

# Effect of Structural Social Capital on Creativity among Hotel Employees in the Cape Coast-Elmina Conurbation, Ghana

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## Abstract

Recent research has highlighted the critical role of management education in unlocking employee creative potential. However, the underlying social structures that facilitate or hinder this creative process has been less highlighted. This study focused on investigating the impact of structural social capital on employee creativity within the hotel industry in the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation, Central Region, Ghana. The study examined the relationship between structural social capital and employee creativity and its implications for creating a favourable social working atmosphere. A descriptive survey design using quantitative research was used. A questionnaire entitled “Structural Social Capital and Employee Creativity Questionnaire” (SSCEQ) was used to collect data from 260 employees of 73 hotels in the study area. Descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to analyse the data. The analysis revealed a positive relationship between structural social capital and employee creativity. The findings provide empirical evidence of the positive impact of structural social capital on employee creativity within the hotel industry. It was recommended that a favourable social working environment should be created by promoting social interactions among employees to enhance creativity while tracking financial performance. The need for managers and employees in the hospitality sector to examine and utilize social capital resources in their operations is also highlighted. Other key recommendations include how counsel-

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lors as well as financial employees can work with hotel management to forge and maintain quality relationships that augur well for obtaining high employee creativity levels in the hotel industry.

## Keywords

Counselling, Employee Creativity, Financial Metrics, Hotel Industry, Management Education, Structural Social Capital, Ghana

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## 1. Introduction

In the fast-paced hotel industry where customer satisfaction is paramount, employee creativity is the secret ingredient that sets successful establishments apart (Anabila et al., 2022). Customers of various hotels and guesthouses demand services that would create a lasting impression in their minds. It is anticipated that employees who go the extra mile to meet their guests' expectations can ultimately improve their opinions about the service and gain a competitive advantage (Kim et al., 2024; Eldor, 2020). The hotel industry embraces best practices in service delivery to meet customers' expectations to sustain long-term sustainable growth (Bardukova, 2023). Therefore, hospitality agencies (hotels, guest houses, etc.) and establishments need creative employees to offer quality services to warrant customers' memorable personal experiences based on their ingenuity (Christou, 2021; Akgunduz et al., 2018; Hon & Lui, 2016). The conviction is that viable resources that can lead to the development and accumulation of human capital become tenets of hospitality firms.

Proponents of social capital theory (SCT) believe that employees' social relations at workplaces facilitate in acquisition of the valuable learning resources vital for developing employees' creativity within organisations (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Leveraging a relationship as social capital to achieve organisational goals has been considered a vital component of the hospitality industry (Dai et al., 2015). Jolly et al. (2021) postulated that the same social capital among various actors in a firm provides vital resources like knowledge, social support, and friendship. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998) described the concept of social capital as the "sum of the actual and potential resources embedded within, available through, and derived from the network of relationships possessed by an individual or social unit".

Emerging and new definitions of social capital conceptualize it as social organization's features, including networks, norms, and trust, making it easier to coordinate and collaborate for mutual gain (Bianchi & Vieta, 2020; Putnam, 1993). These resources are relevant to creating a healthy social environment for creativity (West & Richter, 2024). According to Singh and Bathla (2023), the need for creativity has increased because of increasing globalization, changing work environments, and market competition to ensure organisations are involved in their field

of work. Rastgoo (2017) reviewed creativity as the “interaction that exists among talent, process, and the environment that produces a product that is considered both novel and useful”.

Researchers and industry practitioners believe that through creativity, employees become efficient in their performance to ensure that their organisation has a competitive advantage (Abdelhamid, 2022; Elidemir et al., 2020; Cai et al., 2019) and to promote organisational innovation and effectiveness (West & Richter, 2024; Huang et al., 2023; Abdelhamid, 2022). However, Kabangire and Korir (2023) noted that it is risky to pursue creativity, so employees must think differently, act differently, and consider alternatives to conventional methods to succeed. The hospitality sector needs to render quality hotel services in today’s rapidly changing environment.

