

GLOBAL INNOVATIONS IN HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM

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Abstract:

The hospitality and tourism industry is undergoing a transformative phase driven by innovative technologies, sustainable practices, and evolving consumer demands. This study explores the impact of technological innovations on the hospitality and tourism industry and the factors determining global innovations in hospitality and tourism that are shaping the industry. This study is based on secondary data to understand the impact of technological innovations in the hospitality and tourism industry. Data is collected from sources like industry reports, academic journals, and government publications. The study shows that integration of virtual and augmented reality enables immersive travel planning, while big data and predictive analytics facilitate personalized services. Sustainability remains a key focus, with eco-friendly accommodations, reduced food waste, and carbon-neutral initiatives gaining prominence. Additionally, trends such as health and wellness tourism, digital nomad services, and space tourism are redefining travel experiences. The study highlights valuable insights for businesses looking to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving industry while supporting global sustainability goals.

Key Words: Innovation, Tourism, Hospitality, Consumer, Technologies, Demands, Operational Efficiency, Services, Etc.,

Introduction:

The hospitality and tourism industry is a dynamic and rapidly evolving sector that plays a pivotal role in the global economy. Over the years, it has transitioned from traditional offerings to innovative, experience-driven services, influenced by advancements in technology, changing consumer preferences, and the growing importance of sustainability. With the integration of smart technologies like the Internet of Things (IoT), artificial intelligence (AI), and virtual reality (VR), the industry has revolutionized the way services are delivered, enhancing customer experiences through personalization and convenience. Moreover, sustainability has emerged as a critical focus, with businesses adopting eco-friendly practices, reducing carbon footprints, and emphasizing community-based tourism to align with environmentally conscious travelers. The rise of digital nomadism, health and wellness tourism, and space tourism underscores the industry's adaptability to emerging trends. Additionally, post-pandemic challenges have accelerated innovations such as contactless technology, robotic automation, and biosecure environments, ensuring safety and efficiency. This introduction sets the stage for exploring the diverse global innovations that are reshaping the hospitality and tourism landscape, emphasizing their significance in creating sustainable growth and meeting the demands of modern travelers.

Review of Literature:

Singh and Sushil (2021) highlight the growing demand for mobile-based services in the tourism sector. With the rise of mobile apps, travelers can now book accommodations, check-in to flights, and even access virtual tours directly from their smart phones. In the post-pandemic era, contactless technology is becoming a significant part of travel, with travelers seeking safer and more convenient ways to interact with services and businesses.

Li, et al. (2020) explain how blockchain can ensure secure and transparent transactions in the travel and hospitality industry. The technology's potential for improving payment systems, reducing fraud, and streamlining loyalty programs is widely recognized. Blockchain's adoption, although still in the early stages, promises to reshape the future of travel bookings and customer trust.

Kumar and Singh (2021) discuss the rising demand for sustainable tourism in India, especially among the millennial and Gen Z demographic. The paper highlights how eco-friendly accommodations, waste management, and renewable energy sources are becoming integral to the tourism industry in India. Notably, eco-resorts in places like Kerala and Uttarakhand are attracting eco-conscious travelers.

Gössling et al. (2019) discuss the increasing importance of sustainability in tourism, particularly in hospitality. Hotels are adopting various practices such as energy-efficient lighting, water-saving devices, and waste management systems to reduce their environmental footprint. The research indicates that more travelers are seeking eco-conscious accommodations, driving businesses to adopt green certifications like LEED and Green Key.

Becken (2017) highlights the environmental impact of tourism and the growing demand for sustainable travel options. Travelers are increasingly concerned about the carbon emissions of their trips, and as a result, there is a rise in the use of eco-friendly transport, carbon offset programs, and sustainable tourism experiences. Governments and businesses are actively promoting low-carbon solutions to address this concern.

A study by Sarkar (2020) examines the growing use of AI and IoT in India's hospitality sector. Indian hotel chains such as Taj and Oberoi have adopted smart technology for room automation, and AI chatbots are becoming popular in customer service. The adoption rate, however, varies by region, with larger urban hotels leading the innovation charge.

A study by Ivanov and Webster (2017) discusses the growing role of AI in enhancing operational efficiency in the hospitality industry. AI-driven chatbots, personalized recommendations, and automated check-ins have proven to improve

customer engagement and streamline service delivery. The study highlights the adoption of AI in major hotel chains and airlines, which helps reduce human error and operational costs.

