

ASERS

# Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

Quarterly

Volume XIV

Issue 6(70)

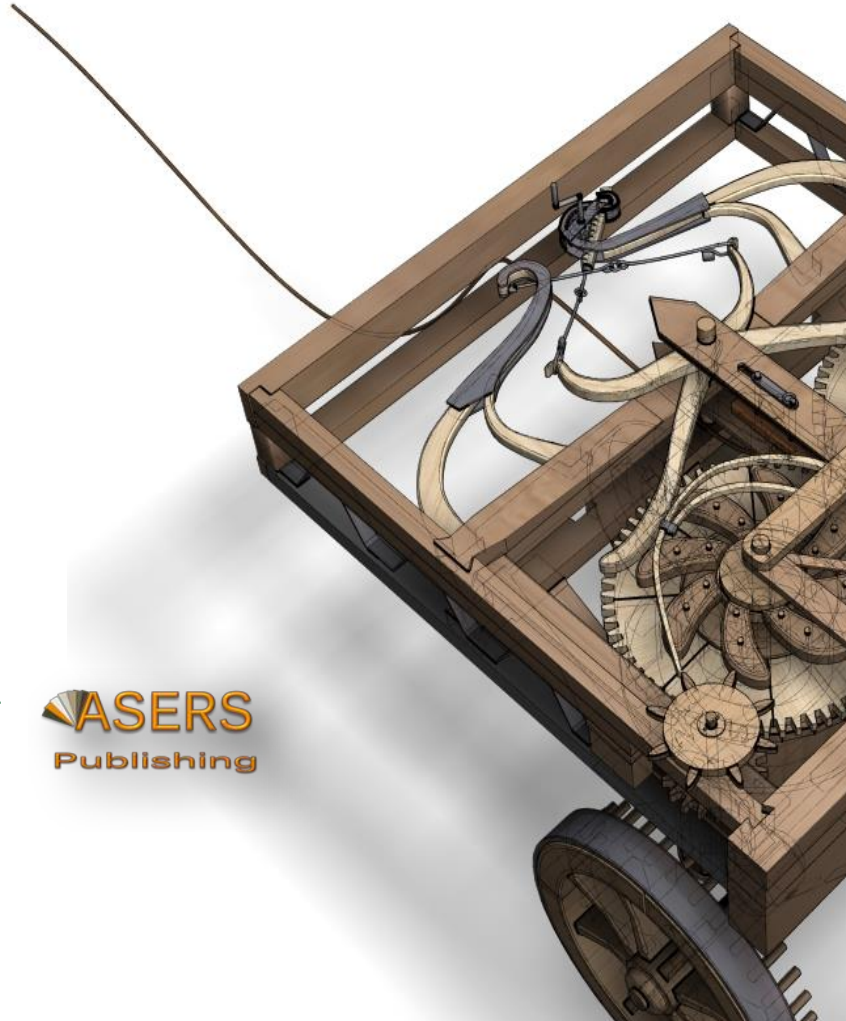
Fall 2023

ISSN 2068 – 7729

Journal DOI

<https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt>

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ASERS Publishing

<http://www.aserspublishing.eu>

ISSN 2068 – 7729

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt>

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# Call for Papers

## Winter Issues 2023

### Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism

**Journal of Environmental Management and Tourism** is an open access, peer-reviewed interdisciplinary research journal, aimed to publish articles and original research papers that contribute to the development of both experimental and theoretical nature in the field of Environmental Management and Tourism Sciences. The Journal publishes original research and seeks to cover a wide range of topics regarding environmental management and engineering, environmental management and health, environmental chemistry, environmental protection technologies (water, air, soil), pollution reduction at source and waste minimization, energy and environment, modelling, simulation and optimization for environmental protection; environmental biotechnology, environmental education and sustainable development, environmental strategies and policies.

Authors are encouraged to submit high quality, original works that discuss the latest developments in environmental management research and application with the certain scope to share experiences and research findings and to stimulate more ideas and useful insights regarding current best-practices and future directions in Environmental Management.

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Details regarding the publication in this journal are here: <https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt/about>

<b>Deadline for submission:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> October 2023
<b>Expected publication date:</b>	December 2023
<b>Website:</b>	<a href="https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt">https://journals.aserspublishing.eu/jemt</a>
<b>E-mail:</b>	<a href="mailto:jemt@aserspublishing.eu">jemt@aserspublishing.eu</a>

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DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6\(70\).15](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6(70).15)

## Digital Innovation in Hospitality: Bridging the Gap between Concierge Services and Hotel Guests

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**Article info:** Received 12 June 2023; Received in revised form 28 July 2023; Accepted for publication 4 September 2023; Published 29 September 2023. Copyright© 2023 The Author(s). Published by ASERS Publishing 2023. This is an open access article distributed under the terms of CC-BY 4.0 license.