However, it is quite worrying that employees at the individual level are unable to generate new ideas in the hotel industry due to resistance to change (Senbeto & Hon, 2020; Hon & Lui, 2016) and work load or job stress (Khelifat et al., 2021; Borralha et al., 2016). Similarly, the Ministry of Tourism’s (2013) *National Tourism Development Plan* (2013-2027) as cited in (Agyapong & Boamah, 2013), documented a decline in the qualified and efficient workforce required to offer quality services. Hence, poor branding strategies, lack of differentiation (Agbenyegah & Neequaye, 2024), poor service quality, and lack of qualified personnel (Kankam-Kwarteng et al., 2020) adversely affect the operations of the hotel industry.

In a survey by the International Labor Organization (2010), soft skills such as creativity, friendliness, language, and communication skills were identified within the hospitality sector as a gap. Portes (2024) believed that people can create social capital by building relationships between themselves and other entities, such as groups and communities. However, it is quite worrying that little has been done globally on social capital and employee creativity. Jain and Jain (2017) further postulated that very little research has been conducted on social capital and employee creativity globally. In addition, the link between social capital and social interaction at the individual level has not been thoroughly researched (Zoghbi-Manrique-de-Lara & Ruiz-Palomino, 2019).

Management education empowers hotel managers with the knowledge and skills to foster a culture of innovation, recognizing and nurturing creative potential in their employees (Talawanich & Wattanacharoensil, 2021). This, in turn, encourages staff to share their ideas and perspectives, leading to a surge in creativity. Structural social capital, comprising the networks and relationships within the hotel, provides the conduit for ideas to flow freely (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). When managers prioritize building strong relationships with their staff, trust and open communication flourish, allowing creativity to take root.

Moreover, management education enhances the structural social capital by teaching managers how to effectively utilize these networks to facilitate knowledge sharing and collaboration (Han et al., 2020). This interplay creates a fertile ground for employee creativity to flourish, driving innovation and success in the hotel

industry. In conclusion, the connections among management education, structural social capital, and employee creativity in the hotel industry are undeniable. By investing in their own development and nurturing social bonds, hotel managers can unlock the full potential of their staff, igniting a creative spark that illuminates the path to success.

With the increasing globalization and market competition that confront the hotel sector in Ghana, it is worth pursuing an effective way of harnessing social capital and employee creativity (Jain & Jain, 2017). In Ghana, research on social capital has concentrated on other sectors of the economy, such as small- and medium-sized business performance (Easmon et al., 2019; Appiah-gyimah, 2018; Agyapong et al., 2017) and public sector employee performance (Tetteh, 2016). Appiah-gyimah (2018) examined the connection between social capital and small-to-medium business growth by addressing the importance of emotional intelligence as a mediator. An analysis of data from Ghana was conducted by Agyapong et al. (2017) to study social capital, innovation, and the achievement of small and medium-sized enterprises in emerging economies. Tetteh's (2016) research was conducted to determine the influence of social capital and perceived organizational politics on workplace crime among Ghana's driver and vehicle licensing authority employees. A critical look at the studies mentioned above reveals that research on the hotel industry's social capital remains limited. Therefore, in view of the limitations of past research, this study investigates the effect of structural social capital on employee creativity in the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation since prior studies on these variables are unavailable in the literature.

### **1.1. Purpose of the Study**

The current study examined the effect of structural social capital on creativity among workers in the hotel industry in Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation in the Central Region, Ghana, and determined whether structural social capital has a significant influence on employee creativity.

### **1.2. Research Hypothesis**

To achieve this objective, we tested this hypothesis: *Structural social capital has a significant relationship with employee creativity.*

## **2. Methodology**

The study area was the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation, in the Central Region, Ghana. Since the study examined the effect of structural social capital on employee creativity, the target population was hotel employees in the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation. Hence, the study's target population comprised all the 847 hotel employees from January 2021 to March 2021, in all licensed hotels and guesthouses in Cape Coast-Elmina. This figure (847) was obtained from the Ghana Tourism Authority Cape Coast at the time of the study.

Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample determination table was used to determine

the sample size. The sample was pegged at 260 staff members serving in the hotel industry within the Elmina and Cape Coast. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling method. This technique eliminates biases and gives participants an equal chance of being selected. A questionnaire entitled Social Capital and Employee Creativity Questionnaire (SSCECQ, Appendix A) was used as the instrument for data collection. The questionnaire (SSCECQ) was designed by the researchers and validated through the opinion of four experts. Its reliability, which is a measure of its internal consistency, was computed using the Cronbach's Alpha method. The values obtained for Structural Social Capital (6 items) and Employee Creativity (8 items) were .86 and .81 respectively (Appendix B). These values were higher than the stipulated minimum of 70, which is generally considered acceptable for research purposes. The questionnaire was ideal for this study because Neelankavil (2007) asserted that the questionnaire guarantee was better when the collected data were uniform, consistent, and objective.

After successful completion of the data collection, all 260 copies of the questionnaire were later assigned numerical values (codes) and keyed into SPSS, version 21. Frequencies and percentages were used to present the demographic variables (Table 1). Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was the internal statistic used for data analysis. Partial least squares structural equation modelling (PLS-SEM) was used for data analysis. PLS-SEM is referred to as a second-generation statistical method (Hair et al., 2021), suitable for large and small sample sizes, and was considered a reasonable choice for this analysis because it models and validates predictive models (Chin, 2010). More importantly, the PLS-SEM approach is deemed the most appropriate technique for data analysis (Hair et al., 2021) because SEM can simultaneously test for relationships between variables through a combination of regression and factor analysis (Baron & Kenny, 1986). The specific software tool used was SmartPLS 2.0.M3, developed by Henseler et al. (2009). In addition, to compute the means and standard deviations of the variables, the SPSS 24 software program was used.

### Control Variables

To ensure a more accurate understanding of how structural social capital influences employee creativity, we included several control variables that previous research has shown to impact creativity. These included personal factors such as gender, age, and education, which have been linked to variation in creative output (Amabile, 1996; Tierney & Farmer, 2002). We also considered work-related characteristics like total years of experience and tenure with the hotel as longer exposure to the work environment can shape innovative behaviour (Ng & Feldman, 2010). In addition, we controlled for employee role, recognizing that certain positions may offer more opportunities for creative expression than others. On the organizational side, hotel size and star rating were included, as larger or higher-rated hotels may provide more resources or structured environments that influence creativity (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007). By accounting and controlling for

these factors, we aimed to isolate the unique effect of structural social capital and strengthen the validity of our findings.

### 3. Result

**Table 1** shows that 126 of the 260 respondents (48.5%) were male, whereas the remaining 134 (51.5 %) were female. This indicates that more females were employed at various hotels within the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation, Ghana.

**Table 1.** Demographic characteristics of the respondents.

Variable	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	126	48.5
Female	134	51.5
Total	260	100

Source: Field Survey (2021).

**Table 2** displays all the variables at various significance levels and positive relationships with one another, as well as the means, standard deviations, correlations, reliabilities, AVEs, and square root of AVEs for all measurements. The findings demonstrated a substantial and favourable correlation between structural social capital and employee creativity ( $r = 0.768$ ;  $p = 0.001$ ). The study hypotheses receive early support from the correlation analysis.

**Table 2.** Reliability Assessment of the Measurement Model (Means, Standard Deviations, Correlations, Reliabilities, and AVE).

Variable	Mean	Std. dev	AVE (rho_A)	Reliability	Cronbach Alpha	p-value
SSC	4.36	0.645	0.601	0.768	0.726	0.001
EC	3.81	0.927	0.590	0.884	0.849	

Note: N = 260; SSC = structural social capital, EC = employee creativity, AVE = Average. Source: Field Survey (2021).

