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Research Article

Social Capital And Employee Creativity in the Hotel Industry of Ghana: Moderating Role of Gender

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Abstract

This study examines the influence of social capital on employee creativity in the hotel industry, focusing on hotels in Cape Coast and Elmina in Ghana. Grounded in social capital theory, the study addresses an important research gap concerning individual-level creativity within the hospitality sector, particularly in developing economy contexts where empirical evidence remains limited. A cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected from 260 hotel employees using structured questionnaires and a simple random sampling technique. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationship between social capital and employee creativity and to test the moderating role of gender. The results indicate that social capital has a significant positive influence on employee creativity in the hotel workplace. The study further revealed that gender does not significantly moderate this relationship, which means that the influence of social capital on employee creativity is relatively consistent across male and female employees. This study contributes to the hospitality management literature by providing empirical evidence on the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel sector, particularly within the Ghanaian context where such research remains limited. The findings also offer practical implications for hotel managers and policymakers in promoting collaborative work environments that strengthen social capital and enhance creativity among employees.

Keywords: Social capital; employee creativity; gender; hospitality industry; hotel employees; Ghana.

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Introduction

The hospitality industry plays an important role in the economic development of both developed and developing economies. The sector contributes not only to national income but also to employment creation, tourism development, and service provision that supports economic activities. In recent years, the global hospitality industry has experienced significant expansion and has become an important driver of economic growth and service development. Research shows that the travel and tourism sector continues to contribute substantially to economic output and employment generation. For instance, the United States

emerged as the most powerful travel and tourism market in 2023, contributing approximately $2.36 trillion to its national economy (World Travel & Tourism Council [WTTC], 2024).

In addition to economic output, the hospitality industry demonstrates strong employment-generating potential. The sector directly employed approximately 42 million women and 16.1 million young people globally in 2022, while nearly 35 million roles were categorized as high-wage positions, highlighting the industry's capacity to support quality livelihoods (WTTC, 2024). The contribution of the hospitality industry is also evident in developing economies such as Ghana. According to the Ghana Tourism Authority (GTA), the sector generated approximately 230,000 jobs in 2020, comprising about 66,000 direct jobs and 164,000 indirect jobs that contributed about 5.5% to Ghana's gross domestic product in 2018 (GTA, 2020). These contributions demonstrate that the hospitality industry remains an important catalyst for economic growth and employment creation in the country.

Despite these contributions, the hospitality industry faces operational and human resource challenges. Service delivery in hospitality organizations is largely human-centred, and guest experiences depend greatly on employees' behaviour and performance. However, fluctuating economic conditions, increased competition, and high employee turnover have created difficulties for many hospitality organizations in maintaining consistent service delivery (Dogru et al., 2023). In addition, organizational constraints that weaken mutual trust and shared purpose among employees may limit collaboration and negatively influence service outcomes (Leung et al., 2021). These challenges often manifest in poor service encounters that may weaken customer satisfaction and intensify competitive pressures (Agbenyegah & Neequaye, 2024). Consequently, hospitality organizations increasingly rely on employees who can demonstrate originality, adaptability, and creativity in delivering exceptional service experiences.

Creativity has therefore become an important organizational capability for firms operating in dynamic service environments. Globalization, technological advancement, 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. However, creativity may be constrained by organizational conditions such as resistance to change, work overload, and work-related stress, which may discourage employees from proposing new ideas or experimenting with innovative service approaches (Senbeto & Hon, 2020; Khliefat et al., 2021). These challenges suggest that organizations require supportive workplace environments characterized by collaboration, trust, and knowledge sharing if creativity is to be enhanced.

The concept of social capital has therefore become increasingly prominent in organizational research because of its ability to explain how social relationships influence behaviour and performance within organizations. Social capital refers to the networks of 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 gain access to resources such as information, trust, shared norms, and social support (Coleman, 1988). In organizational contexts, social capital facilitates cooperation, coordination, knowledge sharing, learning, and innovation. Research also suggests that social capital influences employee attitudes and workplace behaviour in hospitality organizations (Li et al., 2021). Thus, social capital can be considered an important relational resource that shapes employee behaviour and organizational outcomes.

However, social capital within organizations is not always equally accessible to all employees. Literature suggests that social capital is influenced by gendered patterns of socialization that shape participation in workplace networks. Patwardhan et al. (2016) and Russen et al. (2021) argue that women often face structural barriers and cultural stereotypes that limit participation in influential workplace networks, potentially constraining their ability to leverage social capital for innovation and career advancement. Nevertheless, other studies suggest that women may possess relational capabilities that facilitate strong interpersonal networks. Murphy, Gibson, and Kram (2024) argue that women often demonstrate higher levels of empathy, collaboration, and relational sensitivity, which may enable them to cultivate supportive workplace relationships and access informal support systems. These perspectives suggest that gender dynamics may influence how employees access social capital and engage in creative behaviour within organizations.

