

# Effects of Creativity and Innovation on the Performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi

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**Abstract:** *This study examines the effects of creativity and innovation on the performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi. It is structured around a primary research question aimed at assessing the impact of these factors on performance, complemented by a sub-question concerning the practices of the stakeholders. The research is situated within the constructivist paradigm, which considers social reality as a construction of the actors, and adopts an inductive approach based on field-collected data. These data were gathered through direct observation and semi-structured interviews, then analyzed using a thematic approach. The results indicate that creativity and innovation are manifested in both interior and exterior design, culinary offerings with the creation of new dishes, and service quality. They are also reflected in the hotel's structured organization across multiple departments. These practices contribute significantly to improving the overall performance of the establishment. We extend our gratitude to Dr. Kawit Yav Lucide and Ms. Ntumba Nyemba Eunice for their contribution to the collection of empirical field data.*

**Keywords:** Creativity, Innovation, Performance

## 1. Introduction

Generally, humans are driven by a constant desire for self-improvement, which makes them, to some extent, insatiable. In carrying out their activities, individuals continually seek to enhance themselves, which motivates the use of creativity and innovation. These can be defined as the ability of an individual to imagine and produce, often within limited timeframes, a wide variety of ideas, solutions, or concepts. They thus enable actions to be carried out effectively, efficiently, and sometimes unexpectedly, while adding value to existing practices.

Creativity and innovation can also be understood as a structured system, composed of a central core and peripheral elements that revolve around it. This system is constructed through processes of objectification and anchoring, thereby giving meaning to individuals' social representations. In this sense, they constitute a framework for interpreting the world, influencing behaviors and practices. Mechanisms such as categorization and stereotyping play a significant role, with some stereotypes even integrating into the central system. Consequently, any sustainable transformation of practices necessarily involves modification of this central core.

Furthermore, creativity and innovation rely on the ability to mobilize past experiences and recombine them in original ways. They involve retaining images from previous sensations and reorganizing them to produce something new. In the hospitality sector, this dynamic is particularly relevant, as it allows actors to adapt services, improve service quality, and meet the evolving expectations of clients. Imagination, when directed toward creation, thus becomes a key lever for transforming reality, innovating, and proposing novel solutions.

It is within this perspective that the present study examines the effects of creativity and innovation on the performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi. Any research in hotel management requires a clearly defined problem; the central question formulated is: How can the effects of creativity and

innovation on the performance of this establishment be understood? This inquiry aims to shed light on internal dynamics and stakeholder practices that contribute to the overall performance of the organization.

To address this research problem, two theoretical frameworks were utilized: symbolic interactionism, which allows for the analysis of meanings constructed by actors during their interactions, and strategic analysis, which highlights actors' interactions and power relations within the organization. The study follows a constructivist paradigm, viewing social reality as a product of interactions. An inductive approach was adopted, based on direct observation and semi-structured interviews. Finally, thematic analysis was used to interpret the collected data, thereby elucidating the significance of practices related to creativity and innovation and assessing their impact on the hotel's performance.

## 2. Theoretical Foundations

This section presents the theoretical foundations of the study, providing the conceptual and scholarly framework necessary to understand the key constructs under investigation

### 2.1. Definition of Concepts

In order to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity, this subsection defines the central concepts used in the study, including creativity, innovation, and performance.

#### 2.1.1. Creativity

According to Guilford (1950), creativity is the ability to produce new and useful ideas. It manifests through flexibility, fluency, and elaboration of ideas, enabling individuals to generate multiple original solutions to a given problem. Divergent thinking, distinct from convergent thinking, lies at the core of this creative process by promoting the exploration of different alternatives and perspectives. For Guilford, creativity is therefore not merely originality, but the ability to produce varied and appropriate responses.

Amabile (1983) argues that creativity results from the interaction of expertise, creative skills, and intrinsic motivation. It depends on an individual's capacity to combine knowledge in an original and innovative manner within a specific domain. Internal motivation that is, the enjoyment and interest in the task—plays a central role in expressing creativity. Thus, according to Amabile, creativity emerges when technical know-how, creative skills, and personal engagement converge to generate new and relevant ideas.

