

The Use of Self-service Technology to Complement Human Touch Services in Bangkok

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Abstract: The development of science and technology brings to people, fast, convenient and more accurate service experience. Human-technology interaction is now a controversial topic. Hospitality has always been, and will always be, a people-driven industry. So, it's a challenge to find a way to integrate technology with this people-driven industry. The aim of this study is to explore how to remain the human touch in the self-service technology (SST) experience. And eventually aim is finding ways to create exceptional service for guests.

Keywords: Self-service technology (SST); Human interaction; Humanized service; Human touch

1. Introduction

This chapter introduces the background of this research, and explore the existing problems related to travel brands remain human in a digital world, what are the research questions and the research objectives that the research wants to find out. The scope of the research, the limitation and significance of this research and the definition related to this research are discussed in this chapter.

With 5G, big data, artificial intelligence, cloud computing, AR / VR those new technologies continue to emerge and go various, opening a new digital era. In the face of enormous changes in the digital world, the tourism industry has also transitioned from the traditional period into the digital era. In the digital era, the evolving combination of tourism and the digital industry and a growing number of online advertising and marketing are giving visitors unparalleled new experiences. With the advancements in technology and increasing use of artificial intelligence (AI), technology and other tools, many service providers have launched smart services that have become quite common across various industries, including hospitality and tourism services (Heinonen, Ostrom, & Voss, 2015). A few years ago, smartphone-based mobile check-in, keyless access to hotel rooms and mobile boarding passes were introduced, followed by robots for butlers, bellboys or customer service assistants.

Advances technology and expensive labor cost has made the service providers to develop and investigate the self-service delivery option (Shamdasani, Mukherjee, & Malhotra, 2008). Today, using technologies based on self-service (TBSS) to replace traditional human-touch service (THTS) has become a trend. "This evolution of services is somewhat similar to the past experience in the agricultural and manufacturing industry where human labor has been relentlessly replaced by automation" (Ong, 2010).

1.1 Statement of Problems

It is true that the digital age has brought fast and convenient as well as unusual and novel experience to tourists, but many disadvantages have also been exposed along with the development of the digital age. Many of the examples of technological advances listed above clearly illustrate the trend towards "self-service technologies" that is slowly replacing "THTS" in the hospitality industry.

1.2 The Scope of Study

The main area of the research is Bangkok. Because Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, the economy is more developed than other regions, and tens of millions of tourists visit Thailand every year, Bangkok always is the destination they must go. Many of them use the OTA platform to book accommodation, restaurants, attractions, entertainment and more. Bangkok has international tourists and a variety of tourism brands; the researcher can obtain more information in Bangkok. The study was conducted in Bangkok from January 13th to March 23th in 2020. The main objective of this study is to find the way to help travel brands remain human touch in digital age in Bangkok. In this research, 1 hotel brand and 9 guests are involved.

1.3 Limitations of the Study

Because of the main survey area is in Bangkok, but the economic development of different regions also leads to the difference in the development of science and technology. Digital technology in Bangkok is more advanced than in other areas. The survey results may be less comprehensive due to differences in regional economies. The findings will be limited to areas where digital technology is more advanced.

1.4 The Significance of Study

By Through the study of how hotel brands in the digital era to remain the human touch, explore the hotel brand should provide personalized services and guests want the hotel brand to provide personalized services. We hope to help hotel brands preserve the

guest experience in the digital world and let them feel the warmth of the brand. In order to better develop the hotel brand, to remain customer loyalty, guest's satisfaction, to get more new guests.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The main purpose of this chapter is reviewing the previous literature

Through study the whole process of self-service technology experience and perception of guests to explore how to remain the human touch in the self-service technology experience. And eventually purpose is finding ways to create exceptional service for guests. TBSS is a form of service that delivers by the customers to themselves through an interaction with technological systems or devices (Beatson, Coote, & Rudd, 2006). Although sometime customers might still consult employees for the use of the self-service systems or devices, self-service technology has helped to reduce the amounts of employees used in the hospitality industry. (Chen, 2011) Previously unfamiliar with such self-service, some pioneer hotels have implemented kiosks to test customers' reactions.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Kattara, H. S., & El-Said, O. A. (2013). Customers' preferences for new technology-based self-services versus human interaction services in hotels.

The researchers have collected preliminary qualitative data through face-to-face interview with 10 customers at five-star hotel in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt. Then these data were used to guide questionnaire to do quantitative analysis. Out of the 200 distributed questionnaires, only 106 of them were valid. The objective of this study is exploring variations in customer preference for HISs and TBSSs at different stages of the guest hotel cycle, as well as, indicating the motives for their preference. The purpose of collecting data was to discuss the different scenarios that customers can choose from when dealing with the hotel during different service encounters. The results of study reveal that hotel customers prefer to provide services through hotel staff rather than using innovative technologies during the customer cycle.

2.2.2 Barbara, N., Dimitrios, B. & Adele, L. (2013). High Tech for High Touch Experiences: A Case Study from the Hospitality Industry.

This article used a mix of qualitative methods was employed to draw from multiple sources of evidence. The objective of this study is exploring how companies can strategically use technology to create personalized high-touch guest experiences. This article was conducted to develop an understanding of the implementation of high-tech for the creation of high-touch guest experiences. This study has shown that technology can enhance interrelations between guests and members of staff through integrating single encounters to personalized experiences and co-creation with customer involvement.

2.2.3 Ana, B. & Paulo, R. (2016). High tech meets high touch in upscale hotels

This study used both qualitative method and quantitative method. The qualitative phase included an examination of upscale hotel websites, interviews with hotel managers and an internet search regarding the latest technological innovations in hotels. In the quantitative stage, a questionnaire was developed for hotel guests, generating a sample of 310 valid completed questionnaires. The objective of this study is analyzing the importance of current technologies in customer experiences in upscale hotels, assess the importance of the latest technologies in customer experiences in upscale hotels and test whether the importance of the latest technologies in customer experiences in upscale hotels varies according to age group and purpose of travel. This paper presents an analysis of the impact of current technologies on customer experiences in upscale hotels and assesses the potential of the latest technologies for enhancing customers' stay. The results reveal that hotel guests' value digital involvement in their hotel experience. Moreover, business travelers and younger generations give greater importance to latest technologies.

2.2.4 Deependra, S. (2016). Enhancing customer experience using technological innovations: A study of the Indian hotel industry.

Qualitative research was conducted and an in-depth interview. The sample includes general managers, managers and owners of selected hotels in India. The objective of this study is providing a comparative analysis of diverse challenges faced by different categories of hotels during the adoption of technological innovation. The results showed that Indian hotels have lagged behind in technology adoption compared with their western counterparts, though the situation is now changing. The paper highlights the positive impact of technological innovation on customer experience and also identifies constraints in adopting technological innovations.

2.2.5 Miyoung, K. & Hailin, Q. (2014). Travelers' behavioral intention toward hotel self-service kiosks usage.

Quantitative research. A convenience sampling was used and an online survey was conducted. A total of 689,000 e-mail invitations were sent out and a total of 337 responses were received. The objective of this study is to propose a refined technology acceptance model (TAM) to examine the relationship between factors that affect travelers' use of hotel self-service kiosks. The results show that all external variables usage, compatibility, and perceived risk have a significant direct impact on traveler attitudes use the hotel kiosk. This affects the attitude of passengers towards the use of hotel self-service kiosks, followed by perceived convenience use.

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