

Social Capital, Human Value Creation, and the Organizational Performance of Small Businesses in Butembo, Democratic Republic of Congo

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Abstract

Social capital arises from the relationships, connection, and trustworthiness of people who stay in a group, organization, or community to improve knowledge and create human performance. In this study, the effect of social capital on human value creation (including knowledge, ability, and skills) and performance was examined in Butembo, Democratic Republic of Congo. In the study, a purposive sampling technique was used to select 168 respondents composed of office workers from established organizations and businesses. A structured questionnaire was constructed to collect data about respondent profiles and the influence of social capital on human value creation and organizational performance. As a result, it was concluded that the main contributor to organizational performance was human value. Social capital was thus the principal catalyst in enhancing human value and helping to bring about effective and efficient interactions among employees to develop knowledge, improve their performance, and bring value to the daily operations of their organizations.

Keywords: *Social capital, human value creation, organization performance*

Introduction

Groups are one platform from which people share their social feelings. Humans are social creatures and seek relationships with other people for their existence and survival. Humans find themselves surrounded by networks of friends, colleagues, and loved ones. In these networks, they share personal feelings, thoughts, and experiences with each other. That sharing creates social capital among them, which at its very foundation is all about relationships. When these relationships are present in the workplace, they enable team members to function effectively.

What exactly is social capital? There are as many definitions for this concept as there are theorists. One that is succinct and effective has been provided by Paxton (2002, p. 256): "Social capital is the notion that social relations can facilitate the production of economic or noneconomic goods." It conveys the idea that cooperative human effort is an essential element if social capital is to be generated (Algan, 2018). Claridge (2020) observed that it is virtually impossible to have social interaction and exchange without trust. Trust, therefore, is the linchpin of social capital that facilitates collaborative operations.

Social capital provides for socio-emotional needs and encourages team members to collaborate, communicate, and cooperate. When people trust each other, they do not have to worry that they will be taken advantage of (van der Kroon et al., 2002). As a result, cooperation is likely to flourish. Furthermore, any attempt to measure social capital requires interpersonal trust (Algan, 2018).

According to Edinger (2012), social capital has three distinct dimensions—structural, relational, and cognitive. Structural social capital is the overall pattern of connections between actors—who individuals reach out to, and how they reach them. Relational social capital describes the personal relationships that individuals develop based on a history of interactions that fulfill social motives. Finally, cognitive social capital represents the resources that provide shared representations, interpretations, and systems of meaning among individuals, such as a shared vision. For Szreter (2002), social capital derives its benefits from the mutual respect and trusting relationships of people in the group. This enables them to pursue their shared goals more effectively and brings good outcomes.

Shared goals and good outcomes are the results of collaboration. Collaboration enables team members to get work done faster, and fosters innovation and creativity (Waters, 2021). It also helps

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to prevent information silos from developing. Steve Jobs must have had collaboration in mind when he redesigned Pixar's office. He brought disparate departments into close proximity based on the notion that chance encounters would lead to cross-pollination of ideas and foster greater creativity (Miller, 2017).

Not many studies have been conducted about social capital that enhances the value creation of individual human capital. Thus in this study, the effects of social capital on value creation (including knowledge, ability, and skills) and performance were examined.

Literature Review

Social Capital

In 1988, one of Coleman's significant findings from his study on *Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital* was recognized and earned a strong reputation. His research focused on family and community relations that encouraged students to improve their performance at school rather than focusing solely on their socio-economic backgrounds. Based on his findings, he established the concept of social capital as a critical explanatory concept of social mobility. He believed that social capital was a combination of different entities and involved some aspects of social structure that facilitated specific actions of individuals to improve their performance. Based on his concept, each individual has control over particular resources, but social capital itself creates a specific kind of support that is available and can bring about improvement.

Putnam (2000) suggested that the close social ties in families and communities were based on shared norms and beliefs that formed social capital involving the following three concepts—social bonds, social bridges, and social linkages of people or groups further up or lower down the social ladder. Putnam (2000), Healy et al. (2011), and Keeley (2007) found that social capital encompassed the networks, norms, and trust that enabled individuals to act more effectively together with shared values and understandings that facilitated cooperation within or among groups.

