

A Systematic Review of AI-Driven Innovations in the Hospitality Sector: Implications on Restaurant Management

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Abstract

In recent years, embracing technological advancements in the tourist and hospitality sector has played an important part in the growth of the hospitality industry. The integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) into hotel operations represents a transformative change in the hospitality sector, ushering in a new era of innovation, efficiency, and personalized customer experiences. The study explores AI-driven innovations in the hospitality industry with a specific focus on restaurant management. The study used a qualitative approach to systematically review the relationship between AI innovations and hospitality sector through a comprehensive literature review of papers published between January 2018 and November 2024. In total, 27 articles were identified and then critically analyzed through content analysis and narrative synthesis into themes, including “AI innovations” and “AI applications”. Study findings imply that AI-powered innovations improve operational efficiency, provide customized guest experience, reduce costs, escalate customer satisfaction and loyalty, and increase sustainability as part of restaurant management efforts in the hotel industry. The study outcomes will empower stakeholders in the hospitality sector to embrace innovation and drive positive change in the industry. This review paper gives researchers and practitioners a wider understanding of the appropriate selection of AI innovations that can potentially improve decision-making in the hospitality industry.

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence (AI), AI-Driven Innovations, Hospitality Industry, Restaurant Management

1. Introduction

In today's digital landscape, technology has become a vital component of our lives, and the hospitality industry is no exception (Nozawa et al., 2022). With the currently rapidly changing digital environment, businesses in the hospitality and tourism sector experience the challenge of harnessing the power of emerging technologies to stay competitive and meet evolving needs of customers. From customized guest experiences to efficient operations and sustainable practices, there is a rising demand for innovative solutions that leverage on artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge technologies (Talukder et al., 2024). Saturated with new technologies, the hospitality sector faces a highly competitive environment and customers who need superior service, acting as a significant source of innovation. However, the adoption of AI in the tourism and hospitality industry is still in its infancy stages.

Artificial intelligence is the simulation of human intelligence operations by computers, especially the computer systems (Wang et al., 2020). AI is effective at performing certain tasks. It has transformed the hospitality sector by enabling computers to make sound decisions that lead to more efficient operations (Kumar et al., 2021). It has necessitated the development of new competencies and capabilities, resulting in improved customer experiences (Ruel & Njoku, 2021). The AI-powered technologies are expected to enable businesses in the hospitality sector to transition to digital ways of operating. The hotel and tourism industry has implemented AI in systems such as revenue management and customer relationships (Mariani et al., 2020). Furthermore, AI technologies are used to enable service innovation in the delivery of personalized services in the hospitality sector as AI-driven smart services and robotics, like AI-powered chatbot technologies, are used to support human intelligence and physical capabilities (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020).

Several review articles have been published within the AI literature to explore a range of applications within the tourism and hospitality sectors. However, how efficiently the applied AI innovations have performed with respect to restaurant management has not yet been reviewed. According to Ninemeier and Hayes (2016), restaurant management entails managing the health, daily tasks and decision-making processes required to run a restaurant, putting customer satisfaction first, enhancing customer experience, prioritizing employee retention, investing in marketing, managing inventory and following health guidelines among other daily restaurant operations. There is inadequate empirical backing for the relationship between the use of AI-driven innovations as part of routine restaurant management. Therefore, there is a need for empirical studies to demonstrate the extent to which application of AI can be adopted as part of restaurant management. It is against this backdrop that the research study was carried out to explore AI-powered innovations in restaurant management in the hospitality sector.

2. Methodology

The study employed a qualitative approach to examine the role of AI-powered innovations in restaurant management. Unlike previous studies, we have adopted the “overview of reviews” methodology that provides a more comprehensive and systematic understanding of the subject matter. It adopted a narrative analysis and content analysis to systematically review AI-driven innovations literature in the hospitality sector. Overviews of reviews represent a relatively recent approach to evidence analysis that aims to systematically collect and summarize findings of multiple systematic reviews (Lunny et al., 2018). The objective is not to replicate searches evaluating study eligibility, which may introduce bias from the included studies, but to provide a detailed overview of the findings (Blackwood, 2016). Overviews facilitate incorporation of research synthesis outcomes, especially when they yield inconsistent results (Cooper & Koenka, 2012). Information was acquired from 27 research articles on Google Scholar, Scopus, Web of Science. The inclusion criteria were studies that defined artificial intelligence in every aspect of the hospitality sector, published and authored in English and were peer-reviewed. The information was published between January 2018 and November 2024. To search the databases and registers, the researcher identified a set of keywords related to AI in the hospitality sector including “artificial intelligence”, “AI-driven innovations”, and “AI-powered innovations in the hospitality industry”. **Figure 1** shows the inclusion decision flowchart with steps of the review decision process (identification, screening, retrieval, and inclusion) according to the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) standard. It sets a gold standard for conducting systematic reviews in different scientific disciplines (Page et al., 2021). The methodology presents the research journey holistically, from its inception to its conclusions, offering readers with a precise and detailed understanding of the approach and findings (Snyder, 2019).

