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**Article**

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## THE IMPACT OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON CREATIVITY IN THE HOTEL INDUSTRY

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### Abstract

In today's business environment, characterized by instability and unpredictability, organizations' success depends on their ability to adapt and manage the changes required. Therefore, in order to achieve long-term corporate success, companies need to have a culture that encourages creativity and innovation. The aim of the article is to investigate the link between corporate culture and creativity and the impact of the management form on organizational culture. The research highlights the Romanian hotel industry culture, using Hofstede's model. Considering their impact on innovation, there were taken into consideration three factors: individualism, power distance and long term orientation. The article investigates how these factors are influenced by the hotel's exploitation form and their impact on organizational creativity. The research was conducted on two hotels in Bucharest, affiliated to an international hotel chain. In order to identify the impact of the exploitation form on the hotel's organizational culture, one of the accommodation units is operated under a management contract, while the other operates under a franchise agreement. The study is based on a survey conducted among the employees of the two hotels. Results indicate differences regarding the corporate culture between the hotel operated under a management contract and the unit operated under a franchise agreement. Recommendations on how to foster employees' creativity are suggested. The implications of the findings are discussed, considering the limitations and future research directions.

**Keywords:** creativity, innovation, organizational culture, management, Hofstede's model, franchise, hotel

**JEL Classification:** D23, L83, M14

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### Introduction

Innovation has become crucial for organizations, in order to achieve long-term performance. As innovation is defined (Gaspersz, 2005; Wood, 2003; Woodman et al., 1993, cited by Klijn and Tomic, 2010) as the successful implementation of creative ideas, creativity is seen as the cornerstone of innovation. Although considered insufficient, individual and group creativity represent the point of departure for innovation (Nowacki and Staniewski, 2012).

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As a result, academics recognize employees' creativity as imperious necessary for achieving competitive advantage (Amabile, 1988; Devanna and Tichy, 1990; Kanter, 1983; Shalley, 1995, cited by Oldham and Cummings, 1996). Usually, creativity is related to profession results (Drăgănescu, 2000; Roșca, 2006; Mihalcea, Roșca and Todoroi, 2010, cited by Roșca and Todoroi, 2011) and it refers to the development of novel and useful ideas regarding products, services and organizational processes and procedures (Amabile et al., 1996; Zhou and Shalley, 2003; Woodman et al., 1993, cited by Hon, 2011).

In this respect, an idea or procedure is considered novel if it involves either a significant recombination of existing materials or an introduction of completely new materials (Oldham and Cummings, 1996). The initiation and implementation of these products enhance an organization's ability to respond to opportunities and, thereby, to adapt, grow and compete (Kanter, 1983, 1988; March and Simon, 1958; Van de Ven, 1986; Van de Ven and Angle, 1989, cited by Oldham and Cummings, 1996).

There is a lack of research into creativity in the hospitality industry, mainly because, historically, this field of activity was simply concerned with providing accommodation and food for travelers. Emphasis was placed on the operational routine work of how hotels satisfy travelers for accommodation and food needs (Wong and Ladkin, 2008). However, nowadays hospitality is more and more seen as a more complex industry, as it started to focus on creating customer experiences.

In the hotel industry, the tangible forms of organizational creative outcomes include product innovations, continuous improvement and improved customer services (Wong and Pang, 2003). In order to achieve all this, hospitality organizations need employees with specific skills to this respect and the lack of them is considered as the single major obstacle to innovation in the industry (Leiponen, 2005, cited by Martínez-Roz and Orfila-Sintes, 2012). In addition, dependence on human capital is considered extremely important in the hotel industry, in which competitiveness largely depends on human resources (Furunes, 2005; Guerrier and Deery, 1998; Tsaor and Lin, 2004; Yeung, 2006, cited by Martínez-Roz and Orfila-Sintes, 2012).

The research on creativity in the hospitality industry has to be continuously developed, considering the fact that Romanian tourists affirm that creativity and innovation in hotel services is important for their satisfaction as hotel customers (Țigu, Iorgulescu and Răvar, 2013).

Moreover, another study conducted on Romanian tourists (Răvar and Iorgulescu, 2013) concluded that innovation in accommodation units is the most important in choosing and purchasing tourist services. Taking this into consideration, managers should know what motivates their employees to be more creative and how they can foster creativity in their companies, taking into consideration the organizational culture.

Starting from these premises, the paper aims to present a first insight on employees' creativity in the Romanian hotel industry, taking into account the possible influence of the organizational culture and the main determinants of organizational creativity.

After presenting a literature review on motivators to creativity, the role of management in fostering subordinates' creativity and the relationship between culture and creativity, the article presents a pilot study conducted on two hotels in Bucharest, affiliated to an international hotel chain, but with different forms of exploitation.

### **1. Motivators to creativity in the hospitality industry**

Although there is a strong need for creative workforce in the services sector, little is known on how it can be fostered in Romanian hospitality organizations. Research into this field has been conducted in the Western or Asian countries, but the findings may not apply to Romania, as individual creativity depends on several factors such as organizational climate, leadership behavior and relationship among individual members of work groups (Shalley et al., 2004; Scott and Bruce, 1994; Woodman et al., 1993, cited by Hon, 2011).

