

## **IMPACT OF SOCIAL CAPITAL ON PERFORMANCE OF HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY. A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW.**

**Umar J<sup>1</sup>, Ijaya M. A<sup>2</sup> (PhD.)**

*<sup>1&2</sup>Department of Entrepreneurship and Business Studies, Federal University of Technology  
Minna, Niger State, Nigeria.*

*E-mail: come2paida@gmail.com.*

### **Abstract**

*The influence of social values in economic behaviors of developing countries have continued to create a growing demand for social capital as a critical path to revitalize hospitality industry operation, build new capabilities and achieve sustainable economic growth. Despite these assertions, social capital faces challenges which raises concern about their survival and sustainability. Hence, the paper adopts a conceptual review of extant literature from reputable data bases that examined different dimensions of social capital in relation to performance of hospitality industry, with a view to have a synthesis of commentaries on the concept and theory from existing literature. The review focuses on sociological perspective of social capital which limits generalization of the review to anthropological perspective. The major gaps from the review were identified in order to justify the need for further studies. The study was premised on the Social Capital Theory (SCT). A conceptual framework outlining the relationship between variables in the review was created. The findings of this study provide recent update on the dimensions of social capital as it positively influences the performance of hospitality industry. It is suggested that management of hospitality industry can use multiple dimensions of social capital as factors influencing the overall financial and non-financial performance.*

**Keywords:** Social capital, Performance, Hospitality, Competitive advantage, Social capital theory,

## 1.0 Introduction

The recent dynamic nature of business environment has made hospitality industry across the globe to constantly improve their performance, otherwise, they may experience decline in business (Chamanifard *et al.*, 2015). Owing to this, service industry is faced with an environment characterized by stiff competitions which has led to many hospitality industries winding up and some running into liquidation over time (Konak and Secilmis, 2018). Therefore, to meet up with an unpredictable environmental demand, hospitality industry needs to frequently enhanced their operations, as well as generate superior service offerings. These result to continuous growth of hospitality industry in both developed and developing countries with a major portion of the growth to be influenced by social interaction and trust driven unique service systems (Zhao *et al.*, 2011).

However, the hospitality industry plays an integral role in enhancing the economy of its host community through its tourists' support business outfits such as the drinking spots, transport sector, club houses, arts and crafts, super markets and restaurants (Zhao *et al.*, 2011; Rasak, 2012; Eshetie *et al.*, 2016). Essentially, the hospitality industry makes up a substantial part of the world economy, with 9 percent contribution to the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and also create 216 million jobs in the world as well as generating about US\$6 trillion revenue (Amalu and Ajake 2015; Eshetie *et al.*, 2016). Presently, the revenue in Nigeria is valued at over \$252 million in the year 2013, and is projected to increase in size to about \$445 in 2023, with over 12.7% increase in foreign visitors (Amalu and Ajake 2015). For other countries within African continent, South Africa has over R16.6 billion in 2017, Tanzania's revenue amounted to 206Tsh million in 2017 and Kenyan 103.2Ksh million due to attractive promotions (Hotels outlook, 2018–2022).

Despite the important roles hospitality industry play in the development of the world economy, they are still faced with a number of challenges which raises concern about their sustainability. Even now, most of the hospitality industry across African continent did not meet the standards expected in terms of service delivery such as excellent customer relationship, trained personnel, and knowledge of product or service offerings. These have led to customers complaining of

poor-quality service, loss of confidence and dissatisfaction (Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Amalu and Ajake 2015; Dai *et al.*, 2015; Eshetie *et al.*, 2016). As such, the adoption of social capital has made hospitality industry to gain access to resources and knowledge that are not available in the first place (Teerykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013; Stam *et al.*, 2013; Kim and Shim, 2017). These resources generated by social capital are: trust, cooperation, common goal, business opportunities, information, financial capital, as well as emotional support which are very beneficial to service industry and improve overall business success (Saha and Banerjee, 2015; Tata and Prasad, 2015).