Lin (2003) stated that social networks enhance information, influence, credentials, and reinforcement of identity and recognition. Being assured of and recognized for one's worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group sharing similar interests and resources provides emotional support and a public acknowledgment of one's claim to specific resources.

Grossman (2013) described social capital based on the following resources—obligations, expectations, and trustworthiness of structures and information channels. The latter deals with the relationships that help people find and collect information, and norms and effective sanctions of the shared aspirations of behavior for any given social circumstance. In addition, social capital exists among persons in the family and outside of the family, and it facilitates productive activity (Sujchaphong, 2013).

Tzanakis (2013) indicated that social capital is the network and volume of past accumulated relationships commanded by agents. Putnam (2000) stated that social capital is the property of collectives, such as groups or regions. He showed that the indicators of social capital are found in clubs and associations. He believed that the principal source of regional wealth creation and good governance was through clubs and association work. The economic performance of provincial governments were influenced by the form and intensity of networks involved in civic engagement.

Bourdieu (1986), a founder of social capital theory, argued that social relationships embodied the resources that enabled human capital to develop and grow. He posited that social capital represents power possessed by the individual who has sought it by acquiring a position with status (Claridge, 2020). Thus, it is not conferred by the group or team, but seized by the individual who mobilized the resources. He stressed the interconnection of social capital with economic and cultural capital to reproduce class inequalities and hierarchies. He conceptualized social capital along with the other three forms of capital—financial capital, cultural capital, and symbolic capital. He believed that these four forms of money were linked to one another.

In the workplace, individuals, teams, and management need to possess effective social skills. According to Keeley (2007), social skills are the interpersonal skills for interaction and connection

between individuals, groups, and teams to create value that benefits the group and the organization. This created value represents an important asset that cannot be listed in the balance sheet, but it is real and difficult to quantify (Solow, 1999).

Human Value Creation

Beattie and Smith (2010) stated that employee skills and education, employee commitment, positive employee attitudes and behavior, and employee motivation contributed the most to human value creation. Malik et al. (2017) found that firms employed complementary approaches to enhance human value creation and its realization. The more successful systems relied on exploiting existing resources and knowledge architecture to promote efficiency-seeking motive generation by employees. The Golden Organization (2019), a global community of executives and experts from business, academia, social enterprises, and institutions, described human value as realizing the highest human potential in terms of well-being, education, work, inclusion, and self-actualization in a flourishing eco-system.

According to Acemoglu (2013), human value is related to human capital. It involves any stock of knowledge or characteristics that a worker has which contribute to productivity. This human capital can be accessed by companies through worker employment. For Hossain and Roy (2016), workers are recruited based on their value to the company. Then through experiences and training, they become the most highly valued capital for the organization.

This creation of value could be business growth, return on investment, or client satisfaction for the organization. For employees, value is often created by income, development, and a sense of purpose. And similar to society, the value created could be sustainability, well-being, or a high quality of life (van Dijk & Brugma, 2017). People can access resources and information because they have good relations and confidence in each other. These relationships come from interaction between individuals. Their communication enables the development of trust (Dinda, 2014). People will not share information or resources if they do not trust each other. Sharing information requires confidence and good relationships among individuals (Sander & Lee, 2014).

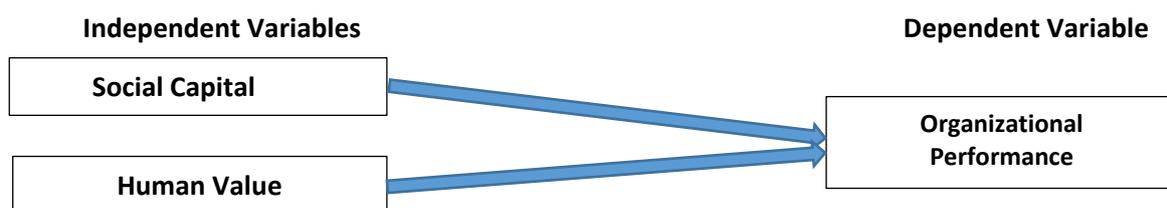
Organizational Performance

The evidence available indicates that social capital influences human value creation in an organization. Lester (2013) found that social capital built on the interaction of people had a significant positive effect on resource exchange and combinations, and it showed a positive direct impact on trustworthiness. Lester concluded that the more trustworthy an employee was deemed to be, the more other employees would exchange or combine resources. Resource exchange was found to be the source of human value creation that led organizations to significant positive product innovation.

