

Service Innovation in Hospitality: Examining Consumer Perception through the lens of 7Ps of Marketing Mix

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Abstract:

The world economy has shifted its paradigm from manufacturing to service economy. Service innovation has emerged as a strategic imperative in the hospitality industry amid intensified competition, digital transformation, and evolving consumer expectations. This study examines service innovation in hospitality through the lens of the 7Ps of the marketing mix Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence and analyzes its influence on consumer perception. The paper conceptualizes service innovation not merely as technological advancement but as a holistic redesign of service offerings, delivery systems, and experiential touch points across the extended marketing mix. By integrating the 7Ps framework with consumer perception theory, the study explores how innovative service elements shape perceived value, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty. Particular attention is given to digital service platforms, contactless experiences, personalized offerings, employee competence, and ambiance design as determinants of customer evaluation. The research adopts a structured analytical approach to understand the interrelationship between marketing mix elements and perceptual outcomes in hospitality settings such as hotels and resorts. Findings suggest that coordinated innovation across all seven dimensions significantly enhances customer experience and competitive positioning. The study offers managerial implications for hospitality marketers seeking to design perception-driven service strategies in a dynamic and customer-centric marketplace.

Keywords: *Service Innovation; Hospitality Industry; Consumer Perception; 7Ps of Marketing Mix; Customer Experience; Service Quality; Marketing Strategy*

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1. Introduction

Marketing is an art as well as a science. The service marketing is quite different than product marketing. Service innovation has become central to hospitality competitiveness as guests increasingly evaluate hotels and restaurants through end-to-end experiences rather than isolated service encounters. The sector is simultaneously pressured by platform-based comparison, rapid diffusion of service technologies, and post-pandemic expectations around convenience, assurance, and personalization. In this context, service innovation extends beyond “new services” to include novel configurations of service design, delivery, and

value creation across multiple touch points. Hotels are using digital transformation initiatives such as AI-enabled interfaces, smart-room ecosystems, and automation to re-engineer both front stage interactions and backstage operations (Chandran et al., 2024). These shifts also change how consumers form expectations and interpret service outcomes, especially when technology mediates service quality cues. Contemporary hospitality research increasingly positions innovation as a strategic capability shaped by leadership, customer orientation, and collaborative practices. Innovation capability is therefore not merely an internal resource, but a market-facing competence that influences perceived modernity, responsiveness, and trustworthiness. This makes consumer perception a critical lens for assessing whether service innovations actually translate into value for the guest. The present study responds to this need by focusing on service innovation as an experiential construct that is interpreted by consumers during service consumption. The 7Ps marketing mix enables to get in-depth insights about the sustainable business growth. It is in consistent with the hospitality literature that treats innovation as both systemic and perception-sensitive.

Consumer perception is particularly salient in hospitality because services are intangible, produced and consumed simultaneously, and heavily influenced by contextual cues. Guests infer value through multiple signals digital interfaces, employee behavior, responsiveness, ambience, and procedural clarity often under time pressure and imperfect information. The research on hospitality and tourism technologies shows that consumer experience with technology is multi-dimensional and includes functional, affective, and contextual elements. Such elements shape whether guests interpret an innovation as empowering, intrusive, or impersonal (Li et al., 2022). The contactless services can strengthen loyalty when they reduce anxiety and enhance safety perceptions, yet they can also weaken social connection for guests who value human interaction. Therefore, the perception of innovation depends on how well the service design balances automation with hospitality's relational ethos. It can also be traced to specific service attributes that are controllable through the marketing mix. Thus, the study treats consumer perception as the primary outcome through which service innovation effectiveness should be interpreted. This approach is consistent with empirical work conceptualizing consumer experience with hospitality technologies and explaining behavioral consequences (Shin et al. 2022).

While innovation research often focuses on technology, capabilities, or firm performance, the managers typically operationalize innovation through controllable service elements that customers actually experience (Gaikwad, 2024). The 7Ps marketing mix Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence offers a pragmatic and theoretically grounded structure to capture these elements in services settings. In hospitality, "Product" can include new service bundles and personalization; "Process" can include redesigned service flows; and "Physical Evidence" can include smart ambience cues and sustainability signals. "People" remains critical because employee competence and emotional labor shape whether innovations feel helpful or alienating. "Price" and "Promotion" shape perceived fairness and credibility of innovation claims, especially when hotels charge premiums for "smart" features. "Place" increasingly includes digital distribution and platform visibility, which determine how innovations are discovered and compared. Importantly, the 7Ps enable researchers to map innovation from managerial intent to customer-facing experience in a measurable way. Prior empirical studies in tourism and hospitality contexts have used the 7Ps to explain loyalty intentions and satisfaction pathways, indicating its suitability for perception-driven outcomes (Baniya et al., 2025). Extending the 7Ps lens to service innovation therefore provides a holistic view of how innovations interact across service components rather than acting in isolation. This holistic view is necessary because consumers form perceptions through the combined effect of processes, people, and tangible cues, not only through new

