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Research Article

Relational Social Capital and Employee Creativity in a Ghanaian Conurbation's Hotel Industry

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Abstract

This study investigates the impact of relational social capital on employee creativity within the Ghanaian hotel industry. Using data from a questionnaire survey of 260 employees in the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation, the study employed structural equation modeling for data analysis. The results indicate a strong positive relationship between relational social capital and employee creativity, suggesting that supportive workplace relationships and networks enhance idea generation and service quality. The findings underscore the value of employees' ability to generate new ideas and deliver high-quality service. The study highlights the importance of fostering social connections to boost creativity and performance, offering practical implications for hotel management, management education, engineering, and counseling. Direction for future for future research are also proposed.

Keywords: Counselling, employee creativity, engineering, hotel industry, management education, relational social capital, Ghana.

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Introduction

The hotel industry plays an important role in the development of the hospitality sector and contributes significantly to tourism activities and service delivery in many economies. Hotels contribute not only to the provision of accommodation services but also to employment creation, tourism development, and the supply of goods and services through linkages with other sectors such as transportation, food supply chains, and tourism services. In many countries, the hotel sector has become an important channel through which hospitality supports economic activity and service-related value creation. In Ghana, the hotel industry contributes to local economic development through employment opportunities, tourism promotion, and support for related industries. The operations of hotels are also largely service-oriented and depend heavily on interactions between employees and guests. As a result, the performance of hotel organizations is strongly influenced by the behaviour and capabilities of

employees who are responsible for delivering service experiences to customers.

Despite the contributions of the hotel sector to tourism and service delivery, the industry faces several operational and workforce-related challenges. Service delivery in hotels is largely human-centred, and the quality of guest experiences depends greatly on employees' behaviour, commitment, and performance. However, many hospitality organizations experience difficulties related to limited employee creativity, weak collective purpose, and insufficient trust among employees, which can negatively influence service delivery and organizational outcomes (Leung et al., 2021; Liu & Jiang, 2020). In competitive service environments, hotels increasingly rely on employees to generate new ideas and provide innovative solutions that improve service experiences for guests. Consequently, organizations that encourage employees to go beyond routine service tasks and contribute innovative ideas are more likely to sustain competitive advantage and achieve superior organizational performance (Rahimi & Kozak, 2017).

Creativity has therefore become an important capability for organizations operating in dynamic and competitive markets. Increasing globalization, technological developments, and changing customer expectations have heightened the need for organizations to promote creative thinking and innovative behaviour among employees (Nawaz & Usman, 2018). Employee creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas that improve products, services, processes, or procedures within the workplace (Amabile, 2012). In hospitality organizations, creative employees contribute to improved service delivery, enhanced customer experiences, and organizational adaptability in rapidly changing environments (Kabangire & Korir, 2023). However, there are several factors that may constrain employee creativity in hospitality settings. For example, resistance to organizational change has been identified as an important barrier that discourages employees from proposing new ideas or adopting innovative service approaches (Senbeto & Hon, 2020). Similarly, high job demands, work overload, and work-related stress may reduce employees' capacity to generate and implement innovative ideas (Khliefat et al., 2021). These challenges suggest that organizations require supportive workplace environments that promote collaboration, trust, and knowledge sharing if employee creativity is to be enhanced.

The concept of social capital has become increasingly prominent in organizational research because of its ability to explain how social relationships influence organizational behaviour and performance. Social capital refers to the network of social relationships among individuals and the resources embedded within those relationships that can be accessed and mobilized by organizational members (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Through social interactions, individuals obtain valuable resources such as information, social support, shared norms, and trust that can influence behaviour and performance (Coleman, 1988). In organizational contexts, social capital facilitates cooperation and coordination among employees and promotes knowledge sharing, learning, and innovation (Sözbilir, 2018). Research has also indicated that social capital contributes to the development of positive employee attitudes, organizational citizenship behaviour, and workplace resilience in hospitality organizations (M. L. L. Santos, 2025). Thus, social relationships within organizations can be considered important resources that influence employee behaviour and organizational outcomes.