The study of Wu and Lee (2016) supported the idea that social interaction was significantly related to group trust. Social interaction in a group positively influenced the group's supportive climate for knowledge sharing to create human value for organizational performance. Agyapong et al. (2017) showed that a positive relationship between social capital and human capital led to innovation and improved small businesses' performance in Ghana.

The aim in this study was to examine the effect of social capital on human value and organizational performance. The variables were conceptualized from the framework illustrated below:

Figure 1 Conceptual Framework



The study was guided by the following questions:

1. What is the sociodemographic profile of respondents in small businesses in Butembo?
2. What is the strength of social capital and human value in small businesses in Butembo?
3. What is the level of organizational performance in small businesses in Butembo?
4. What effects do sociodemographic features, social capital, and human value have on organizational performance?

Methodology

A quantitative purposive sampling technique was used to select 168 respondents composed of office workers from organizations and businesses in Butembo, Democratic Republic of Congo. A structured questionnaire was used to collect data about respondent profiles and the influence of social capital on human value creation and organizational performance. More than half (57.1%) of respondents were male, while 42.9% were female. More than half (57.2%) were aged between 36–55 years old, 19.0% ranged between 15–35 years old, and only 4.8% were aged above 56 years old. A total of 38.1% of respondents had a Master's degree, 33.3% had a bachelor's degree, and 28.6% had a high school diploma. The data revealed that 47.6% of the respondents worked in the area of organizational management (director, project manager, finance director, manager, supervisor, etc.), 33.3% of them worked in other services (teaching, health services, etc.), and 19.0% worked as office staff (secretary, accountant, marketing officer, etc.). A total of 42.9% of the respondents had 1–3 years of experience, 23.8% of them had 13 or more years of experience, 19.0% had 8–12 years of experience, and 14.3% had 4–7 years of experience.

Data collected via the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency, mean, and percentage), Pearson correlation, and linear regression analysis to examine the ability of the dependent variables to act as predictors.

Results

Analysis of Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance

The effects of social capital on human value and organizational performance are summarized in Table 1. First, the overall mean of 3.98 showed that respondents *agreed* on the significance of social capital in the workplace (refer to the *Code* provided under Table 1 that details the range of each category recognized). The participants *strongly agreed* that they had good social communication exchanges with their colleagues, undertook social participation during seminars, supported their colleagues socially at work, and agreed about having trusted colleagues in the workplace.

Second, regarding human value creation, the results showed a mean of 3.69, indicating that respondents *agreed* about the creation of good human value in the workplace. Sharing information showed a higher mean, which indicated they had a well-developed habit of sharing information with their colleagues. This implied that they had trust and could share what they knew to make sure their work was well done and supportive of each other. However, Item HV4 showed a low mean of 3.14, which placed this response in *neutral* territory. This meant that respondents were not sure of the influence colleagues have on their decision-making.

Lastly, respondents agreed that overall organizational performance, the quality of services, and employee trust among themselves were in the second highest category. However, they were undecided when it came to the question of organizational profitability being higher than planned.

Table 1 Analysis of Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance

Questions	Mean	SD
Social Capital		
SC1. At my workplace, I have colleagues with whom I can communicate on every topic relating to my job.	4.24	0.92
SC 2. I share with my colleagues the resources I receive from professional development seminars or other information sources.	4.20	0.67
SC 3. Getting things done at my job requires the support of my colleagues.	4.10	0.81
SC 4. I can quickly get access to useful information from my colleagues.	3.90	0.81
SC 5. My colleagues are the essential source of work advice for success in my job.	3.90	0.92
SC 6. Being a member of my colleagues' team is part of my identity.	4.10	0.81
SC 7. When a problem arises, my colleagues help me to go through this problem.	3.81	0.59
SC 8. I can trust my colleagues.	3.57	0.96
SC 9. My colleagues and I share experiences to improve our job performance.	4.14	0.64
SC 10. I expect to be part of my colleagues' team for a long time.	3.86	0.78
Overall Mean	3.98	0.53
Human Value Creation		
HV1. The information advised by my colleagues can be used for my job.	3.90	0.81
HV2. The information shared by my colleagues increased my knowledge.	4.14	0.89
HV3. The information shared by my colleagues improved my work performance.	3.95	1.00
HV4. My colleagues influence my decision-making.	3.14	1.21
HV5. My work performance is motivated by my colleagues.	3.33	0.95
Overall Mean	3.69	0.89
Organizational Performance		
OP1. Employees are satisfied with the trust among themselves from the organization.	3.38	0.85
OP2. Organizational profitability is high than planned.	3.05	1.05
OP3. The organization has high-quality services.	3.71	0.94
Overall Mean	3.38	0.95