Despite the increasing attention given to social capital and employee creativity, important gaps remain. First,

comparatively little attention has been given to how relational resources embedded in workplace networks influence creative behaviour among hospitality employees. Second, most existing studies on social capital and creativity have been conducted in Western and Asian contexts, with limited empirical evidence from hospitality organizations in sub-Saharan Africa. Third, while gender has been discussed in relation to workplace networks, few studies have examined gender as a boundary condition in the social capital–creativity relationship in service-intensive settings. Addressing these conceptual, contextual, and boundary-condition gaps is important for advancing knowledge on how workplace relationships influence creative behaviour in hospitality organizations.

Drawing on social capital theory and social exchange theory, employees who possess stronger relational networks are more likely to exchange knowledge, share information, and collaborate in solving workplace problems, which may stimulate creative performance. However, the strength of this relationship may vary across gender due to differences in access to and utilization of workplace social capital. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hospitality industry, with particular emphasis on the moderating role of gender, using data from the hotel industry in Ghana. The objectives of the study are as follows: (1) to examine the relationship between social capital and employee creativity among hotel employees; and (2) to examine the moderating role of gender in the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel sector.

Literature Review

Drawing on social capital theory, this study argues that employees' workplace relationships constitute valuable resources that provide access to information, trust, shared understanding, and social support, which facilitate creativity through learning and knowledge integration (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Social exchange theory complements this perspective by explaining how workplace relationships are sustained through reciprocal interactions, where employees respond to supportive treatment by sharing ideas, assisting colleagues, and engaging in cooperative problem solving (Blau, 1964). In hotel work, where service delivery is highly interdependent, the combination of relational resources (social capital) and reciprocity norms (social exchange) creates conditions that encourage employees to generate and implement innovative service ideas.

Social Capital Theory and Employee Creativity

Social capital theory provides an important framework for explaining how workplace relationships influence behaviour and performance within organizations. The theory suggests that individuals derive benefits from social relationships through access to resources embedded in networks of interactions, including information, trust, shared norms, and social support (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). These relational resources facilitate communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among organizational members, which are essential for innovation and problem solving.

Employee creativity refers to the generation of novel and useful ideas that improve products, services, processes, or procedures within organizations (Amabile, 2012). In hospitality organizations, creativity contributes to improved service delivery, enhanced customer experiences, and the ability to respond effectively to unexpected service challenges. Because hotel operations depend heavily on teamwork and interpersonal interaction, employees often rely on colleagues for information and support when addressing service-related problems.

Empirical studies increasingly suggest that workplace social relationships play a critical role in stimulating employee creativity. For instance, research shows that employees embedded in supportive networks are more likely to access diverse knowledge and expertise that facilitate idea (Zhou et al., 2022; Nguyen et al., 2021). Similarly, studies highlight that social capital can foster psychological safety within organizations, enabling employees to express ideas without fear of negative consequences. Such supportive environments encourage experimentation and collaborative innovation.

However, the relationship between social capital and creativity is not always uniformly positive. Some scholars argue that highly cohesive networks may limit exposure to diverse perspectives, leading to redundant information exchange and reduced novelty in idea generation. In such situations, tightly knit networks may constrain creativity rather than stimulate it. Nevertheless, when workplace relationships provide access to diverse knowledge and open communication, social capital can significantly enhance innovative thinking and creative problem solving.

Collectively, these arguments suggest that social capital creates a relational environment that facilitates knowledge sharing, collaboration, and access to valuable resources. Employees who possess strong workplace networks are therefore more likely to exchange ideas, integrate knowledge, and develop innovative solutions to

service-related challenges. Consequently, social capital may serve as an important mechanism through which employee creativity can be enhanced within hospitality organizations.

H_A 1: Social Capital Has a Significant Influence on Employee Creativity

Gender, Social Capital, and Employee Creativity

While social capital provides important relational resources within organizations, access to these resources may vary across individuals depending on their social position within workplace networks. Gender, as an important social category, may influence how employees participate in organizational networks and utilize social capital within the workplace. Differences in socialization patterns, professional opportunities, and organizational norms may shape how men and women develop and maintain workplace relationships (Angervall et al., 2018).

Existing research suggests that men are often more likely to be embedded in high-status networks that provide access to influential mentors, strategic information, and organizational opportunities (Woehler et al., 2021). Such networks may enhance access to resources that stimulate creative thinking and career advancement. In contrast, women often develop relational networks characterized by trust, cooperation, and emotional support, but may have more limited access to broader structural networks that provide influential organizational resources (Setini et al., 2020; Murphy et al., 2024).

The hospitality industry has also been criticized for gender disparities in leadership positions and career progression. Studies conducted in hospitality contexts suggest that gender stereotypes and unequal access to workplace networks may influence employees' professional development and opportunities for advancement (Patwardhan et al., 2016). At the same time, other research indicates that inclusive organizational practices and gender-neutral policies may promote equal access to workplace networks and encourage collaboration across gender groups (Robledo et al., 2015).

Despite increasing attention to social capital and employee outcomes, relatively limited research has examined how workplace relationships influence employee creativity within hospitality organizations, particularly in developing economy contexts. Furthermore, the moderating role of gender in shaping how employees leverage workplace social capital for creative performance remains insufficiently understood.