Social capital within organizations is often conceptualized in different dimensions, including structural, cognitive, and relational social capital (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Among these dimensions, relational social capital has received considerable attention because of its emphasis on trust-based relationships among organizational members. Relational social capital refers to the level of mutual trust, respect, and emotional bonds that develop among employees through repeated interactions within organizations. These relational qualities create a supportive work environment that encourages employees to share knowledge, collaborate with colleagues, and explore new ideas. Empirical evidence suggests that relational social capital enhances employee creativity because employees feel psychologically safe to exchange ideas and engage in collaborative problem solving (Hidayat et al., 2024). In hotel organizations where service delivery requires constant coordination among employees, relational social capital may therefore represent an important resource that stimulates creativity and improves service performance.

Despite the increasing attention given to social capital in organizational research, very little attention has been given to how relational social capital influences employee creativity within hospitality organizations. Much of the existing literature on social capital in hospitality has focused primarily on outcomes such as organizational performance, knowledge sharing, and employee resilience rather than examining how interpersonal relationships among employees influence creative work behaviour (Sözbilir, 2018; Giannoukou, 2024; Santos, 2025). In addition, most empirical

studies on social capital and creativity have focused on organizational contexts in Western and Asian economies, with comparatively limited attention given to hospitality organizations in Africa (Ayentimi et al., 2021; Thai et al., 2020). This limited attention restricts the understanding of how relational social capital develops and influences employee behaviour within hospitality organizations in developing economies.

Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between relational social capital and employee creativity in the hotel industry in Ghana. Specifically, the study investigates how trust-based relationships among employees influence their ability to generate creative ideas and innovative solutions within the workplace. By focusing on relational social capital and employee creativity in the hospitality sector, the study contributes to the literature by extending existing research on social capital and employee behaviour and by providing empirical evidence from a developing economy context where such studies remain limited.

Literature Review

This section provides the theoretical and empirical foundation for the study by discussing Social Capital Theory (SCT), Social Exchange Theory (SET), and Relational Social Capital (RSC). It further reviews the concept of employee creativity and examines how social capital influences creative work behaviour, particularly in hospitality organisations.

Social Capital Theory (SCT)

Social Capital Theory emphasises that social relationships represent valuable resources that influence individual and organisational outcomes. Social capital refers to resources embedded in social networks that can be accessed and mobilised by organisational members, including trust, shared norms, support, and knowledge (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Adler and Kwon, (2002) argue that social capital strengthens organisational effectiveness by enabling individuals to leverage relationships to access valuable information and resources. Thus, social capital is not simply about the existence of relationships, but about the value those relationships generate through cooperation and coordination.

In organisational settings, social capital supports collaboration and facilitates the exchange of knowledge among employees. When employees interact frequently and maintain strong interpersonal relationships, they gain access to diverse perspectives and information that stimulate creative thinking (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998; Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). In service-oriented industries such as hospitality, where teamwork and interpersonal interactions are critical, social capital becomes particularly important. Evidence suggests that social relationships among employees' support knowledge sharing and innovation within hospitality organisations (Dai et al., 2015). Recent studies further show that employees embedded in strong relational networks are more likely to collaborate effectively and develop creative solutions to service challenges (Huu, 2023; Scott & Manning, 2024). Similarly, evidence from hospitality settings suggests that supportive relational environments enhance knowledge sharing and innovation outcomes (Omotosho et al., 2025). From the SCT perspective, hotels that cultivate supportive social environments characterised by trust, cooperation, and open communication are more likely to improve employee creativity and strengthen service performance.

Social Exchange Theory (SET)

Social Exchange Theory provides a complementary explanation for how workplace relationships develop and influence employee behaviour. SET suggests that relationships are formed and sustained through reciprocal exchanges, where individuals provide and receive resources through social interactions (Emerson, 1976; Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). These exchanges include both tangible and intangible resources, such as information, trust, support, respect, and cooperation (Blau, 1964). Through repeated exchange relationships, individuals develop mutual expectations and obligations that influence behaviour and social outcomes.