Code. 0.79–1.59 *Strongly Disagree*; 1.60–2.40 = *Disagree*; 2.41–3.20 = *Neutral*; 3.21–4.00 = *Agree*; 4.01–5.00 = *Strongly Agree*

Correlation between Social Capital, Human Value, and Organization Performance

Results shown in Table 2 indicated that a significant positive relationship ($p < .01$) existed between social capital and human value, and with organizational performance and human value (Table 2).

Table 2 Correlation between Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance

Feature	Social Capital	Human Value
Human Value	.644**	
	.000	
Organizational Performance	.644**	.825**
	.000	.000

** $p < .01$

The influence of social capital and human values on organizational performance is presented in Table 3. The data indicated that there were positive relationships between social capital and communication with colleagues and employee satisfaction, organizational high-quality services, and

organizational profitability ($p < .01$). The findings also indicated that there were relationships between social capital and sharing resources with colleagues, together with the organization's high-quality services ($p < .01$). Weaker relationships ($p = .05$) were indicated between social capital and getting things done with the support of colleagues (SC 3/OP 4), and also organizational profitability and high-quality organization services (SC 3/OP 2). The remaining relationships with social capital were all found to be significant ($p < .01$).

Table 3 Correlation between Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance

ITEMS	OP1 (Trust)	OP2 (Profitability)	OP3 (Service Quality)
SC 1	.496**	.236**	.467**
SC 2			.242**
SC 3		.163*	
SC 4	.401**	.399**	.153*
SC 5	.721**	.499**	.412**
SC 6	.643**	.444**	.665**
SC 7	.723**	.403**	.683**
SC 8	.262**	.498**	
SC 9	.517**	.631**	.548**
SC 10	.594**	.715**	.537**

Code. SC and OP Items are listed in Table 1.

Correlation between Human Value and Organizational Performance

The five elements of human value investigated and their impact on organizational performance are shown in Table 4. Trust, profitability, and service quality were all influenced positively and significantly ($p < .01$) by meaningful interactions among work colleagues. These interactions involved information sharing, decision making, and work performance.

Table 4 Correlation between Human Value and Organizational Performance

ITEMS	OP1 (Trust)	OP2 (Profitability)	OP3 (Service Quality)
HV 1	.471**	.455**	.467**
HV 2	.499**	.454**	.624**
HV 3	.812**	.686**	.701**
HV 4	.788**	.561**	.417**
HV 5	.559**	.564**	.650**

Effect of Demographic Features, Social Capital, and Human Value on Organizational Performance

The results obtained showed that years of experience, respondent age and gender, human value, social capital, and level of education accounted for 73.0% of organizational performance change.

Data presented in Table 5 indicated that human value was the most important factor in predicting change in organizational performance, accounting for 67.9% of variation, while social capital only added 2.2%.

Table 5 Effect of Social Capital and Human Value on Organizational Performance

Model	Statistics				Change Statistics				
	R	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Std. Error of Estimate	R ² Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.825 ^a	.681	.679	.540	.681	354.384	1	166	.000
2	.838 ^b	.703	.699	.522	.022	12.166	1	165	.001

Code. ^a represents Predictor (Constant) for Human Value; ^b represents Predictors (Constants): Human Value, Social Capital

Table 6 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant ($p < .001$).