Addressing these gaps, the present study examines whether gender moderates the relationship between social capital and employee creativity within the hotel industry.

H_A 2: Gender Moderates the Relationship Between Social Capital and Employee Creativity in the Hotel Sector

Conceptual Framework

Based on the preceding theoretical arguments, a conceptual framework is developed to examine the relationships among social capital, gender, and employee creativity in the hotel sector. The framework is grounded primarily in social capital theory, which explains how workplace networks provide individuals with access to valuable relational resources. According to Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), social capital comprises three interrelated dimensions: structural social capital, cognitive social capital, and relational social capital. These dimensions represent patterns of interaction among organizational members, shared understanding that facilitates communication, and the quality of interpersonal relationships developed through repeated interactions.

Within hospitality organizations, strong social capital can create supportive environments that encourage collaboration, knowledge sharing, and creative problem solving among employees. Employees embedded in workplace networks characterized by trust, shared values, and open communication are more likely to exchange ideas and develop innovative approaches to service delivery. Consequently, social capital is expected to enhance employee creativity by enabling employees to access relational resources that stimulate innovative thinking.

This study also introduces gender as a moderating variable that may influence the relationship between social capital and employee creativity. Gender may shape how employees' access and utilize workplace networks to influence the extent to which social capital contributes to creative performance. Differences in network participation, access to mentoring relationships, and exposure to organizational resources may affect how employees leverage social capital for innovation.

The framework is further supported by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964), which explains how relationships based on trust, reciprocity, and mutual support influence behaviour within organizations. Employees who experience supportive workplace relationships are more likely to reciprocate by sharing knowledge, contributing ideas, and engaging in creative activities that benefit the organization.

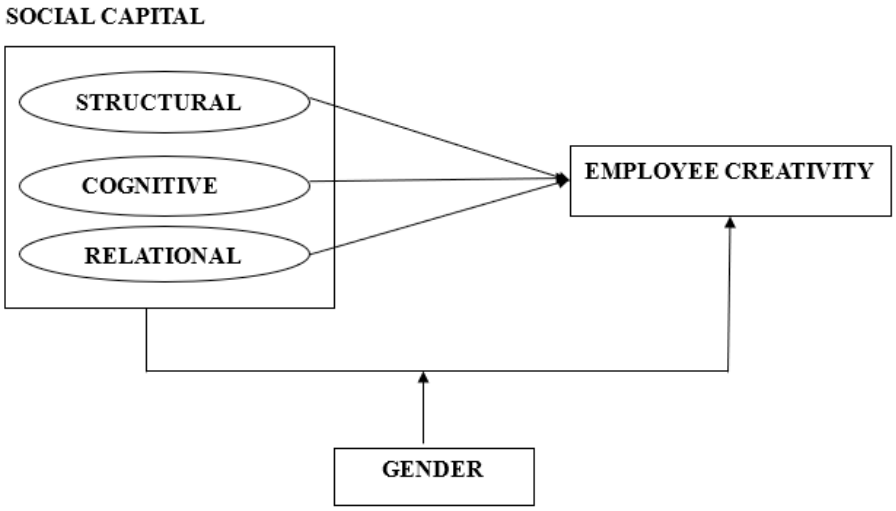

Figure 1. *Theoretical framework. Source: Authors' construct (2021)*

The conceptual framework (Fig.1) proposes that social capital (structural, cognitive, and relational) positively influences employee creativity among hotel employees, while gender moderates this relationship by shaping employees' access to and utilization of workplace networks. The framework integrates insights from social capital theory and social exchange theory to explain how relational resources and reciprocal interactions facilitate creativity in hospitality organizations.

Methodology

This study was conducted within the hotel industry in Ghana. Most hotels in the Central Region are located in Cape Coast and Elmina, largely due to their historic tourist attractions, festivals, and heritage sites that attract numbers of both domestic and international visitors (Bondzi-Simpson, 2015). These tourism activities have increased demand for hotel accommodation within the area. Therefore, this study purposefully selected Cape Coast and Elmina as the study locations for administering the survey.

The study examined the effect of social capital on employee creativity and further assessed the moderating role of gender in this relationship. An explanatory research design was adopted because it allows the researchers to examine relationships among variables and explain the causal relationships that exist between them.

Following the purpose and objectives of the study, a quantitative research approach was employed. The quantitative approach was considered appropriate because the constructs of social capital (cognitive, structural, and relational), employee creativity, and gender (male and female) were quantified and analysed using statistical techniques. The quantitative methodology therefore enabled the researchers to test the hypotheses and examine the interactions among the variables based on the theoretical framework.

According to records that the researchers obtained from the Ghana Tourism Authority GTA, (2019), there were 847 employees in registered hotels within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation. This was taken as the target population used for determining the appropriate sample size. The profile of the registered hotels and their number of employees is presented in Table 1.

