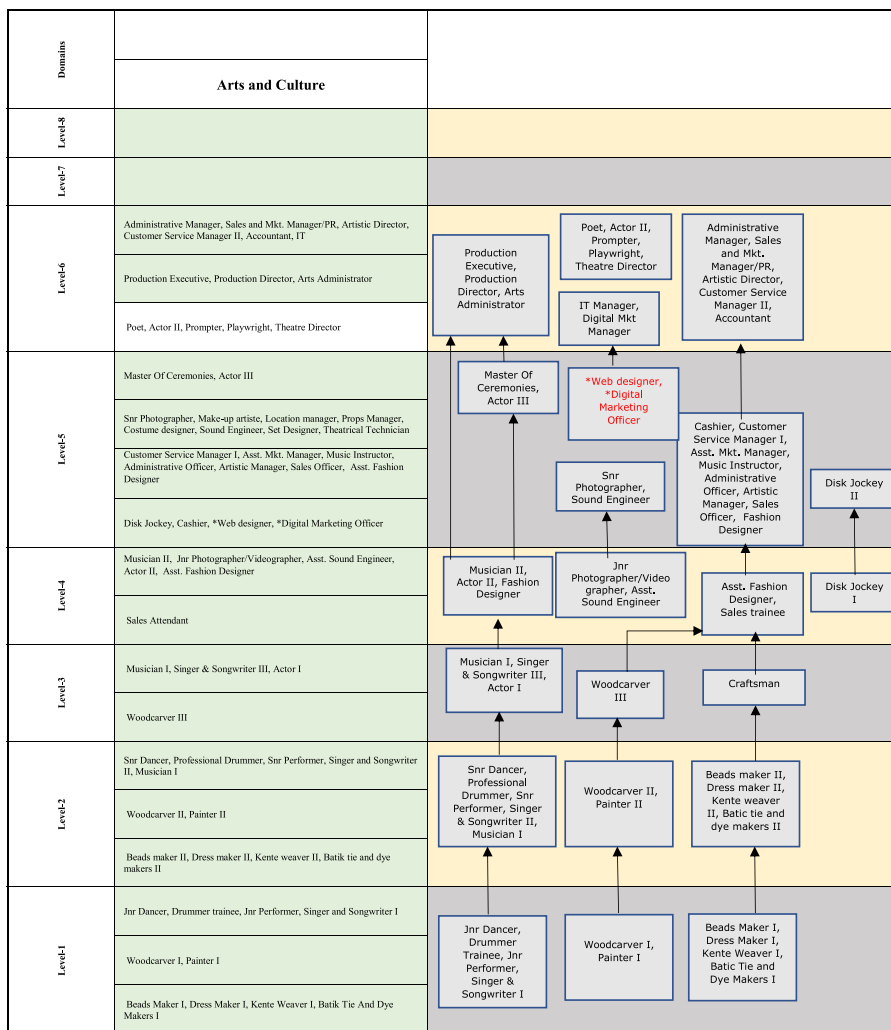


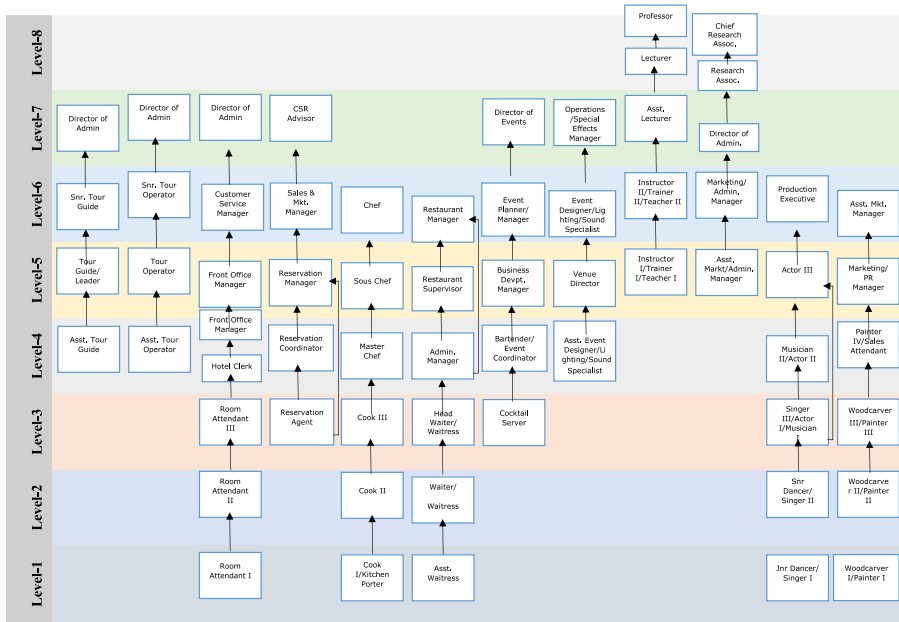
Table 8.
Entry level
requirement for arts
and culture related
occupations