However, academics recognize several personal characteristics positively related to creativity (Barron and Harrington, 1981; Gough, 1979; Martindale, 1989, cited by Oldham and Cummings, 1996): broad interests, attraction to complexity, intuition, aesthetic sensitivity, toleration of ambiguity and self-confidence. Moreover, a classic scale describing environmental stimulants to creativity is the Work Environment Inventory, developed by Amabile and Gryskiewicz (1989, cited by Wong and Pang, 2003) and computed of: freedom, challenge, resources, supervisor, co-workers, recognition, unity and cooperation and creativity supports.

In order to be creative, the employees need to be intrinsic motivated (Amabile et al., 1996; Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Wong and Ladkin, 2008; Wong and Pang, 2003, cited by Hon, 2011), as intrinsically motivated people tend to be more curious, cognitively flexible, learning-oriented and persevering, characteristics associated with higher creativity (George, 2007; Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Shalley et al., 2004, cited by Hon, 2011).

Moreover, of the main manifestation of intrinsic motivation, employee self-concordance (Bono and Judge, 2003; Sheldon and Houser-Marko, 2001; Sheldon et al., 2003, cited by Hon, 2011) is also a principle determinant of creativity (Amabile et al., 1996; Ford, 1996; George, 2007; Oldham and Cummings, 1996; Shalley et al., 2004; Woodman et al., 1993, cited by Hon, 2011). In its research, Hon (2011) indicates that fostering intrinsic motivation is an important pathway through which organizational modernity, empowering leaders and supportive coworkers (elements that determine higher levels of self-concordance) can enhance organizational creativity.

Another important determinant of intrinsic motivation is job complexity, also related to creative performance at work. To this respect, specifically, complex, challenging jobs (especially those characterized by high levels of autonomy, skill variety, identity, significance and feedback) are expected to support and encourage high levels of motivation and creativity, than are relatively simple, routine jobs (Deci, Connell and Ryan, 1989; Hackman and Oldham, 1980, cited by Oldham and Cummings, 1996). As a result, enhancing creativity in the hotel industry, recognized for its mostly simple and routine jobs, is challenging. Risk also has a central role in creativity, especially the willingness to take risks, which is an important antecedent of creative efforts. The willingness to take risks is relevant to creativity at work due to the fact that managers and organizations can develop environments that should impact the willingness to engage certain risks (Dewett, 2004). However, several researchers claim that a climate for creativity exists in an organization because employees are willing to take risks (Tesluk et al., 1997, cited by Dewett, 2004). These being said, the fear of risk taking is one of the greatest barriers for creative endeavors (Walter, 2012). Hotel employees' risk taking behavior can be encouraged by intrinsic job-related motivators as (Wong and Ladkin, 2008): opportunity for advancement and development, loyalty to employees, appreciation and praise of work done, feelings of being

involved, sympathetic help with personal problems and interesting work. Service employees in the hotel industry frequently face pressures and work stress derived from heavy workload, insufficient time, high responsibility, role ambiguity, role conflict and job insecurity (Cavanaugh et al., 2000; LePine et al., 2005; Podasakoff et al., 2007, cited by Hon et al., 2013). Hon et al. (2013) studied the relationship between work stress and creativity and concluded that organizations interested in improving employee's creativity need to be discriminating in their interpretation of levels of work stress. The study indicates that challenge-related stress is related to high employee creativity, while stress associated with job insecurity, role ambiguity or role conflict should be eliminated. Moreover, the same study concluded that supervisory task feedback is an important boundary condition that makes challenge-related work stress come to be regarded as "good" and positively related to employee creativity.

In order to promote organizational creativity and provide an atmosphere in which it is safe to share novel ideas, time and resources should be allocated for experimentation, opportunities for competence-building should be provided, intrinsic reward systems should be implemented, goals and a clear vision should be set and innovative efforts should be recognized (Ramus, 2001; Paulus, 2000, cited by Klijn and Tomic, 2010). Moreover, researches indicate that employees in the hospitality industry agree that trainings and development instruments are important motivators to creativity, while organizations themselves recognize the importance of training employees in creativity skills, such as lateral thinking, mind-mapping techniques and creative problem solving (Wong and Pang, 2003). Martínez-Roz and Orfila-Sintes (2012) indicate that, in the hotel industry, there is a direct relationship between training plans and innovation intensity: when the company has a specific training plan for employees, there is a higher probability of introducing innovations intended to improve hotel services. However, it must be mentioned that employees' creativity alone, although a very valuable asset of every company, is not enough to ensure company's success if it is not directed to serve the organization's goals and objectives (Roşca and Todoroi, 2011).

## **2. The role of management in enhancing organizational creativity**

It has been established that organizational context is an extremely important determinant of employee creativity. One of the main characteristics of organizational context is management and supervisory style. To this respect, in literature there is a consensus that managers influence subordinates' creativity in two primary ways: creating a work context and evaluating creative performance (Williams, 2001). Academics (Deci et al., 1989; Deci and Ryan, 1985, 1987, cited by Oldham and Cummings, 1996) agree that supervision that is supportive of employees enhances creativity, while controlling or limiting supervision tends to diminish creative performance. Supervisory task feedback as an organizational signal gives rise to the perception that creative performance has the potential to be effective and so new and useful ideas can be produced that supervisors in the organization will support (LePine and Van Dyne, 1998, cited by Hon et al., 2013).