To determine the appropriate sample size, the study employed the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) sample size determination table. Based on a population of 847 employees, a sample size of 260 respondents was considered appropriate for the study. Simple random sampling was used as the sampling technique. This technique ensured that every employee within the population had an equal chance of being selected,

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)

thereby reducing sampling bias and improving the representativeness of the sample. Table 1 shows the profile of hotels in the Cape Coast and Elmina conurbation of their employees and sub-sample sizes proportionately selected to obtained the sample of 260 respondents for the study.

Data Collection Instrument

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire titled Social Capital and Employee Creativity Questionnaire (SCECQ). The development of the questionnaire was grounded in established studies within the literature on social capital and employee creativity. SCECQ consisted of closed-ended items to ensure consistency, objectivity, and clarity in the responses obtained from participants. It was designed to gather data on three distinct dimensions of social capital viz: Structural Social Capital, Cognitive Social Capital, and Relational Social Capital.

Structural Social Capital

The structural social capital dimension (Appendix A, Section B) examined network ties, network density, and multiple relationships among employees within the hotels. The six (6) items used in this section were adopted from Turner (2011) and Kim and Shim (2018), drawing on their application in previous studies by Muhammad, Mahadi, and Hussin (2016) as well as (Mura, Lettieri, Radaelli, and Spiller 2013). The items were designed to assess the network structures that facilitate communication and resource sharing among employees.

Cognitive Social Capital

The cognitive social capital dimension (Appendix A, Section B) contained six (6) items, focusing on shared norms, values, vision, and meanings among employees within the organization. Items used in this section were initially based on Anderson and Jack (2002) and later refined using contributions from Carey, Lawson, and Krause (2011), as applied by Muhammad et al. (2016). These items measured the extent to which employees shared a common understanding that facilitates communication and coordination within the workplace.

Relational Social Capital

Relational social capital was measured using eight (8) items that examined interpersonal relationships, trust, and informal networks among hotel employees (Appendix A, Section B). These items were adopted from Jones and Taylor (2012) and Nahapiet and Ghoshal (1998), and later applied in Kim and Shim (2018). The items captured the level of trust, friendship, and mutual support that develop among employees through repeated workplace interactions.

Employee Creativity

Employee creativity was measured in Section C of the questionnaire (Appendix A). This section focused on employees' ability to generate novel ideas and solutions within the workplace. The measurement scale was adapted from Zhou and George (2001) and later refined by Sanda and Arthur (2017) to ensure its suitability for the hospitality context.

Instrument Pre-Testing and Validation

Prior to the main data collection, the SCECQ was pre-tested with 30 employees from selected hotels in the Sekondi–Takoradi Metropolis. The purpose of the pre-test was to examine the clarity, consistency, and relevance of the questionnaire items. The pre-test was also used to confirm the face and content validities of the instrument. This resulted and resulted in minor adjustments to improve its wording and structure. The reliability values of the various sections of SCECQ were computed using Cronbach's alpha. The Cronbach's alpha values ranged from .7 to .85, exceeding the recommended threshold of .70 suggested by Nunnally (1978). The reliability results are presented in Table 2.

Data Collection Procedure

Prior to the administration of the questionnaire, the researchers scheduled meetings with hotel managers within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation to introduce the purpose of the study and establish rapport. An introductory letter from the Department of Management at the University of Cape Coast was presented to the management of the hotels to obtain permission to conduct the survey.

Table 2. *Cronbach's Alpha of study variables*

Variables	Number of items	Cronbach's Alpha	
		Pilot	Main Study
Structural Social Capital	6	.72	.73
Cognitive Social Capital	7	.70	.71
Relational Social Capital	8	.74	.81
Employee Creativity	8	.73	.85

Source: Field data, (2021).

The SCECQ was self-administered to employees in the selected hotels. The data collection process was initially scheduled between May and July 2020. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the associated restrictions on hotel operations, the data collection period was postponed. The questionnaires were eventually administered between January and February 2021 after the COVID-19 lockdown restrictions had been relaxed.

During the data collection process, all safety protocols established by the Ministry of Health and the Ghana Health Service were strictly followed. These included the wearing of nose masks, hand sanitization, and adherence to social distancing guidelines.

Copies of the questionnaire were administered on Wednesdays and Fridays between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and between 2:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m., excluding weekends. Respondents were asked to complete and return the questionnaire to the human resource manager or hotel manager for collection by the researchers.

Due to the fact that self-report questionnaires may introduce social desirability bias and potential common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2003), respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Participation in the study was voluntary, and the questionnaire did not require respondents to provide personal identification information. The researchers also ensured that the responses were reported collectively rather than individually in order to maintain neutrality and confidentiality.

Data Processing and Analysis

Each copy of the completed questionnaire was coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. Descriptive statistics, particularly frequencies, were used to present the demographic characteristics of the respondents. The hypotheses were analysed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM).

The PLS-SEM approach was considered appropriate for the study (Hair, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2021) because it allows the simultaneous examination of relationships among multiple variables. The technique combines features of regression and factor analysis to analyse complex relationships among latent constructs (Baron & Kenny, 1986). In addition, SEM helps control for measurement error and provides more accurate estimates of relationships among variables within the model

(Hair et al., 2021). The analytical model used in this study included social capital as the independent variable, employee creativity as the dependent variable, and gender as the moderating variable.