In organisational contexts, employees who perceive support, fairness, and cooperation from colleagues or supervisors are more likely to reciprocate by engaging in behaviours that support organisational objectives. Such behaviours include cooperation, knowledge sharing, and collaborative problem solving (Liu, 2017). In hospitality organisations, employees frequently depend on one another to deliver service experiences. As a result, reciprocal interactions become important for building trust and sustaining collaboration across departments and work roles. Recent hospitality research indicates that supportive leadership, positive work relationships, and psychological safety shape employees' willingness to engage in creative behaviour (Azim et al., 2019; Karatepe et al., 2020; Jameel et al., 2025). Although SET has been criticised for simplifying social relationships into a purely reciprocal process, it remains useful for explaining how repeated interactions and mutual obligations support strong workplace relationships. In this study, SCT provides the primary theoretical focus,

while SET helps explain how reciprocal interactions contribute to the development and sustainability of relational conditions that support creativity.

Relational Social Capital (RSC)

Relational Social Capital represents a core dimension of social capital that focuses on the quality of relationships among organisational members. RSC reflects trust, mutual respect, friendship, and emotional bonds that develop through repeated interactions (Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Relational social capital highlights that the strength and quality of interpersonal relationships determine the extent to which resources embedded within networks can be exchanged effectively. (Ali-Hassan et al., 2015)Ceci, Masciarelli, and Poledrini (2020) argues that social capital is fundamentally rooted in relationships, and the strength of those relationships influences the flow of resources. Relational social capital facilitates communication, cooperation, and knowledge sharing among employees. Employees who maintain positive relationships with colleagues are more likely to exchange information and resources that stimulate creativity (Jameel et al., 2025; Liu, 2013). Similarly, strong relational networks promote collaborative learning and support innovation by strengthening the flow of knowledge and shared understanding among employees (Sözbilir, 2018). In hospitality organisations, relational social capital is critical because service delivery requires strong coordination among employees across departments such as front office, housekeeping, food and beverage, and reservations. Trust-based relationships enable employees to communicate openly, share knowledge, and collaborate effectively in solving service challenges. Thus, relational social capital creates conditions that encourage employees to share ideas and explore innovative approaches to service delivery.

Employee Creativity

Creativity has become an essential capability for organisations seeking competitiveness and long-term sustainability. Creativity is commonly described as the production of novel and useful ideas by individuals or groups working together (Amabile et al., 1996). Woodman et al. (1993) similarly define creativity as the generation of valuable and useful new ideas, products, services, procedures, or processes within organisations. In service organisations such as hotels, creativity is particularly important because employees frequently face unique customer requests and service challenges that require innovative solutions. Empirical research indicates that creative employees contribute to improved organisational performance by generating ideas that enhance service delivery and operational efficiency (Ferreira et al., 2020; Kršlak & Ljevo, 2021). Studies also suggest that employee creativity is influenced by both individual and contextual factors within organisations. In hospitality settings, supportive work environments, positive emotions, and psychological safety have been linked to improved creative performance (Hidayat et al., 2024). Therefore, organisations seeking to strengthen innovation and service excellence require workplace conditions that support employees' ability to develop and implement new ideas.

Social Capital and Employee Creativity

The social capital perspective suggests that social relationships provide resources that can stimulate creativity and innovation. Social capital facilitates the flow of information among employees and creates shared norms and trust, making collaborative outcomes more likely (Liu, 2018; Santos et al. 2023). Some scholars define social capital as the accumulated value of resources derived from interpersonal relationships (Liu, 2013), while others define it more broadly as the network of relationships and shared norms that characterise social groups (Tsai & Ghoshal, 1998). In organisational contexts, employees develop social capital through interaction, knowledge sharing, and collaborative learning. These interactions enable employees to access diverse perspectives and expertise that stimulate creative work behaviour (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005; Korzynski et al., 2019).

Empirical research shows that social capital positively influences employee creativity and innovation, particularly in service-oriented industries where teamwork and interaction are central to performance outcomes (Han et al., 2014; Huang & Liu, 2019). Recent hospitality studies further support the view that relational ties among employees enhance creativity by strengthening knowledge exchange and collaborative learning (Hidayat et al., 2024; Omotosho et al., 2025). However, despite these insights, evidence on the specific influence of relational social capital on employee creativity in hospitality organisations remains limited, especially in developing economy contexts. This limitation provides a clear justification for examining relational social capital as a predictor of employee creativity in Ghana's hotel industry. Based on the theoretical arguments and empirical evidence discussed above, the following hypothesis is proposed:

Hypothesis

H_A **1:** Relational social capital has a significant influence on employee creativity.

