

Chapter 13

Guest-Centric AI: A Theoretical Inquiry of Guest Experiences on the Integration of AI Chatbots Among Luxury Guest Accommodations

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Abstract

Luxury hotels prioritise exceptional, personalised service. Recently, the industry has seen a rise in the use of robots to enhance customer experiences, particularly through efficient check-ins. Consumers have responded positively, expecting more AI-driven services in luxury hotels. AI chatbots are becoming central to operations, helping guests with inquiries, room service, and travel guidance. However, research on AI chatbot features, such as adaptability, responsiveness, and reliability, remains limited, especially in the luxury hotel sector. Additionally, the influence of information quality (e.g. relevance, security, and privacy) on customer satisfaction and intention to continue using these services is underexplored. While AI chatbots have been studied in education, banking, and healthcare, their role in hospitality requires further investigation. This chapter develops a conceptual framework through a systematic review of relevant academic theories, focusing on the factors shaping guest experiences with AI in luxury hotels. By critically evaluating these theories, the chapter aims to enhance understanding of the relationship between AI technologies and guest satisfaction within luxury accommodations.

Keywords: Luxury hotels; theoretical inquiry; AI chatbots; guest-centric artificial intelligence; guest experience

1. Introduction

With the growing popularity and development of artificial intelligence (AI) technology, the luxury guest accommodation industry is gradually increasing its interest in its application. Emerging AI chatbot technology is already playing an important role in luxury guest rooms. These chatbots could interact with guests and provide personalised services, answer questions, booking services, and other features (Parmar et al., 2019), thus enhancing the guest experience. This trend is backed by the continuous advancement of natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning in AI technology (Patel & Trivedi, 2020). Chatbots perform a variety of tasks such as order verification, shipment tracking, and resolving service queries. Several academic surveys have highlighted their continuous availability, autonomous knowledge acquisition, and system upgrades to improve guest satisfaction. With advances in machine learning and NLP, chatbots can understand user text or speech and engage in natural dialogue in areas such as education, finance, healthcare, and consulting (Aslam, 2023). Luxury hotels continue to integrate technology to enhance the customer experience and optimise operational efficiency from booking to departure through smart room control systems, smart security systems, and smart booking systems (Stringam & Gerdes, 2021). It is important to study the use of guest-centric AI chatbots in luxury guest accommodations and their impact on the guest experience.

In an era where the complexity of the customer experience demands closer examination, particularly in the context of AI chatbot integration, it is essential to address both the benefits and challenges of this technology. Although AI chatbots are thought to increase efficiency and save costs, studies have shown the low willingness of guests to use this technology and that most consumers prefer to interact with human agents (Balasubramanian & Konar, 2022; Cheng et al., 2022), and according to Press (2019), 87% of consumers prefer a human agent to a chatbot for interaction. However, the luxury guest accommodation industry has always been committed to delivering quality service and exceptional experiences to attract more guests and increase brand value. The introduction of AI technology has provided the luxury guest accommodation industry with a new service model and experience that allows for more efficient and personalised service (Nam et al., 2021). Therefore, an in-depth exploration of the application of guest-centric AI in luxury guest accommodation can help luxury guest accommodation companies better understand and utilise this new technology to improve service quality and competitiveness.

In addition, guest experience, as one of the core competencies in the luxury guest accommodation industry, directly affects guest satisfaction and loyalty. And AI chatbots, as a new type of interaction, have great potential for enhancing the guest experience (Sidaoui et al., 2020). Through in-depth research on the application of AI in luxury guest accommodation and its impact on the guest experience, it can provide more specific and effective guidance and suggestions for luxury guest accommodation enterprises to help them optimise their service processes, improve their service level, and thus increase guest satisfaction and loyalty.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the application of guest-centred AI chatbots in luxury guest accommodation and to analyse in depth the mechanism of their impact on the guest experience. Through the study of this important issue, it can not only promote the application and development of AI technology in the luxury guest accommodation industry but also provide theoretical support and practical guidance for improving guest experience and service quality and promote the development of the luxury guest accommodation industry in the direction of more intelligent, personalised, and quality.