**Abstract:** This study has a primary objective of investigating the existing gap that exists between guest interactions and hotel concierge services, with an emphasis on exploring potential solutions through software technology. To attain this goal, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted; eight conversations involved hotel concierges while twelve exchanges entailed interactions with guests. In conducting these interviews, the research aimed to gain extensive knowledge regarding challenges faced by both parties throughout their communication processes. Each interview was critically analysed to systematically identify specific issues suitable for resolution via software applications.

The classification of concierge services facilitated the proposal of technology-based enhancements, which underwent testing by a focus group comprising both guests and concierges. The main objective of this study was to meticulously assess the proposed improvements in terms of their effectiveness in bridging gaps between these two groups. According to research results, there is a direct link between employing suggested software solutions and decreasing interaction discrepancies; implying that strategic usage can considerably boost hotel hospitality through better communication and comprehension among staff members and guests alike.

The research suggests a wider implementation of technological resources in the hospitality industry as they can enhance guest experience and increase concierge efficiency. Further investigation could examine how effective these software solutions are across varying hotel environments and evaluate their lasting effects on customer contentment and hotel profits.

**Keywords:** hospitality industry efficiency; guest interactions; hotel concierge services; software technology solutions; communication.

**JEL Classification:** L86; L83; L25; D30; Q01.

### Introduction

The emergence of the digital era has engendered extensive alterations across multiple sectors, and this extends to the hospitality industry (Kim *et al.* 2020). With an ever-increasing requirement for superior customer service and exceptional guest encounters, hotels are continuously seeking novel methods in exceeding their guests' anticipations (Huangxiong Qi and Rucong Mo, 2021). Within a hotel's operational framework, among various positions that exist is the concierge role which assumes critical importance as a linkage between hotels and guests alike. As per convention, it encompasses delivering customised services while managing requests from clients; its central objective lies mainly in creating unforgettable experiences for patrons (Bardi, J.A. 2011). However, due to the rising complexities of diverse client demands with time- progressing challenges arise with attempts towards fulfilling this goal by hotel concierges.

One significant problem that has received a great deal of attention is the deficiency in communication between hotel guests and concierges (Kim *et al.* 2020). Despite the advancements in technology, which have revolutionised service delivery and utilisation, specific areas continue to create tension (Maglovska C.R. 2020).

This study seeks to thoroughly examine this friction point, with particular emphasis on the issues that arise during interactions between hotel guests and concierges, particularly in the context of communication gaps.

The integration of technology in the hospitality industry has been widespread (UKEssays, 2018). Digitised room keys and online booking systems are among the many technological advancements that have significantly influenced how hotels operate. Hotels employ various digital tools and software programs to simplify operations, improve customer experience, and optimise productivity levels (Popov, L.A. *et al.* 2017). Nonetheless, despite these advances, there is still a dearth of research into how software solutions can boost interactions between concierge staff and guests which needs attention from researchers (Cardoso, L *et al.* 2021).

Our proposition suggests that the utilisation of software can have a substantive impact on decreasing the communication and comprehension barrier between hotel concierge personnel and their guests. This inference stems from the accepted understanding of how digital tools can be beneficial in many industries, including hospitality (Paul, P. *et al.* 2018). Software solutions have illustrated capabilities to enhance communication, streamline services, and enhance user experience, thereby cultivating more gratifying customer experiences (Buhalis, D. and Law, R. 2008).

To verify this supposition, we implement a twofold research methodology. Firstly, we conduct comprehensive interviews with both guests and concierges aiming to gather insightful understandings of the obstacles they encounter during their interactions. This method is employed to systematically classify the ideas acquired from these discussions revealing hurdles that could potentially be addressed by implementing software solutions.

As a result of categorising these issues, we suggest particular software-based enhancements. A focus group consisting of both concierges and guests is then utilised to evaluate the effectiveness of these improvements. The inclusion of various stakeholders in the focus group allows for an extensive assessment that provides crucial feedback on how well the proposed enhancements reduce the identified interaction gap.

