

# EFFECT OF STRUCTURAL SOCIAL CAPITAL ON EMPLOYEE'S PERFORMANCE OF HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY IN MINNA METROPOLIS, NIGER STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

**T**he study investigates the effect of structural social capital on employees' performance of hospitality industry in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. Quantitative researched design was adopted with a structured questionnaire for data collection. The study focuses on eighteen (18) Three- star hotels registered with Niger State Association of hotels in Minna Metropolis, Niger State. The sampling techniques for this study were conducted in two phases. In the first phase, purposive sampling technique was employed while census - based method was utilized in the second phase. Two key employees providing the administrative services (Manager and Receptionist) were surveyed for this study. 36 questionnaires were administered to respondents of three - star hotels, only 34 questionnaires were returned and used for the analysis of this study. Descriptive and inferential statistical were employed for data analysis. The result showed R<sup>2</sup> of 46.3%. The regression result revealed that network ties have positive and significant effect on employee's performance of hotel in the study area, while network configuration has a positive and insignificant effect on employee's performance of hotel in the study area. It is recommended that management of hotels should imbibe the culture of structural social capital as catalyst that influence employees' behaviour to achieved sustained performance. Government should ensure strict compliance of structural social capital dimensions in developing local content policies by institutional body as well as explore social relationship as critical tool for business success.

**Keywords:** Structural Social Capital, Employees Performance, Social Capital Theory, Network ties, Network configuration

## Introduction

The core of every hospitality industry is to render excellent services to their guest (Amalu and Ajake 2015). These services involved a chain of activities executed by the security guard, who welcome the guest, the receptionist who check-in the guest after payment of hotel bills, the porter who carry guest's luggage to his/her rooms, the chef who cooked and delivered delicious meal to the guest, and the cleaner who ensured that the hotel room and the environ is clean (Atintola *et al.*, 2019). This implies that the hotel employees are very essential in carrying out day to day activities needed to achieve the desired set objectives (Banki *et al.*, 2016; Konak and Secilmis, 2018). Therefore, the success of any hotel depends largely on courteous treatment of their employees by pay masters which in turn demonstrate a good work ethic that can influence effective customers' service delivery (Tang, 2016; Neneh, 2017). The dynamic and highly competitive business environment of the hospitality industry, beckons for social relationships as crucial task for hotel employees to ensure influx of guest as well as enhance effective and efficient service delivery to client (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013). Unfortunately, most of the hotel managers treat their employees as just ordinary workers that can easily be replaced with others if they fail to do their job as prescribed by the management (Akintola *et al.*, 2019). As such, employees benefit such as promotion and salary increment are merely at the discretion of management. Employees that complained are threatened with job terminations. Other employees suffer from sexual harassment and verbal abuse. All these treatments have a negative impact on employee's performance (Akintola *et al.*, 2019). Like other cities and town in Nigeria, the performance of hotels in Minna is negative as result of non - existent of sound customers. As such, resulted in the closure of top three hotels in Minna with good edifice namely; Golden Place, Hydro and Shiroro hotels respectively (Banki *et al.*, 2016)

For hotels to satisfy their guest needs, their employees need more than a good remuneration. Such as, leave bonuses, end of the year bonus, best employees of the year. A satisfied guest is not only after once in a lifetime quality service but a lifetime constant of such service which can only be achieved through social relationship

between employees and clients (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013). Relatedly, Chamanifard *et al.* (2015) described social capital as the network of relationships possessed by social actors and the sum of potential resources embedded within, available through and derived from such network build by mutual acquaintance. Such relationship among actors, provide opportunities for them to gain access to relevant peers with desired sets of knowledge or resources that enhanced effective and efficient service delivery in an organisation (Ellinger *et al.*, 2013). More so, structural social capital as a dimension of social capital enables hotels employee to share their work-related experience, expertise, technical-know-how, and contextual information with their colleagues (Swanson *et al.*, 2020), which in turn, improve their service qualities by enhancing employees knowledge of customer preferences and tailoring their service accordingly (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013). On the other hand, structural social capitals facilitate the flow of critical information and transfer of knowledge that foster cooperation among network members during the process of service delivery (Hallam *et al.*, 2018). Interestingly, managers of established hotels have acknowledged the fact that social relationship could be used to achieve service effectiveness, pursue strategic goals, achieved profitability and novel operations (Sainaghi and Baggio, 2014; Konak and Secilmis, 2018; Swanson *et al.*, 2020). Going by this, having a structural social capital-oriented approach is not only a strategy for hotels in the present time, but a complete modelled blueprint for operational efficiency (Tang, 2016; Neneh, 2017; Konak and Secilmis, 2018). Based on the highly competitive nature of hospitality industry, hotels have now employed structural social capital dimension to revitalize their operations, build new capabilities (Ellinger *et al.*, 2013; Hallam *et al.*, 2017) and achieve sustainable economic growth (Jafri *et al.*, 2014). However, this paper aim to assess the effect of structural social capital on the performance of the hospitality industries in Minna metropolis, Niger State.