Nevertheless, a number of studies have been undertaken on social capital and performances of hospitality industry through qualitative and quantitative approaches across the globe. For instance, Kim and shim (2017) led a study on the effect of structural relationship on firm performance in tourism cluster in South Korea. Similarly, Tata and Prasad (2015) assessed the impact of different types of social capital on business performances in U.S.A. Neneh (2017) conducted a study on social capital and customer satisfaction in south Africa. Based on the above prior studies, it is evident that there is a gap of conceptual review. It is against this back drop that this study explored social capital and performance of hospitality industry. Consequently, the study aims at providing insights through a review of related literatures on social capital and performance of hospitality industry by explicating the concepts, dimensions, definitions and conceptual framework which could be adopted by hospitality industry in achieving a sustainable growth.

The remainder of the paper is organized as such: section 2.0 and 3.0 is the literature review and conceptual framework; section 4.0 is theoretical review; section 5.0 limitations and direction for future research based on such limitations and section 6.0 which is conclusion and recommendations.

## **2.0 Literature Review**

### **2.1 History of Social Capital**

The history of social capital can be traced back to classical economists, such as Adam Smith and John Stuart Mill, and sociologists, such as Max Weber, who emphasized on the role of culture in economic development. (Benhador, 2016). According to Smith (2007) the concept of ‘social

capital' was first evoked to explain the importance of community participation in enhancing school performance. After long disappearance of the concept, the concept of social capital was reanimated by a team of Canadian sociologists (Seely *et al.*, 1956), that interpersonal relations that are formed based on trust, common goals and cooperation among actors that can lead to better quality of life in urban neighborhoods, and eventually increase the values of property. Moreover, neo-classical economist in the year 1990s, proposed a new doctrine of economic growth and development, which employed the concept of social capital (social networks, trust and common goal) to clearly explicate the influence of social values in economic behaviour. The diverse impact of trust, norms, values, and networks ties on institutions is the foundation of social capital (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). Ganown and Robert (2018) contend that economic behaviours are embedded in social networks, owing to the fact that economists and social scientists have become interested in using social capital as an explanatory variable to explain economic behaviour (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009; Berzina, 2011; Ganown and Robert, 2018). Benhador (2016) asserted that culture interacts with economic development in different ways and thus, cultural dimensions are indispensable for understanding economic behavior. Muniady *et al.* (2015) also affirmed that economic growth is influenced not just by the existence of institutions, but also by certain values, belief and norms that stimulate exchange and investment. He outlined four ways through which culture affects economic behavior: impact on production and consumption, attitudes towards work, creation and managing of institutions, and social networks. The bonding linkage between culture and development has been well established now and social scientists are now paying more attention on how social values that can shape the overall development process (Andrews, 2011; Hallam *et al.*, 2017). The first systematic exposition of the term to academic debates can be attributed to the work of Robert D. Putnam (1993), that greatly popularized the term social capital as features of social organization such as norms, trust and network of relationship that can enhance the efficiency of society by facilitating common actions. For him, social relationship has value and social contacts influence the productivity of people and institutions.

With reference to Nigeria, economists realized the importance of quality of labour in production and started including human capital (knowledge and skills) as a factor of production. Later on, it was recognized that not only human capital, but also cultural factors are important in economic and social outcomes. This reorganization of social components on development led to the birth

of social capital in 1990s. social capital has become the vehicle through which third world countries can developed their hospitality industry. The incorporation of strong ties, trust, kinship and friendship as ingredient of social capital have makes hospitality industry better able to capture the nuances of the world and salvage economic decline of services industry (Neneh, 2017).

### **2.1.1 Classification of social capital**

Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) greatly popularized the term social capital into two modes. The first classification is relationship within the firm (internal social capital), the second are relationship outside the firm (external social capital).

#### **2.1.1.1 Internal social capital**

Internal social capital reflects social ties and network among employees within an organization, and the assets embedded in the relationship (trust and cohesion). More so, resources generated form internal social capital are shared by internal organizational members (Tang, 2016; Hallam *et al.*, 2017). In addition, the internal perspective, also known as the “bonding social capital”, fosters the creation of dense networks through coordination, cooperation, and trust among people involved in the hotel’s operation (Mahajan and Benson, 2013; Dai *et al.*, 2015; Konak and Secilmis, 2018; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019)

#### **2.1.1.2 External social capital**

External social capital can be understood as social links with external entities such as suppliers, customers, partners, and thus, the assets embedded in these relationship (mutual understanding and trust). Typically, the external perspective, known as the “bridging social capital”, relate to direct and indirect external links of an actor with other actors beyond organization. More so, allow hospitality industry to achieved operational efficiency that they cannot achieved alone (Mani, 2015; Tang, 2016; Konak and Secalins, 2018).