3. Results and Discussion

Since the research explored the role of AI-driven innovations in restaurant management, the study outcomes found that AI-powered technologies help to improve customer satisfaction, enhance operational efficiency, promote sustainability practices, and offer customized guest experiences. The studies reviewed offer valuable insights into major themes in the application of AI innovations in the hospitality industry. These include increasing operational efficiency and enhancing customer experiences (Elkhwesky et al., 2022; Li et al., 2022). It was found that AI-powered innovations offer a variety of opportunities for the hospitality sector to improve their daily operations and their long-term strategies, as well as ensure that their guests get consistent quality services and products (Yang et al., 2020). Certain restaurants use smart room technologies powered by AI that allow visitors to take full control of their rooms, from entertainment devices, air conditioning units, and lighting, to other room amenities (Lata & Mehta, 2021). Since restaurant management entails enhancing customer experience, the study found that AI improves customer

satisfaction and experience through personalized services. For example, the Peninsula Hotels uses the AI systems to assess the visitor preferences from previous stays, allowing them to customize the room even prior to the customer's arrival. From adjusting the room temperature to arranging for their transport, which ensures that every guest feels uniquely valued resulting in an impressive increase in visitor repeat visits.

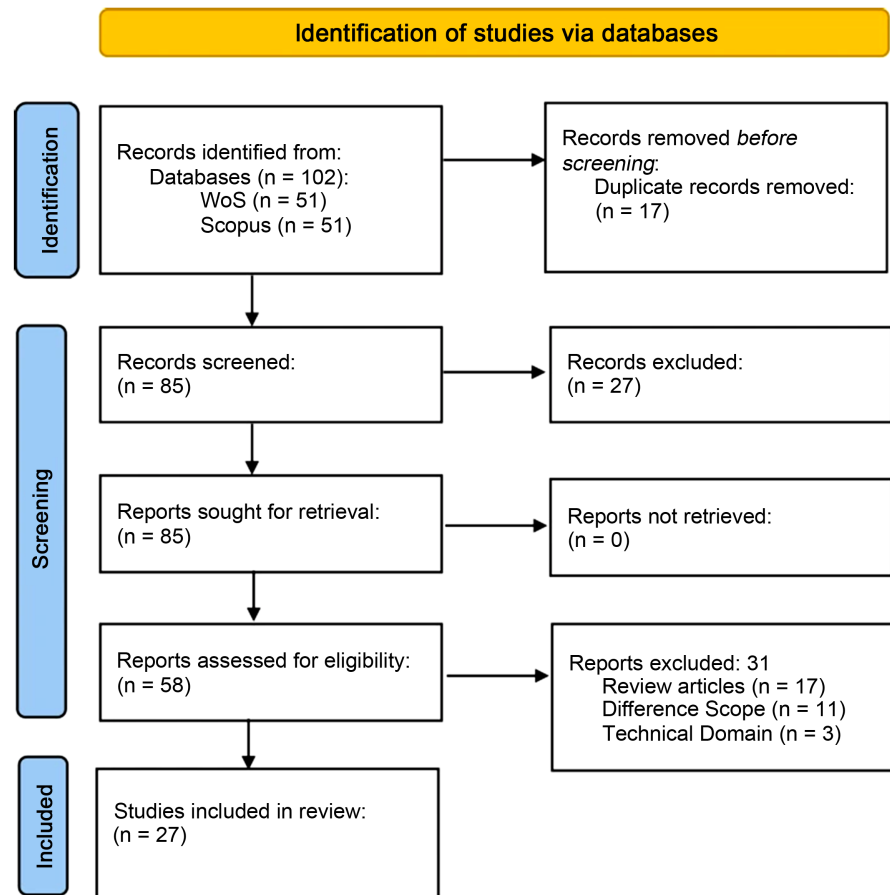


Figure 1. Inclusion decision flowchart.