means keep an eye on something for me. Sophisticated devices like CCTV and security gadgets have taken over their job.

Policymaker

Mostly, the foreign hospitality firms come to work in Ghana with their chefs who are specialized in the international or continental foods. They only employ our local chefs when they are engaging in local foods which serve local consumers and some international tourists. Usually, these occupations “sommelier”, and “executive chef” are not available in our labor market. This is because our higher institutions do not have programs for these specializations. For example, if you examine how people become chefs, most of the chef started like a *steward or cleaner or gardener* in the industry after

Table 9.
Tourism and
hospitality career
pathway map



completion of secondary schools. Then, they developed later the passion to be cooks and become chefs as they get the opportunity to progress.

Trade association

Entry level requirements for the jobs and possible pathways in the T&H sector

In this section, we present the findings specifically on Objective 2; that is, on the entry level requirements of the identified jobs, and mapped according to the NTVETQF. The results showed that jobs associated with no formal education have an entry requirement from Level 1 and 2. This is regarded as employees who can read and write, but without any formal education; and is referred to in the NTVETQF as National Proficiency I and II. Jobs identified in these categories include low-profile jobs such as “room attendant”, “reservation agent”, “dishwasher”, “cook”, “junior dancer”, “assistant gardener”, “security”, “waiter/waitress” and “kitchen porter”. While the entry level requirement for employees with formal education starts from Level 3 to Level 8, where Level 3 refers to “national certification I” and Level 8 as “doctorate degree” (professional/technology). Finally, the findings showed that the majority of the emerging jobs were more related to information technology and environmental occupations (e.g. website designers, digital marketers, data analysts, hygienists, sanitationists, health, and safety and hazard experts). For example, the technology related occupations (digital marketers) can leverage the five elements of Bloom’s digital taxonomy and the four components of Kolb’s learning style in creating bloggings and podcasts that ensure the production and sharing of tourism contents on social media or sending e-newsletters of varied services and products to their customers (tourists). Extractions to support some of the findings include the following:

On our beaches you can find people parading themselves as they help people who are drowning. They have learnt swimming informally and they help people at the beach. Some people called them local informal rescuers.

Beneficiary

We have the *reservation agent* who deals with ticketing and making travelling arrangement for tourists to travel to their destinations [...] *tour operator* will put the tour package in terms of transportation and other logistics in place. In my organization I employ *data analyst*, who manages customers' data and other data related issues. It is seen as one of the emerging occupations that the industry cannot avoid if we want to be competitive. We must always analyze our markets' characteristics in order to plan and develop business strategies as well.

Beneficiary

We are looking for *food, beverage and sanitation officers* as well as a Chef. I know they have various ranks of Chefs from *executive Chef* to the *head Chef*. Nowadays, you can also have *pastry Chef*, who specializes in pastry.

Trade Associations

[...] *room attendant, cook, security, kitchen porters, waiters and waitresses* usually consist of workers in the lower class in the Ghanaian labor market. Some people also see the *cashiers* as part of the restaurant service and the *front officer* in the reception. We also have the *purchasing officers, store keepers, marketers* as well as *sales person* who markets the tour packages to tourists. We are seeing demand for *web designers* and *digital marketers* as the industry strives hard to promote Ghana's T&H to the outside world on the social media and other digital platforms.

Trade Associations

[...] if you go to other countries, they have specific courses for people to become *bartenders*. Bartenders in Ghana don't have any qualification before they begin to practice. They just enter as trainers and later they develop the passion to be bartenders.