Results

This section presents the findings of the study based on the research hypothesis. As indicated in the methodology, the study employed a quantitative research approach and utilized Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to analyse the data. The results are presented in two stages. First, the measurement model was assessed to establish the reliability and validity of the constructs. This was followed by the structural model assessment, which examined the relationships among the variables and tested the research hypothesis.

The model examined the influence of social capital on employee creativity while assessing the moderating effect of gender. Measurement model results are presented first, followed by structural model results. Figure 2 presents the final PLS-SEM output illustrating the relationships among the constructs.

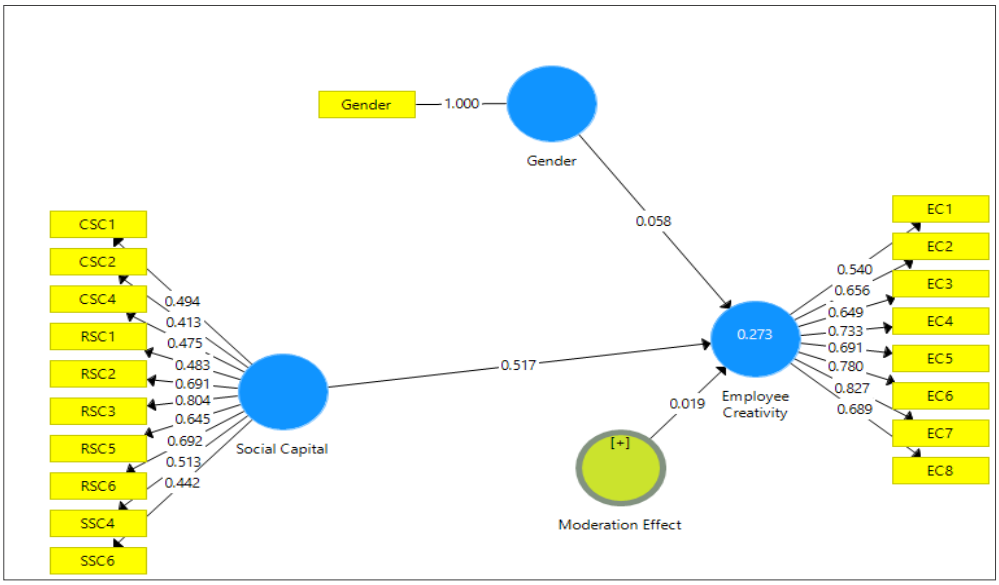

Figure 2. *Final PLS-SEM Output. Source: Field Survey (2021)*

Figure 2 illustrates the measurement and structural model results generated from the PLS-SEM analysis, showing the relationships among social capital, gender, and employee creativity.

Measurement Model Results

Item Loadings

Item loadings were examined to determine indicator reliability. According to Hair et al. (2021), loadings above 0.708 indicate that the construct explains more than 50 percent of the indicator variance. In this study, the retained indicators recorded loadings within the recommended range of 0.40–0.70 and above, which were considered acceptable for establishing indicator reliability.

Internal Consistency Reliability

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (CA), rho_A, and composite reliability (CR). These measures evaluate the consistency of indicators measuring the same construct. Reliability values above 0.70 are considered acceptable (Hair et al., 2021).

The results presented in Table 3 show that the Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability.

Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was evaluated using the average variance extracted (AVE), which measures the extent to which a construct explains the variance of its indicators (Hair et al., 2021). A minimum AVE value of 0.50 is recommended (Henseler et al., 2015). The AVE values reported in Table 3 indicate that the constructs adequately explain the variance of their indicators, confirming convergent validity.

Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Heterotrait–Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. HTMT values below 0.85 indicate that constructs are empirically distinct (Henseler et al., 2015). The results presented in Table 4 show that all HTMT values were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating that the constructs were sufficiently distinct and that discriminant validity was established.

Table 3. *Construct Reliability, Validity and Discriminant Validity*

	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
EC	0.849	0.862	0.884	0.491
Gender	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
Moderation	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
SC	0.767	0.779	0.828	0.335
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)				
	EC	Gender	Moderation	SS
EC				
Gender	0.120			
Moderation	0.160	0.003		
SC	0.621	0.181	0.330	

Note: SC – Social capital Source: Field Survey (2021)

Although the AVE for social capital was slightly below the recommended 0.50 threshold, the construct demonstrated acceptable internal consistency reliability based on Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, and composite reliability values above 0.70. In PLS-SEM, AVE values slightly below 0.50 may be acceptable when reliability is satisfactory and indicators remain theoretically meaningful. The HTMT results further confirmed that the constructs were empirically distinct, supporting the adequacy of the measurement model for subsequent structural analysis.

Structural Model Results

After establishing the adequacy of the measurement model, the structural model was evaluated to assess the predictive power of the model and the significance of the hypothesized relationships. The coefficient of determination (R^2) showed that social capital explained 27.3 percent of the variance in employee creativity ($R^2 = 0.273$), indicating moderate explanatory power.