The PLS technique permits the evaluation of both the measurement and structural models for the PLS-SEM results. The formative measurement model's coefficients were tested for significance using the bootstrapping method, whereas the structural model's route model coefficients were tested for significance using the blindfolding method. As rho\_A is thought to be a considerably more accurate predictor of indicator reliability than CA, the research released the rho A finding (Hair et al., 2021). All rho\_A scores for the constructions were more than 0.70, which could be inferred. **Table 3** also includes the study's composite reliability, which was used to demonstrate how well certain constructs were measured using their indicators (Ringle et al., 2012). This indicates that CA demands a high degree

of reciprocal correlation between all indicators allocated to a particular concept. Additionally, the study's average variance extracted (AVE)-based convergent validity (CV) passed the requirement because all constructs had AVE values greater than 0.50.

**Table 3.** Items loading.

SSC Items	Item reliability	EC Items	Item reliability
SSC1	0.601	EC1	0.569
SSC2	0.514	EC2	0.685
SSC3	0.654	EC3	0.656
SSC4	0.716	EC4	0.713
SSC6	0.662	EC5	0.684
		EC6	0.769
		EC8	0.681

Source: Field Survey (2021).

### Measurement Model Assessment

Loadings over 0.708, which show that the construct accounts for more than 50% of the indicator's variation and, consequently, provides adequate item dependability, are advised in terms of item reliability. In order to avoid affecting the constructs' overall dependability, indicators with loadings below the 0.708 threshold were removed from the model (Hair et al., 2021).

The indicator loadings for each construct were assessed in terms of item loadings, as the first form of assessment. According to the general rule, components with loadings below 0.70 are a good indicator of the quality of the construct (Henseler et al., 2009). Thus, certain construct-specific components with loadings below 0.7 were eliminated from the model. Others with loadings below 0.7 were kept because they help to achieve dependability overall.

**Table 4.** Construct reliability and validity.

Variable	CA	rho_A	CR	CV (AVE)
EC	0.849	0.853	0.884	0.590
SSC	0.726	0.838	0.768	0.601

**Notes:** CA-Cronbach's alpha; CR-Composite reliability; CV-Convergent validity, AVE-Average Variance Extracted, SSC-Structural Social Capital; EC-Employee Creativity. Source: Field Survey (2021).

According to Hair et al. (2021), the percentage of an indicator's variation can be explained by its underlying latent variable which is calculated using Cronbach's alpha (CA) and rho\_A results. Because rho\_A is thought to be a considerably more accurate predictor of indicator reliability than CA, this study published the

rho\_A findings (Hair et al., 2021). All the rho\_A scores for the constructions were more than 0.70, which could be inferred. Table 4 also includes the study’s composite reliability, which explains how well the individual components were measured by their combined indicators (Ringle et al., 2012). This indicates that CR demands a high degree of reciprocal correlation between all indicators allocated to a particular concept. Additionally, the study’s average variance extracted (AVE)-based convergent validity (CV) passed the requirement because all constructs had AVE values greater than 0.50.

**Table 5.** Summary of the results.

Variable	(β)	T-Stats	P-value	R <sup>2</sup>	R <sup>2</sup> adjusted	Q <sup>2</sup>	f <sup>2</sup>
EC				0.393	0.386	0.177	
SSC -> EC	0.269	3.488	0.001				0.110

Source: Field Survey (2021).

The findings based on the T-stat with matching p-values of 0.05, are displayed in Table 5. Additionally, Cohen (1992) discussed route coefficients in light of the criterion. According to his theory, correlation values of 0.10 indicate a weak or tiny relationship, 0.30 indicates a moderate correlation, and 0.50 indicates a significant or high association. The results in Table shows that structural social capital had a significant and positive influence (R = 0.269, t = 3.488, p = 0.001, p < 0.05) on employee creativity. This result further indicated that structural social capital accounted for 39.3 percent of the variation in employees’ creativity in the hotels studied (Table 5). With respect to effect size, the study asserted that structural social capital (f2 = 0.110) caused a small and moderately statistically significant positive variance in employee creativity.