### **2.1.2 Distinctiveness of social capital in comparison to other forms of capitals.**

In comparing social capital to other forms of capitals, Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009) distinguishes social capital from others capitals based on three perspectives. Firstly, social capital is embedded in relationships, therefore it cannot be owned by a single person exclusively; secondly, it's an investment of time and energy that can even profit individuals that did not participate in its making; and thirdly, it has a spillover effect on the community, in such that costs and benefits accrue to social relations is not restricted to the person building relationships, but to every individual that belongs to the group.

Ganown and Robert (2018) argues that physical capital and economic capital possesses some characteristics as: extension in time, deliberate sacrifice in the present for future benefits, and transfer of ownership from one person to another. To him, social capital deals only with the time dimension aspect (for example, trust or reputation take some time to develop); material sacrifice is not necessarily required; in most cases, its ownership cannot be transferred into another person. Muniady *et al.* (2015) postulates that while economic capital can be measured based on rate of return, while such measurement is not straightforward for social capital. Another major difference between social capital and other forms of capital is that social capital dwelled on social relationship, whereas other forms of capital primarily reside in the individual alone (Sainaghi, 2014).

Nemati *et al.* (2016) compares different features of capitals and elucidate that while economic capital is in people's bank accounts and human capital is insides their heads, social capital is in the structure of their relationships. You can sell your privately-owned asset, such as building, but you cannot sell your social relationships, in which other individuals also have a stake. However, actors cannot trade social capital in the market but it is, instead, embedded within a group (Felício *et al.*, 2014). Social capital belongs to all actors and requires the actions of all involved to sustain it.

### **2.1.3 Definition of social capital**

Social capital is a multifaceted concept that has been defined differently by different scholars, but there is, however, still a lack of scholarly consensus as to what exactly constitutes social capital. (Andrews, 2011; Chamanifard *et al.*, 2015; Neneh, 2017). This is attributed to the different perception of researchers, and the context in which it is being used (Berzina, 2011; Pinho, 2011; Teerykim *et al.*, 2013) As such, the definitions adopted in prior studies have focused

“Social capital” in terms of “sociological” and “Anthropological” perspective” (Gannon and Robert, 2018).

### **2.1.3.1 The sociological perspective**

The sociological perspective hypothesizes social capital as features of social organizations, such as trust, networks and norms that can improve the efficiency of an organization by facilitating coordinated actions and cooperation for mutual benefit (Nemati *et al*, 2016). Similarly, Social Capital has being conceptualized by (Teerykim *et al.*, 2013) as the ability of the individuals to build network of connections and trust among members with a view of achieving common goal. With regards to sociological approach, social capital is synthesized in terms of: 1) structural (social interaction), 2) relational(trust), and 3) cognitive (shared goals).

- i. The structural social capital (social interaction) is related to the overall pattern of connection among network members (Dai *et al*, 2015; Munaidy *et al.*, 2015). Such connections among actors, provide opportunities for them to gain access to relevant peers with desired sets of knowledge or resources. Frequent interactions between actors, positively influence the speed at which organizational learning occur (Andrews, 2011). Konak and Secilmis (2018) argues that successful interaction between actors increases hotels rates, which, in turn, enhances organizational performance.
- ii. Relational social capital( trust) relate to the personal relationship that people developed with each other through a history of interactions ( Chamanifard *et al.*, 2015; Muniady *et al.*, 2015; Konak and Secilmis, 2018) .These relationship is usually a reflection of the duration of ongoing social interaction, emotional intimacy and frequency of reciprocal behaviours, which in turn developed trust among network members ( Andrews, 2011). Trust indicates confidence between two or more entities (persons and organization) that regular day to day behaviours with actors in hospitality industry will be freehearted, cooperative and predictable based on shared norms (Mahajan, 2011)
- iii. Shared vision as a dimension of social capital refers to resources that provide shared, interpretations, representations, and shared meaning between network members (Stam *et al.*, 2014). These relationships facilitate collective goals of network members’ that shared ideas within a team, foster learning, facilitate interdependence and enhance team effectiveness (Zhao *et al.*, 2011; Ellinger, 2012; Tang, 2016).