Predictive relevance was assessed using the Q^2 statistic obtained through the blindfolding procedure. The Q^2 value of 0.123 indicates acceptable predictive relevance of the model.

Effect size (f^2) was also evaluated to determine the contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous construct. The results indicated that social capital had a substantial effect on employee creativity ($f^2 = 0.342$), while gender and the moderation effect showed negligible effect sizes.

The statistical significance of the path coefficients was assessed using bootstrapping procedures. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4. *Structural Model Results of Moderation Effect*

	Beta (R)	T Stats	P Values	R^2	R^2 Adjusted	Q^2	f^2
EC				0.273	0.264	0.123	
Gender -> EC	0.058	1.059	0.290				0.005
Moderation -> EC	0.019	0.194	0.846				0.000
SS -> EC	0.517	12.867	0.000				0.342

Source: Field Survey (2021)

To further evaluate the robustness of the model, several model quality indicators were examined. The coefficient of determination (R^2) indicated that social capital explains 27.3 percent of the variance in employee creativity, suggesting moderate explanatory power. The predictive relevance value ($Q^2 = 0.123$) obtained through the blindfolding procedure further confirms that the model possesses acceptable predictive capability. In addition, the effect size results indicate that social capital contributes substantially to explaining employee creativity ($f^2 = 0.342$), while the effect sizes associated with gender and the interaction term are negligible. In a collective sense, these results suggest that the structural model demonstrates satisfactory explanatory and predictive performance, supporting the robustness of the proposed relationships.

The results indicate that social capital has a significant positive influence on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.517$, $t = 12.867$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that employees who possess stronger workplace relationships are more likely to exhibit creative behaviours.

However, the interaction effect between gender and social capital was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.019$, $t = 0.194$, $p = 0.846$), indicating that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social capital and employee creativity.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis: Social capital has a significant influence on employee creativity in the hotel sector.

This hypothesis examined the influence of social capital (SC) on employee creativity among hotel employees. Social capital was treated as a composite construct reflecting the overall network relationships, shared understanding, and interactions within the organisation.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that social capital has a statistically significant and positive effect on employee creativity ($\beta = 0.517$, $t = 12.867$, $p < 0.001$). This suggests that higher levels of social capital are associated with increased employee creativity in the hotels studied.

These findings are consistent with prior empirical studies on social capital and creativity. For instance, Liu (2013) found that social capital significantly enhances organisational creativity by facilitating interaction and knowledge exchange among employees. Similarly, Chen, Chang, and Hung (2008) established that social capital has a direct positive effect on organisational creativity, as it promotes cooperation, trust, and information sharing. In addition, Inkpen and Tsang (2005) emphasised that social capital enables knowledge transfer and learning within organisations, which are critical drivers of creativity and innovation. Perry-Smith and Shalley (2003) also found that employees embedded in strong social networks are more likely to generate creative ideas due to access to diverse information and resources.

The model further explains approximately 27.3% of the variance in employee creativity ($R^2 = 0.273$; Adjusted $R^2 = 0.264$), indicating that social capital is a substantial predictor of creative performance within the organisational context. In addition, the predictive relevance of the model ($Q^2 = 0.123$) confirms that the model has adequate explanatory power.

The significant influence of social capital on employee creativity provides empirical support for social capital theory, which suggests that workplace networks enable employees to access knowledge, trust, and support necessary for innovation (Inkpen & Tsang, 2005). The findings also align with social exchange theory, indicating that supportive and interactive work environments encourage employees to reciprocate through creative behaviours such as idea sharing and problem-solving (Perry-Smith & Shalley, 2003).

The results imply that the creativity benefits derived from social capital are rooted in the strength and quality of workplace relationships rather than isolated individual efforts. Consequently, organisational practices that enhance communication, trust, and collaboration are likely to improve employee creativity and overall performance.

In conclusion, the study confirms that social capital, as a composite variable, has a significant and positive influence on employee creativity in the hotel industry within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation. The hypothesis is therefore supported.

Hypothesis: Gender moderates the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel sector.

This hypothesis examined whether gender influences the relationship between social capital and employee creativity among hotel employees. Specifically, the study tested whether the combined dimensions of social capital—structural, cognitive, and relational—interact with gender to influence employee creativity.

The results presented in Table 4 indicate that the moderating effect of gender on the relationship between social capital and employee creativity was not statistically significant. This suggests that the relationship between social capital and employee creativity does not differ significantly between male and female employees in the hotels studied.

These findings are consistent with Baer and Kaufman (2008), who reported minimal differences between men and women in creativity test scores and creative accomplishments. Similarly, Potur and Barkul (2015) observed that differences in creative performance are often influenced by contextual and organizational factors rather than gender characteristics. (Foss, Woll, and Moilanen (2013) also noted that workplace creativity is shaped by multiple organizational conditions.