The remainder of this paper is organized as such: The literature review of the variables employed for this study. The following section discusses the method and procedures utilized in conducting this study. The next section provides results and discussion. Lastly, the conclusion and recommendations for the study are stated.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

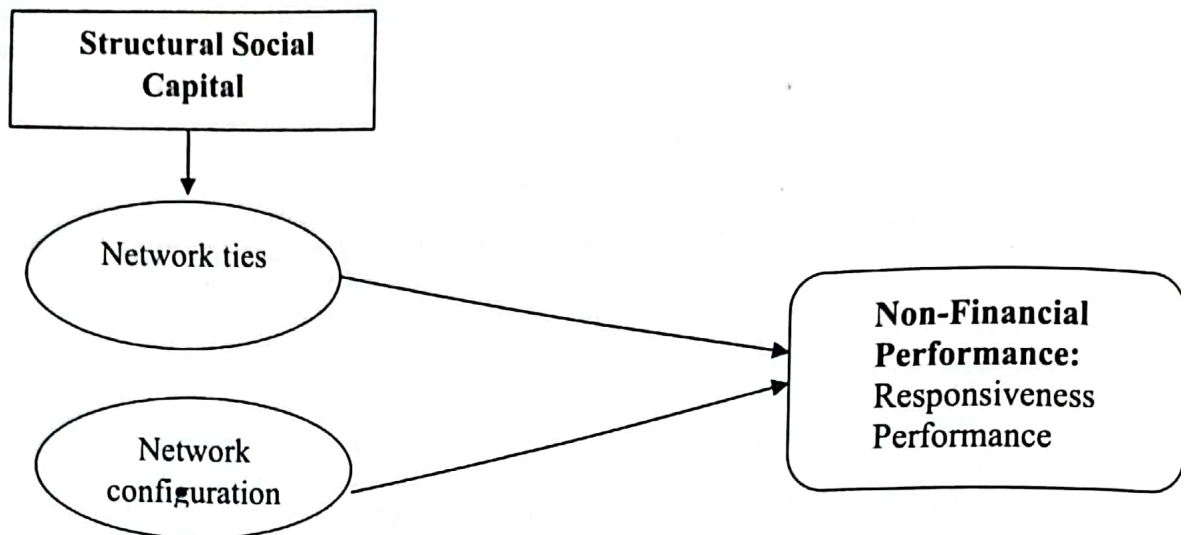
### 2.1 Conceptual Review

#### Concept of Social Capital

Structural social capital relates to pattern of connection among network members that enables them to exchange vital information that may enhance inter-firm collaboration among them in executing task (Dai *et al.*, 2015). Ellinger *et al.* (2013) referred to structural social capital as the degree of connection that employee within an organization share with each other's in order to promote cooperation among them which in turn increase organizational performance. Structural social capital is defined as the extent of social interaction amongst hotel employees that can enhanced their performance (Meseguer-Martinez *et al.*, 2018; Wairimu, 2019). Similarly, Li *et al.* (2014) synthesized structural social capital as formal and informal collaboration and coordination as well as social interaction among network members that can enhance working condition that increase organizational performance. On the other hand, prior studies that conceptualized social capital based on structural dimension focus on content and quality of the information sharing. The content refers to the degree of information shared among network members of hotel; the quality refers to the timely, accuracy, credibility and adequacy of the exchanged information that would ameliorate how service are delivered to customers (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2014; Munaidy *et al.*, 2015; Hador, 2017). Furthermore, Sainaghi and Baggio (2014) and Neneh (2017) conceptualized structural social capital based on network ties and network configuration. The network ties refer to collaborations among network members that allow them to gain access to other members resources and information within an organization, while network configuration constitutes the channels through which vital information and resources is disseminated among network member within an organization. After the critical examination of the various approaches of conceptualizing structural social capital, this current study adopts network configuration and network ties dimension of structural social capital as used in the studies of (Sainaghi and Baggio, 2014; Neneh, 2017). The rational for the selection is based on the fact that, hotel can only achieve operational efficiency and effectiveness if only employees collaborate and work together as a team in rendering services to guest.