### **2.1.3.2 The Anthropological perspective**

Scholars (like, Berzina, 2011; Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Chamanifard *et al.*, 2015; Gannon and Robert, 2018) have conceptualized anthropological Social Capital perspective based on the notion that human has natural instinct for association. As such, Chamanifard *et al* (2015) defined 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. From the above definitions, the anthropological approach synthesizes social capital in terms of bonding, bridging and linking social capital. bonding social capital denotes ties amongst people who know each other well such as immediate family members (spouses, neighbours and close friends) who are alike demographically (age, education, religion and ethnicity). Whilst, bridging social capital refers to a more distant relationships amongst diverse social groups who differ on key personal characteristics (such as former employers, former workmates and loose friends) but share similar financial status and power (Barros and santos, 2009; Stam *et al.*, 2013; Saha and Banerjee, 2015). linking social capital refers to ties and networks among groups and individuals in positions of political or financial power (Rasak ,2012; Tang, 2016;). Bhandari and Yasunobu (2009), affirmed that while bonding and bridging social capital comprises of horizontal relationships, linking social capital lie in vertical relationships. Neneh (2017), established that bonding social capital promotes strong ties and relationships among closed people necessary to pursue common goals in hospitality industry; bridging ties with people across diverse social group can provide access to larger pool of information, resources, and opportunities for hospitality industry to leverage; Linking social capital consist of networks and ties of a particular organization with states or other agencies. After critical examination of the two approaches of defining social capital. the current study adopts the sociological perspective of social capital which conceptualized the term based on features of social organization with more emphasis on the output derive from social norms (Berzina, 2011; Nemati *et al*, 2016). The rationale for the selection of this perspective is because, the sociological perspective inculcates socio-cultural factors in explicating economic phenomena which is most helpful in understanding operational efficiency of hospitality industry. Therefore, using this perspective, the current study will examine social capital and hospitality industry as clearly stated in the overall objective of this study.



#### **2.1.4 Overview of Hospitality Industry in Nigeria**

Broadly, the hospitality industry has been recognised as a vehicle for development and growth of the Nigerian economy (Konak and Secilmis, 2018). The sector has contributed 4.8% to Nigeria GDP and 1.8% of total employment to the country (Amalu and Ajake 2015; Eshetie *et al.*, 2016). The sector has notable hotels in Lagos and Abuja such as Transcorp Hilton, Nordic, Sheraton, Eko and federal palace hotels (shehu *et al.*, 2019) as well as characterised with foreign direct investment (FDI) as the major producer of oil in Africa which form the bases of economy diversification (Zhao *et al.*, 2011; Rasak, 2012; Eshetie *et al.*, 2016).

In general terms, the sector comprises of Motels, Restaurants, Hotels, Resorts and Casinos; the sector include location, size, levels of service, target markets, number of rooms, facilities and ownership etc. In Nigeria context, the industry supply chain has great impact on other business activities in the economy (Li *et al.*, 2013). Hotel guests expend money in the restaurant, recreation, retail and transportation sectors as well as the industry provide opportunity for trade shows, conventions and business meetings which in turn generate economic growth (Ali Jafri *et al.*, 2014). It can be clearly stated that hospitality industry is directly linked with the socio-cultural and economic activities that is widely recognised as one of the fastest growing and rapidly developing industries in Nigerian economy. In spite of the contribution of hospitality industry to the nation's economy, inadequate power supply, low patronage, high cost of production, insecurity, and unstable foreign exchange policies are the main challenges confronting the sector.

##### **2.4.1.1 Performance**

performance is defined as an evaluation of all activities carried out in order to fulfil organizational goals, which can be financial and non-financial or a combination of both (Muniady *et al.*, 2015; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019) Financial measures are related to monetary instruments derived from accounting record (Muniady *et al.*, 2015; Mani and Lakhali, 2015; Sainaghi, 2014; Tang, 2016). To date, Prior Studies adopting this measure sought to use objective means (secondary data from annual reports and other financial documents) (Li *et al.*, 2014; ; Kim and Shim, 2017) or subjective which used self- report and ask respondents ( i e general manager or assistant manager ) to evaluate their hotels financial performance to that of their competitors (Muniady *et al.*, 2015; Konak and Secilmis, 2018; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019) with specific indicators such as hospitality industry revenue growth, return on investment, profit

level, and market share, EBIT margin, (Teerykim *et al.*, 2013; Stam *et al.*, 2013 ; Felí 'cio *et al.*, 2014).