### 2.1.2. Innovation

According to Schumpeter (1934), innovation consists of introducing new combinations of products, production methods, markets, or organizational forms. Such innovations create market disruptions and constitute a primary driver of economic development.

Drucker (1985) describes innovation as a tool for entrepreneurs to leverage change and generate value. It relies on observing trends, analyzing customer needs, and seeking practical solutions applicable in economic and social contexts.

Trott (2005) defines innovation as the process of designing and implementing new ideas aimed at improving existing products, services, or processes. Innovation is not limited to technical aspects but also encompasses organizational and commercial dimensions to create a competitive advantage.

The OECD (2005) defines innovation as the implementation of a new or significantly improved product, process, marketing method, or organizational method. This definition emphasizes the central role of innovation in firm performance and competitiveness.

### 2.1.3. Performance

According to Koontz and O'Donnell (1972), performance is the measure of an organization's effectiveness in achieving its objectives while optimally utilizing its resources. It involves assessing the capacity to produce results relative to the resources invested, taking into account both the quality and quantity of services delivered.

Drucker (1974) defines performance as an organization's or individual's ability to produce meaningful results relative to the efforts and resources mobilized. He emphasizes that performance is not merely a matter of productivity but also encompasses achieving strategic objectives and creating value.

Chiavenato (2004) considers performance as the overall efficiency of an organization or service, measured by effectiveness and efficiency in resource utilization. He underscores the importance of planning, monitoring, and optimizing processes to enhance performance and achieve set objectives.

## 2.2. Theoretical Frameworks

This section presents the theoretical frameworks that underpin the study, offering perspectives to analyze how individuals interpret, negotiate, and strategically act within the social and organizational context of Hotel La Source.

### 2.2.1. Symbolic Interactionism

Symbolic interactionism views individuals as active agents in their social interactions, constructing their universe of meaning through exchanges with others. According to Le Breton (2004: 47-49), symbolism values the actor's interpretative resources, enabling them to negotiate prevailing norms and rules. For Mbale Kizekele (2010: 11), society is a living network of interindividual relationships where meanings and values are more or less shared. The interactionist approach therefore prioritizes understanding concrete social processes and the interpretations actors give to their actions.

Blumer, cited by Mucchielli (2004: 127), asserts that social meanings emerge from actors' interactive activities. Le Breton (2008: 54-55) emphasizes that interaction goes beyond verbal communication, incorporating bodily symbolism: gestures, facial expressions, eye contact, and movements compose a synchronized "choreography" that establishes a shared universe of meaning. Each interaction thus becomes a form of homeostasis, where individuals' actions subtly influence each other, creating continuous adjustment.

Debuyst (2008: 326) reminds us that interactionism is based on Blumer's three premises: society exists in action, culture and social structures emerge from individuals' actions, and norms are produced through mutual action. Individuals always act based on their perception of reality, not reality itself. Thomas, cited by Le Breton (2008: 19-20), notes that education and experience provide preformatted attitudes but leave room for individual adjustment, making surprise and creativity possible in interactions.

This framework is particularly relevant to our study, as it allows us to understand how actors at Hotel La Source attribute meaning to the effects of creativity and innovation on performance. The social world is not fixed but constantly recreated through interactions and mutual interpretations. Norms and rules are negotiated, actors remain masters of their actions, and behaviors are adjusted according to context, providing a dynamic understanding of social processes within the hotel organization.

### 2.2.2. Strategic Analysis Theoretical Approach

Strategic analysis, proposed by Crozier and Friedberg (cited by Digneffe, 1990: 87), focuses on power relations within organizations and on actors' strategic choices. It posits that actors have relative autonomy, allowing them to define personal strategies and navigate the limits of existing rules (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977: 85). According to these authors, power is a reciprocal but unbalanced relationship, where each party can gain advantages while never being entirely powerless vis-à-vis the other (1977: 65).