Methodology

Study Area

The study was conducted in Cape Coast and Elmina two ancient cities located along the Gulf of Guinea coastline in the Central Region of Ghana. These locations are considered the 'heartbeat' of Ghana's rich tourism industry, with the hotel sector working in conjunction with the tourism sector (Akyeampong, 2011). According to Cobbinah et al. (2017), the Cape Coast-Elmina region is among the top tourist destinations in Ghana, attracting visitors from various parts of the world. Similarly, Addo (2011) noted that Cape Coast has long served as the main venue for the Pan African Historical Theatre Festival, a biennial event aimed at uniting Africans from both the continent and the Diaspora to participate in activities that reflect on the impact of the transatlantic slave trade on African people. Additionally, of the 304 registered hotels and guest houses in the Central Region, 73 of them are located in Cape Coast-Elmina alone (GTA, 2019), making up almost a quarter of the total in the whole Central Region. The researchers believed that the hotel industry was appropriate for this study as their operations involve a lot of social interaction among employees, customers, and other stakeholders, leading to idea generation and implementation in the face of global challenges confronting the industry.

Research Design

An explanatory survey design was employed to examine the scope and characteristics of the cause-and-effect relationship between relational social capital and employee creativity (Escorcia et al., 2022). As noted by Park et al. (2020), this type of design focuses on hypothesis testing to determine both the direction and nature of the relationship between the variables being investigated. The primary aim was to clarify how relational social capital influences employee creativity and to understand the nature of this relationship.

Study Population

The study examined the relationship between relational social capital and employee creativity among hotel employees in the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation. Hence, the study's target population was the hotel industry's employees based on the current records of employees from January 2021 – March 2021 of the licensed hotels and guest houses within the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA) destination. According to the GTA (2019), the hotel section's total number of employees within the Cape Coast and Elmina districts totalled 847 (Table 1).

Sample and Sampling Techniques

Using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table, the researchers selected a representative sample of 260 hotel employees from the total population within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation. Table 1 presents the profiles of the registered hotels along with the number of employees at each. The study focused on collecting data from both rated and budget hotels in the Cape Coast–Elmina area, as outlined in Table 1. The unit of analysis for this research comprised employees working in the various hotels within the conurbation. The researchers employed a stratified sampling technique, categorizing the 73 hotels into five distinct strata. This approach ensured that the sample reflected the population's diversity, capturing the unique characteristics of each category. Within each stratum, a simple random sampling method was employed to obtain a sub-sample in proportion to the size of the stratum. The combined use of these techniques ensured that each employee had an equal chance of selection, while also enhancing the study's external validity and allowing for a more accurate generalisation of the findings.

Data Collection Instrument

The primary tool used to gather data was the "Relational Social Capital and Employee Creativity Questionnaire" (RSCECQ) designed by the researchers. According to Kerlinger (1986), questionnaires effectively provide essential information about practices and conditions for which respondents should be knowledgeable. The researchers reviewed prior studies that aided them in the design of obtain appropriate questionnaires on relational social capital (Mohammed & Mostafa, 2019;

Table 1. *Profile of Licensed hotels, Employees and Sample Size*

Hotel Category	Number of Hotels	No. of employees	No. of respondents
3- Star	2	280	86
2- Star	6	94	29
1- Star	14	182	56
Guest House	3	21	6
Budget	48	270	83
Total	73	847	260

Sources: GTA, (2019) and Field data, (2021)

Muhammad et al., 2016) and employee creativity (Rastgoo, 2017; Zhou & George, 2001).

Data Processing and Analysis

The 260 completed copies of RSCECQ were assigned numerical codes and entered into SPSS (version 26). Descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies, were used to summarize the demographic data, while the study's objectives were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM).

PLS-SEM was considered the most suitable analytical method for this research (Hair, Hult, Ringle Sarstedt, 2021), as it allows for the simultaneous examination of relationships between variables by integrating regression and factor analysis techniques (Baron & Kenny 1986). By this method, PLS-SEM eliminates the problems associated with Type 1 errors and the need to adjust alpha levels when running multiple regressions. PLS-SEM also allows measurement error to be controlled for (Hair et al., 2021) and may offer a more realistic measure of the model under investigation. The model was made of relational social capital and employee creativity.