## 4. Discussion

These results imply that the structural dimension of social capital significantly improves employee performance to be creative in the workplace within the hotel industry in the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation. The results of this study confirm Bhatti et al. (2021) finding that Structural Social Capital is an important determinant of employees increased adaptation to new skills and ideas, thus making them creative in the work environment. The findings also support those of (Oussi & Chtourou, 2020), who concluded that structural social capital has an effect on the working environment of employees within the organisation, thereby increasing the performance and creativity of employees within a given organisation.

### 4.1. Conclusion

The results lead to the conclusion that there is a positive and significant connection between Structural Social interaction and Employee Creativity. It is implied that the higher the hotel industries that instituted Structural Social Capital to im-

prove network ties, network configurations, and appropriate organisations, the more employees' creativity increases. It was also concluded that an effective institution of these factors by the management of hotel industries helps improve the competence and creativity of employees and, hence, the general working environment.

## 4.2. Recommendations

Our study reveals a compelling relationship between structural social capital and employee creativity in Ghana's hotel industry, suggesting significant opportunities for innovation and competitive advantage. Based on our findings, we propose several practical recommendations for hotel managers and stakeholders in the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation.

Management education programs should incorporate modules on social capital, creativity, and innovation, with emphasis on their financial implications. By equipping hotel managers with these skills, hotels can better foster environments where structural social capital flourishes while maintaining financial discipline. This integrated framework not only builds on current financial systems but also equips managers with a robust tool for making informed decisions in times of rapid market change.

Also, we recommend incorporating creativity metrics into performance evaluation systems alongside financial indicators. By measuring both structural social capital elements and creative outputs, hotels can better understand and enhance this relationship while tracking financial performance. By establishing a clear connection between structural social capital, employee creativity, and financial performance, hotel organizations can better justify ongoing investments in innovation and workforce development (Kaplan & Norton, 1992).

The Ghana Tourism Authority and hospitality education institutions should incorporate social capital development into their training curricula, including financial literacy components. By emphasizing the importance of building structural social capital alongside technical and financial skills, these programs can better prepare future hotel employees and managers to foster creativity in their organizations while maintaining financial sustainability.

The counselling implications arising from the impact of management education and structural social capital on creativity are double-faced. Firstly, helping employees understand and navigate formal organizational structures is a primary role for counsellors in the hotel industry. Counsellors can teach hotel workers strategies for accessing different information channels effectively. They can also help them understand how to leverage formal and informal organizational structures.

Counsellors should develop programs that combine management learning with structural network building for their hotels. Also, they can design interdisciplinary training initiatives that create new structural connections, in addition to structured opportunities for employees to participate in cross-functional projects.

Hotel management should prioritize creating favourable social working environments that foster network ties and configurations. Physical workspaces can be designed to encourage spontaneous interactions, while regular interdisciplinary activities can strengthen relationships across hierarchical levels. As our study demonstrates, these structural elements significantly enhance employee creativity, which is vital for service innovation in the competitive hospitality sector (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998).

Hotels should implement formal mentoring programs connecting employees across different departments and experience levels. Such programs leverage structural social capital by creating purposeful network configurations that facilitate knowledge sharing and creative problem-solving. This approach directly supports our finding that structural social capital accounts for 39.3% of the variance in employee creativity within the studied hotels.

Finally, hotel organizations should integrate financial metrics with innovation outcomes driven by enhanced structural social capital. By leveraging existing financial reporting mechanisms—such as revenue growth, operating margins, and cost-efficiency analyses—hotels can complement these with nonfinancial indicators that capture the creative outputs underpinning service innovations (Parveen & Alraddadi, 2024; Hegazy et al., 2022; Elbanna et al., 2022; Panno, 2020). For example, adopting a balanced scorecard approach allows hotel managers to augment traditional financial indicators with innovation-related metrics. Measures such as net present value (NPV) or return on investment (ROI) for new initiatives can be paired with indicators like the number of new service ideas generated, implementation success rates, or improvements in guest satisfaction.