Moreover, work stress can be shifted into creativity with the help of supervisory task-focused feedback (Hon et al., 2013): if hotel managers provide useful and positive task feedback, staff under stress will know that they have someone available to consult when problems arise and that their supervisors will be willing to share their knowledge and

feedback to solve problems and ensure that new ideas are viable. Evaluation of creative performance should be fair and supportive (Amabile et al., 1996, cited by Williams, 2001) and the feedback provided by managers should be an opportunity to revise one's creative ideas without making criticism or praise salient (Williams, 2001).

Another key contextual factor that influences employees' creativity is leadership (Shin and Zhou, in press; Tierney et al., 1999, cited by Zhou and George, 2003). Empowering leadership, directly associated with creativity, is defined as the process of implementing conditions that enable sharing power with an employee by delineating the significance of the employee's job, providing greater decision-making autonomy, demonstrating trust in the employee's capabilities and providing employees with the freedom to act as flexibly as circumstances warrant (Arnold et al., 2000, cited by Hon, 2011). Slåtten et al. (2011) concluded that empowering leadership plays a fundamental role for employee creativity in frontline jobs. Considering the fact that the hospitality industry has a very strong interactive nature of service delivery, service employees in frontline service jobs are a critical asset and managers should emphasize organizational conditions that positively cultivate and promote service employees' creativity (Slåtten et al., 2011). In order to improve creativity in an organization, there is a need for human relations training and leadership training. These types of programs should make managers and supervisors more aware of how they hinder creativity and what they can do positively to enhance creativity in their organizations (Wong and Pang, 2003).

Moreover, academics have discovered a relationship between leaders' personal qualities and organizational creativity. A study conducted on Norwegian hospitality industry (Mathisen et al., 2012) indicates that creative leaders can be considered as models that may motivate and inspire followers, who may also learn creative behaviors and procedures. In addition, the same research concluded that creative leaders have the ability to understand and appreciate the needs of their followers in order to act creatively, being perceived, at the same time, as better partners to discuss ideas with than less creative leaders. In addition, Zhou and George (2003) argue that emotional intelligence leaders play a critical role in enabling and supporting employees' creativity. Cheung and Wong (2011) argue that transformational leadership, with its four dimensions (Bass and Avolio, 1995, cited by Cheung and Wong, 2011) – charismatic influence, individualized consideration, inspirational motivation and intellectual stimulation, is also positively related to followers' creativity.

In summary, managers can influence their subordinates' creativity by developing an appropriate organizational culture and structure, allocating resources, designing work groups and jobs, an appropriate level of support and encouragement and a fair manner of evaluating creative performances. In order to achieve all this, an organization that recognizes the importance of creativity should direct its training interventions to teaching managers managerial practices that enhance subordinates' creativity. Research indicates that creativity can be taught and training intended to boost employee creativity should be directed not only at the employees, but at their managers (Williams, 2001).

### **3. Culture and creativity**

Organizational culture can be described as a set of beliefs and assumptions shared by organizational members that facilitate internal integration and external adaptation

(Williams, 2001). It has been stated that employee creativity can either be promoted or inhibited by organizational values and norms implemented by an organization to guide individual performance (Amabile et al., 1996; George, 2007; Shalley et al., 2004, cited by Hon, 2011). At organizational level, culture forms the foundation for nurturing creativity. To this respect, there must be trust, respect for individual differences and open communication to support creativity (Wong and Pang, 2003).

Traditional organizations, characterized by norms and values that emphasize adherence to rules, following authority and stability are perceived in literature as inhibitors of creativity, while modern organizations, characterized by equality of members, openness and flexibility to move are recognized as promoters of creativity (Hon, 2011).

Culture definitely influences organizational creativity. Considering Hofstede's work on culture, behavior and nationality, in 1980 (with its four dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism – collectivism, masculinity – femininity, uncertainty avoidance and a fifth dimension – long term orientation, added by Michael Bond in 1991), Tajeddini and Trueman (2012) identified three societal-culture factors in direct relationship with innovation (and therefore, creativity): individualism (IDV), power distance (PDI) and long term orientation (LTO).

Individualism can be defined as a preference for a loosely-knit social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only. Its opposite, collectivism, represents a preference for a tightly-knit framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty (<http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>). Individualistic and collectivistic cultures have different effects on creativity. Harmony, group conformity and interdependency are promoted within collectivistic cultures, while uniqueness and group independence are valued by individualistic cultures. These being said, researchers concluded that individualistic values contribute more to creativity (Goncalo and Staw, 2006, cited by Klijn and Tomic, 2010).

Romania, with a score of 30, is considered a collectivistic society. This manifests in a close long-term commitment to the member 'group', be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount, and over-rides most other societal rules and regulations. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. In collectivist societies offence leads to shame and loss of face, employer-employee relationships are perceived in moral terms (like a family link), hiring and promotion decisions take account of the employee's in-group, management is the management of groups (<http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>). This research intends to discover whether Romanian hotel employees have a disposition towards individualism, being therefore more likely to be creative and innovative.

Power distance expresses the degree to which the less powerful members of a society accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. People in societies exhibiting a large degree of power distance accept a hierarchical order in which everybody has a place and which needs no further justification. In societies with low power distance, people strive to equalize the distribution of power and demand justification for inequalities of power (<http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>). Power distance and strict hierarchies might have different effects in different cultures (Rice, 2003, 2006, cited by Walter, 2012). Walter

(2012) concluded that culture mainly affects supervisory encouragement, work group support, organizational encouragement and autonomy or freedom and organizational impediments to creativity. In high power distance cultures, subordinates may be reluctant to express their ideas openly when they communicate with their superiors and are less likely to develop a creative culture because they are more likely to follow existing rules (Alavi and McCormick, 2004, cited by Tajeddini and Trueman, 2012).