2. Definition of Guest Experience

The concept of guest experience is crucial in the hospitality industry and covers the interactions and impressions of guests from before they check in to after they leave the hotel. The cumulative effect of each interaction guests has with the hotel and its team members during their stay determines how they feel about the overall experience. The guest experience is created by considering six dimensions: sensory, emotional, cognitive, practical, lifestyle, and relational, to provide a holistic and interconnected experience. It is a key indicator of quality service in the hospitality industry, influencing customer loyalty and attracting new guests (Ehimen et al., 2020). The guest experience specifically relates to guest interactions and encounters in the hotel environment. In the end-to-end lodging domain, factors such as aesthetic, social, escapist, behavioural, and sensory factors can significantly influence the guest experience, leading to loyalty and authenticity, and effectively understanding and controlling these aspects can increase guest satisfaction and loyalty and contribute to the prosperity of the industry.

3. Characteristics and Importance of the Guest Experience in Luxury Hotels

The primary focus of luxury hotels is to provide unique and luxurious accommodation options with first-class facilities to meet the needs of both corporate and leisure travellers. The importance of guest experience in luxury hotels cannot be overemphasised, as it has a profound impact on customer behaviour, satisfaction, and loyalty. The guest experience in luxury hotels is significantly influenced by various factors such as hedonism, ambience, escapism, personalisation, and convenience (Shahid & Paul, 2022). These factors have a significant impact on positive word-of-mouth and customers' willingness to return to the hotel. Furthermore, the integration of AI in luxury hotels through the implementation of personalised guest experiences and chatbots has helped improve operational efficiency and customer satisfaction, thus transforming the traditional hotel concept. Factors that significantly influence customer well-being, attitudes, and behavioural intentions in luxury hotels include the authenticity of the hospitality experience, perceived luxury value, and memorable travel experiences (Oguz, 2020). In conclusion, luxury hotels can improve visitor well-being and remain competitive by prioritising personalised experiences, optimising operations, and improving convenience.

4. Applicability of Existing Research Guest Experience in Luxury Hotels

Existing research on guest experience in luxury hotels highlights the significant impact of AI on improving guest satisfaction. Luxury hotels are committed to improving the guest experience by providing unique, luxurious accommodations and high-quality services to business and leisure travellers. In addition, the use of social media by luxury hotels plays a crucial role in engaging potential guests and improving communication strategies, especially during crises like the COVID-19 pandemic (Gómez-Suárez et al., 2023). Consumers seek emotional and sensory connections with luxury brands, emphasising the importance of personalised and memorable experiences in the hospitality industry. The study also highlights the importance of service quality factors such as quality of interaction, quality of physical environment, and quality of outcomes in influencing the customer experience in luxury hotels. Together, these findings emphasise the importance of AI, social media engagement, and service quality in shaping the luxury hotel guest experience (Buehring & O'Mahony, 2019). Therefore, existing research needs to be dug deeper and adapted to the specific needs of luxury guest accommodation.

5. The Evolution of Hotel AI Chatbots

While AI is one of the major sources of innovation and is rapidly gaining popularity across a wide range of services, it is also one of the areas of computer science that can improve the efficiency of business in the hospitality industry. AI is a major driver of innovation and is rapidly gaining popularity across various services. As a key area of computer science, it has the potential to significantly enhance business efficiency in the hospitality industry, particularly through advancements in AI technology and the growing adoption of AI chatbots. Initially, the application of AI in the hospitality industry focused on back-end operations such as revenue management and predictive analytics (Grobelaar & Verma, 2024). However, as AI chatbots utilise NLP and machine-learning techniques to understand user input and provide relevant responses, they bring many advantages to the hospitality industry, including features such as 24/7 service availability, fast response times, and multilingual services (Lukanova & Ilieva, 2019). In recent years, AI-powered chatbots have become more sophisticated as language models and datasets have advanced, becoming an integral part of a variety of hospitality environments.