#### Concept of Performance

More so, the study's second variable, performance is being measure using one of either form: financial and non-financial dimensions or a combination of both (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Felicio *et al.*, 2014; Tang, 2016; Nemati *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, this study utilized non-financial measures with focus on responsiveness performance. The rational for this is premised on the fact that studying hotels based on responsiveness performance will give an informed perspective as to whether or not the value proposition do satisfy hotels business objectives. The conceptual framework depicts the explanatory and explained variables of the study in the Figure 1.



Framework of the Study

### Theoretical Framework for the Study

This study is anchored on social capital theory. The theory was developed by French sociologist (Bourdieu, 1986). Although, the theory, springs from network theory and it's based on the assumption that person family, friends and associates constitute an important asset that hotel capitalized upon and leveraged for capital gain (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). To reiterate, SCT posits that hospitality industry rely on the concept of social connections among network members, which may be characterized by network ties, network configuration and norms of accepted behavior which enable network members to effectively work together in pursuit of business objectives (Felicio *et al.*, 2014; Konak and Secilmis, 2018). Going by the social capital perspective, the theory focused on how strong network ties among hotel employees facilitate inter-firm cooperation that will help them to render quality services to their guest (Konak and Secilmis, 2018; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019). However, the social capital theory is utilized in developing (i. network ties, and (ii. network configuration dimensions that served as the specific outcome that underpins the structural social capital orientation of the hotels and the accompanying performance.

### Empirical Review of Structural Social Capital and Hotels Employees Performance

Meseguer-Martinez *et al.* (2018) conducted a quantitative study to examine the effect of structural social capital on innovative performance of Science Park in Spain. The study has a sample of twenty-eight firms located in the science and technology park of Albaceta. Twenty-eight questionnaires were administered to managers and other employees of the companies. In collecting the questionnaire back, only twenty-four were found useful for data analysis. Descriptive statistic and Partial Least Square are used for data analysis. The findings revealed that science-push absorptive capacity has no significant influence on structural social capital towards innovation performance in this science park, while demand-pull absorptive capacity has a significant influence on structural social capital towards innovation performance in this science park. The study recommended science park managers should incorporate technological institutions within firms' networks, and promote informal contacts among firm managers and researchers from technological institutions.

Wairimu (2019) conducted a cross-sectional survey of three hundred registered social enterprises in Nairobi County, while evaluating the influence of structural social capital on performance of social enterprises in Nairobi city county, Kenya. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of one hundred and seven from the registered three hundred enterprises. One hundred and seven semi-structured questionnaires were administered to the entire sample. The data collected from the field were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistic. Pearson's moment correlation and chi-square were employed for analysing the data. The findings revealed that Structural Social Capital have positive influence on Performance of Social Enterprise in the study area. The study recommended that Social entrepreneurs should engage in deeper structural social capital as a critical tool for growth and sustainability of enterprise.

Swanson *et al.* (2020) adopted quantitative approaches to examine how social capital impacts small-and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) performance in a hospitality industry in South Korea. Survey research design was adopted with a sample of one hundred and ninety-nine SMEs while comparing the influences of knowledge sharing and innovation generated from structural social capital on non-financial performance. They adopted the structural equation modelling test for the hypotheses proposed in their study. The empirical evidences revealed that social capital constructs, including structural, relational and cognitive social capital, all positively influence knowledge sharing and innovation among SMEs in the hospitality industry, which in turn enhances SME business performance. Further analysis revealed that SMEs that imbibe social capital orientation will constantly pursue novel services that would result in enhanced tourism business performance in terms of financial or non-financial aspects. They then concluded by stating that adopting social capital dimensions provide a gateway for hospitality industry to offer unique services to customers and market needs, as well as ensuring SMEs growth and profitability.

Liang *et al.* (2021) conducted a quantitative study to examine how structural social capital affects performance of large firms through the mediating mechanism of resource acquisition. A descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were employed for data analysis. The study survey two hundred and fifty-three top managers from Chinese firms and found that the social ties of top managers facilitated resource acquisition, which was in turn beneficial for firm performance. The result of the findings revealed that social ties of top managers play an important role in firm's activities, particularly, resources acquisition and general organizational performance. The study recommended that Chinese firms should not only accumulate structural social capital parameters, but their managers should also implement strategies that increase entrepreneur's ability to utilize their resources to enhance the performance of their firms.