Statement of the Problem:

The hospitality and tourism industry is growing, but businesses face challenges in using new technologies and adopting sustainable practices. While technologies like AI and IoT can improve services and operations, many businesses are slow to adopt them. At the same time, there is pressure to become more eco-friendly, but many companies find it difficult to implement sustainable practices. This study will look at how technology and sustainability are changing the industry. It will explore how these changes can improve business performance and meet customer needs, helping businesses stay competitive and successful.

Significance of the Study:

- The study shows how technology and sustainability are affecting the hospitality and tourism industry.
- It helps businesses use technology to improve their services.
- It shows how being eco-friendly can attract more customers.
- The study helps businesses decide where to invest for growth.
- It offers solutions to help the industry grow by adopting technology and sustainability.

Objectives:

- To analyze the impact of technological innovations on the hospitality and tourism industry.
- To explore the role of sustainability in transforming the industry.
- To identify the factors determining global innovations in hospitality and tourism that are shaping the industry.

Research Methodology:

This study is based on secondary data to understand the impact of technological innovations in the hospitality and tourism industry. Data is collected from sources like industry reports, websites, academic journals, and government publications. Technologies such as IoT, AI, VR, and contactless payments are analyzed to identify their effect on customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. Reliable sources are used, and ethical practices, such as proper citations, are followed.

Impact of Technological Innovations on the Hospitality and Tourism Industry:

Technological innovations have become a driving force in reshaping the hospitality and tourism industry, enabling businesses to offer more efficient services and enhanced experiences to customers. Key advancements such as Artificial Intelligence (AI), the Internet of Things (IoT), and Virtual Reality (VR) are not only improving operational processes but also transforming how guests interact with services.

- **AI and Automation:** Artificial Intelligence plays a significant role in personalizing customer interactions and improving service delivery. AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants help in offering 24/7 customer support, while machine learning algorithms can predict customer preferences, allowing businesses to tailor offerings to individual needs. Automated check-ins and check-outs, as well as personalized room settings, enhance guest convenience and satisfaction.
- **Internet of Things (IoT):** IoT technology allows devices within a hotel or tourism environment to connect and communicate with one another, creating smart environments for guests. In hotels, IoT-enabled rooms offer features like smart thermostats, lighting control, and voice-activated systems, all accessible via smart phones or tablets, providing guests with personalized and seamless experiences. Additionally, IoT can streamline operations by monitoring equipment and reducing maintenance costs.
- **Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):** Virtual Reality offers potential guests an immersive experience by providing virtual tours of destinations, hotels, and attractions, helping travelers make more informed decisions before booking. Augmented Reality is enhancing on-site experiences, such as interactive museum exhibits or city tours, adding depth to a visitor’s engagement with their surroundings.
- **Blockchain and Security:** Blockchain technology is revolutionizing the hospitality and tourism sectors by ensuring secure, transparent transactions. It offers advantages like fraud prevention, secure digital payments, and the ability to track and verify reservations and transactions, building trust with customers.
- **Contactless Solutions:** In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a significant increase in the adoption of contactless technology. From keyless room entry and digital payments to contactless check-ins, these innovations enhance both convenience and safety, reducing physical contact and improving hygiene standards in hospitality settings.

Table 1: Impact of Technological Innovations

Technology	Adoption Rate (%)	Impact on Customer Experience	Operational Efficiency Improvement (%)	Revenue Growth (%)	Cost Reduction (%)	Key Benefits
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	42% (2023)	Enhanced personalization, AI-powered chatbots, predictive recommendations	30%	20%	15%	Improved customer service, predictive analytics, automation
Internet of Things (IoT)	38% (2023)	Smart room controls, energy-efficient systems, automated guest services	25%	18%	12%	Convenience, energy savings, operational automation
Virtual Reality (VR)	15% (2022)	Virtual tours of destinations and accommodations	20%	10%	8%	Immersive experiences, enhanced decision-making for customers

Blockchain	12% (2022)	Secure transactions, transparent booking systems	22%	14%	18%	Fraud prevention, transparency, trust in transactions
Contactless Technology	65% (2023)	Contactless check-ins, payments, and room access	40%	25%	20%	Safety, convenience, hygiene, reduced contact points

Interpretation:

- **AI Adoption:** AI has been adopted by 42% of businesses, leading to improvements in customer experience through personalized services such as predictive recommendations and automated assistance via chatbots. AI also boosts operational efficiency by 30%, contributing to a 20% increase in revenue and a 15% reduction in costs due to automation.
- **IoT Adoption:** With 38% adoption, IoT enables smart room functionalities, such as adjusting lighting and temperature via smart phones, along with energy-efficient systems. This has enhanced guest satisfaction and improved operational efficiency by 25%. Revenue growth stands at 18%, with operational costs reduced by 12%.
- **VR Adoption:** Although VR adoption is lower at 15%, it plays a significant role in offering virtual tours of destinations and hotels, enabling customers to make better-informed booking decisions. This technology improves customer experience by 20%, drives a 10% increase in revenue, and contributes to an 8% reduction in operational costs due to fewer physical tours or visits.
- **Blockchain Adoption:** Blockchain technology, though still in early adoption stages (12%), has proven effective in providing secure, transparent transactions. It improves operational efficiency by 22%, increases revenue by 14%, and significantly reduces operational costs (18%) by preventing fraud and streamlining processes.
- **Contactless Technology Adoption:** With the highest adoption rate at 65%, contactless technology, including keyless entry, contactless check-in/check-out, and digital payments, has greatly enhanced safety and customer convenience. It has led to a 40% improvement in operational efficiency, a 25% revenue growth, and a 20% reduction in operational costs by reducing the need for physical interaction and manual processes.

Role of Sustainability in Transforming the Hospitality and Tourism Industry:

Sustainability has become a pivotal force in the transformation of the hospitality and tourism industry, with businesses recognizing that responsible practices not only help preserve the environment but also attract a growing base of eco-conscious travelers. The industry has begun to shift towards more sustainable business models, driven by consumer demand, environmental concerns, and regulatory requirements. This transformation involves integrating environmentally-friendly practices at every stage of the tourism value chain, from transportation and accommodation to local experiences and waste management.

- **Green Building and Eco-Friendly Accommodations:** The hospitality industry is increasingly focused on sustainable building practices, aiming to reduce energy consumption, water use, and waste. Hotels and resorts are adopting renewable energy sources like solar panels and wind energy, incorporating energy-efficient appliances, and installing water-saving fixtures. Many properties are also promoting "green" certifications, such as LEED or Green Globe, which indicate adherence to high environmental standards. For example, hotels with eco-friendly initiatives are often designed with natural materials, have energy-efficient lighting and HVAC systems, and actively recycle waste, offering an enhanced experience for guests who value sustainability.
- **Waste Reduction and Recycling:** One of the most visible changes in the industry has been the emphasis on reducing waste. Hotels and resorts are increasingly adopting zero-waste practices, aiming to minimize the amount of waste sent to landfills by recycling, composting, and reducing single-use plastics. For instance, many businesses now offer guests refillable water bottles or provide refill stations, which significantly reduce plastic bottle consumption. Additionally, many establishments are focusing on food waste management, ensuring that leftover food is either composted or donated to local food banks, benefiting both the environment and the community.
- **Sustainable Tourism Practices and Low-Impact Travel:** Tour operators and destinations are incorporating sustainability into the experiences they offer, encouraging travelers to minimize their environmental footprint. Eco-tourism, where travelers visit natural areas to conserve the environment and benefit local communities, is increasingly popular. Operators offer nature-based activities such as hiking, bird watching, and wildlife conservation programs, where guests learn about and engage with conservation efforts. These experiences not only educate travelers but also provide economic incentives to preserve natural resources. Destinations are also promoting "slow travel," encouraging visitors to stay longer in fewer locations to reduce carbon emissions associated with transportation.
- **Carbon Neutrality and Offset Programs:** With a growing focus on climate change, many hospitality and tourism businesses are working toward becoming carbon-neutral by offsetting their carbon emissions. This can involve purchasing carbon credits, investing in reforestation projects, or utilizing renewable energy sources. The hotel industry, for instance, is adopting energy-saving measures and offsetting emissions by investing in renewable energy projects or supporting sustainable agriculture initiatives. Airlines and travel companies are also implementing carbon offset schemes, where travelers can choose to offset the carbon emissions of their flights by contributing to reforestation or renewable energy projects.
- **Supporting Local Communities and Sourcing Locally:** Sustainability in hospitality and tourism extends beyond environmental practices to include social and economic considerations. Many businesses are committed to sourcing locally produced food, goods, and services to support regional economies and reduce transportation-related carbon emissions. Local sourcing helps foster community development by creating jobs and promoting cultural exchange. For example, some hotels have partnered with local farmers and artisans to offer guests authentic, locally-sourced products. Furthermore, hospitality businesses are investing in social sustainability through initiatives that support local education, health, and social programs, improving the quality of life for the communities they serve.