Romania scores high on power distance (90), which means that in an organization, subordinates expect to be told what to do and prefer an autocrat boss (<http://geert-hofstede.com/romania.html>). Unfortunately, the centralization of power and tight control over employees is unlikely to support openness to new ideas in the hospitality industry (Sun, 2009, cited by Tajeddini and Trueman, 2012).

The long-term orientation dimension can be interpreted as dealing with society's search for virtue. Societies with a short-term orientation generally have a strong concern with establishing the absolute truth. They are normative in their thinking. They exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results. In societies with a long-term orientation, people believe that truth depends very much on situation, context and time. They show an ability to adapt traditions to changed conditions, a strong propensity to save and invest, thriftiness, and perseverance in achieving results (<http://geert-hofstede.com/dimensions.html>).

There is no score available for Romania, for this dimension (<http://geert-hofstede.com/romania.html>), therefore this research intends to discover this cultural dimension in the hotel industry. Considering the fact that creativity requires risk taking and challenging the future, the hotel industry needs a long term oriented culture that supports and encourages employees to discover novel ideas (Buijs, 2007; Cooper and Kleinschmidt, 1995; Menzel et al., 2006, cited by Tajeddini and Trueman, 2012).

Academics (Țigu et al., 2008) suggest that, in the accommodation industry, hotels operated under a management contract tend to have a more powerful organizational culture than those affiliated to an international hotel chain through a franchise agreement. This hypothesis also is intended to be researched in the present study.

#### **4. Research methodology**

Considering the literature review, it is obvious that creativity is extremely important in the hospitality industry and research on this subject should be developed. Although researches on cultural values and organizational culture in the hotel industry in Romania have already been conducted (State, 2004; Țigu et al., 2008), the relationship between employees' creativity and organizational culture has not been studied.

As a result, in order to analyze the impact of organizational culture on employees' creativity in the hotel industry, a research was conducted on two important hotels in Bucharest, affiliated to an international hotel chain. Considering previous studies (Țigu et al., 2008), indicating that the form of hotel exploitation may influence their organizational culture, one of the hotels selected (Hotel H) is operated under a franchise agreement, while the other (Hotel I) functions under a management contract. As it may be noticed, the names of the organizations are not to be mentioned in the article, for reasons of confidentiality.



In order to analyze employees' creativity in Romanian hotels, a questionnaire was specifically designed and administrated to those of the two hotels involved in the study. To ensure its validity and clarity, the questionnaire was designed in Romanian. Moreover, considering the fact that most of hotel employees are not highly educated, the questions were elaborated using a clear, simple and understandable language, which eliminated any ambiguity.

First of all, the questionnaire was designed in order to permit the determination of Hofstede's cultural dimensions directly related to employees' creativity (individualism, power distance and long term orientation), by using the model applied by Hofstede (1987, cited by State, 2004) in its own previous studies. Secondly, the other questions referred to some important aspects with impact on employees' creativity, as mentioned in the literature review: co-workers support and cooperation, supervisor's support and behavior, creativity support and attitude towards risks. The last questions were intended to obtain the respondent's demographic characteristics: age, gender, education level, occupation. The questionnaire had finally 15 questions, with a total of 40 items to be answered.

In order to lead the research, several general hotel managers have been contacted. In the case of the hotel operated under a franchise agreement, the first meeting with the General Manager and the Human Resources Manager was a success, resulting in their agreement to include Hotel H in the study. During the authors' first visit at the hotel, on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May, the questionnaire was pre-tested on two employees from the front-office and housekeeping department. The medium time needed for completing the questionnaire was of approximately 10 minutes and did not require any further adjustments. After obtaining management's agreement to support the research in the hotel, the study was developed with the help of the human resources department, who assured that hotel's middle-management and entire staff is aware of the research and its objectives. Although the authors insisted to conduct the study most professionally (in a hotel's conference room dedicated to the research, with the assistance of one of the authors), the survey was conducted by the human resources department, which, during the week of 17<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup> of June, distributed the questionnaire to all the departments of the hotel. Due to the fact that the research was conducted during the summer (a holiday period), most of the employees could not participate in the study. In addition, it has to be mentioned that the survey was realized using a conducted sampling method, through a voluntary method, the hotel personnel (sometimes skeptical regarding the questionnaire suggested for completing) not being forced by its superiors to be part of the study. Finally, 33% of hotel's staff completed the questionnaire.

Conducting the research in a hotel operated under a management contract proved to be more challenging than the authors had expected. After a series of discussions with hotel managers that concluded with the hoteliers' refusal to take part in the research, the authors obtained the Hotel I General Manager's agreement to conduct the study in his organization. The main reasons for refusal to involve in the research invoked by the previous managers the authors had discussed with were the fact that their hotel chains have very strict policies regarding human resources management and surveys regarding employees' opinions and level of work satisfaction have already recently been conducted.

