

Two Decades of Research in Innovative Strategy of Hospitality Industry: A Systematic Literature Review

Pratim Chatterjee*

Abstract

Purpose: Despite the significance of innovation observed for the survival and growth of hospitality industry there is no comprehensive research in this area, the purpose of this study is to represent a review of literature around the hospitality innovation. This paper also aims to identify the effective firm specific innovative strategy for the survival and growth of the hospitality industry and highlight the future research direction in this area. **Methodology/Approach:** Systematic Literature Review method is adopted in the present study. Keywords searches were performed in the Google Scholar database using “Hospitality Innovation” OR “Hotel Innovation” OR “Innovation” AND “Service Innovation”. Last two decades were taken as the time frame where last time study was conducted in April 2022. **Findings:** Existing literature shows that till now research is scarce in the hospitality innovation. Product, process, organizational and marketing innovations as well as firm specific radical or incremental innovation will be essential as survival strategy for the hospitality industry in future. Use of innovation as a competitive strategy in the hospitality industry is still found to be unexplored. **Originality/Value:** This paper reviews literature of almost two decades on hospitality innovation and aims to shed light on a very ignored yet potential strategy of hospitality industry. This paper will be useful to hospitality professionals, researchers, and academicians.

Keywords: Hospitality Innovation, Hotel Innovation, Service Innovation, Innovation

INTRODUCTION

Any novel or new idea that may be new to the world or any existing product or services with a major revision can be considered as innovation. An innovative hotel offers a

new product, service, process or a modified organizational method for the customers. The needs and preference of the customers are diverse and ever changing so to meet up their expectations a hotel need to continuously innovate its product and services (Grissmann et al., 2013; Nagy, 2014; Pavia & Floričić, 2017). In Service industry it is considered more difficult to satisfy a customer because of the basic service features like intangibility and perishability. Hospitality industry being one of the largest service sector industries are also not free from this disadvantage. So new service/product development has to be an essential steps of service industry for their survival and growth (Orfila-Sintes & Mattsson, 2009; Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2010; Line & Runyan, 2011; Backman et al., 2017; Salman et al., 2017). Hotels need to research and come up with the findings about the specific personal taste and preference of the guest with impoverished value added and innovative product and services along with their existing ones to offer a memorable experience to the customers (Bharwani & Mathews, 2016; Pena et al., 2016).

Hospitality and tourism industry since early times have encountered and are also now facing lot of challenges be it economical, healthcare, social or political. Hospitality innovation is the only way to transform these challenges into opportunities to get a competitive edge. Moreover, different other factors such as ever rising customer demand, changing customer attitude, government restriction related to hospitality & tourism, competition etc. increases the significance of innovation in the hospitality industry (Chen, 2011; Hillman & Kaliappen, 2015; Pavia & Floricic, 2017; Aladag et al., 2020). Though hospitality industry is considered among the most lucrative industry of the world still lower productivity is observed in it compared to other industries and less innovation practices is considered as the primary reason for this phenomenon

* Assistant Professor, Amity University, Kolkata, West Bengal, India. Email: chatterjeepratim29@gmail.com; ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-4136-8157>

(Toivonen & Tuominen, 2009; Martin-Rios & Ciobanu, 2019). Innovation increases customer satisfaction and value for money which positively influences customer loyalty through positive word of mouth publicity and finally these variables will have a direct or indirect positive effect on the intention of the guest to visit a hotel (Chaniotakis & Lymperopoulos, 2009; Han & Hyun, 2014; Soleimani & Einolahzadeh, 2018; Tripathy, 2018; Konuk, 2019) Though research for innovation and customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry is need of the hour, still our insights in these areas remains vague (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012; Sandvik et al., 2014).

Thus, the main objectives of the study can be considered as follows:

- To study the existing literature on the innovation practices of hospitality industry in a systematic manner.
- To identify the effective firm specific innovative strategy for the survival and growth of the hospitality industry.
- To recognize the research gap and scope of future research in this study area.