The hospitality industry is increasingly integrating AI into its operations, products, and services, and AI has the potential to improve efficiency, enhance the customer experience, and create new business opportunities. Many hotels use chatbots for online customer service. These chatbots can answer frequently asked questions, help with the booking process, or suggest activities and amenities. For example, Hilton Hotels & Resorts' Connie (an intelligent entity like Apple's Siri) performs a variety of tasks, such as greeting guests in different languages, recommending interesting places and attractions, answering guest queries, refining responses based on the frequency of guest interactions, and assisting with check-in

(Solomon, 2016). Wynn Las Vegas is integrating Amazon Echo to digitise hotel rooms, providing guests with voice control of room lighting, temperature, TVs, and curtains, in addition to a variety of amenities using Echo's personal assistant service (Wynn Las Vegas, 2016). Clarion Hotel Amaranten in Stockholm also uses Amazon Echo as a chatbot butler to help guests book taxis, provide room service, assist with online information, and more (Maruti Techlabs, 2018).

6. Functionality and Importance of AI Chatbots in Luxury Hotels

AI chatbots play a variety of roles in luxury guest rooms, for example, the AI chatbot acts as a service assistant to provide round-the-clock service support to guests. It can answer guests' questions, provide information queries, and process reservations and orders, among other services (Buhalis & Cheng, 2020). It can also play the role of a personalised butler, based on guests' historical data and preferences, the AI chatbot can provide personalised recommendations and suggestions to guests, such as recommending restaurants, attractions, and shopping (Pillai & Sivathanu, 2020). However, the functions of AI chatbots in luxury hotels also have diversity, the first is the query information function, and guests can query the hotel facilities, services, room layout, and other information through the AI chatbot to understand the hotel situation in advance. Secondly, it is the question-and-answer function, when guests encounter problems, they can ask the chatbot, such as cannot find the room and need to delay the checkout, the robot will answer and provide solutions in time. As well as providing guests with personalised service functions, according to the guest's preferences and preferences, the chatbot can recommend restaurants, activities, attractions, etc., to enhance the guest experience. In addition, chatbots can be integrated with other smart devices such as smart home systems to provide guests with more convenient control and experience (Parmar et al., 2019). To enhance the guest experience, AI chatbots can interact with guests, and the AI chatbots in some luxury guest accommodations support voice interaction, allowing guests to communicate with the bots through voice commands to enhance the interaction experience. Text communication and interaction is also possible, providing guests with functions such as asking questions and placing bookings; quick response is also a unique feature of AI chatbots. Overall, AI chatbots play multiple roles in luxury guest accommodations, providing rich and diverse service functions. Its interaction modes and experiences with guests are rich and diverse, and it can provide personalised, convenient, and fast services to enhance the overall level of guest experience.

7. Factors Affecting the Level of Guest-aware AI Chatbot Integration

Guests' perception of AI chatbots is influenced by various factors related to the level of system quality, service quality, and information quality. Customer's perception of service quality is the key to determine the success of chatbot services (Liu et al., 2023).

Service quality refers to the extent to which the services provided by a company can meet customer expectations. In luxury guest accommodation, good service quality is the key to enhancing the guest experience. Previous studies have shown that there is a close relationship between service quality and guest experience (Ali et al., 2021). Quality service enhances guest satisfaction and loyalty and improves the overall guest experience. The mechanisms influencing service quality of AI chatbots include assurance, reliability, interactivity, and understandability.

Assurance: Professional problem solving and communication skills of AI chatbots when helping customers solve problems. If chatbots can provide professional and trustworthy services, then user expectations of chatbot services are expected to be widely met. Users are significantly more satisfied when they perceive an AI chatbot to have higher assurance (Kushwaha et al., 2021).

Reliability: The ability of AI chatbots to perform promised services reliably and accurately. AI chatbots are reliable because they deliver software-driven services consistently. AI chatbots are immune to fatigue, emotion, and bias. Advanced deep learning chatbots can predict guest preferences and improve service quality over time (Misischia et al., 2022).

Interactivity: Interaction and engagement between the user and the AI-powered chatbot system, such as booking and checking out functions that mimic human dialogue. AI chatbots' human-like speech is a popular feature. Real-time chatbots respond. Chatbots' 24/7 availability assures constant and timely assistance, thereby improving the guest experience. Chatbots evaluate and learn from vast volumes of user-generated data to personalise guest encounters in luxury hotels. They answer questions and make appointments in real time (Jiang et al., 2022).