Beneficiaries

Discussions of findings

To understand the career pathways' progression, this research investigated the declining and emerging jobs and job titles and their respective entry level requirements in the T&H sector. Findings revealed that there are clear occupational paths available to all categories of workers in the six subsectors to progress in their choice of occupations. According to the SCCT, self-efficacy outlines the employee's capability to organize and attain the highest career paths. Further, the theory emphasizes that employees will pick a career path for which they view themselves as most efficacious (Lent *et al.*, 1994). Interestingly, the possible career pathways accommodated diversification or realignment of occupations in the sector. For example, within the arts and culture subsector, woodcarver of Level 3 can diversify or realign an occupation after acquiring some level of training and formal education and become an assistant fashion designer or a sales trainee in Level 4 and progress to Level 6 to become a fashion designer, manager, sales manager or customer relationship manager. This pathway is possible because the individual, through training, develops a self-efficacy trademark such as positive attitudes, abilities and cognitive skills that boosts one's self confidence to make great strides in the job market.

Noticeably, the sector's career pathways' progression is envisioned on some key emerging occupational areas: safety and security; technology adoption; and hygiene (environmental occupations). The findings on technology strengthens the understanding of how Ghanaian T&H businesses have gradually started deploying the concept of artificial intelligence (AI) within the field of robotics, which is regarded as one of the most exciting and promising

applications for individuals and businesses operating within T&H. For example, providing the chatbots' services that allow a hotel or travel company to provide 24/7 support through online chat or instant messaging services, even when their staff are not available. Analytically, the findings on technology, security, safety and hygiene imply that these findings are in line with [UNWTO \(2003\)](#) initiatives for nations to develop a national policy to safeguard tourists against risk and hygiene related matters such as crime, sexual assault, terrorism, food safety and hygiene. Furthermore, this shows that Ghana, a country ranked as the 115th of 136 tourism destinations in the world, is adhering to and aligning career paths that cover security and hygiene issues addressed in the UNWTO developmental plans for the T&H sector. In addition, the emerging technology supported occupations and job titles also demonstrated the level at which technology-oriented occupations have been responded to in the Ghanaian career pathways progression of the T&H sector. This signifies that the Ghanaian T&H sector is conforming to the best practices in the world T&H space. Furthermore, this study's finding highlighted Ghana's acceptance of various technology adoption measures supported by legislation such as the Electronic Transaction Act (Act 772 of 2008), National Information Technology Agency Act (Act 771 of 2008) and Data Protection Act (Act 843 of 2012) to protect and ensure quality service provision in the sector. This provides evidence of Ghana's preparedness in supporting the innovation technology that will benefit the T&H sector. The T&H sector depends on the Internet as one of the technological ways tourists can access the needed information related to online traveling sites, booking, photo check out, price comparison for vacations and e-transactions. Added to this, Ghana's Agenda for Jobs: Creating Prosperity and Equal Opportunity for All (2017–2024) of the Coordinated Program of Economic and Social Development Policies emphasized the transformation of the T&H sector through investment in innovation technology and job creation for excellent e-service to tourists such as websites, e-check-in and online booking.

The finding on the declining job and job title "watchman" reaffirmed that security related matters have become complex and the roles of "watchman" have been expanded to cater for the safety and security need driven for the sector. Ten years ago, the role of "watchman" in context was to watch over a property or premise at night when the owners or occupants are asleep. Today, the direction of crime has changed, given that there is daylight robbing, kidnapping, property theft, mugging, armed robbery, as well as terrorism acts evidenced in the sector. Previous studies in context have evidenced how tourists feel unsafe at some destination sites ([Boakye, 2010](#); [Poku & Boakye, 2019](#); [Preko, 2020a, 2020b](#)). It is also important to note that during the COVID-19 pandemic, security personnel have had an add-on function of checking the temperature of tourists, and ensuring the strict adherence of the COVID-19 protocols on site. This signifies that the security personnel job description has been expanded to include safeguarding the health and safety of tourists at sites. This observation is similar to the findings of [Cheung, Takashima, Choi, Yang and Tung \(2021\)](#), where they investigated the impact of COVID-19 on psychological needs of tourists using the existence, related and growth theory. Their findings reinforce the importance of safety and security during COVID-19. This provides a signal that advances the understanding on how safety and security personnel and their careers can strategically be defined to manage any given situation in the sector.