Further the paper is structured as follows:

- Research methodology.
- Theoretical background of hospitality innovation.
- Conclusion and scope for future research.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopted the structured systematic literature review method to review and analyze articles (Paul & Singh, 2017; Paul & Feliciano Cestero, 2020). All articles with the term “Hotel Innovation” OR “Hospitality Innovation” OR “Service Innovation” AND “Innovation” have been searched in the Google Scholar search engine. This paper spans a time horizon of almost two decades (2000-2022) and the search was conducted in April 2022 for the last time. After considering only the innovation articles of the hospitality industry total 76 articles are finally included for review. After screening these articles for relevance finally 64 articles are taken into consideration in the study.

Innovation Strategy in Hospitality Industry

In this section the articles are reviewed to determine different types of hospitality innovation strategy taken

by the hotels. To find answers to some justified questions like the importance of innovation in the hotel industry, the types of innovation mostly observed in hotels, most suitable innovation strategy for the hospitality industry and different types of hospitality innovation techniques a comprehensive review of the literature has been conducted. Then following findings obtained from the studies are as follows:

1. Most prevailing hospitality models were identified like; i) Service innovation conceptual model ii) 7 step innovation model iii) Measurement model iv. Absorptive capacity model and v) Culinary product development model.
 - *Service Innovation Conceptual Model*: This conceptual innovation model (Doztel et al., 2013) was developed to measure the relation between e-innovation and p-innovation with the firm value where e-innovation is advised in most of the industries and p-innovation in human dominated industries.
 - *7 Step Innovation Model*: The 7-Innovation model (Sengupta & Dev, 2011) begins with inspiration and proceeds with insight, ideation, initiative, implementation, invigilation, and investigation. 7-I Model was applied to Improve Brand Positioning at the Taj Holiday Village Goa, India.
 - *Measurement Model*: In the measurement model (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012) link were measured among corporate culture, indicators of innovation and hospitality industry business performance. This model further adds the positive relationship of cultural dimension with innovation and performance of the hotel
 - *Absorptive Capacity Model*: Absorptive capacity model (Thomas & Wood, 2014) is used to examine the ability to absorb and utilize the external knowledge in an innovative way to get an competitive edge.
 - *Culinary Product Development Model*: One of the well accepted hospitality innovation model is Culinary product development model (Harrington, 2004) This model mainly focuses on knowledge and process-oriented expertise and skills to gain competitive advantage. This is an organic innovation model for the purpose of culinary innovation and new product development.
2. In many scholastics the effect of incremental and radical innovation in the hospitality industry was

observed. Dewar and Dutton (1986) explored innovation based on how much new knowledge is derived from it. They come up with radical and incremental innovation. Here radical innovation are breakthrough changes in technology to come up with new or reforming improvement of product or services. Whereas incremental innovation are minor modification of process or technology to get a better performance. Radical innovations are always costly and matter of a strategic decisions of a company whereas incremental innovations have always less impact on profit so also easy to implement (Martínez-Ros & Orfila-Sintes, 2009; Brooker et al., 2011; Gyurácz-Németh et al., 2013).

3. Finally in the third edition of OECD Oslo Manual (2005, p. 46) four types of innovations were considered: (1) product innovations; (2) process innovations; (3) marketing innovations and (4) organizational innovations (Hjalager, 2010; Nagy, 2014; Gomezelj, 2016). These four types of innovations in terms of hospitality industry are explored in the next sections:

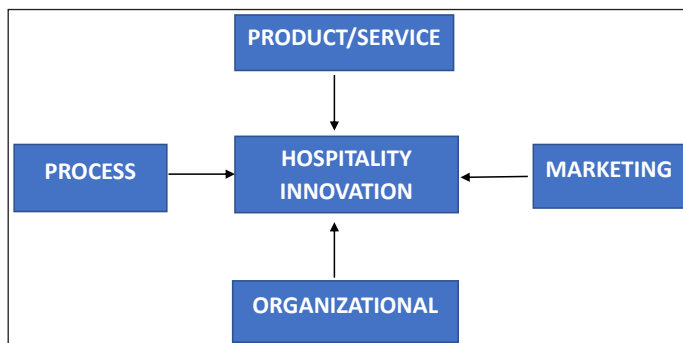


Fig. 1: Types of Hospitality Innovation

Types of Hospitality Innovation

• *Product Innovation*

Product innovation is the introduction of a total new or significantly modified product or service in the respect of its features or intended application. Guisado-González et al. (2011) in his studies elucidated the importance of the introduction of new technology for the application of product or service innovation in hospitality industry. Similarly, product/service differentiation and new product development process has been mostly regarded as a way of innovation of the hospitality firms to earn a competitive edge because this is directly experienced by the end

user. (Hjalager, 2010; Ivankovič et al., 2010; Becerra et al., 2013; Hassanién & Eid, 2013) considered hotels associated with innovation practices are more successful in terms of revenue earning and customer satisfaction. Similarly further studies show significant relation between product or service innovation and successful operation of hospitality firms. (Lewis and Chambers & Morrison, 2001; Laugen et al., 2005; Nagy, 2014). In all areas of operation product innovation can be observed like in food production new trends like molecular gastronomy, fabricated foods in restaurant contact less service, service through robots and flambe service and innovation in terms of facial recognition system and specially designed room like lanai, penthouse etc. are mostly seen in the rooms division of a hotel.

• *Process Innovation*

Process innovation is the execution of new or uncommon production, service method that accelerates the growth and quality of the production or service delivery process. Effect of process innovation on hospitality industry is observed in many noted literatures. Tajeddini (2010) motivated evolution of proper service method that inspires the hotel employees to come up with their creative ideas. Zhou et al. (2005) and Chen et al. (2009) explored the positive effect of innovation initiation and service delivery innovation on financial and market performance in their literature. Further some significant studies (Ottenbacher & Gnoth, 2005; Rodgers, 2007; Orfila-Sintes & Martínez-Ros, 2009; Hjalager, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; López-Fernández, 2011; Vila et al., 2012; Grisseemann et al., 2013; Hilman & Kaliappen, 2015) have been observed in the process innovation for hospitality industry. They mentioned production or service method used in hotels like infrared technology used in kitchen, contactless dining experience, virtual reality, oracle cloud hotel PMS, automated check in method etc.

• *Marketing Innovation*

Marketing innovation is the introduction of a new or modified marketing method that seeks to alter the promotional channel of the product, service or packaging and is novel to the organization. There can be diverse rationale for marketing innovation, Hankinson (2004) identified internet as the innovative promotion means where the marketing cost can be distinctly controlled. (Hjalager, 2010; Backman et al., 2017) have also contributed by citing other positive impacts of marketing innovation. Further notable contribution (Mortensen & Bloch, 2005, p. 49; Scaglione et al., 2009; Line & Runyan, 2012; Vila et al., 2012; Pappas, 2015) have been made

in this area. Marketing strategies like changes in food & beverage item packaging, happy hours, off season room rate, innovative garnishing of food & beverage, branding of hotel like ecotel etc. were mentioned in those articles.

• *Organizational Innovation*

Organizational innovation is the introduction of a new organizational method in the firm’s business practices that is newly developed in the firm and is a strategic innovation approach by the management. The introduction of new category of hotel as a part of strategic management decision like medical hotel or meditel, spa hotel, wellness hotel, train hotel, boutique hotel etc. has high potential yet gained little attention (Victorino et al., 2005; Han, 2013).

One of the significant innovations among them is medical hotel or hotel hospital that provides the entire gamut of standard hotel facilities as well as healthcare services to the medical tourists and patients (Docrates, 2011; Medical Hotels, 2011) Medical hotel offers physical convenience by providing accommodation and food to the family members of the patients unlike a normal hospital or medical clinic (Gan & Fredrick, 2011; Heung et al., 2011; Han et al., 2015; Han & Hwang, 2013). Further some significant studies (Jacob et al., 2003; Pikkemaat, 2008; GHN, 2011; Sandvik et al., 2014; Han & Hyun, 2014; Kazemha & Dehkordi, 2017) have been observed in the Organizational innovation for hospitality industry.