However, the General Manager of Hotel I was extremely open minded and collaborative. In order to obtain the best possible outcome of the research, he accepted the conditions suggested by authors for conducting the survey. As a result, he informed the middle-

management about the research and its objectives. With management's support, the survey was conducted by one of the authors on the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, in a hotel's conference room, between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. (in order to capture employees' lunch break and shift change). For the same reasons as in the case of Hotel H, only 36% of hotel's staff completed the questionnaire. Although the authors expected a higher response rate at the survey, the results can be considered relevant for the present paper. Although the authors admit that the number of hotels involved in the research, as well as the number of employees involved in the survey cannot provide representativeness at national level, they think that the results can be considered a strong starting point for further researches.

## 5. Results and discussion

As mentioned before, one of the main objectives of the paper is to identify the influence of organizational culture on creativity and the possible impact of the form of hotel's exploitation on the culture's strength. To this aim, three dimensions of Hofstede's cultural model were identified and the results will be compared with the conclusions of previous studies conducted in Romania and on Romanian hotels. The first study on organizational culture in Romania was conducted in 2000 on a 4-star hotel in Bucharest (State, 2004). The study was further developed in 2007 in a more comprehensive research conducted on two hotel chains in Romania (Țigu et al., 2008). All these results will be compared with Hofstede's estimations for Romania and the actual values obtained by Interact and Gallup Organization study on Romanian population in 2005.

As it can easily be observed in Table no. 1, although previous studies indicate Romania and Romanian hotel employees as collectivistic, both Hotels H and I have an individualistic culture, the values obtained being higher than 60. The results confirm State's (2004) predictions, who in her study mentioned that Romanians will probably gradually shift from a collectivistic culture to an individualistic one.

**Table no. 1 Values of Hofstede's societal-cultural factors**

	<b>IDV*</b>	<b>PDI*</b>	<b>LTO*</b>
<b>Hotel H</b>	79,87	85,81	51,25
<b>Hotel I</b>	152,3	104,5	46,53
<b>Romanian hotel chain A (2007)</b>	30	76	-
<b>Romanian hotel chain B (2007)</b>	22	77	-
<b>Hotel M in Bucharest (2000)</b>	38,22	64,87	-
<b>Interact study on Romania (2005)</b>	49	33	42
<b>Hofstede's estimations for Romania</b>	30	90	-

\*IDV – individualism, PDI – power distance, LTO – long term orientation

Source: authors' research, Țigu et al. (2008), State (2004), Luca (2005), <http://geert-hofstede.com/romania.html>

Surprisingly, although the values of Hofstede's societal-cultural factors should be between 0 and 100, Hotel I registered a value of 152,3, which indicates an extremely individualistic culture of the employees. This also confirms the hypothesis that hotels operated under a management contract have a stronger organizational culture. The results are encouraging, considering the fact that individualistic cultures, characterized by uniqueness and the belief

that the individual is able to add value to the organization, are positively related to creativity. The results regarding the power distance are very close to Hofstede’s estimation for Romania, indicating that employees from both Hotel H and I have an extremely large power distance. Once more, the results indicate a stronger organizational culture in Hotel I, operated under a management contract.

Surprisingly, although worldwide is expected a permanently decrease of the power distance (State, 2004), the hotels involved in the study registered higher indexes than the ones in the previous studies conducted on the Romanian hotel industry. Unfortunately, this characteristic of the organizational culture usually has a negative effect on employees’ creativity, due to the fact that employees with large power distance lack initiative and prefer to be told what to do and to follow the existing rules.

To the authors’ knowledge, this is the first research on Romanian hotel industry that indicates the long term orientation of hotel employees. The results are similar with the ones obtained by Interact’s study on Romanian population, indicating that employees from both Hotels H and I have mainly a short term orientation. In this case, Hotel H, operated under a franchise agreement, seems to have a slightly stronger organizational culture than Hotel I. Unfortunately, once again, an organizational culture characteristic with a negative impact on employees’ creativity is identified.

In order to identify the individualistic or collectivistic orientation of hotel employees, the respondents were asked to grade from 1 to 7 (1 – “not at all important”, 7 – “very important”) several characteristics of the ideal job. The comparative results, for both Hotel H and I are presented in Figure no. 1.

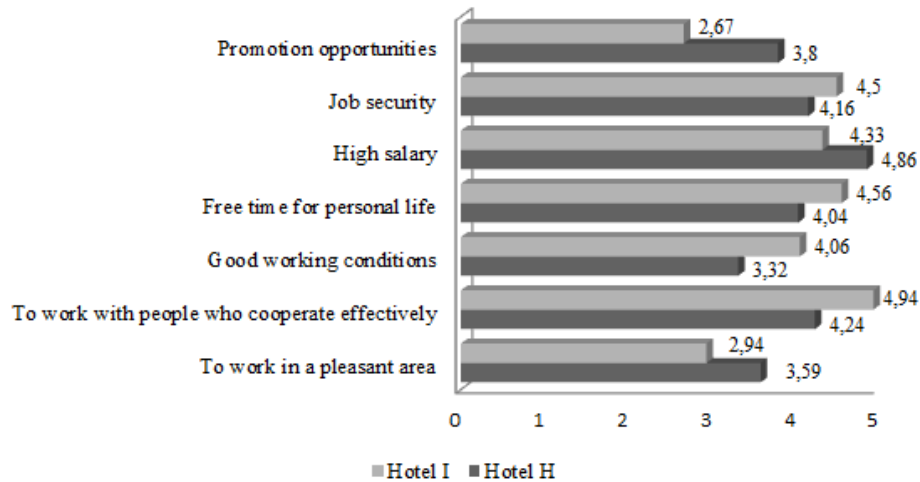


Figure no. 1 Characteristics of the ideal job

Source: authors’ research

There are several significant differences between the options of employees in Hotel H and I. While for the employees in Hotel H the most important is the possibility of gaining a high

salary, for employees in Hotel I what matters most in an ideal job is to work with people who cooperate effectively. Moreover, while employees in Hotel H consider the least important to have good working conditions, employees in Hotel I appreciate the least having promotion opportunities.