Based on this review, it is empirically proof that the studies reviewed are of foreign base and focused on SMEs as well as neglecting hospitality industry. This posed that geographical and industry wise gaps exist.

## Methodology

### Study Area

Minna the Niger State capital is located some 740 kilometers from Lagos and 140 Kilometer from Abuja the Federal Capital of Nigeria and on latitude North 6o.301 and longitude East 8o.801 of the equator. By 2022, Minna has an estimated population of about 478,576 people (World population review 2022).

### Research Design, Sampling Techniques, Data Source and Data Analysis

The study employed quantitative research design as used in the studies of (Saha and Banerjee 2015 Swanson *et al.*, 2020). The study only focuses on Three- star hotels registered with Niger State Association of hotels in Minna Metropolis, as they are the leading hotels in Minna, Niger State. According to the Association, there were 58 registered hotels in Minna as at the time of visit in the year 2020. Only 18 of the 58 hotels possessed the features of 'three-star' hotels and thus served as the sample hotels for this study. The sampling techniques for this study were conducted in two phases. In the first phase, purposive sampling technique was employed and secondly the phase, census - based method was utilized. Two prominent employees providing the administrative services (Manager and Receptionist) were surveyed for this study. The questionnaires were structured to elicit response about academic qualification, age, sex and gender of the respondents. In line with the previous studies, a seven -point likert scale was adopted for this study (Konak and Secilmis, 2018; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019; Swanson *et al.*, 2020). Descriptive statistics was used for analysing the demographic profile of the respondents. Moreover, a total of 36 questionnaires were administered to Manager and Receptionist of Three - star hotels. In assessing and coding the filled questionnaire, 2 of the 36 questionnaires were not filled by respondents due to reason best known to them. Thus, the exclusion of 2 questionnaires from the analysis. Multiple regression analysis was used for analysing the explanatory and explained variables. SPSS software package was employed for analysing demographic profile of respondents and STATA software package was utilized for analysing the explanatory and explained variables.

### Model Specification

In assessing the effect of structural social capital on the performance of hotels employee's in Minna metropolis, an econometrics model was built around the components of structural social capital (network ties and network configuration) and employees performance (responsiveness performance), the model are thus used in estimating the effect of these components on employees performance.

Having stated this, the model is thus formulated as follows:

$$EMP = f(SSC) \quad 1$$

$$\text{With } EMP = RP \quad 2$$

$$\text{and } SSC = f(NTT, NCG) \quad 3$$

Where: EMP = Employees performance

SSC = Structural social capital

Substituting equation 2 and 3 into equation 1, equation 1 becomes

$$RP = f(NTT, NCG) \quad 4$$

Equation 3 can be rewritten as follow:

$$RP = f(NTT + NCG) \quad 5$$

Transforming equation 4 into linear regression, equation 4 then becomes

$$RP = \beta_0 + \beta_1 NTT + \beta_2 NCG + \mu \quad 6$$

Where:

RP = Responsiveness performance

NTT = Network ties

NCG = Network configuration

$\beta_0$  = Intercept

$\beta_1 - \beta_2$  = Estimation parameter associated with the influence of the indicators of structural social capital on employee's performance in hospitality industries in Minna metropolis.

$\mu$  = Error terms

Drawing from the model, our a-priori expectation of the expected pattern of behaviour of the independent variables (NTT & NCG) on the dependent variable (RP) are  $NTT > 0$ ,  $NCG > 0$ .