In the context of our research, this approach allows for an analysis of how Hotel La Source staff mobilize creativity and innovation to meet occupational challenges. Innovation involves solving complex technical, organizational, or financial problems by implementing new ideas to improve organizational functioning. Strategic analysis thus helps understand actors' choices and behaviors in a specific organizational context.

Crozier and Friedberg (1977: 56) explain that actors' behavior always has a dual aspect: offensive, to seize opportunities and improve their situation, and defensive, to protect their freedom of action. This approach enables us to grasp the meaning of hotel staff actions in applying creative and innovative solutions and fostering customer loyalty. Individual strategies thus influence the hotel's performance and contribute to its adaptation to a competitive environment.

Finally, the strategic approach complements symbolic interactionism by highlighting that relationships among actors are not only social exchanges but also power relations. These relationships are reciprocal, involving negotiation and exchange, but unbalanced, as advantages are not equally shared (Crozier & Friedberg, 1977: 69). The combination of these two theoretical lenses allows for understanding both the meaning attributed to actions and the strategic dimension of interactions within Hotel La Source.

### 2.3. State of the Question

To better define our research object, it was necessary to provide a state of the question on the topic addressed. This step involves reviewing published works related to our subject and demonstrating how our study distinguishes itself. As Mucchielli (2004, p.343) notes, humans are not born alone and do not learn alone; experience is constructed within a reference universe that forms the crucible of learning. Accordingly, we attempted to inventory certain works of our predecessors to identify points of convergence and divergence while highlighting the originality of our study.

Today, tools, books, and dissertations addressing concepts related to our theme are multiplying. We chose to highlight the most relevant texts directly related to our research object. Following an exploratory reading, we identified several publications that indirectly address our problem, allowing us to situate our approach within the existing scientific landscape.

Among these works, Stéphane P. (2010), in *De l'hôtel au logement*, shows that accommodation has undergone increasing professionalization, but individuals' career paths remain fraught with obstacles and instability, often marked by temporary stays or periods of wandering. Trabelsi (2016), in his thesis on local development and hotel valorization, emphasizes the importance of communicative interactions and territorial links in the hospitality sector. Cooper (1997) highlights the necessity of meticulous organization to reconcile tourism development with environmental preservation, in order to optimize social and economic benefits.

Our study differs from these previous works in several ways. It is limited to a specific spatial framework, focusing on the hospitality sector in Lubumbashi, and is recent, dating from 2021. The population studied includes all staff members of Hotel La Source, with a purposive sample selected according to precise criteria. Finally, our approach relies on a psychosocial method and diverse data collection and analysis techniques, including observation, interviews, and content

analysis, providing an original perspective on creativity, innovation, and performance in the local hospitality sector.

### 3. Presentation of Hotel La Source

The study on the effects of creativity and innovation on performance is based on the case of Hotel La Source Lubumbashi, a hospitality establishment located in the city of Lubumbashi, Democratic Republic of Congo. Situated in a quiet residential area, approximately 2.8 km from downtown and near Luano International Airport, the hotel benefits from a strategic location that facilitates accessibility and attracts a diverse clientele, including both business travelers and tourists.

The hotel stands out due to its diverse accommodation offerings, including standard rooms, specialty rooms, and fully equipped apartments suitable for different types of clients. Available facilities include internet access, a swimming pool, a restaurant, a multipurpose event hall, as well as complementary services such as transportation and laundry. This range of services demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement and adaptation to the demands of the local hospitality market.

Additionally, Hotel La Source Lubumbashi provides an environment characterized by comfort, tranquility, and a welcoming atmosphere, which are essential elements of the guest experience. The establishment also offers a combination of local and European cuisine in its restaurant, further enhancing its appeal. With significant accommodation capacity and modern amenities, the hotel maintains a competitive position in the Lubumbashi hospitality sector.

For this research, the hotel constitutes a relevant field for analyzing practices related to creativity and innovation. Indeed, the introduction of new services, improvements in offerings, and organization of activities (such as buffets or events) reflect tangible forms of innovation likely to influence the hotel's performance. These initiatives help attract and retain clients while strengthening the overall performance of the hotel.