In order to identify the power distance index, the respondents were asked to indicate the differences between the type of boss they would like to work with and their actual boss in the hotel.

Once more, as presented in Figure no. 2, there are differences between Hotel H and I. While most of Hotel’s H employees (36,87%) would like to work with a paternalistic boss (also, the actual type of boss in 50% of the cases), the majority of employees (44,44%) in Hotel I (with a larger power distance) would like to work with an autocratic boss (the real type of boss in 50% of the cases). From this point of view, employees in Hotel I are less likely to be creative. In both hotels, in order to enhance their employees’ creative performance, the superiors should be more empowering, should increase the autonomy of their employees and should involve them in the decision making process.

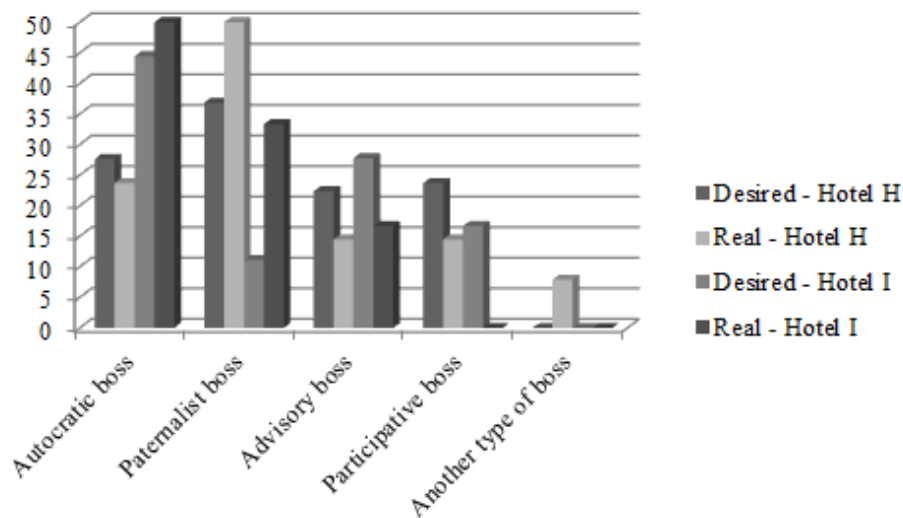


Figure no. 2 Differences between employees’ desired and actual boss

Source: authors’ research

Moreover, the study intended to identify whether the organizational context, from the supervision point of view, is favorable for enhancing employees’ creativity. To this aim, the respondents were asked to grade on a Likert scale (from 1 “very rarely” to 5 “very often”) several characteristics of their direct supervisor. A weighted average was computed for every one of the six characteristics, both for the total number of Hotel’s H and I respondents (Figure no. 3).

In both Hotels H and I, the direct supervisor often provides a good example by his behavior and clearly explains the organization’s objectives and expectations, which enables a good

working context for creativity. Moreover, another positive aspect related to creativity is the fact that in both hotels, the supervisor often allows his employees to express their opinion.

However, while in Hotel I employees are rarely afraid to disagree with their supervisor, in Hotel H this aspect occurs more often, which may negatively influence employees' initiative to express their ideas.

In addition, the supervisory task feedback and the trust in employees' capabilities are favorable for creativity in both hotels, considering the fact that the direct supervisor often proves interest in team's work results and teaches his employees to solve possible problems that may arise within the organization.

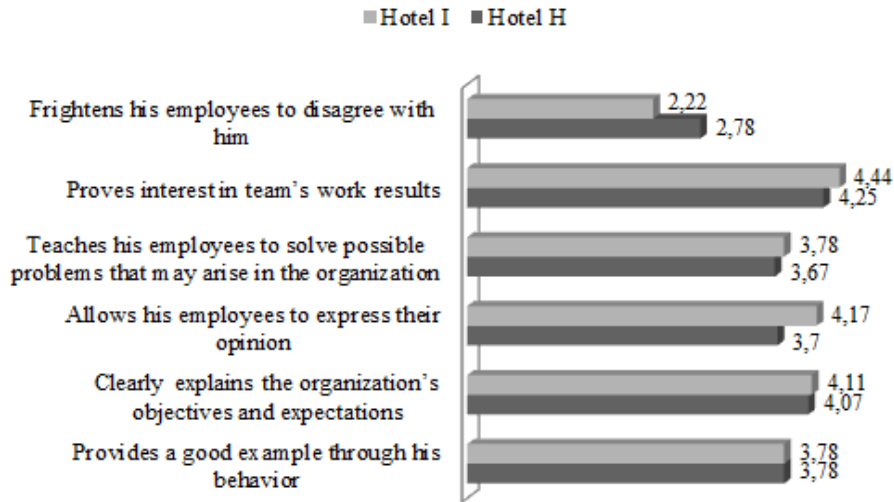


Figure no. 3 Characteristics of hotel employees' direct supervisor

Source: authors' research

Another work context determinant that enhances organizational creativity, included in the research, is co-workers support. To this aim, similar to the question discussed above, the respondents were asked to grade on a 5-point Likert scale (1 – “very rarely”, 5 – “very often”) 3 characteristics of their co-workers in the hotel. The weighted averages for the responses of the employees of both Hotel H and I are presented in Figure 4.