## Results and Discussion of Findings

### Results

Table 4.1 present the demographic characteristic of Three- star hotels respondents. On the basis of functional responsibility, it can be observed that 50%, representing 17 respondents were managers, and 50%, representing 17 respondents were receptionists. Gender distribution revealed that 53% representing 18 respondents were male, and 47%, representing 16 respondents were female. This might be from the fact that most of the women that are working in hotels in northern part of country are being bad mouth as indecent women and thus abate their participation in hospitality industry services. More so, age distribution revealed the following, 29.4%, representing 10 survey respondents that were of the age between 26 and 30 years respectively, as well as 55.9%, representing 19 respondents fall between the age 31 and 35. Moreover, 14.7%, representing 5 respondents had their age between 36 and 40. The findings depict that the average age of respondents is largely between 31 and 35 years which indicate that respondents are still young which can be attributed to economic active age of the respondents. Furthermore, Table 4.1 discloses that, 2.9%, representing 1 survey respondent had Secondary School Certificate Examination (SSCE). 17.6%, representing 6 survey respondents had their education level as National Diploma/NCE. 55.9%, representing 19 survey respondents had their education level as Higher National Diploma (HND)/Bachelor Degree and 23.5%, representing 8 survey respondents had their education level as Master Degree. The average educational qualifications of respondents are Higher National Diploma (HND)/Bachelor Degree; this is an indication that most hotel employees in Minna are graduates which can be attributed to inability of the graduates to get government employment. Lastly, 55.9%, representing 19 survey respondents had their experience between 0-5years, more so 32.4 %, representing 11 survey respondents had their experience between 6-10years, furthermore, 11.8 %, representing 4 survey respondents fall between 11-15years. The average working experience for Three- stars hotels employees is 2years. This finding indicates that the respondents hardly work for a very long period in hotels due to intangibility of the services and dynamic nature of the business.

**Table 4.1: Demographic Characteristic of the Respondents**

	Three-Stars Hotels		
	F	%	Mean
<b>Functional</b>			
Manager	17		
Receptionist	17	50	
<b>Total</b>	34	50	50
<b>Gender</b>		100	50
Male	18		
Female	16	53	
<b>Total</b>	34	47	53
<b>Age</b>		100	
26-30 years	10	294	
31-35 years	19	559	3
36-40 years	5		2
41 Above	0	147	
<b>Total</b>	34	0	
		100	
<b>Educational qualifications</b>			
SSCE	1	29	
ND/NCE	6	176	
HND/DEGREE	19	559	3
MASTERS	8	235	
<b>Total</b>	34	100	
<b>Working experience</b>	19	559	2
Less than 5 years			
6-10 years	11	324	
11-15 years	4	118	
Above 15 years	0	0	
<b>Total</b>	34	100	

Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

#### Discussion of Regression Analysis Results

The result from Table 4.2 showed  $R^2$  of 0.46270, implying that about 46.3 % of variations that occur in performance were explained by the independent variables included in the models of Three- Stars Hotel. While the remaining 53.7% were due to other extraneous variables not included in the model and error in measurement of some variables. The F- value of 3.20 was significant at  $p < 0.05$  across the hotels, respectively. Thus, indicating that the model for the study has a good fit.

**Table 4.2: Regression Results of Three-star Hotels in the Study Area.**

	Three- Stars Hotels		
Explanator y variables	Coefficient	Standard error	P> t
Network ties	0.4732752	1965302	0.023**
Network configuration	0.1524296	134932	0269
Constant	5.112301	13.65019	0.711
F	3.20		
Prob>F	0.0140**		
R-square	0.4627		
Adj R-square	0.3186		

$p < 0.05$

Source: Author's Field Survey (2021)

The hypotheses tested for the study revealed that network ties had a positive and significant effect on performance of hotel employees with a coefficient of 0.4732752 and p -value of 0.023\*\* at  $< 0.05$ . Based on this result, this study rejects the null hypotheses. The results are in line with our a priori expectation as well as in support of the result of Dai *et al.* (2015) which stated that structural social capital has a positive and significant effect on business performance in Chinese hotels. This implies that

content, frequency and quality of shared information among employees are important in improving business organization performance. More so, network configuration had a positive but insignificant effect on performance of hotel employees with a coefficient of 0.1524296 and p-value of 0.269 at  $< 0.05$ . This result is in contrary to our a priori expectation. Based on this result, this study fails to reject the null hypotheses. The finding is also in contrary to the studies of Akintimehin *et al.* (2019) who revealed that social capital has a positive but significant effect on non- performance of Nigeria informal sector.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

The aim of this study is to investigate the effect of structural social capital on performance of hospitality industry employees in Minna, Metropolis, Niger state, Nigeria. The findings of the study revealed that network ties has a positive and significant effect on employee's performance, while network configuration had positive and insignificant effect on employee's performance of Three- stars hotels in the study area. Based on this result, the following recommendations were made in other to improve the performance of employees in the hospitality industries in the study area as well as Nigeria as whole. Owners and manager of hotels should focus more on developing strong relationship among employees in order to promote resources sharing, ideas transfer, and teamwork as well as achieved sustained competitive advantage. Moreover, The study provide insight to institutional bodies such as National Tourism Development Council (NTDC) on the outcome of social relationship on the performance of hotels industry amongst other services that would positively facilitate the upward moving of the country tourist to that of their partners in other countries.

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