It was found that AI-innovations improve operational efficiency. The use of robots as museum guides, waiters, and luggage-storage workers (Ivanov et al., 2019), butlers, receptionists, concierges, in-room assistants, and deployment of robots as bartenders have become prominent applications of artificial intelligence in the hospitality sector (Cain et al., 2019). The research findings agree with the study by Prentice et al. (2020), which found that AI service quality significantly contributes to overall service quality in the hospitality sector through necessitating a better understanding of how AI technologies can affect service quality, guest satisfaction, and loyalty through worker-related outcomes, such as employee productivity. AI significantly enhances the operational efficiency of hotels or restaurants. For example, the Ritz-Carlton has adopted an AI system to streamline the room cleaning schedules. The system puts into consideration various components such as the priority rooms,

visitor check-out times, and employee work patterns, leading to a 20 percent increase in housekeeping efficiency. The Radisson Hotel Group uses the AI innovations to efficiently monitor and manage water usage, resulting in significant reduction in waste and resource consumption. This research's findings are consistent with Gajić et al. (2024) study outcomes showing that artificial intelligence has a significant effect on operational efficiency across different sectors. The adoption of AI-driven innovations allows for optimization of operational procedures, minimization of operational expenses, and increased customer satisfaction via customized services. Agarwall et al. (2022) found that AI is particularly applied in the hospitality industry in the automation of administrative tasks, carrying out predictive analytics, and improving decision-making processes leading to increased efficiency, which shares the same study outcomes with our findings. In general, the AI-powered innovations will enable restaurants to innovate and differentiate themselves in the highly competitive hospitality business environment, ultimately shaping the future of dining experiences globally to further optimize operations.

From the study results, it was found that AI-innovations have positive impacts on the restaurant management from a customer, management and employees' perspectives. It was generally reported that AI-innovations increase operational efficiency. The AI-driven automation optimizes inventory management and minimizes operational costs, thus enhancing service consistency and profitability (Li et al., 2021). AI improves inventory management precision by enhancing accuracy, data structuring and analysis, optimizing replenishment, and offering features such as real-time tracking. It also eliminates stockouts and overstock situations to increase efficiency, forecasts demand variations, and optimizes supply chains via machine learning algorithms as well as data analysis (Feizabadi, 2022).

AI provides customers with the opportunity to personalize their accommodations based on their profiles. This way, they will receive the experience they specifically require. The AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants allow workers to connect with guests in real-time to offer customized recommendations and assistance, a view shared by Tan et al. (2021). AI facilitates personalized customer interactions by evaluating a huge amount of data sets to understand individual preferences, dietary restrictions, and purchasing behaviors among others. This capability enables the restaurants to give customized menus, personalized marketing, and interactive dining experiences that addresses to diverse consumer needs (Tan et al., 2021). AI is used to assess customer data and behavior to create personalized marketing experiences. It enhances personalized marketing through the AI algorithms that can process huge amounts of data such as psychographic and demographic information, purchase history, browsing behavior, and social media activity, to gain insights into consumer preferences and behavior (Babatunde et al., 2024). For instance, for customers who love watching movies, Netflix uses the AI algorithms to analyze their viewing habits and suggest content that is likely to be of interest to them. Al-Nafjan et al. (2023) offer a comprehensive examination of "neuro-tourism", which is an innovative technique that uses neuroscience to improve the hospitality industry's marketing strategies by understanding guests'

conscious and unconscious brain activities.

AI's integration into hospitality sector significantly improves guest satisfaction, while concurrently increasing revenue via targeted marketing and operational efficiencies. By leveraging AI-powered innovations like machine learning and predictive analytics, hospitality establishments can personalize offerings to meet individual preferences, thereby developing stronger customer relationships (Tiwari & Mishra, 2021). AI enhances customer service and experience (Doborjeh et al., 2021). Moreover, the future trajectory of AI-driven innovations in this industry foresees developments in the Internet of Things (IoT) incorporation into restaurant management. The innovations are set to further change operations by optimizing efficiency and enriching customer interactions. For example, IoT devices will facilitate real-time data collection and analysis, thereby improving inventory management precision and optimizing resource allocation to effectively meet demand changes. In addition, the utilization of IoT platforms can remember guests' specific comfort preferences, such as room temperature, lighting, movie titles, and TV channels, and automatically set the room for the next stay (Chen et al., 2022). The AR applications will offer interactive dining experiences, allowing customers to interact with digital menus (Abufawr et al., 2024; Tan et al., 2021). There are certain unique restaurant management applications of blockchain. Blockchain technology enhances transparency and traceability, ensuring food safety and compliance with regulatory guidelines and statutes. By leveraging on the blockchain technology, customers can better understand the production process of the food they consume, leading to an increase in their confidence in its safety and quality (Román et al., 2018). Enhanced transparency is related to enhanced perceived food safety and quality, increasing customer satisfaction. The workers are developing and sharing skills and supply chains are seeing end-to-end transactions and applying AI to generate higher returns. In general, the blockchain technology offers trust and visibility in operations, finance and diner experience.