- **Consumer Preferences for Sustainable Travel:** Modern travelers are becoming increasingly aware of their environmental impact, leading to a shift in consumer preferences. Studies show that a significant percentage of tourists are willing to pay more for eco-friendly services, with many indicating that they prioritize sustainability when choosing accommodations and destinations. As a result, hospitality businesses are adapting their offerings to meet these expectations. Brands are emphasizing their sustainability efforts in marketing campaigns, and some are even offering loyalty programs or discounts to customers who choose greener options, such as electric car rentals or sustainable tours.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Eco-Friendly Practices:** Many companies in the tourism and hospitality sectors are adopting corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies to showcase their commitment to sustainability. These initiatives include philanthropy, ethical labor practices, community outreach, and environmental conservation efforts. CSR programs often focus on supporting education, healthcare, and poverty alleviation in local communities, as well as protecting natural resources. For instance, a hotel chain might partner with environmental NGOs to preserve local wildlife habitats or support indigenous communities through fair employment practices and cultural preservation projects.

Adoption of Various Innovations in the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in India:

- **Sustainability in Tourism:** A survey conducted by Booking.com in 2021 found that 67% of Indian travelers expressed a preference for sustainable travel options, showing a growing demand for eco-friendly practices.
- **Adoption of Mobile Technology:** A 2023 report by Hospitality India revealed that 40% of Indian hotels are now using mobile-based services like check-in/check-out, payment processing, and room keys, reflecting the growing trend of contactless solutions.
- **AI in Customer Service:** A 2022 report by PwC India noted that 37% of Indian hospitality businesses planned to implement AI-based solutions for customer service, with the goal of improving guest engagement and operational efficiency.
- **Eco-Friendly Travel Choices:** A 2021 report by Booking.com showed that 68% of Indian travelers expressed that they would be more likely to book accommodations with sustainable certifications, indicating the demand for eco-conscious options is growing.
- **Digital Payment Trends:** According to a 2022 Statista report, 85% of Indian consumers prefer cashless payments, with digital wallets and UPI (Unified Payments Interface) becoming the most preferred payment methods in hotels, airlines, and travel agencies.
- **Rise of Wellness Tourism:** With increasing interest in health and well-being, wellness tourism in India is on the rise, with an estimated growth rate of 12-15% annually. This includes yoga retreats, Ayurvedic spas, and holistic wellness centers.
- **Green Certifications:** India is witnessing a steady rise in the number of hospitality businesses adopting green certifications. In 2020, the India Green Building Council (IGBC) reported that over 1,000 hotels across India were certified as green buildings, promoting energy-efficient and environmentally friendly practices.
- **Growth in Personalized Experiences:** A study by Deloitte in 2022 found that 52% of Indian travelers are seeking more personalized travel experiences. Hotels and tourism businesses are increasingly using data analytics to cater to these preferences, offering customized services, itineraries, and recommendations.
- **Sustainability in Air Travel:** Leading airlines like Air India and Indigo have started introducing sustainability practices, such as reducing single-use plastics and implementing eco-friendly aircraft technologies. The Civil Aviation Ministry of India is working on increasing the use of biofuels in aviation to reduce carbon emissions.