### 4.3. Limitations and Future Research

Indeed, this study has some limitations. Firstly, the focus on the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation restricted the data gathering, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, relying solely on quantitative data gathering method may overlook nuanced insights that qualitative approaches could provide. Thirdly, focusing only on structural dimension was not comprehensive. Future research should consider including other cities to broaden the sample size and employing a mixed methods approach to capture a more comprehensive understanding of embedded resources in structural social capital on employee creativity in the hospitality industry. Future studies should look into the cognitive and relational dimensions and leadership style, workplace culture, and individual differences.

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## Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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## Appendix A: Research Questionnaire

### STRUCTURAL SOCIAL CAPITAL AND EMPLOYEE CREATIVITY QUESTIONNAIRE (SSCECQ)

Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is designed to solicit your responses for a research project titled: **Structural Capital and Employee Creativity in the Hotel Industry**. Kindly try to answer every question in the instrument.

To assist in responding accurately, **employee creativity** in this study refers to **your ability to generate new and useful ideas, methods, or solutions in the course of your work**. For example, suggesting improvements in guest service, creating new ways to handle tasks more efficiently, or introducing novel ideas that contribute to team success.

Please be assured that your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic purposes.

Thank you very much for your willingness to participate in the research project.

#### Section A: SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Please provide some brief details about yourself and the facility by **ticking and writing** in the space provided.

##### 1. Gender:

Male

Female

##### 2. Age:

18 - 24

25 - 34

35 - 44

45 - 54

55 and above

##### 3. Higher level of education completed:

Basic education

High school

Diploma/Technical certificate

Bachelor's degree

Master's degree or higher

##### 4. Total years of work experience in the hospitality industry:

Less than 1 year

1 - 3 years

4 - 6 years

7 - 10 years

More than 10 years

##### 5. How long have you worked at your current hotel?

Less than 6 months

6 - 12 months

- 1 - 3 years
- More than 3 years

**6. Your current job role/department**

- Front Desk/Reception
- Housekeeping
- Food & Beverage
- Kitchen
- Management

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Approximate size of your hotel (number of employees):**

- Fewer than 20
- 21 - 50
- 51 - 100
- More than 100

**8. What is the star rating of the hotel where you work?**

- 1-star
- 2-star
- 3-star

Other (please specify): \_\_\_\_\_

**Section B: Structural Social Capital**

This section of the questionnaire describes the potential or actual resources embedded with social relationships as you observe them. Please, respond to each of the following statement and indicate by **ticking** the number corresponding to the extent to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

**1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree**

<b>Structural Social Capital: In my hotel</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1. I interact with several employees whom I know					
2. I exchange ideas with many of my colleagues					
3. I have frequent interpersonal relationships with other employees					
4. I have a very close relationship with other employees					
5. There is frequent communication with other employees					
6. I have frequent interaction between personnel to improve the service we render					

**Section C: Employee Creativity**

This section of the questionnaire is to assess your ability to be creative as an employee. Please respond to each of the following statement and indicate by **ticking** the number corresponding to the extent to which you agree or disagree with

each statement.

**1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Neutral; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly Agree.**

<b>Employee Creativity: In my hotel</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>D</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>A</b>	<b>SA</b>
1. I suggest new ways to achieve goals and objectives					
2. I come up with new and practical ideas to improve performance					
3. I suggest new ways to increase quality					
4. I am a good source of creative ideas					
5. I exhibits creativity on the job when given the opportunity to					
6. I often have new and innovative ideas					
7. I come up with creative solutions to problems					
8. I often have a fresh approach to problems					

*Thank you for participating in this study.*

### **Appendix B: Cronbach’s Alpha Values for SSC and EC**

<b>Variables</b>	<b>No. of Items</b>	<b>Cronbach’s Alpha</b>
Structural Social Capital (SSC)	6	0.86
Employee Creativity (EC)	8	0.81

Source: Field data, (2021).