Table 6 ANOVA for Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	103.253	1	103.253	354.384	.000 ^b
	Residual	48.366	166	.291		
	Total	151.619	167			
2	Regression	106.575	2	53.287	195.194	.000 ^c
	Residual	45.045	165	.273		
	Total	151.619	167			

Code. ^a represents Dependent Variable: Organizational performance; ^b represents Predictors (Constant):Mean for Human Value; ^c represents Predictors (Constants):Means for Human Value and Social Capital.

Results displayed in Table 7 show that the predictive model for organizational performance was $Y = .75X_1 + .35X_2 - .723$, where X_1 is human value and X_2 is social capital.

Table 7 Coefficient Analysis for Social Capital, Human Value, and Organizational Performance^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.154	.176		.875	.383
	Mean for Human value	.880	.047	.825	18.825	.000
2	(Constant)	-.723	.304		-2.378	.019
	Mean for Human value	.747	.059	.701	12.639	.000
	Mean of social capital	.349	.100	.193	3.488	.001

Code. ^a represents Dependent Variable:Organizational Performance

Discussion and Conclusion

The results indicated that respondents *agreed* (Overall $M = 3.98$) that there was a high level of social communication among colleagues, social participation during seminars, social support to their colleagues at work, and trust for colleagues in the workplace. The results resonated with Lin's (2003) findings, who stated that social networks enhance information, influence, social credentials, and reinforcement of social relations identity and recognition. Being assured of and recognized for one's worthiness as an individual and a member of a social group that shares similar interests and resources provides emotional support and a public acknowledgment of one's claim to specific resources.

Regarding human value, the results showed an overall mean of 3.69, which indicated that respondents *agreed* to develop good human values for their work. The highest mean score was obtained for sharing information with their colleagues. This implied that they had trust and could share what they knew, hence making sure their work was well done and functioned to support each other. However, the question "My colleagues influence my decision-making" received a low mean score of 3.14 indicating neutrality. This meant that respondents were not sure of their colleagues' influence on the decision-making process. Malik et al. (2017) found that some firms employ complementary approaches to value creation and realization. The more successful strategy relied on exploiting existing resources and knowledge architectures for efficiency-seeking motives.

In a flourishing eco-system, human value permits realization of the highest human potential in well-being, education, work, inclusion, and self-actualization. Lester (2013) found that social capital, built from the interaction of people, had a significant positive effect on resource exchange and combination, and it positively impacted trustworthiness.

The results indicated that there was a very significant positive relationship between social capital and human value, and between human value and organizational performance. For Hossain and Roy

(2016), workers were recruited based on their importance to the company. Then through experience and training, they became the most highly valued capital for the organization.

The most effective predictor of change in the performance of organizations surveyed in Butembo was human value, with a high level of influence of 67.9%. The coefficients of regression supported the results, showing that for a positive change in human value, organizational performance increased by .75, and for a positive change in social capital, organizational performance increased by .35. Sujchaphong's (2013) data supports the present results in that social capital was shown to facilitate productive activity such as exists in the relations among persons inside and outside of the family. The study of Wu and Lee (2016) lends support to these results in that social interaction was shown to be significantly related to group trust. Social interaction in a group positively influences the group's supportive climate for knowledge sharing, and extends to the human value creation for lifting organization performance. This was indicated by Agyapong et al. (2017) who showed a positive relationship between social capital and human capital for innovation and performance of small businesses in Ghana.

The main contributor to the organizational performance of the businesses surveyed in Butembo was human value. This creation of value could be business growth, return on investment, or client satisfaction with the organization. For employees, value is often created by income, development, or a sense of purpose. And similar to society, the value created could be about sustainability, well-being, or a higher quality of life (van Dijk & Brugma, 2017). People can access resources and information because they have good relations and confidence in each other. These relationships arise from the interaction among individuals, and their communication enables them to build trust (Dinda, 2014). People will not share information or resources if they do not trust each other. This means that trust and good relationships between individuals are needed to promote the sharing of information (Sander & Lee, 2014).

Therefore, social capital is the principal catalyst contributing to human value. It aids in promoting effective and efficient interactions among employees to develop knowledge, to improve their performance, to bring value to daily operations, and to sustain the creation of competitive advantages for their organizations.

Study Limitations and Future Research

Future investigators might consider a qualitative approach to support the statistical findings reported here. For example, observation could be carried out using selected individuals working in different workplaces, and analyzing the reports for established organizations.

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