Considering the weighted averages obtained the co-workers support seems to be more favorable to employees' creativity in Hotel I. However, in both hotels this aspect should be improved, taking into account the fact that co-workers only sometimes take over their colleagues' tasks if they cannot complete them.

Moreover, although co-workers often help themselves when needed, they do not share their knowledge very often. These results are not necessarily surprising, considering the fact that both Hotels H and I have an individualistic orientation.

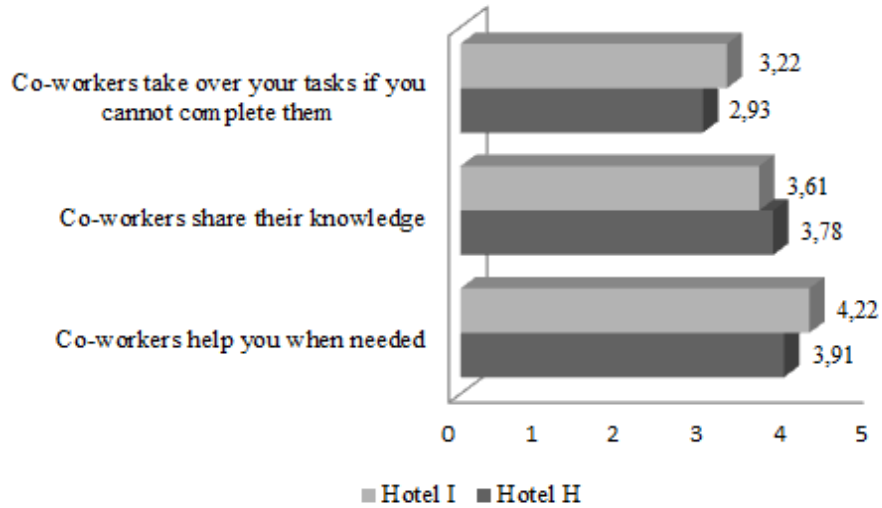


Figure no. 4 Co-workers support

Source: authors' research

The last work context determinant of creativity researched was the organizational support. Respondents were asked to grade from 1 – “very rarely” to 5 - “very often” 4 elements, the results being showed in Figure no. 5.

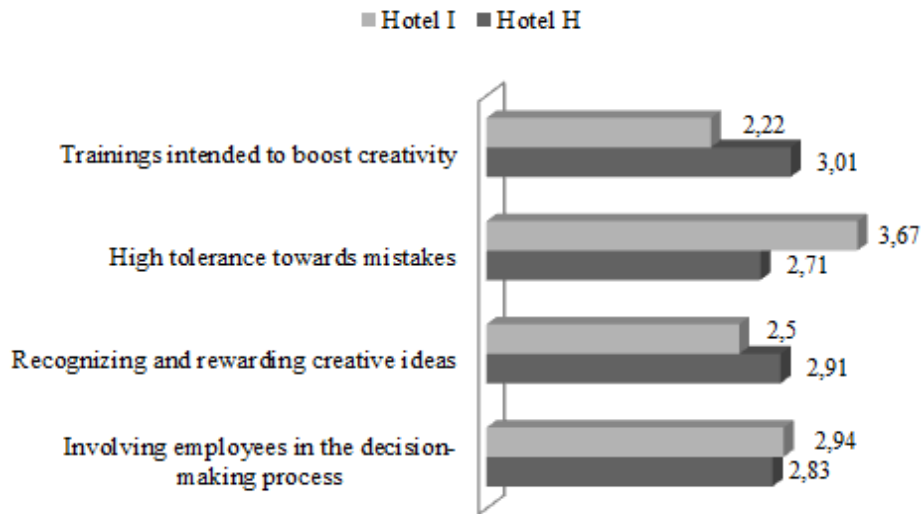


Figure no. 5 Organizational support for creativity

Source: authors' research

Unfortunately, neither Hotel H nor Hotel I offer an organizational support intended to boost employees' creativity. While Hotel H sometimes trains its employees in order to develop their creativity, in Hotel I this thing rarely occurs. In addition, according to the respondents' opinions, in both Hotels H and I employees' creative ideas are recognized and rewarded rarely or only occasionally. Moreover, the employees are only sometimes involved in the decision-making process, which is in accordance with the large power distance existing culture and the prevail of an autocratic type of boss. While in Hotel I employees' mistakes are often tolerated, in hotel H this occurs only sometimes. This aspect may inhibit employees to express new ideas and consequently, develop their creativity.

The study was also intended to indicate the degree to which employees are creative in the hotel they work in. To this aim, the respondents were asked to grade from 1 ("very rarely") to 5 ("very often") the frequency of their creativity outcomes.

As it can be noticed in Figure no. 6, Hotel's I employees are more creative in all the aspects taken into account (all weighted averages are higher than the ones obtained in the case of Hotel H). The employees questioned are most creative in finding new ways of solving current tasks of the job, but only sometimes suggest new ways of achieving organizational objectives. Moreover, Hotel's I employees sustain they are more creative in suggesting new ways of improving the quality of hotel's products and services, while Hotel's H employees believe they are only sometimes creative in this matter. In addition, employees questioned only sometimes suggest new products and services in the hotel.