Thus, studying Hotel La Source Lubumbashi allows for a deeper understanding of how creative and innovative dynamics implemented by organizational actors contribute to improved performance. It also provides an opportunity to analyze the interactions between management strategies, professional practices, and outcomes in the specific context of Lubumbashi's hospitality sector.

### 4. Methodological Framework

In this research on the effects of creativity and innovation on the performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi, defining the study population constitutes a fundamental step. According to Berther (1987), a population is a set of statistical units or individuals meeting a common definition. Similarly, Mucchielli (2004) considers it as all human groups relevant to the survey objectives. In this study, the population includes all staff members of Hotel La Source involved in service provision activities.

However, due to constraints of time, financial resources, and accessibility, it was not possible to survey the entire population. Therefore, sampling was employed. According to Pires (1997), a sample results from a process aimed at extracting a portion of a population to constitute an empirical corpus. Likewise, Kambulu Nshimba (2017) defines a sample as a fraction of the parent population, allowing conclusions to be generalized.

Albarello (2007) further notes that sample size does not necessarily depend on the overall population size, challenging the idea of a fixed percentage guaranteeing representativeness. In this qualitative research, the focus was on the relevance of selected actors and the richness of the information collected. We thus opted for a qualitative sample based on diversification of participant profiles.

In this perspective, our study follows a “field-based” sample, considering Hotel La Source as a coherent social universe. This approach enables understanding of interactions between actors in their real context, including practices, representations, and action logics directly related to our research object.

Regarding data collection methods, we prioritized direct observation and semi-structured interviews. Direct observation, as defined by Mace and Petry (2000), involves observing phenomena in their natural setting to extract relevant information. This was reinforced by Chapoulie (cited by Kaminski), who emphasizes the importance of prolonged and personal field observation.

This observation followed an immersive approach, with continuous presence in the field for a defined period. As Anne-Marie Arborio and Pierre Fournier (1999) highlight, observation provides access to actual social practices and goes beyond participants’ discourse. It is therefore a privileged means of capturing interactions and behaviors in context.

In addition, interviews were used as a complementary data collection technique. According to Blanchet and Gotman (1992), an interview is an exchange situation that facilitates the production of contextualized discourse. Blanchet et al. (2003) describe it as a device for collecting structured discourse around a research theme. Abric (2011) also emphasizes the importance of in-depth interviews in studying social representations.

The interviews conducted enabled understanding of actors’ perceptions, experiences, and action logics. As Kienge-Kienge (2005) notes, this technique reveals individuals’ rationalities and allows analysis of social dynamics at work, complementing data obtained through direct observation by adding an interpretative dimension.

Three types of interviews were used: exploratory, main, and control. Exploratory interviews helped better understand the field and refine the research problem; main interviews deepened the collected data; control interviews verified the coherence of information. This approach aligns with a qualitative logic in which, as Goffman indicates, “the universal is found in the particular,” highlighting the importance of case singularity.

Overall, this methodological framework combining population definition, sampling, observation, and interviews produced relevant and reliable data. It follows a constructivist and inductive approach aimed at understanding the effects of creativity and innovation on the performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi based on field realities.

## 5. Data Presentation and Analysis of Results

The results of our field research were obtained using observation techniques and interviews conducted with participants of all genders, without any discrimination based on categorization.

### 5.1. Originality of Infrastructure and Decoration

Hotel La Source stands out for the original decoration of its rooms, entirely inspired by Art Nouveau style. Each space, whether a standard room, suite, or apartment, has its own identity, combining comfort and aesthetics to provide guests with a unique experience.

The larger apartments are equipped with kitchens and full bathrooms, meeting the needs of extended stays. This attention to interior design reflects the hotel’s commitment to innovating in the quality of hospitality and stay.

Room personalization goes beyond visual aspects, allowing guests to feel in an environment suited to their tastes and needs, thereby enhancing attractiveness and customer loyalty. This approach demonstrates that creativity and innovation are not limited to services or processes but also encompass the physical and sensory guest experience. The hotel transforms each stay into a unique and memorable experience.