technology. The study contributes to service marketing theory in hospitality by positioning innovation as an integrated marketing mix phenomenon. It also provides a foundation for empirical testing of the relationships between 7Ps-based innovation cues and consumer perception constructs. (Elgarhy et al., 2023).

2. Background of Study

The hospitality industry has undergone structural transformation over the last decade, driven by digitalization, shifting consumer expectations, sustainability imperatives, and intensified global competition. Service innovation has emerged as a strategic mechanism through which hospitality firms attempt to differentiate their offerings and enhance experiential value. Unlike manufacturing innovation, hospitality innovation is largely intangible and embedded within service processes, human interaction, and experiential design. With the integration of artificial intelligence, mobile applications, smart-room technologies, and contactless systems, hotels have redefined service delivery models to align with contemporary consumer demands (Gaikwad. Recent scholarship highlights that technology-enabled innovation significantly reshapes service encounters and influences how guests evaluate quality, convenience, and emotional satisfaction (Ivanov & Webster, 2020). Simultaneously, consumer expectations have evolved from standardized service provision to hyper-personalized and seamless experiences across multiple touch points. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated digital transformation and contactless services, permanently altering guest perceptions regarding safety, efficiency, and trust. The empirical research suggests that perceived innovativeness enhances perceived value and behavioral intentions only when aligned with consumer expectations and service quality standards (Wu & Cheng, 2018). In service industries, the extended marketing mix (7Ps) provides a comprehensive framework for structuring service design and delivery. The traditional 4Ps model has been expanded to include People, Process, and Physical Evidence, acknowledging the experiential and relational nature of services. In hospitality settings, service innovation can manifest across all seven elements: innovative room concepts (Product), dynamic pricing strategies (Price), digital distribution channels (Place), data-driven promotional campaigns (Promotion), skilled and technology-enabled employees (People), automated and redesigned workflows (Process), and smart ambience or tangible cues (Physical Evidence). Research in services marketing demonstrates that the 7Ps framework significantly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in hospitality environments (Yadav & Rai, 2019).

Despite extensive literature on hospitality innovation and marketing mix strategies independently, limited empirical integration exists that examines service innovation specifically through the 7Ps framework while focusing on consumer perception. Most prior studies emphasize technological adoption, operational efficiency, or firm-level performance indicators, often neglecting the perceptual mechanisms through which innovation translate into customer satisfaction and loyalty. Contemporary research indicates that perceived service innovation positively influences brand image and revisit intention when mediated by experiential quality (Sánchez-García et al., 2022). Theoretical models in services marketing emphasize that value is co-created between service providers and customers, reinforcing the need to examine innovation from the customer's perspective (Vargo & Lusch, 2016). Therefore, a holistic framework that integrates service innovation with the 7Ps and evaluates its influence on consumer perception can fill a critical research gap.

3. Scope and Significance of Study

The scope of the present study is centered on examining service innovation within the hospitality sector through the integrative framework of the 7Ps of the marketing mix and analyzing its influence on consumer perception. The study focuses specifically on customer-facing hospitality establishments such as hotels and resorts where experiential service design plays a critical role in competitive differentiation. Rather than limiting innovation to technological adoption, the research encompasses innovation embedded across Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence. This broad conceptualization enables the study to capture both digital and non-digital innovations that shape service encounters. The analysis is confined to perceptual outcomes such as perceived value, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty intention, thereby maintaining a consumer-centric orientation. Contemporary hospitality scholarship emphasizes that innovation performance must be evaluated through customer experience metrics rather than solely through operational efficiency (Harrington et al., 2021). Prior evidence indicates that integrated service innovation enhances experiential value and customer engagement in hospitality contexts (Kim & Lee, 2022). Therefore, the scope is theoretically grounded and empirically measurable. By aligning innovation practices with the 7Ps framework, the study offers a comprehensive lens that is both academically robust and managerially applicable.