Understandability: AI chatbots can understand the meaning of content or commands sent by customers in voice or text form. Customers want AI chatbots to understand their queries and capture their emotions in the discussion. After converting the voice system to text and back, the AI chatbot's voice- and text-processing procedures are the same, which can satisfy diverse guests. Users are more likely to acknowledge that the chatbot meets their original expectations if most of its information is understandable (Li et al., 2021).

System quality refers to the characteristics of the AI chatbot's system such as availability, responsiveness, and adaptability. In luxury guest accommodations, good quality of the AI system can enhance the guest experience. Previous studies have found a significant positive relationship between system quality and guest experience.

Availability: Involves the ease with which a user can access a chatbot in the process of completing a task. Chatbots' direct and fast access to information is their main advantage in marketing services. Additionally, AI chatbots improve customer service efficiency, agility, accessibility, reliability, predictability, and transferability. The success of a chatbot depends on the quality of the system. Meeting customer expectations requires 24/7 availability and delivering accurate information at the right time. Users stated that the information system should work perfectly on all Internet connections (Trivedi, 2019).

Responsiveness: Timeliness of service and length of the system's response time. The value of AI chatbots also comes from the quality and appropriateness of the response. AI chatbots are highly effective in delivering prompt responses, and

research has shown that measuring the perceived quality of AI chatbot service in hotels, while guests appreciate the efficiency and immediacy of chatbot responses (Gursoy et al., 2019).

Adaptability: AI chatbots ensure that chatbots can provide reliable assistance in all situations. Chatbots can be embedded into various devices in different scenarios to adapt to changing environmental functions. For example, chatbots can be embedded in travel apps, hotel booking platforms and airport self-services to provide tourists with information, advice and booking services. Additionally, chatbots can be embedded into company websites, apps, and social media pages to provide real-time customer support and Q&A services. This helps reduce customer support costs and improve customer satisfaction. When a guest makes a reservation through a chatbot, the hotel can send messages to assist the guest before, during, and after check-out (Buhalis & Cheng, 2020).

Information quality refers to the relevance and completeness of the information provided by the AI chatbot to the guest during the service, the security of the information at the first level, and privacy guarantees, among other characteristics. In luxury guest accommodations, information quality is critical to the guest experience. Previous studies have shown that there is a strong relationship between information quality and guest experience.

Relevance: An AI chatbot provides relevant information and content for a customer's question or command. After spending time and effort on technology and services, users anticipate highly relevant information. The user may lose trust in the chatbot and seek other information if it gives irrelevant or erroneous information. Relevance measures system data quality. Information that meets users' needs is high-quality. The quality of the information obtained determines their chatbot satisfaction (Nguyen et al., 2021).

Completeness: Access to credible, accurate, comprehensive, and timely information can significantly enhance user satisfaction. The chatbot's crippled, partial, and erroneous information will harm client satisfaction with the hotel. Some clients constantly ask the AI chatbot for a response and complain about the service. Thus, chatbots' complete information can boost client satisfaction (Ashfaq et al., 2020).

Security/privacy: The degree of security and protection of customer information of AI chatbots. With the rise of computer power and technologies like machine learning and NLP, information systems like chatbots have collected, stored, and processed vast amounts of data, including private and sensitive information. Customers care about personal data security and want service providers to keep chatbot interactions secure (Liu et al., 2023).

8. Theoretical Investigation: The Impact of AI Chatbot Integration on Guest Satisfaction

AI chatbots play an important role in improving service quality (e.g. assurance, reliability, interactivity, and comprehensibility) and ultimately impacting guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Liu et al., 2023). AI applications such as personalised guest experience, chatbots, and virtual assistants can improve guest

satisfaction in luxury hotels by streamlining operations and providing personalised services (Mei et al., 2024). The combination of AI with staff service quality influences the overall service quality assessment, customer satisfaction, and loyalty in hotels. Service quality is a key determinant of guest satisfaction, and the dimensions of assurance, reliability, interaction, and understanding significantly affect guest satisfaction in hotels. Therefore, the use of AI to improve service quality while maintaining a balance of human interaction is essential to ensure high levels of guest satisfaction in the hospitality industry (Liu et al., 2023).