The significant influence of social capital on employee creativity provides empirical support for social capital theory, which suggests that workplace networks enable employees to access knowledge, trust, and support that facilitate idea generation. The findings also align with social exchange theory, indicating that supportive relationships encourage employees to reciprocate through behaviours such as idea sharing and creative problem solving.

The non-significant moderating role of gender suggests that the creativity benefits derived from workplace relationships may be similar for male and female employees in the hotels studied. This implies that creativity may depend more on the availability and quality of workplace networks than on gender differences. Consequently, organizational practices that strengthen communication, trust, and collaboration may enhance creativity across employees without requiring gender-specific interventions.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel industry within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation in Ghana, while also assessing the moderating role of gender. The findings indicate that social capital has a significant positive influence on employee creativity, while gender does not significantly moderate this relationship.

The significant relationship between social capital and employee creativity provides empirical support for social capital theory. The theory posits that social networks provide individuals with access to valuable relational resources such as information, trust, and shared norms (Adler & Kwon, 2002; Nahapiet & Ghoshal, 1998). Within hospitality organizations, these relational resources facilitate communication, collaboration, and knowledge exchange among employees. When employees maintain strong interpersonal relationships characterized by trust and mutual support, they are more likely to share ideas, combine diverse perspectives, and develop innovative solutions to service-related challenges. The findings therefore suggest that workplace networks serve as important mechanisms through which employees access knowledge and resources that stimulate creative thinking.

The results also align with social exchange theory, which explains how supportive workplace relationships encourage reciprocal behaviours among organizational members (Blau, 1964). When employees experience trust and cooperation within their workplace networks, they are more likely to reciprocate by contributing ideas, assisting colleagues, and engaging in creative problem-solving. In hospitality settings where service delivery requires continuous interaction among employees, these reciprocal relationships may strengthen collaboration and facilitate innovation in service encounters.

The finding that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social capital and employee creativity suggests that the benefits of workplace relational resources may be relatively similar for both male and female employees in the hotels studied. This result supports previous research indicating that gender differences in creative performance are often minimal when employees operate within comparable organizational environments (Baer & Kaufman, 2008). Similarly, Potur and Barkul (2015) argue that creativity differences between men and women are frequently influenced by contextual factors rather than inherent gender characteristics.

These findings suggest that access to supportive workplace networks may be more important for creativity than

gender differences among employees. When employees have equal opportunities to participate in organizational networks and share knowledge, both men and women may benefit similarly from relational resources that facilitate creative thinking. This perspective is consistent with research by Foss et al. (2013), who emphasize that workplace creativity is shaped by organizational conditions such as collaboration, trust, and knowledge exchange rather than demographic characteristics alone.

Overall, the findings highlight the importance of strengthening workplace relationships within hospitality organizations. By fostering environments characterized by open communication, trust, and collaboration, hotel organizations can enhance employees' access to social capital and stimulate creative problem-solving. Such relational environments are particularly important in service-oriented industries such as hospitality, where employees frequently encounter unpredictable service situations that require flexible and innovative responses.

Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel industry within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation in Ghana, while also assessing the moderating role of gender. The findings highlight the important role of social capital in promoting creativity among hospitality employees. Specifically, the results indicate that social capital significantly influences employee creativity. Employees who develop strong workplace relationships characterized by trust, collaboration, and shared understanding are more likely to generate new ideas and engage in creative problem-solving.

The results also show that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social capital and employee creativity. This suggests that the influence of social capital on creativity is similar for both male and female employees in the hotel industry. These findings challenge assumptions that workplace creativity varies substantially across gender groups. Instead, the results indicate that when employees have equal access to workplace networks and social resources, both men and women can contribute similarly to creative outcomes.

These findings provide useful insights for managers in the hospitality sector, where service innovation and customer experience are essential for competitiveness. Creativity among employees is critical for improving service delivery, responding to changing customer expectations, and addressing operational challenges. The study therefore reinforces the importance of building strong workplace relationships as a means of stimulating creative behaviour.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, several recommendations are proposed for hotel managers, industry stakeholders, and policymakers.

First, hotel managers should foster collaborative and inclusive work environments that encourage interaction and knowledge sharing among employees. Strengthening workplace relationships through teamwork, open communication, and collaborative activities can enhance social capital and stimulate creative thinking.

Second, organizations should invest in training and development programmes that promote creativity and innovation. Workshops, brainstorming sessions, and innovation-oriented training can help employees develop creative skills while aligning their ideas with organizational goals. Such initiatives can also strengthen shared understanding among employees, contributing to the development of cognitive social capital.

Third, hotel management should cultivate psychologically safe environments where employees feel comfortable expressing ideas without fear of criticism or failure. When employees perceive that their contributions are valued and supported, they are more likely to experiment with innovative solutions. Team-building activities, recognition programmes, and supportive leadership practices can reinforce mutual trust and cooperation.

Finally, policymakers and industry regulators such as the Ghana Tourism Authority should incorporate creativity and innovation strategies into hospitality training programmes. Networking platforms, industry forums, and knowledge-sharing initiatives can strengthen social capital across the hospitality sector and enhance employees' creative capacity.