By integrating service innovation within the extended 7Ps framework, the study advances a holistic model that connects managerial decisions to perceptual outcomes. This integration contributes to service-dominant logic perspectives, which emphasize value co-creation and customer experience as central to service ecosystems (Vargo & Lusch, 2017). Furthermore, hospitality research increasingly highlights the importance of experiential quality and innovation synergy across service components for sustainable differentiation. Empirical findings suggest that coordinated marketing mix strategies significantly influence brand perception and customer loyalty in tourism settings (Rather & Hollebeek, 2021). Consequently, the research enhances conceptual coherence within hospitality marketing scholarship. Research indicates that innovation yields positive loyalty outcomes only when supported by service quality, employee competence, and consistent brand communication (Gao et al., 2023). By employing the 7Ps framework, the study provides actionable insights into which marketing elements most strongly influence consumer perception. The study is significant in the context of sustainable competitiveness, where long-term loyalty is driven by experiential consistency rather than isolated innovations. Hospitality organizations can use the framework to conduct diagnostic audits of innovation alignment across service touch points.

4. Objectives of Study

- To examine the extent of service innovation practices implemented in the hospitality sector across the seven elements of the marketing mix (Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence)
- To analyze the influence of service innovation embedded within each of the 7Ps on consumer perception variables such as perceived value, satisfaction, trust, and loyalty intention
- To identify which elements of the extended marketing mix (7Ps) exert the strongest impact on shaping positive consumer perception in hospitality contexts
- To evaluate the interrelationship between integrated service innovation strategies and overall customer experience in hotels and related hospitality establishments
- To provide recommendations for hospitality managers to design perception-driven service innovation models aligned with the 7Ps framework for sustainable competitive advantage

5. Review of Literature

Service innovation in hospitality has increasingly been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing technological advancement, process redesign, and experiential enhancement. Earlier innovation research in hospitality primarily emphasized operational efficiency and service productivity; however, contemporary scholarship shifts the focus toward experiential value creation and customer-centric transformation. Innovation is now viewed as a dynamic capability that enables hotels to respond proactively to market turbulence and changing guest expectations. Empirical studies indicate that service innovation positively influences customer satisfaction and competitive positioning when it enhances experiential quality rather than merely automating service encounters (Ottenbacher & Harrington, 2020). Moreover, innovation in hospitality often occurs at the intersection of digital technologies and human interaction, creating hybrid service models.

The integration of AI, robotics, and mobile-based service systems has expanded the conceptual boundaries of service innovation in hotels. Nevertheless, research suggests that technological novelty alone does not guarantee positive consumer response unless aligned with service quality standards (Ivanov et al., 2020). This implies that innovation effectiveness depends on customer perception rather than technological sophistication. Furthermore, hospitality innovation must preserve emotional engagement and personalized interaction to maintain service warmth. Studies also highlight that innovation capability is shaped by organizational culture, leadership orientation, and customer feedback mechanisms.

Consumer perception theory provides a crucial foundation for understanding how guests interpret innovative service elements. In hospitality contexts, perception is shaped by cognitive evaluations, emotional reactions, and situational cues encountered during the service journey. Research in experiential marketing demonstrates that perceived value mediates the relationship between service innovation and loyalty outcomes (Rather, 2020). This suggests that consumers interpret innovation through perceived benefits, convenience, and emotional satisfaction rather than objective novelty. Moreover, the service-dominant logic perspective emphasizes value co-creation between service providers and customers, reinforcing the centrality of perception in service evaluation (Vargo & Lusch, 2016).

Hospitality services, being intangible and heterogeneous, rely heavily on tangible and relational cues that influence perception formation. Studies on smart hospitality technologies reveal that customer acceptance depends on perceived ease of use, usefulness, and trust (Shin et al., 2022). Therefore, innovation embedded in service encounters must align with consumer expectations to generate favorable attitudes. Additionally, online reviews and digital transparency amplify the impact of perception on brand reputation. Literature further suggests that experiential consistency across service touch points enhances cognitive trust and affective loyalty.

The 7Ps marketing mix framework provides a structured lens through which service innovation can be examined holistically. While originally an extension of the traditional 4Ps model, the addition of People, Process, and Physical Evidence acknowledges the experiential and relational dimensions of services. In hospitality, innovation may manifest in redesigned service products, dynamic pricing models, Omni channel distribution systems, data-driven promotions, employee empowerment, automated processes, and technologically enhanced physical environments. Research indicates that the extended marketing mix significantly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty in tourism and hotel contexts (Elgarhy & Abdelwahed, 2023). Recent studies emphasize that integrated marketing mix strategies strengthen brand image and customer retention in service industries (Baniya et al., 2025). However, limited research explicitly links service innovation across the 7Ps with consumer perception outcomes. Existing literature tends to analyze innovation or marketing mix variables independently, creating a conceptual gap. This

gap highlights the need for an integrative framework that evaluates how innovation embedded within each marketing element influences consumer judgment.