There is a positive significant correlation between AI-powered technologies (virtual reality, business intelligence tools powered by machine learning, and chatbots) and customer satisfaction (customer patronage, expectations and perceived quality of the service) (Abufawr et al., 2024). The AI systems encourage personalization through conversational systems such as voice assistants and chatbots (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Customized responses to guest inquiries have a big potential. Examples include AI-powered chatbots and virtual assistants such as minute, multi-lingual robots answering questions at Tokyo airport and hotel check-ins (Cain et al., 2019). Service robots and chatbots can contribute to improving customer experience and service quality. The service robots use AI and machine learning technologies. The service robots play the same role as humans, but they are associated with improved speed of service delivery. Robots have been found to be good at carrying out repetitive tasks such as food preparation, cleaning and even delivery (Sprenger & Mettler, 2020). Chatbots have been one of the most common uses of robots within the hospitality industry. It can be used to offer basic customer service, or for more complex tasks such as hotel or flight bookings. Wirtz (2023) shares

the view that technologies such as code and software related to analytics, image processing, robotic process automation and low-code platforms are projected to transform the service industry, including the hospitality sector. They can all contribute to enhancing the customer experience and service quality. In most hotels globally, service robots are used to improve and personalize customer experiences. The interactive AI kiosks may greet guests when they arrive while service robots take the visitor's luggage to their rooms to make the check-in process seamless and efficient (Yang et al., 2020). Hotels may use machine learning technologies to set automated workflows for workers. This includes monitoring maintenance procedures, inventory management, pricing optimization, and other hotel operational processes (Abufawr et al., 2024). In addition, AI has a wide range of effects on the hospitality industry. For example, the AI in point-of-sale systems can minimize employee stealing in Food and Beverage (F&B) enterprises, such as restaurants (Be-rezina et al., 2020).

The AI-based assistance technologies may be used to build and develop customer relationships by providing pleasant customer interactions. Cain et al. (2019) found that AI-powered devices can improve customer experiences through stress management, emotional intelligence, and virtual personal assistants. The study outcomes agree with findings by Sinha and Praveen (2024) on AI-driven innovations in the food and beverage industry, which reported that AI is increasingly revolutionizing the food and beverage service sector by providing innovative solutions that enhance operational efficiency and customize guest experiences.

4. Conclusion

In summary, AI-driven innovations have pushed the hospitality sector to greater heights in terms of increased operational efficiency, customized guest experiences, and sustainability practices. The study focused on some of the AI-driven innovations in the hospitality sector, including service robots, virtual assistants, chatbots, blockchain technology, machine learning technologies and AMRs among others. It is crucial to focus on these technologies and implement suitable strategies to meet the needs and expectations of both guests and staff in the hospitality sector. The business owners and managers as well as employees, in the hospitality sector, should pay attention to AI-powered innovations, so that organizations can better evaluate their ability to successfully implement AI in their operations. The study outcomes would aid the major players in the hospitality sector to attain increased operational efficiency, personalized customer experiences and increased efficiency. It provides valuable insights into the various ways in which AI-driven solutions can improve guest experiences, streamline operations, and drive sustainable practices as part of restaurant management within the hospitality sector.

4.1. Recommendations

The recommendation is to consider empirical research, especially on the long-term effects of AI-powered technologies on actual behaviors, potential drawbacks

and ethical risks for guests and service staff. Few studies have been conducted on the potential challenges and ethical risks of the adoption of AI in the hospitality sector, with a specific focus on restaurant management. The major challenge faced by hospitality firms in implementing these innovations is the substantial financial expenses, including acquisition, installation, maintenance, software updates, adaptations to premises for robot mobility, worker training and hiring specialists. Customers' reluctance to use new technologies can pose a challenge for the hospitality players, as they may prefer human-delivered services or be intimidated by using the technology. There are also ethical concerns associated with data security and privacy. Moreover, it is suggested to consider a quantitative study about a specific AI-driven innovation adoption in a particular player in the hospitality industry, such as luxury cruise ships or hotels.

4.2. Implications

This review article can result in a better understanding of AI adoption and implementation in the hospitality sector. The implications could be applied to business owners and managers in the industry. The findings contribute to restaurant management and AI innovations theoretically and practically. In addition, the article contributes to the existing literature on the adoption of AI-driven solutions in the hospitality and tourism sector.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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