

## Developing creativity and innovation in the hospitality industry in Romania by improving the human resources management practices

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### **Candidate's background**

Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina graduated in 2010 the Faculty of Commerce at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies, with a general average of 9.69, and specialized in 2012 by graduating with a general average of 10 the Business Administration in Tourism Master's Program at the same university. After working in commerce, she has done several internships in the tourism industry and human resources. She is engaged in the tourism industry as an active member of Young Skål Bucharest (a youth organization for tourism professionals) and by participating at different tourism conferences and events. Her academic interests focus on human resources, hotel management and tourism innovation.

### **Brief presentation of the research project**

Research on tourism innovation is still in its beginnings, several aspects being gradually implemented in theory and empirically proven. Studies mainly focused on the numerous types of innovation and its determinants, the impact of innovation on firm's competitiveness, types of costs and firm's individual market attractiveness. Although academic literature recognizes the importance of the need for creative work force in the service sector, little is known about creativity and the ways it can be fostered, especially in Romanian companies. Most of the studies on this subject have been conducted in Asian and West European countries. According to present theories, individual creativity performance depends on several social-contextual factors as organizational climate, leadership and the relationship between co-workers. The innovation capacity should become an essential requirement in the process of personnel recruitment, aspect that is still insufficient investigated in the tourism industry. It can be observed a lack of research on human resource management practices relevant to creativity. Moreover, there are few studies that correlate a particular country, its culture and its performance in the hospitality industry. Empirical research on hotel services and the innovation capacity of a country is still in its beginnings and insufficient.

This being said, the PhD. thesis aims to develop an extensive research, focused on 3 directions (managers, employees and customers of the Romanian hospitality industry) in order to provide an in-depth analysis of innovation and the role of human resource management practices. The research aims to be the first study conducted in Romania that will lead to identifying the work motivators for hotel employees, correlated to the enhancement of creativity and innovation, adding its results to the existing international research on this matter. The research will also highlight the impact of national culture to the innovation ability, but, unlike the foreign existing studies, will also take into consideration the influence of the local cultures existing in a country. Moreover, the research will identify a model of factors with influence on hotel customer satisfaction, highlighting the crucial importance of the human resources and of the innovation level existing in the company.

**Keywords:** *innovation, creativity, hotel employees, culture, management*

### **Research methods**

In order to understand the manner in which creativity and innovation is managed in the Romanian hospitality industry, 3 exploratory studies will be conducted. The information needed will be obtained by conducting 3 different surveys (on hotel managers, hotel employees and hotel customers) with the

help of a questionnaire. The study will focus on 3-5 star hotels in Romania, located in different regions of the country and mainly affiliated to a hotel chain. After an in-depth literature review, in the second year of PhD. studies it will be conducted the first survey, focused on hotel managers. The study is aimed to identify managers' perception on the factors with influence on creativity and innovation in hotels. Further, in the third year of the PhD. programme, the research will focus on the surveys conducted on hotel employees and customers. The study focused on hotel employees is aimed to identify the role of motivation in the creative process and the proper organizational context for the enhancement of creativity. Moreover, the research will highlight the influence of local culture to the employees' innovation ability. Last, but not least, the research focused on hotel customers is mainly intended to highlight innovative hotel services with great impact on customers' purchase decision.

### Research outputs and their implementation

The research conducted during the PhD. programme will materialize in the publication of several articles in national and international prestigious academic journals, as well as in participating at international academic conferences. Until now, there have been published 3 articles\* in journals available on prestigious academic databases and other 4 papers\*\* have been or are to be presented at international academic conferences. Last, but not least, a research meant to be included in an article of a journal following ISI Thomson Reuters Services is under development.

\* 1. Țigu Gabriela, Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina, Răvar Anamaria Sidonia (2013) – THE IMPACT OF CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY ON CUSTOMERS, *Journal of Tourism Challenges&Trends*, Volume VI, No. 1, June 2013, ISSN 1844-9743, pp. 9-34

2. Răvar Anamaria Sidonia, Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina (2013) – CONSUMERS' PERCEPTION ON INNOVATION IN TOURISM VALUE CHAIN, *The Annals of the University of Oradea. Economic Sciences*, 1st issue / July 2013 – Tom XXII -2013, ISSN 1582-5450 (electronic edition), pp. 815-824

3. Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina, Răvar Anamaria Sidonia (2013) – MEASURING MANAGERS' PERCEPTION OF INNOVATION IN THE ROMANIAN HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, *Procedia Economics and Finance*, Vol. 6, pp. 512-522, ISSN: 2212-5671

\*\* 1. Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina, Răvar Anamaria Sidonia (2012) – THE ROLE OF SOCIAL ENTERPRISES IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE TOURISM INDUSTRY, *1st International Conference on Social Responsibility, Ethics and Sustainable Business*, ICSR, 22-23/10/2012, București, România, <http://icsr2012.wordpress.com/>

2. Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina (2013) – FACTORII MOTIVATORI ȘI SATISFAȚIA MUNCII ANGAJAȚILOR ÎN HOTEL, *Romanian Sociological Association International Conference – Towards the Good Society – European Perspectives*, 24-26/10/2013, București, România, <http://www.conference.arsociologie.ro/>

3. Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina, Răvar Anamaria Sidonia (2013) – TOURISTS' SATISFACTION WITH INNOVATION IN ROMANIAN HOTELS, *The 7th International Management Conference "New Management for the New Economy"*, 7-8/11/2013, București, România, <http://conference.management.ase.ro/>

4. State Olimpia, Iorgulescu Maria-Cristina (2013) – THE IMPACT OF MANAGEMENT AND ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE ON CREATIVITY IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY, *The 4th International Conference on Tourism – 2013 CACTUS „Contemporary Approaches and Challenges of Tourism Development”*, 13-16/11/2013, Bran, România, <http://www.tourismconference2013.ase.ro/>

The PhD. research will conclude with a model of human resources practices intended to enhance creativity and innovation in the hospitality industry - an extremely important tool for hotel managers and the first initiative of this kind in the tourism field. This model can set a starting point for further researches. It would be interesting to study the impact of innovation in the hospitality industry and the way it influences the hotel's long term financial results. Moreover, it would be interesting to identify a suitable method of measuring employees' creativity.

**Auxiliary elements that may support the research**

The research on the hospitality industry and on human resources management is supported by the internship programmes conducted in a hotel affiliated to an international hotel chain and in a human resources company. Moreover, as an active member of Young Skål, the author maintains a permanent connection with the tourism industry in Romania, by organizing and participating at different professional tourism events and conferences (as “Turism în România 2030” Colloquium and “Hotel Tourism & Leisure Investment Conference”). The PhD. student aims to develop a career in higher education, having taught seminars on “Human resources in tourism” and “Operations technique for tourism” at the Bucharest University of Economic Studies. With the experience gained until now (during the master’s programme and during the 1<sup>st</sup> year of PhD. studies) in researching hospitality’s human resources, the PhD. scientific initiative aims to conduct to interesting results, both theoretical and practical.

**References**

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