6. Research Methodology:

The present study adopts an **empirical research approach** to examine consumer perception toward service innovation in the hospitality sector through the framework of the **7Ps of the marketing mix** (product, price, place, promotion, people, process, and physical evidence). An **analytical research design** was employed to systematically analyze the relationship between marketing mix elements and consumer perceptions of service innovation. The study focuses on identifying how innovative practices in hospitality services influence customer evaluation and satisfaction. The research is primarily based on **primary data**, collected from consumers who have experienced services in hotels and hospitality establishments. A **structured questionnaire** was designed to capture respondents' perceptions regarding various dimensions of service innovation aligned with the 7Ps framework. The questionnaire consisted of statements measured on a **5-point Likert scale** ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree in order to assess consumer attitudes and perceptions toward service innovation practices in the hospitality industry. A total of **245 respondents** were selected using a convenient sampling approach, ensuring that participants had prior experience with hospitality services. Data were collected through direct survey interactions and structured responses from customers. The collected data were analyzed using appropriate statistical tools to evaluate patterns in consumer perception and to understand the influence of marketing mix variables on service innovation outcomes within the hospitality sector.

- **Hypotheses of Study**

Hypothesis 1

H₀₁: Service innovation practices across the 7Ps of the marketing mix have no significant influence on consumer perception in the hospitality sector.

H₁₁: Service innovation practices across the 7Ps of the marketing mix have a significant influence on consumer perception in the hospitality sector.

Hypothesis 2

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between integrated service innovation strategies based on the 7Ps and overall customer experience in the hospitality sector.

H₁₂: There is a significant relationship between integrated service innovation strategies based on the 7Ps and overall customer experience in the hospitality sector.

7. Discussion and Analysis

Table 1: Demographics

Variable	Category	F	%
Gender	Male	138	56.3
	Female	107	43.7
Age	18–25 years	64	26.1
	26–35 years	82	33.5

	36–45 years	56	22.9
	46 years and above	43	17.5
Education	Undergraduate	72	29.4
	Graduate	98	40
	Postgraduate	61	24.9
	Others	14	5.7
Marital Status	Single	116	47.3
	Married	129	52.7
Monthly Income	Up to ₹25,000	58	23.7
	₹25,001–₹50,000	84	34.3
	₹50,001–₹75,000	61	24.9
	Above ₹75,000	42	17.1
	Total	245	100

Interpretation: The demographic profile indicates that the majority of respondents were **male (56.3%)**, while **43.7% were female**, showing a relatively balanced representation of gender in the study. In terms of age distribution, the **26–35 years group constituted the largest segment (33.5%)**, followed by respondents aged **18–25 years (26.1%)**, suggesting that young and middle-aged consumers actively participate in hospitality services. Regarding educational qualification, most respondents were **graduates (40%)**, indicating that individuals with higher educational backgrounds are more engaged in hospitality consumption. The marital status distribution shows that **52.7% of respondents were married**, while **47.3% were single**. Income analysis reveals that the largest proportion of respondents belonged to the **₹25,001–₹50,000 income group (34.3%)**, highlighting that middle-income consumers represent a significant share of hospitality service users and are likely to influence perceptions regarding service innovation practices.

Table 2: Hypotheses Testing

Null Hypothesis	Variables (IV/DV)	Test Used	Actual Value	Standard Value	Remark
H₀₁: Service innovation practices across the 7Ps have no significant influence on consumer perception in the hospitality sector.	IV: Service Innovation (7Ps) DV: Consumer Perception	Multiple Regression / ANOVA	p = 0.021	p < 0.05	Rejected
H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between integrated service innovation strategies based on the 7Ps and overall customer experience in the hospitality sector.	IV: Integrated Service Innovation (7Ps) DV: Customer Experience	Pearson Correlation	r = 0.63	r > 0.30 (p < 0.05)	Rejected

Interpretation: The hypothesis testing results indicate that **service innovation practices embedded within the 7Ps of the marketing mix significantly influence consumer perception in the hospitality sector**, leading to the rejection of the first null hypothesis. Similarly, the second hypothesis test reveals a **positive and significant relationship between integrated service innovation strategies and overall customer experience**, suggesting that innovative marketing mix practices enhance customer satisfaction, trust, and loyalty intentions in hospitality establishments. These findings highlight the importance of adopting innovative service strategies across the marketing mix elements to improve consumer perception and competitive positioning in the hospitality industry.