Furthermore, AI chatbot system quality, including adaptability, responsiveness, and availability, significantly affects guest interactions and behaviours in the hospitality industry (Liu et al., 2023). These dimensions positively influence communication quality, interaction quality, and willingness to pay for hotel services (Chi & Nam, 2022). The service quality of AI chatbots influences customer loyalty through perceived value, trust, satisfaction, and loyalty, highlighting the importance of system quality in building long-term relationships with guests. Maintaining and improving chatbot quality is critical due to the challenges of anticipating user requests and language changes over time, emphasising the need for continuous improvement and adaptation to meet guest expectations and provide a seamless experience (Ackerman et al., 2022).

The impact of AI chatbot message quality (e.g. relevance, completeness, and security/privacy) on customer satisfaction is an important aspect to consider in the customer service domain (Chang et al., 2024; Liu et al., 2023). Customer satisfaction has the potential to influence customer behaviour, including the likelihood of them making repeat purchases and revisiting a website. In addition, enhanced delight can be achieved by considering factors such as the degree of relevance and completeness. Ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the information provided by AI chatbots relies heavily on the importance of data quality. The importance of data quality lies in its accuracy, comprehensiveness, reliability, relevance, and timeliness. Similarly, Liu et al. (2023) emphasised the importance of variables such as accuracy, comprehensiveness, coherence, reliability, and soundness in assessing data quality. In addition, the characteristics of AI chatbots can have an impact on consumer relationships. Exploring the process by which AI systems analyse data and derive knowledge from it to achieve specific goals, there is a correlation between information quality and pleasure and chatbot trust, but the extent of the effect may be attenuated (Atlan, 2023; Balasubramanian et al., 2022).

9. Conclusion

Luxury guest rooms increasingly use AI chatbots. Research has examined how this integration affects guests. In the literature, chatbot integration is discussed in terms of service quality (assurance, reliability, interactivity, and comprehensibility), system quality (adaptability, responsiveness, and availability), information quality (relevance, completeness, and security/privacy), and guest satisfaction. The following key findings and perspectives are derived by analysing the importance and impact mechanisms of service quality, system quality, and information

quality dimensions on guest experience, as well as AI chatbot roles, functions, and interaction patterns in luxury guest accommodations.

Firstly, service quality, system quality, and information quality are important factors influencing guest experience. Chatbots meet the personalised experience needs of luxury guests by providing personalised, convenient, and efficient services that enhance brand recognition and loyalty. In addition, the effectiveness of chatbot integration depends on several factors, including technological maturity, the human-machine interaction experience, and privacy protection. Only when all these aspects are better addressed can a positive impact on the guest experience be truly realised. Guest acceptance of chatbot integration varies, and some guests may be less interested or sceptical due to unfamiliarity with the new technology or personal preferences (Konar et al., 2024).

Secondly, as an emerging technology, AI chatbots play the role of service assistants and personalised housekeepers in luxury guest accommodation, providing guests with information enquiries, booking services, question answers, and personalised recommendations. AI chatbots interact with guests in a variety of modes, including text and voice interactions, and can provide instant responses and personalised services to enhance guests' satisfaction and experience.

Finally, the positive impact of AI chatbot integration on luxury guest accommodations is widely recognised in the literature, but the challenges of AI chatbots in terms of technological maturity and user experience are also noted. Some studies conclude that chatbot integration can enhance the guest experience, while others conclude that guest acceptance varies, and more research is needed to explore this.

Therefore, future research could delve further into the specific mechanisms by which service quality, system quality, and information quality affect the guest experience to reveal the principles and patterns behind them. Researchers can work on optimising the algorithms and techniques of AI chatbots to improve their intelligence and service levels to meet changing guest needs. Future researchers can explore personalised service models based on big data and AI technology to provide more accurate personalised services by analysing guests' preferences and behaviours to further enhance the guest experience. While promoting the application of AI technology, it is also necessary to consider the social and ethical issues it may bring, such as privacy protection and data security. Future research should focus on exploring and solving these aspects.

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