### 5.2. Innovation in Hospitality and Food Services

The services offered by Hotel La Source reflect a constant commitment to innovation and adaptation. Each offering, from Wi-Fi throughout the hotel, the outdoor pool, to the fitness complex, is designed to meet varied guest expectations.

Meeting rooms and spaces dedicated to conferences and seminars also illustrate this creativity applied to professional services. The hotel goes beyond accommodation, providing comprehensive solutions for a diverse clientele. This ability to combine comfort, functionality, and originality constitutes a strategic advantage, allowing the hotel to stand out from competitors and provide an enriched, personalized customer experience.

Ultimately, these innovations enhance the hotel’s appeal in the local market. They demonstrate that creativity is not only aesthetic but applies across all services, contributing to overall performance and client loyalty.

### 5.3. Types of Innovation Implemented

Innovation at Hotel La Source is manifested through the creation of new combinations of products, services, processes, and organizational structures. Each initiative aims

to improve the customer experience while enhancing the hotel's competitiveness in the Lubumbashi hospitality market. This approach shows that innovation is not limited to a single domain but encompasses the entire operation of the hotel.

Two main types of innovation were identified. Disruptive innovation corresponds to the introduction of radically new services or processes. These innovations disrupt habitual practices and offer novel solutions to guests, allowing the hotel to distinguish itself significantly from competitors.

In contrast, incremental innovation involves making small improvements to existing services. These gradual adjustments optimize service quality, reduce costs, or better meet client expectations without fundamentally altering the organization or consumer habits. In all cases, for an initiative to qualify as innovation, it must represent a genuine novelty or lead to a significant improvement over previous practices. Hotel La Source thus combines creativity and adaptation to generate a tangible impact on performance and customer satisfaction.

#### 5.4. Impact of Creativity and Innovation on Performance

The dissemination of innovations constitutes a key factor in generating significant economic effects. When a novelty is introduced within an organization, its impact depends not only on its design but also on how it is adopted and integrated by the relevant actors. Without dissemination, even the most brilliant innovation remains ineffective.

At Hotel La Source, this dissemination is reflected in the constant adaptation of offerings to clients' needs and behaviors. Services and products vary according to seasons, allowing the hotel to respond to demand fluctuations and optimize the customer experience. This flexibility reflects proactive management and sensitivity to market signals.

Adjusting offerings according to consumption periods ensures better circulation of products and services, minimizing losses and increasing customer satisfaction. These practices reflect a thoughtful strategy where creativity and innovation are applied not only to the design of new services but also to their implementation and dissemination. These initiatives therefore directly contribute to improving the hotel's performance. Performance, understood as the ratio between generated revenues and invested resources, becomes a concrete indicator of the effectiveness of implemented innovations, illustrating the link between creativity, adaptation, and economic performance.

#### 5.5. Linking Theory and Practice

The innovative practices observed at Hotel La Source perfectly illustrate Thomas' theory (cited in Le Breton, 2008), which states that individuals do not merely undergo their environment; rather, they continuously adjust their actions based on past experiences and new situations encountered. Each hotel staff member adapts their decisions to respond to changing client needs, demonstrating that innovation is a dynamic and interactive process.

In daily management, adaptation manifests as precise adjustments to services and offerings. For instance, seasonal consumption variations require staff to modify product presentation or adjust available quantities. This ability to anticipate and respond to fluctuations demonstrates that innovation is not only technical but also relies on human creativity and actors' responsiveness to market constraints.

The strategic analysis by Crozier and Friedberg (cited in Digneffe, 1990) complements this perspective by highlighting the relative autonomy of actors within the organization. Each individual decision, whether managing a buffet or organizing a specific service, influences the hotel's overall performance. This approach emphasizes that creativity and innovation are not isolated but function within a network of relationships and interactions that structure organizational effectiveness.