On the other hand, non-financial performance uses non-monetary instruments to provide explanations on how well a hospitality industry is doing (Stam, 2011; Ellinger *et al.*, 2012; Sainaghi 2014; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019). This category of studies adopted subjective measures (perception) of general managers, deputy manager, department manager and other stakeholders on the performance of the hospitality industry (Pinho, 2011; Andrews,2011; Konak and Secilmis, 2018). The specific indicators used includes customer satisfaction, ethical behaviour, service quality, employee satisfaction, and stakeholder's satisfaction (Dai *et al.*, 2015; Mani and Lakhali, 2015).

The last categories of studies combined both the financial and non-financial measures (Stam, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2014; Saha, 2015; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019). This combined approach adopts the use of objective and subjective measures (revenue growth, return on investment, customer satisfaction, ethical behaviour, service quality, and stakeholder's satisfaction) (Stam, 2011; Li *et al.*, 2014; Saha, 2015; Kim and Shim, 2017; Akintimehin *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, this study adopts the non-financial performance discussed earlier. The rationale for this, is premised on the fact that non- financial elements are considered as main performance indicators affecting financial performance.

#### **2.4.1.2 Social capital and hospitality industry performance.**

Social capital has a positive effect on hospitality industry performance through knowledge sharing process that will be beneficial to the industry (Dai *et al.*,2015). Although, this processes allows hospitality industry employees share their work-related experience, expertise, technical - know-how, and contextual information with other colleagues (Kim and Shim, 2017) which in turn, improve their service quality by enhancing employees' knowledge of customer preferences and tailoring their service accordingly (Pinho, 2011; Terrykim *et al.*, 2013; Li *et al.*, 2013). For instance, Konak and Secilmis (2018), surveyed 300 top managers of five-star hotels in two cities in turkey to investigates the mediating role of competitive strategies on the relationship between

social capital and hotels performance. The survey was conducted using structured questionnaires. Hierarchical moderated regression was used as confirmatory analysis to test the research hypotheses. The findings indicate that social capital has a positive effect on the hotel's performance and competitive strategies. The study recommended that hotels should implement social strategies in order to achieve competitive advantage. In south Korea, Kim and Shim (2017) survey a sample of 199 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 capital, all positively influence knowledge sharing and innovation among SMEs in the tourism cluster, which in turn enhances SME business performance. Similarly, Muniady *et al* (2015), examined the effect of relational, cognitive and structural social capital on the financial performance of micro-enterprises owned and managed by women in Peninsular Malaysia. This study employed a cross-sectional analysis, and quantitative data from 417 micro-entrepreneurs from Malaysia are collected through structured interviews. The findings indicated that cognitive and structural social capital has a significant positive effect on micro-enterprise financial performance. More so, Tang (2016), conducted an empirical inquiry of environmental scanning and social capital building in Taiwan. Utilizing a questionnaire survey, 240 self-administered questionnaires were mailed to general managers of hotels in Taiwan. A descriptive statistics and regression method of data analysis was employed. The findings gotten from the empirical tests of eight hypotheses showed that proactive personality of hotels manager positively influences environmental scanning and social capital. The study concluded that service innovation and social capital is contingent on new service delivery method in hotels (Tang, 2016). Based on

previous studies reviewed, it is evident that social capital positively impacted hospitality industry performance.