Product/Service	Process	Marketing	Organizational
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Molecular Gastronomy • Facial Recognition system (Rooms) • Robots in hotels • Gueridon Service • Special Rooms(Lanai, Penthouse) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Infrared technology in kitchen • Contactless dining experience • Virtual reality • Oracle Cloud Hotel PMS • Automated Check In 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in Food and Beverage item packaging • Happy hours • Off season Room rate • Innovative garnishing of Food & Beverage • Branding - Ecotel 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Customized production system • Medical Hotel • Wellness /Spa Hotel • Learning & development • Collaboration

Fig. 2: Hospitality Innovation Examples

Product/Service	Process	Marketing	Organizational
Hjalager, 2010; Becerra et al, 2013; Hassanien & Eid, 2013; Ivankovič et al, 2010; Lewis and Chambers & Morrison, 2001; Laugen et al, 2005; Nagy, 2014; Guisado-González et al, 2011	Tajeddini,2010; Zhou et al, 2005; Chen et al, 2009; Ottenbacher & Gnoth, 2005; Rodgers, 2007; Orfila-Sintes & Marti’nez-Ros, 2009; Hjalager, 2010; Chen et al., 2011; López-Fernández, 2011; Vila et al., 2012; Grisseemann et al., 2013	Hankinson, 2004; Hjalager, 2010; Backman et al, 2017; Mortensen & Bloch, 2005, p. 49; Scaglione et al, 2009; Line & Runyan, 2012; Vila et al, 2012; Pappas, 2015	Victorino et al, 2005; Han, 2013; Gan & Fredrick, 2011; Heung et al, 2011; Han et al, 2015; Han & Hwang, 2013; Jacob et al, 2003; Pikkemaat, 2008; GHN, 2011; Sandvik et al, 2014; Han & Hyun, 2014; Kazemha & Dehkordi, 2017

Fig. 3: Hospitality Innovation Notable Contributions

CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper describes different types of theoretical and methodological approach of hospitality innovation. The objective of this paper was to investigate the innovative strategy of hospitality industry through systematic literature review. After completion of a rigorous review of the existing article it is obvious that any suitable innovation is mandatory for the survival and growth of a hospitality organization in this fierce competitive market. Significant research gap is observed in the scarce of hospitality innovation literature. It is also observed from the hospitality innovation built up models that not only the innovation techniques but also the implementation of innovation at the ground level in the hotel is essential for any successful innovation operation. It needs to be well accepted by the employees at all levels so that the importance of innovation will also be imbibed by the customers through the hotel staffs. As advised by Dewar and Dutton (1986) depending on the size, business strategy, financial condition, payback period, types of property etc. factors the management of the hotel will choose to adapt a radical or incremental innovation strategy. Among all innovation strategy as per OECD Oslo Manual (2005, p. 46) though we find some studies on product/service and process innovation, but only a handful of studies on marketing and organizational innovation in terms of hospitality industry whereas there is varied scope for more research on marketing, and organizational innovation in the hospitality industry. Hospitality industry having the highest potential among all service sector industries is observed to be least innovative and the Though hospitality has the highest potential among all the service industries still it is the least innovative and lack of interest from both the academia and the industry professionals in this area is quite alarming (Tajeddini & Trueman, 2012; Martin-Riosa & Ciobanu, 2019). More research on hospitality innovation needs to be explored and there is a requirement for better empirical and logical evidence (Gomezelj, 2016; Hjalager, 2010) in this study the future directions are made which are as follows:

- In sum product, process, marketing, and organizational innovation are found to be most effective hospitality innovation research.
- Future studies can be conducted on the implementation of radical or incremental innovation in the hotel

industry based on definite criteria such as hotel size, category of hotels, types of property, business strategy, financial condition etc.

- There is a need for future research by considering viewpoints of those stakeholders who are directly or indirectly connected in hospitality industry innovation.
- There is also an urgent need for more new theory or model development in future in the hospitality innovation to justify the methodological approach.

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