Thus, these practices contribute directly to productivity, client satisfaction, and hotel profitability. Hotel La Source's capacity to combine experience, adaptation, and initiative demonstrates that creativity and innovation are essential levers for achieving optimal performance and maintaining a competitive position in Lubumbashi's hospitality market.

## 6. Discussion of Results

The results show that creativity and innovation at Hotel La Source manifest both in room personalization and service offerings. Each room, suite, or apartment has a unique identity, and spaces are adapted to the needs of extended stays. This approach aligns with Debuyst (2008) and Blumer (1969), who argue that culture and social structure are built through individuals' daily practices. The hotel thus transforms interactions with clients into a creative process directly influencing perception of the establishment.

The implementation of innovative services, such as widespread Wi-Fi, an outdoor pool, fitness complex, and meeting rooms, demonstrates that the hotel adapts its offerings to clients' evolving needs. These functional innovations reflect Thomas' theory (cited in Le Breton, 2008), according to which individuals adjust actions based on past experiences and new situations. Hotel staff do not merely apply rules but continuously adapt practices to maximize client satisfaction and service efficiency.

The two types of innovation identified disruptive and incremental show that the establishment adopts both radical changes and gradual improvements. Disruptive innovation, for example, is observed in the original layout of suites and apartments, while incremental innovation is reflected in service adjustments according to seasonal and consumer behavior variations. These observations align with Crozier and Friedberg's theory (cited in Digneffe, 1990), which emphasizes the importance of actors' autonomy and strategic decisions in overall organizational performance.

Observed practices have a direct impact on hotel performance. Dissemination and adaptation of innovations optimize revenue and improve profitability, confirming that creativity and innovation are not merely aesthetic or technical but constitute a strategic lever for economic performance

(Debuyst, 2008). Hotel La Source demonstrates how innovations combining originality, functionality, and constant adaptation can generate tangible economic effects while enhancing client loyalty and satisfaction.

## 7. Contribution of Results

This study makes several significant contributions to hospitality management and research on creativity and innovation. First, it highlights the importance of creativity in space design and personalization, showing how the originality of Art Nouveau style in Hotel La Source's rooms and apartments influences client experience and fosters loyalty. This observation enriches understanding of innovative practices in hospitality, emphasizing that innovation extends beyond services to the physical and sensory environment.

Second, the study illustrates the direct impact of innovation on economic performance and hotel productivity. Seasonal adjustments of products and services, and the introduction of modern equipment such as Wi-Fi, the pool, and meeting rooms, show that creativity and innovation can be strategic levers to enhance profitability and competitiveness. This practical contribution provides concrete guidance for hotel managers wishing to integrate innovation into their operational models.

Third, from a theoretical perspective, the study confirms and enriches the conceptual frameworks of Thomas (cited in Le Breton, 2008) and Crozier and Friedberg (cited in Digneffe, 1990), showing how actors' autonomy and strategic decisions influence overall performance. The analysis demonstrates that creativity and innovation are as much social processes as economic tools, linking individual behavior to organizational outcomes.

## 8. Conclusion

This study shows that creativity and innovation are essential levers for the development and performance of Hotel La Source in Lubumbashi. They enable actors to mobilize their experience and imagination to propose original solutions, adapt services, and meet diverse client needs. The use of creativity and innovation translates into improved service quality and the ability to stand out in a competitive environment, enhancing attractiveness and client loyalty.

Moreover, theoretical and methodological analysis revealed that creativity and innovation go beyond mere introduction of novelties; they rely on complex interactions among actors, social representations, and organizational strategies. The frameworks of symbolic interactionism and strategic analysis showed that innovative practices result from constant adjustments, past experiences, and strategic decisions by hotel staff. This dynamic contributes directly to overall performance by harmonizing individual and collective actions for optimized results.

This research underscores the importance of viewing creativity and innovation as integrated, multidimensional processes within hospitality. The results offer practical guidance for hotel managers aiming to improve performance

and competitiveness through innovation. They also show that valuing creative practices and effectively disseminating innovations are decisive factors for economic and organizational success, while enriching academic reflection on hotel management and development.

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