### 3.0 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework outlines the independent and dependent variables as discussed in the literature review and elaborated in the Figure 1.0 below

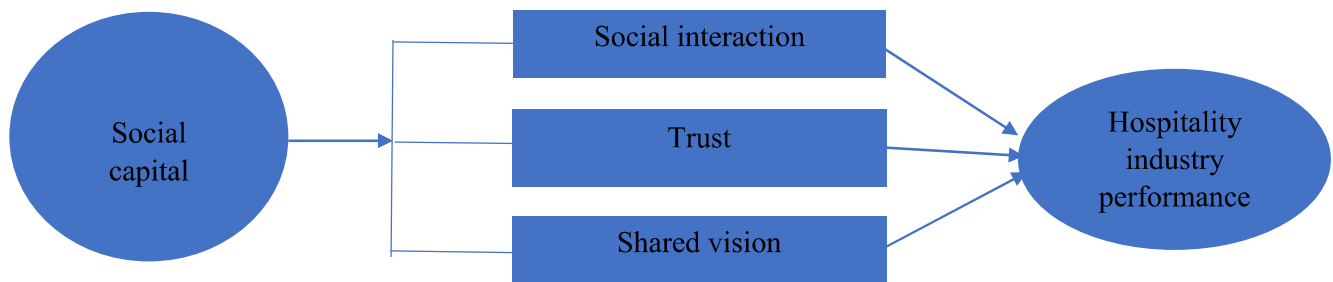


Figure 1.0 – social capital

Source: Authors (2020)

A framework is developed to show the inter-connection of independent and dependent variables. The strategies identified included: social interaction, trust, and shared vision. Performance of hospitality industry is the dependent variable that is greatly influenced by the three independent factors as shown above.

### 4.0 Social capital theory.

The social capital theory (SCT) was developed by French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu in 1986. Although, the theory, springs from network theory and its notion was to incorporate socio-cultural factors to explain economic outcomes (Bhandari and Yasunobu, 2009). SCT advocates that hospitality industry rely on the concept of social connections among actors, which may be characterized by trust, shared vision, norms of accepted behaviour that enable network members to effectively work together in pursuit of business objectives (Felício et al., 2014; Konak and Secilmis, 2018). Mani and Lakhali (2015) considered that resources generated through network relationships are soft infrastructure for enhancing hospitality industry performance.

From the perspective of social scientists, Social capital theory stem from the fact social capital is embedded in “relationship” and its application is aimed at comprehending social ties, trust and shared vision (Rasak, 2012; Kim and Shim,2017). More so, Social capital features such as, information sharing, trust and shared vision between network members influences the

performance of service firms by generating resources, knowledge and providing necessary information to enhance their service delivery (Dai *et al.*, 2015; Kim and Shim, 2017). Similarly, Teerykim *et al.*, (2013), pointed out that hospitality industry enjoys formal networking support through membership in business associations and informal support through family networks and social networks. However, these Categories of studies adopting this theory sought out to identify trust , information sharing and shared vision dimensions of social capital as factors influencing performance of hospitality industry in terms of financial and non-financial measure (Li *et al.*, 2014 ; Felı 'cio *et al.*, 2014; Mani and Lakhal, 2015; Saha and Banerjee, 2015 ).

### **5.0 Limitations and Future research direction.**

The current study has some limitations: firstly, only academic journals articles were included in the review, excluding thesis, book chapters and conference papers. Secondly, the study exclusively focused on sociological dimensions of social capital and neglecting anthropological dimensions. Accordingly, Future review by scholars should also include, conference proceedings, thesis, and book chapters in order to have a better understanding of the different dimensions of social capital employed in enhancing operational performance of hospitality industry. Another direction, future scholars, can explore anthropological dimension of social capital (bonding, bridging and linking) to examine the relationship between social capital and hospitality industry performance.

### **6.0 Conclusion and Recommendations**

This review presents a multi-level conceptual framework for understanding the social capital and hospitality industry performance. Generally, hospitality industry due to their nature as profit organizations, are majorly faced with excellent customer relationship problem amongst others. These have led to customers complaining of poor quality of service, loss of confidence and dissatisfaction. However, the adoption of social capital dimensions such as though, social interaction, trust, and shared vision has been found to be a vital tool that can enhance the performance of hospitality industry. Based on the review, it is evident that social capital enables organizations to gain access to resources and knowledge that are not available in the first place which suggests that hospitality industry can rely more on such resources as *compared* other forms of capital to better respond to client diverse needs and gain customer loyalty. It is

recommended that management of hospitality industry can use multiple dimensions of social capital as factors influencing the overall financial and non-financial performance. This review adds to the body of knowledge of social capital literature in developing economies.

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