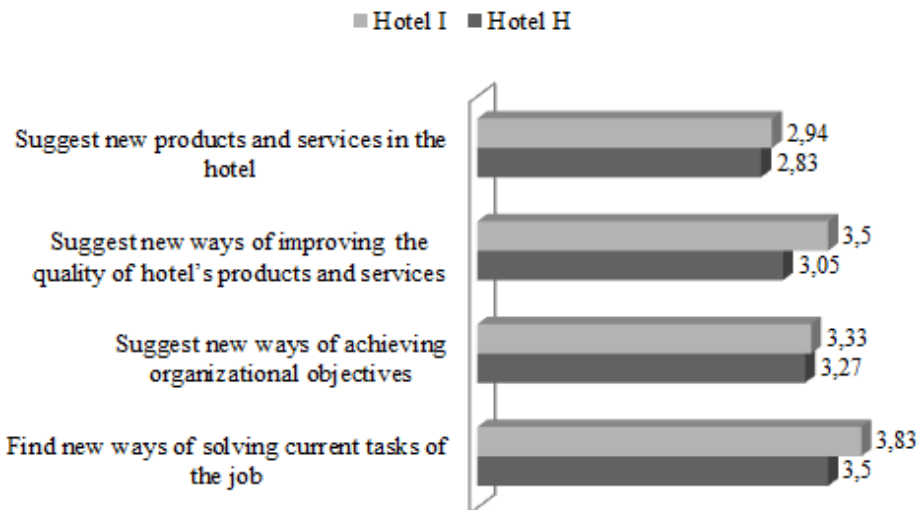


Figure no. 6 Employees' creative behavior

Source: authors' research

The low frequency of creativity efforts may be related to the fact that the respondents are only somehow willing to take risks (Hotel's I employees scored a higher weighted average at this aspect – 3,17, than Hotel's H employees – 3,08). Although their attitude towards risks is not necessarily positive, employees in both Hotels H and I stated that creativity and

innovation play an important role in their professional and personal life (weighted averages of 3,97 and, respectively, 3,78).

The respondents' demographic profile is similar if both hotels and the general demographic characteristics of the entire sample are presented in Table 2. Almost half of the respondents are highly educated, although only 27% occupy a management position. The distribution on gender is balanced, 48,96% of the respondents are female and 51,04% are male.

**Table no. 2 Demographic profile of the respondents**

Level of education				
vocational school	high school	post-high school	bachelor's degree	masters' degree
4,17 %	37,49 %	7,29 %	34,38 %	16,67 %
Position				
execution	low management	middle management		top management
68,75 %	9,38 %	16,67 %		1,04 %
Gender				
Female			Male	
48,96 %			51,04 %	
Time frame intended to work in the organization				
less than 6 months	6 months-1 year	1 - 3 years	3 – 5 years	more than 5 years
5,21 %	4,17 %	19,79 %	19,79 %	51,04 %
Department				
front-office	food&beverage	housekeeping	sales-marketing	administrative
16,67 %	38,54 %	11,46 %	17,71 %	15,62 %

*Source: authors' research*

More than 70% of the respondents intend to keep working in the organization in the next 5 years, the job security being scored as the third most important characteristic of the ideal job, for employees in both Hotels H and I. In addition, the study can be considered relevant, as it involved employees from all the hotel's departments.

### Conclusions

The research on creativity and innovation in the hospitality industry should be continuously developed, being important in the present time. The paper aimed to study employees' creativity in two hotels in Bucharest, affiliated to an international hotel chain, taking into consideration the influence of the organizational culture and several main determinants of organizational creativity.

Using Hofstede's model, the study indicates that hotel employees have an individualistic culture, which may positively influence their creative behavior. Unfortunately, the large power distance and short term orientation identified suggest that the organizational culture is not favorable to enhancing employees' creativity. The article adds value to the research on organizational culture in Romania, being, at the authors' knowledge, the first initiative of identifying the long term orientation index in the hotel industry. Moreover, the present study confirms the premises that hotels operated under a management contract have a stronger organizational culture than those operated under a franchise agreement.



As far as the work context is concerned, supervision and co-workers support should be improved in order to provide better conditions for fostering creativity. The medium willingness of taking risks of the hotel employees questioned is also one determinant that reflects in a not very high frequency of creative efforts. Moreover, managers should consider fostering their employees' creativity through specifically designed trainings and recognition of valuable ideas.

The research has its limitations, mainly developed from the sample's lack of representativeness, but can be further developed into a more comprehensive study. The study's limitations can also be considered to be of organizational nature, taking into account the lack of a more numerous research team, which would enable the possibility of developing surveys in several accommodation units in different regions of the country. In addition, it should be found a way of motivating hotel staff to respond positively to the academic environment's call for taking part in scientific research. Moreover, the literature review on the studied subject should be done more rigorous, in order to avoid citing secondary sources. The present study is an empirical one, but the low number of respondents does not influence the relevance of the conclusions obtained by analyzing the opinions of the employees questioned. In the future, it would be useful to compare the organizational culture and predisposition to creativity in hotels under different forms of exploitation, belonging to the same international chain. Moreover, in order to obtain a complex insight on creativity in the hotel industry, a study similar to the present one should be directed to hotel managers.

### **Acknowledgement**

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