Conclusion and implications

In conclusion, the current study revealed one declining job and 12 emerging jobs, mostly in the security, hygiene and information technology-oriented occupations; and developed national career pathways for the sector. Strategically, these results suggest that Ghana is on course in developing career paths that incorporate key components of the tourism and hospitality agenda of the UNTWO advocacy in the areas of safety, security, hygiene and deployment of technologies in the sector. This will position the country to compete effectively with other tourism nations worldwide. It was also found that the possible career paths developed make

provision for diversification and realignment of occupations in the sector, which serves as a motivational factor to all employees who aspire to choose occupational paths with high social status, and promising and rewarding careers within the sector. Indeed, the results of this study have extended the national understanding of career progression, which has not been examined earlier in the T&H sector in context. The current study makes significant contributions that fill gaps in the extant tourism career literature. First, this is the first study in context that comprehensively examines declining and emerging jobs and job titles in the T&H sector. Second, the research provides vocational insights in mapping the entry level requirements for the jobs allied with occupations in the NTVETQF of Ghana at the national level. Third, findings from this research differ from earlier career research of [Amissah *et al.* \(2020\)](#), who found perceptions toward the careers in the sector unfavorable in terms of the knowledge transfer skills, employee exposure to other career avenues and the offer of good promotion prospects using tourism students' data in context. Fourth, this study extends tourism studies ([Armoo & Neequaye, 2014](#); [Kim *et al.*, 2009](#); [Murry *et al.*, 2017](#); [Tolkach & Tung, 2019](#)) on career paths within the literature by using first-hand qualitative data from the key industry stakeholders. Fifth, this study has addressed the lack of national career pathways progression in accordance with the NTVETQF based on the six identified subsectors of the T&H sector, which will help to overcome the challenges of upgrading from the lower to higher ranks in the sector.

Practically, this study's findings provide learning opportunities for HR managers and general managers to develop specific HR policies and practices regarding recruitment, education, talent management and career progression management that will boost employee self-efficacy in the sector. It is important for the HR practitioners and managers in the sector to conduct periodic trainings, workshops, conferences, seminars and open fora on career progressions' awareness matters for the T&H employees in order to increase their knowledge on the subject matter. Again, the T&H sector and its allied institutions should employ both hard and soft media (e.g. newspapers, television programs, brochures, websites etc.) in the dissemination of information about employee career progressions to ensure a continuous increase of knowledge on career pathways' subjects. At the national level, the entry level for T&H occupations and career mapping for the T&H may now be adopted for use in the T&H industry. The career mapping for the T&H serves as a standardized career progression pathway that may guide T&H practitioners and administrators on job placement and promotion, to solve the practical knowledge gap of career misalignment in the T&H industry. Strategically, T&H businesses should embrace the significant role played by robotics and AI in order to develop the sector by deploying a variety of technologies, including collision detection, Wi-Fi and AI to navigate hotels and provide services. For industry practitioners, one practical implication is the valuable signal for the growing number of jobs in security services, hygiene and information technology-oriented occupations. The Ministry of Tourism, Arts and Culture, including practitioners, HR directors and general managers, should respond timely to these growing needs in order to remain competitive in the sector. In addition, the findings inform HR managers, other practitioners and business owners about the need to pay attention to the entry level requirements for each occupation and apply them to useful ends accordingly. At a glance, the results reveal that only "watchman" occupation and job title was identified as a declining job. It is important to inform HR managers and general managers that they should always be up-to-date in looking out for jobs that might need training and re-qualification in their respective organizations. This strategy might be treasured in developing new skills needed for the sector. The finding of scarcity of some key professions or skills such as "hospitality accountant", "sommelier" and "executive chef" in the sector implies that T&H managers and businesses, including HR managers, can make recommendations to the higher learning institutions to prepare these skills for the sector. This will encourage businesses in the T&H sector to begin engaging the services of Ghanaian workers to occupy these key positions in the sector. Again, the findings suggest to HR

managers that organizational structure, design, culture and process should simultaneously create work-based learning for Ghanaian employees to acquire the skills that are a scarcity for the sector. Scholars have widely acknowledged that a structured and diversified career path progression offers employees mobility within the sector, which then motivates employees to work hard in achieving higher positions (Gebbels, 2019; Kim *et al.*, 2009; O'Leary & Deegan, 2005; Tolkach & Tung, 2019). This research supports these viewpoints and further recommends that managers should consider providing working conditions that will boost employee self-efficacy to work harder to migrate from the lower to the higher positions in the industry. Practically, the study identified six subsectors in the T&H industry, namely: "travel and tour", "lodging", "catering", "events", "education and training" and "arts and culture". Educational institutions could take a cue from this and develop courses and programs to fill the skills gaps in the sector. The recommendations provided in this study are not country specific but similar geographic settings can adopt some of the suggestions when necessary.