Ethical Consideration

Informed consent was obtained from all respondents before commencing the research. The researchers established rapport with hotel managers in the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation and ensured that adequate information was provided to all participants. Our research was guided by a steadfast commitment to uphold the autonomy and dignity of all participants through transparent communication and explicit consent. We empowered participants to share their perspectives freely, thereby facilitating genuine insight and collaboration Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RSCECQ was administered and collected face to face from January 2021 to February 2021 after the lockdown restriction was relaxed. Participants were assured that their identities would remain anonymous and their responses confidential, and they were informed that their involvement in the study was entirely voluntary. The researchers adhered strictly to personal hygiene and social distancing guidelines as outlined by the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service. Despite the potential for social desirability and common method biases, the results remained objective and unbiased.

Structural Model Assessment

When the measurement model assessment is satisfactory, the next step in evaluating PLS-SEM results is assessing the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2021), the basic standard valuation criteria to be considered include the coefficient of determination (R^2), the Q^2 ("blindfolding-based cross-validated redundancy measure"), effect size (f^2) and the statistical significance and relevance of the path coefficients. As an acceptable rule, R^2 of 0.25, 0.5 and 0.75 is considered as weak, moderate and substantial respectively." In addition, "a predictive relevance (Q^2) of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 is considered as small, medium and large respectively." Furthermore, "effect size (f^2) of 0.02, 0.15 and 0.35 are seen as small, medium and large respectively." Finally, a significant level of 5% or less or a t-statistic of 1.96 or higher is appropriate for a structural model.

Control Variable

To gain a clearer understanding of the relationship between relational social capital and employee creativity, we incorporated several control variables that prior studies have identified as influencing creative performance. These included individual-level factors such as gender, age, and educational background, all of which have been associated with differences in creative output (Amabile et al., 1996; Li et al., 2019). We also accounted for work-related variables like overall professional experience and length of service within the hotel, as prolonged exposure to the work setting may affect innovative behaviour (Cai, 2018). Additionally, we controlled for job role, acknowledging that some positions inherently offer greater chances for creative engagement. At the organizational level, we included hotel size and star classification, recognizing that larger or more prestigious hotels might offer enhanced resources or more structured environments that can impact creativity (Claver-Cortés et al., 2007). Controlling for these variables allowed us to better isolate the specific influence of relational social capital and enhance the robustness of our results.

Results

This section presents the findings and analysis derived from the study's research hypothesis. As an explanatory study, it utilizes a quantitative approach, as detailed in the methodology. The results and interpretations are organized in line with the research hypothesis. Additionally, this part highlights the outcomes of the study based on the stated hypothesis, which was examined using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The measurement models were first presented and followed by the structural model (which also tested the hypothesis). Two models were generated to explain the relationship and the interaction among the variables. Model one assessed and addressed relational social capital and employee creativity objectives.

Model One

The first model of the PLS-SEM was used to address the study's objective. Next is the presentation of the measurement and structural results.

Measurement Model Assessment

The assessment of the measurement model was guided by key assumptions, including item loadings, construct reliability and validity, convergent validity (measured by average variance extracted), and discriminant validity. As noted by (Henseler et al., 2015), testing these assumptions is essential for accurately interpreting the results of the structural model and ensuring the study's reliability and validity.

Item Loading

The initial step involved evaluating the item loadings for each construct. Following the rule of thumb suggested by Henseler et al. (2009), items with loadings of 0.70 or higher were considered strong indicators of their respective constructs. As a result, items with loadings below 0.70 were removed from the model unless they contributed meaningfully to overall reliability. The final model, refined based on these criteria, served as the foundation for further analysis using PLS-SEM, with the results illustrated in Figure 1.