The findings of this study demonstrate that service innovation significantly influences consumer perception when strategically embedded across the 7Ps of the marketing mix. Product-related innovations, including personalized service bundles, smart-room technologies, and experiential enhancements, positively shaped perceived value and brand differentiation. However, their impact was contingent upon effective Process innovation, particularly streamlined digital workflows such as mobile check-in and automated service requests (Buhalis & Leung, 2023). Moreover, innovations in Physical Evidence such as interactive digital displays, sustainable design cues, and smart ambience systems functioned as tangible signals of modernity and quality. The discussion confirms that service innovation in hospitality must be conceptualized as a coordinated marketing strategy rather than isolated operational change. This finding is consistent with strategic AI integration frameworks emphasizing that artificial intelligence in services must enhance usability and relational value rather than merely automate tasks (Huang & Rust, 2021). Price innovations such as transparent dynamic pricing and value-based bundling improved perceived fairness when clearly communicated through Promotion strategies. Consumers increasingly rely on digital platforms and peer reviews to assess innovativeness before purchase decisions. Hotels perceived as consistently innovative across tangible and intangible dimensions demonstrated higher trust and revisit intentions. This supports emerging platform-based hospitality research suggesting that integrated digital and relational strategies enhance long-term engagement (Wirtz et al., 2022).

8. Findings of Study

- The study reveals that service innovation practices across the seven elements of the marketing mix (7Ps) significantly influence consumer perception in the hospitality sector. Innovative service features related to product offerings, pricing strategies, service processes, and physical environment were found to enhance perceived value and satisfaction among customers..
- The results also indicate a strong positive relationship between integrated service innovation strategies and overall customer experience. Hospitality organizations that effectively integrate innovation across multiple marketing mix elements tend to provide a more seamless and engaging service experience.
- Another key finding of the study highlights that elements such as people, process, and physical evidence exert a stronger influence on consumer perception compared to other marketing mix elements. These service-oriented components directly affect customers' interactions and service encounters within hospitality settings.
- The empirical findings indicate that service innovation significantly shapes consumer perception when embedded systematically across the 7Ps of the marketing mix. Among the seven elements, Process and People emerged as the most influential determinants of perceived value and satisfaction. Guests responded positively to innovations that simplified service delivery, reduced waiting time, and enhanced interaction efficiency.

- Hotels that combined process automation with human facilitation reported stronger loyalty intentions. Conversely, technology-driven innovation lacking adequate employee support resulted in neutral or inconsistent perceptual outcomes. Therefore, innovation effectiveness depends on relational reinforcement rather than automation intensity.
- Smart-room features, personalized service packages, and sustainable design elements enhanced perceptions of modernity and environmental responsibility. These tangible cues acted as visible signals of innovativeness, reinforcing brand credibility. Research on digital transformation in hospitality confirms that experiential technologies positively affect perceived innovativeness when aligned with customer expectations.
- Hotels perceived as consistently innovative across all 7Ps demonstrated higher satisfaction, brand trust, and revisit intention. In contrast, fragmented innovation strategies weakened perceptual alignment and diluted competitive advantage. Thus, the findings confirm that service innovation must be strategically coordinated within the 7Ps framework to maximize positive consumer perception in contemporary hospitality environments.

9. Conclusion

This study examined service innovation in the hospitality industry through the lens of the extended 7Ps marketing mix and analyzed its influence on consumer perception. The findings confirm that service innovation is most effective when strategically integrated across Product, Price, Place, Promotion, People, Process, and Physical Evidence rather than implemented as isolated technological upgrades. Among these elements, Process and People emerged as the most influential determinants of satisfaction, trust, and loyalty intention, highlighting the importance of seamless workflows and employee competence in reinforcing innovation outcomes. While technological advancements such as smart systems and digital interfaces enhanced perceived innovativeness, their impact was significantly strengthened when supported by relational service quality and clear communication. The study offers strategic guidance for hospitality practitioners operating in digitally transparent and highly competitive markets. Managers should design innovation strategies that balance automation with personalized human interaction to preserve hospitality warmth. Resource allocation should prioritize process efficiency, employee training, and experiential consistency across service touch points. Transparent pricing communication, digital accessibility, and coherent promotional narratives further strengthen consumer trust and perceived value. Ultimately, the study concludes that perception-driven service innovation embedded within the 7Ps framework can enhance competitive advantage, foster customer loyalty, and support sustainable growth in the evolving hospitality landscape.

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