Our study furthermore contributes to the SCCT in three ways: First, the T&H ecosystem is largely influenced by the national career paths available to the people. As such, the SCCT inherently supports a national career path ecosystem that opens up career pathways to individual actors in the T&H sector. This opportunity helps individual actors or employees to organize and accomplish the highest career progression possible in the industry. Secondly, it is envisaged that individual actors in the T&H will work and progress with aplomb when the individual is taken through on-the-job training and education. In other words, the SCCT improves our understanding of how individual actors or employees in the T&H sector progress through the ranks on the back of an important outcome expectation of the SCCT – "self-efficacy". Lastly, the SCCT has been used extensively at the personal and organizational levels. This study is the first to apply the SCCT to a national career pathway to fully harness the triadic reciprocity.

Limitations and area for future studies

In all, the findings of this study cannot be overlooked because, significantly, this is the first study in context that responds timely to the development of a national career progression, although there are some limitations. This research has the inherent limitations of a qualitative study that discourages the results to be generalized due to the lack of randomness in the selection and statistical representation of interviews although the qualitative approach is perhaps one of the best approaches to gathering unique insights from the industry. Further studies should investigate how HR managers, practitioners, employers and other stakeholders in the sector are applying and complying with the national career paths and provide recommendations for updates that will see continuous relevance of the career path document to the sector, as well as furthering investigations into the applications of robotics and AI in the sector. For future study directions, researchers should consider gathering quantitative data from employees of the sector regarding the applicability of the developed career path based on their choice, attitudes and viewpoints that can be gathered through different engagements such as workshops, seminars, conferences and open fora, etc.

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Appendix

Research instruments

- (1) Is there any official document that defines all the occupations and corresponding job descriptions in the tourism and hospitality sector of Ghana?

- What is the specific regulatory document that defined career progression in the tourism and hospitality sector?
 - Is it a regulatory framework for only tourism or hospitality or for both tourism and hospitality?
 - Does the regulatory framework identify and describe all existing jobs including job titles, duration, entry requirements in the sector?
 - Does the regulatory framework define the opportunities for possible progression from the lower to higher qualifications with the respective jobs?
- (2) What are the occupations in the Ghanaian tourism and hospitality sector?
- Are these occupations in the sector documented with their titles and job descriptions?
 - Are there any emerging or declining jobs in the tourism sector that should be titled and defined for the industry?
 - Are there any emerging or declining jobs in the hospitality sector that should be titled and defined for the industry?
- (3) Is there any career path for progression in the sector?
- Does the career path map the possible pathways for progression from lower to higher qualifications and respective jobs?
 - What is the minimum entry requirement for jobs in the tourism and hospitality sector?
 - What are the possible career paths for Proficiency I holders to obtain a bachelor degree in the sector?
- (4) Are the occupations in the sector aligned to the NTVETQF guidelines in the sector?
- What are some of the professions identified in the sector that are aligned to the NTVETQF guidelines?
 - What are the entry requirements for these qualifications: Proficiency I, II, Certificate I, Higher National Diploma, and Bachelor degree?
- (5) What are the further education and training programs on offer to individuals in the technical and vocational occupations to their career pathways?
- (6) In what specific ways is the institution preparing occupations in the sector for progression from the lower to higher qualifications and respective jobs?
- (7) Were you involved in the drafting of the national framework that regulates occupations and career pathways for employees in the sector? (**Employer and trade associations**)
- Are you (employers' association/trade unions) represented on the regulatory body?
- (8) What are the tourism and hospitality academic qualifications offered in your institution? (**Training providers**)
- (9) What programs of education and training do you provide for your employees? (**Beneficiary institutions**)

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