Overall, strengthening social capital within hotel organizations can play a critical role in enhancing employee creativity. By investing in workplace relationships, fostering inclusive practices, and supporting creative development, hotel managers and industry stakeholders can improve service delivery and promote sustainable growth within the hospitality sector.

Research Contributions

This study contributes to the hospitality management literature in several ways.

First, theoretically, it extends social capital theory by demonstrating that relational resources embedded in workplace networks significantly enhance employee

creativity in hotel organizations. While previous research has often focused on outcomes such as knowledge sharing, commitment, and performance, this study highlights the role of social capital in stimulating creative behaviour among hospitality employees.

Second, methodologically, the study applies Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) to examine the relationships among social capital, gender, and employee creativity. This approach allows the simultaneous assessment of measurement and structural models, providing a robust empirical test of the proposed framework.

Third, contextually, the study contributes to the limited body of research on employee creativity within hospitality organizations in developing economy contexts. Much of the existing literature has focused on Western and Asian settings. By examining the hotel industry in Ghana, the study provides new insights into how workplace relationships influence creativity in emerging tourism destinations.

Finally, the study contributes to the literature on gender and workplace creativity by demonstrating that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social capital and employee creativity. This suggests that when employees have equal access to workplace networks and relational resources, both men and women can demonstrate similar levels of creative behaviour.

Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the theoretical understanding of social capital and employee creativity in several ways. First, the findings reinforce the relevance of social capital theory in explaining how workplace relationships influence employee behaviour. Employees who develop strong interpersonal networks characterized by trust, shared norms, and open communication are more likely to engage in creative thinking and problem-solving.

Second, the study extends prior research by demonstrating that social capital functions as an important mechanism for enhancing creativity within hospitality organizations. Relational resources embedded in workplace networks facilitate knowledge sharing, collaborative learning, and the generation of innovative ideas.

Finally, the study contributes to the literature on gender and workplace creativity by showing that gender does not significantly influence the relationship between social capital and employee creativity. This finding suggests that creativity in organizational settings may depend more on access to supportive workplace relationships than on gender differences.

Managerial Implications

The findings offer several implications for hotel managers seeking to enhance employee creativity. Managers should prioritize the development of strong workplace relationships by promoting collaboration, teamwork, and open communication among employees. Strengthening interpersonal networks within the organization can enhance social capital and stimulate creative thinking.

Managers should also encourage knowledge-sharing practices such as cross-departmental collaboration, regular team meetings, and brainstorming sessions. These activities create opportunities for employees to exchange ideas and develop innovative solutions to service challenges.

Additionally, hotel managers should create psychologically safe environments where employees feel comfortable proposing new ideas without fear of criticism. When employees perceive that their contributions are valued and supported, they are more likely to experiment with innovative approaches that improve service delivery.

Counselling Implications

The findings also provide useful insights for organizational counsellors and human resource practitioners in the hospitality sector. Counsellors can support employees in developing interpersonal and communication skills that strengthen workplace relationships and collaboration.

Through counselling and training programmes, employees can learn how to build trust, manage conflicts, and engage in effective teamwork. These relational competencies can strengthen social capital within organizations and encourage employees to share ideas more openly.

Counsellors may also help employees develop confidence in expressing creative ideas. By supporting employees' psychological well-being and interpersonal relationships, counselling interventions can contribute to a more supportive and innovative organizational climate.

Limitations and Future Research

This study has several limitations. First, the research was limited to hotels in Cape Coast and Elmina, which may affect the generalizability of the findings to other regions and hospitality contexts. Second, the study employed a cross-sectional design, which restricts causal inference and does not capture how workplace networks and creativity evolve over time. Third, the use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce

social desirability bias and potential common method bias despite procedural remedies. Finally, gender was operationalized as a binary category, which may not fully capture broader gender identities or cultural influences shaping workplace networks.

Future research could employ longitudinal or multi-source designs to examine how social capital and creativity develop over time. Additional studies may also explore boundary conditions such as leadership style, psychological empowerment, service climate, and job design to better understand when social capital strengthens or constrains creativity. Comparative research across regions or countries could further examine how cultural contexts influence workplace networks and creative outcomes in hospitality organizations.

Final Conclusion

This study examined the relationship between social capital and employee creativity in the hotel industry within the Cape Coast–Elmina conurbation in Ghana, while assessing the moderating role of gender. The findings demonstrate that social capital significantly enhances employee creativity in hospitality organizations. Employees who maintain strong workplace relationships characterized by trust, collaboration, and shared understanding are more likely to generate innovative ideas and engage in creative problem-solving.

The study also found that gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between social capital and employee creativity, suggesting that when employees have equal access to workplace networks and relational resources, both men and women can demonstrate similar levels of creative behaviour.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of strengthening workplace social capital as a strategic mechanism for fostering employee creativity and service innovation. By promoting collaborative work environments, encouraging knowledge sharing, and supporting inclusive organizational practices, hotel managers and policymakers can strengthen employees' creative capacities and contribute to sustainable development within the hospitality sector.

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 hinder the publication of this paper.

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