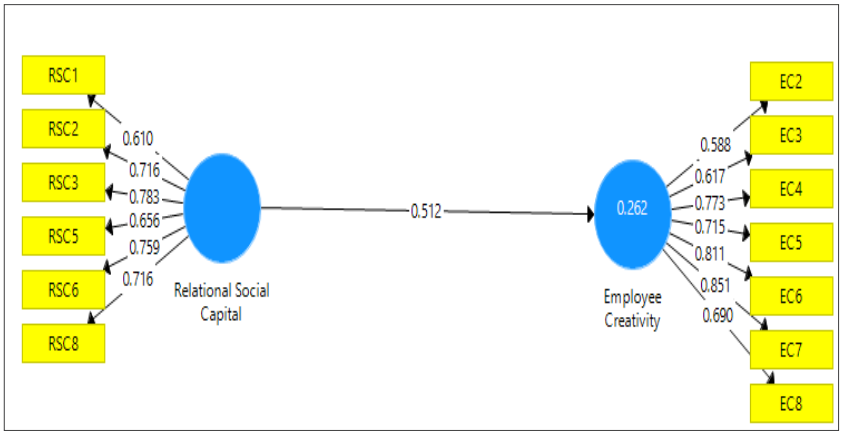

Figure 1. *Final model extracted*

Table 3. *Construct Reliability and Validity*

	CA	Rho_A	CR	CV (AVE)
EC	0.849	0.853	0.884	0.590
RSC	0.805	0.822	0.858	0.503

Notes: CA – Cronbach's alpha; CR – Composite reliability; CV – Convergent validity; AVE – Average Variance Extracted; EC - Employee Creativity; RSC - Relational Social Capital

Source: Field Survey (2021)

Construct Reliability and Validity

Table 3 presents the results of other assessment criteria, including construct reliability and validity and convergent validity (average variance extracted).

As shown in Table 3, the study assessed indicator reliability (IR), which reflects the proportion of variance in an indicator explained by its underlying latent variable (Hair et al., 2016), using both Cronbach's alpha (CA) and rho_A values. The analysis prioritized rho_A, as it is considered a more rigorous and accurate measure of reliability compared to CA (Hair et al., 2021). All constructs recorded rho_A values above the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Table 3 also reports the composite reliability (CR) of the constructs, which measures how well a group of indicators collectively captures the intended construct (Ringle, Sarstedt, & Straub 2012). This measure requires a high degree of internal correlation among the indicators, a condition satisfied by the data. Additionally, convergent validity was confirmed through the Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with all constructs achieving AVE scores greater than 0.50, indicating that a substantial proportion of variance in the indicators was successfully captured by their respective latent constructs.

Discriminant Validity

Table 4 further presents the quality of the model by testing for discriminant validity (DV), as suggested by Hair et al. (2021). The DV is primarily tested using the Fornell and Larcker (1981) criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio. It is noted that the HTMT

ratio is regarded as a better and quality measure of discriminant validity (DV) than Fornell and Larcker's (1981) criterion. Hair, Hult, Ringle and Sarstedt (2016) thus recommended for testing DV by Sarstedt Ringle, Smith, Reams and Hair (2014). As such, the study assessed the DV using the HTMT score (Table 4).

Table 4. *Discriminant Validity : Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)*

Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)	**EC**	**RSC**
EC	**1.0**	
RSC	**0.562**	**1.0**

Source: Field Survey (2021)

From Table 4, all the values for each construct were below HTMT.85. This indicates that each construct is truly distinct. After these basic assessments, the study followed up with the analysis of the research objectives in the next section.

Structural Model

After the measurement model was assessed to ensure that it meets the PLS-SEM criterion, the study presented the results of the research objective. This was done by assessing the direction and strength using the path coefficient (β) and level of significance with t-statistics obtained through 5000 bootstraps. The result of the objectives is in Table 5.

The result of the structural equation model is presented in Table 5 and was used to discuss the study's research objective. The results were presented based on the

Table 5. *Result of Structural Equation Model*

	(β)	T-Stats	P-values	R^2	R^2 adjusted	Q^2	f^2
EC				0.393	0.386	0.177	
RSC -> EC	0.381	10.618	0.000				0.217

Source: Field Survey (2021)

t-stat with corresponding p-values < 0.05. Also, the path coefficients were explained based on the criteria suggested by Cohen (1992); namely, that a correlation coefficient of 0.10 represents a weak or small correlation, a correlation coefficient of 0.30 represents a moderate correlation, and a correlation coefficient of 0.50 represents a large or strong correlation. Results in Table 5 showed a significant and positive influence of relational social capital (R=0.381; t=10.618; p<0.05) on employee creativity. These results further indicated that relational social capital dimensions account for 38.6 percent (R^2: Table 5) of variation in the employees' creativity in the hotels studied. Concerning the effect size, the study asserted that relational social capital (f^2=0.217) caused small and moderate statistically significant positive variance in employee creativity.