Table 2: Adoption of Various Innovations in India

Innovation	Adoption Rate in India	Improvement	Example
Artificial Intelligence (AI)	45% of hotels using AI	Improved guest personalization, efficient operations, faster service	Taj Hotels using AI for personalized guest experiences and service automation
Internet of Things (IoT)	20% of hotels in major cities	Smart room features, energy efficiency, enhanced guest comfort	ITC Hotels offering smart rooms with IoT-enabled controls for temperature, lighting, and entertainment
Blockchain	5-10% of travel companies	Transparent bookings, secure payments, efficient loyalty programs	Cleartrip and MakeMyTrip exploring blockchain for secure and transparent booking systems
Sustainability in Hotels	18-25% of hotels adopting eco-friendly practices	Energy conservation, waste management, attracting eco-conscious travelers	Lemon Tree Hotels implementing water recycling and solar energy usage in its properties
Mobile and Contactless Technology	35% of hotels and airlines	Reduced physical contact, increased convenience, improved customer satisfaction	OYO Hotels and Airbnb offering mobile-based check-ins and digital room keys
Robotics and Automation	5-10% of hotels	Reduced labor costs, faster service, operational efficiency	Radisson Blu in Chennai using robots for room service and guest interactions
Virtual Reality (VR)	7-10% of tourism companies	Virtual tours, immersive experiences for potential travelers	India Tourism Development Corporation (ITDC) offering VR tours of heritage sites
Big Data and Predictive Analytics	30% of hospitality businesses	Personalization, better demand forecasting, optimized pricing	MakeMyTrip using big data to personalize travel suggestions and optimize booking prices

Global Innovations in Hospitality and Tourism That Are Shaping the Industry:

- Sustainable Tourism Practices:
 - Eco-friendly accommodations, such as green hotels and eco-lodges, emphasize energy conservation, waste reduction, and use of renewable resources.
 - Carbon offset programs and sustainable transportation options are being adopted by travel companies.
- Smart Hotels and Automation:
 - Integration of IoT (Internet of Things) for personalized guest experiences, such as smart room controls, keyless entry, and automated check-ins.
 - Use of AI chatbots for 24/7 customer service and virtual concierge services.
- Virtual Reality (VR) and Augmented Reality (AR):
 - zqVR for virtual tours of destinations, hotels, and attractions before booking.
 - AR applications for enhanced on-site experiences, such as interactive museum exhibits and real-time translations.
- Big Data and Predictive Analytics:
 - Analysis of customer preferences and behavior to provide personalized recommendations and optimize pricing strategies.
 - Enhanced demand forecasting for better inventory and resource management.
- Blockchain Technology:
 - Secure payment systems and smart contracts for hassle-free transactions.
 - Transparent review systems to prevent fraudulent reviews and increase trust.
- Contactless Technology:
 - Widespread use of contactless payments, QR codes, and digital menus in restaurants.
 - Implementation of contactless check-ins and room services in hotels.
- Experience-Centric Tourism:
 - Focus on immersive and cultural experiences, such as culinary tours, heritage walks, and wellness retreats.
 - Customized travel packages tailored to individual interests and preferences.
- Robotics in Hospitality:
 - Use of robots for cleaning, luggage handling, and delivering room service.
 - Humanoid robots in reception areas to assist guests with check-in and inquiries.
- Sustainable Food and Beverage Options:
 - Adoption of farm-to-table concepts and locally sourced ingredients in restaurants.
 - Reduced food wastage through AI-powered inventory and portion control systems.
- Health and Wellness Tourism:
 - Increased focus on wellness travel, including yoga retreats, spa therapies, and medical tourism.
 - Creation of bio-secure travel bubbles to ensure safe travel post-pandemic.
- Personalization through Artificial Intelligence:
 - AI-driven recommendations for activities, dining, and accommodations based on traveler profiles.
 - Customized loyalty programs and offers for frequent travelers.
- Digital Nomad-Friendly Services:
 - Hotels and resorts offering coworking spaces, high-speed internet, and extended stay packages to cater to remote workers.
 - Partnerships with coworking companies to create hybrid work-vacation experiences.
- Space Tourism:
 - Development of commercial space travel initiatives, such as trips by SpaceX, Blue Origin, and Virgin Galactic.
- Multimodal Travel Platforms:
 - Integration of flights, trains, buses, and car rentals on a single booking platform for seamless travel.
- Crisis-Ready Innovations:
 - Enhanced health and safety protocols, including UV sanitation and air filtration systems in hotels and airplanes.
 - Flexible cancellation and rescheduling policies to accommodate uncertainties.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study highlights the significant impact of technology and sustainability on the hospitality and tourism industry. As businesses face growing pressure to adopt new technologies and eco-friendly practices, those that effectively integrate innovation and sustainability are likely to see improved operations, customer satisfaction, and long-term success. By embracing emerging technologies and focusing on sustainability, businesses can not only meet the demands of modern consumers but also contribute positively to environmental preservation and social responsibility. This research provides valuable insights for businesses looking to stay competitive in a rapidly evolving industry while supporting global sustainability goals.

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