Discussion

This hypothesis investigated the effect of relational social capital on employee creativity in the hotel industry within the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation. According to the results in Table 5, relational social capital significantly influences employee creativity. The results show that without relational social capital, there should be much emphasis placed on trust within the working environment, established norms and obligations, and identifying roles and responsibilities. Good relational social capital facilitates support systems created in the organisation that eventually impact employees' creativity and hence, the entire organisational performance of the Cape Coast and Elmina hotel industries.

The research hypothesis was to establish whether relational social capital as a social capital dimension influences employee creativity in the hotel industry in the Cape Coast-Elmina conurbation or not. Most employees in the hotel industry in Cape Coast and Elmina support an efficient relational social capital system as a dimension in providing conducive social capital to create a good workplace innovation for employees. The data that the respondents have supplied show that a proper relational social capital scheme in the hotel industry makes employees work with high enthusiasm, increasing the creativity, and performance level of the employees. The findings agree with studies by Adler and Kwon (2002) who examined the association between social capital and performance in a large-scale manufacturing firm. RSC built on trust, reciprocal obligations, and shared norms significantly enhance employee creativity. In both studies, strong interpersonal relationships foster open communication and psychological safety, which are essential for creative idea generation and collaboration. The current study has thus revealed that relational social capital has substantial influence on creativity.

Theoretical implications

Hotel organizations should prioritize the development of comprehensive management education programs that go beyond traditional operational skills. These programs should emphasize innovative thinking, relationship-building, and creativity-fostering techniques. Managers could benefit from regular workshops and seminars that blend theoretical knowledge with practical applications specific to the hotel industry.

The role of Engineering and Technology that arises from the findings in this study is both multifaceted and critically important. First, based on the study's findings regarding the importance of relational social capital in fostering employee creativity, hotels should implement technological solutions that enhance workplace relationships and innovation. Modern hotel management systems should incorporate digital platforms that facilitate collaboration and strengthen social connections among staff members. These systems should include features for virtual team building and relationship development, particularly as they are critical in the contemporary hospitality environment.

Practical implications

Hotels should invest in integrated management systems that support both operational efficiency and social capital development. Such systems should include workflow automation that encourages cross-departmental collaboration while maintaining the personal connections essential to the hospitality industry. These platforms should facilitate knowledge sharing and creative idea exchange, supporting the study's findings on the relationship between social capital and employee creativity.

Management should implement digital collaboration tools that break down hierarchical barriers and encourage creative input from all staff levels. These tools should align with the hospitality industry's unique needs, fostering both operational excellence and the strong interpersonal relationships that this study has shown to be crucial for employee creativity.

Managerial implications

Hotel management teams should include professionals skilled in developing workplace relationships and fostering creative environments. These specialists should focus on building the relational social capital that this study has identified as crucial for employee creativity. Their role should include facilitating communication, building trust, and developing emotional intelligence across all departments. These initiatives should emphasize the study's key finding that employee creativity flourishes when supported by strong management education, diverse perspectives, and effective cross-departmental collaboration.

Counselling implications

The key implications for counsellors working with hotel management would include the following, among others: Firstly, counsellors should emphasize the importance of building and maintaining quality relationships at work. They can guide employees to develop active listening skills and emotional intelligence to strengthen trust with colleagues. They could train the leadership team as well as employees to practice open communication techniques that foster mutual understanding. In that way, all workers in hotels will be able to learn strategies for building genuine connections across departments.

Secondly, counsellors can design interventions that combine management education with relationship-building. This can be done as they lead hotels to create peer mentoring programs where experienced employees share both technical and interpersonal knowledge. The extension of this implication is for counsellors to facilitate group learning sessions that incorporate team-building elements and design job rotation programs that help employees build broader relationship networks while gaining management skills.

Limitations and future research

The focus on the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation in the Central Region may have constrained data collection and limited the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the exclusive use of quantitative methods may have overlooked deeper insights that qualitative approaches could offer. Future research should expand the geographical scope to include other cities and adopt a mixed methods approach to provide a more comprehensive understanding of social capital, particularly its cognitive and structural dimensions, as well as the influence of organizational culture and leadership effectiveness in the hospitality industry.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that this study was conducted in the absence of any potential conflicts of interest relating to financial or commercial bonds that may construe the publication of this paper.

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