The research conducted holds tremendous potential for not just individual hotels, but the entire hospitality industry. The success of software in connecting concierges and guests can lead to groundbreaking improvements in guest experiences. This study's findings serve as a framework for similar technology implementations across various sectors of the hospitality field that fuse traditional human interactions with modern-day innovations resulting in top-of-the-line customer service.

Additionally, this study provides valuable observations for other industries that prioritise customer satisfaction by showcasing how technology can be utilised to augment communication and service provision. The findings of this research have the potential to encourage more comprehensive inquiries into the feasibility and relevance of similar software solutions across different fields, thereby making a substantial contribution to the expanding scope of literature on technology's role in enhancing customer experience.

## 1. Literature Review

This literature review aims to expand academically on the key themes of this research paper. Firstly, it delves into how the role of concierge services in the hotel industry has evolved, exploring studies by scholars such as Leung and Law (Leung, R. and Law, R. 2010). Secondly, it examines how technology has transformed guest experiences in hospitality using sources from Collins and Van Hoof *et al* (Van Hoof, H.B 1996). Lastly, this review explores the untapped potential for software solutions to bridge the gap between concierges and guests with insights provided by Dabholkar's classification scheme (Dabholkar, P.A. 1994). Through analysis of these three crucial aspects, we can gain a comprehensive understanding of their impact on customer loyalty within the hospitality industry. In conclusion, academic expansion beyond conventional arguments is essential to understand maturing trends within an evolving market that demands competent decision-making skills from business leaders seeking success amidst challenging conditions brought about by globalisation and technological advancements as well as emerging disruptors like Airbnb or Booking.com (Bock, K. 2015).

### 1.1 The Role of Concierge Services in the Hotel Industry

The hospitality industry highly values concierge services as they significantly contribute to ensuring a high-quality guest experience, increasing satisfaction and retention rates (Hollander, J. 2022). Historically, the role of concierges revolved around acting as the primary link between guests and various services such as booking dinner reservations or arranging transportation while also providing information about local attractions. In recent times though, there has been an extensive widening of responsibilities for these employees (Fusté-Forné, F. and Jamal, T. 2021).

In contemporary times, concierges play a multifaceted role as personal aides, excursion leaders, troubleshooters, and occasion organisers to enrich clients' stay at the hotel (Brotherton, B. 1999). A research study conducted by Tussyadiah and Fesenmaier has revealed that satisfaction with concierge services is a vital factor in establishing customer loyalty (Tussyadiah, I.P. and Fesenmaier, D.R. 2009). It highlights how important it is for hotels to recognize not only the significance of enhancing guest experiences but also ensuring their repeated patronage through efficacious operations of concierge services.

Even though the concierge service is vital, its delivery still faces difficulties. Research indicates that with the increasing variety of guest requirements, concierges sometimes encounter obstacles in fulfilling these changing expectations (Kandampully, J. 2010). Therefore, it is crucial to recognize and address these challenges to optimise customer satisfaction (Huangxiong Qi and Rucong Mo, 2021). With the rise of technological advancements, hotels have leveraged digital tools to expand concierge services by offering guests access to a range of amenities, including instant messaging services (Maglovska C.R. 2020).

## 1.2 The Impact of Technology on Guest Experiences

The hospitality sector has demonstrated exceptional flexibility toward technological innovations (Kansakar *et al.* 2019). These digital tools have been broadly integrated into the industry, changing service delivery and guest experiences. With online booking systems and mobile apps for check-ins/check-outs; guests can have virtual tours of hotel facilities while automated services are used to customise their experience more conveniently (Šerić, M., Saura, I.G. and Praničević, D.G. 2016). As such, these advancements signify an overall revolutionising influence on consumer engagement by enabling personalization and enhancing convenience compared to traditional models of operation (Sutyryna, O. 2021).

Research conducted by Neuhofer, Buhalis, and Ladkin revealed that the integration of digital technology has facilitated personalised guest experiences which have contributed immensely to guests' satisfaction (Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D. and Ladkin, A. 2014). Ivanov and Webster explored advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and service automation in the hospitality sector (Ivanov, S.H. and Webster, C. 2017). They found out that using these technologies aids in automating routine tasks, improving staff's productivity to focus on more complex tasks consequently enhancing quality services for customers leading to better guest experience. Moreover, digital technology has also enabled hospitality businesses to collect and analyse large amounts of data on guest preferences and behaviour (Kim *et al.* 2020). This data is used to personalise guest experiences further and offer recommendations for activities, dining options, and facilities tailored to individual preferences.

## 1.3 The Potential for Software Solutions in Bridging the Gap between Concierge and Guest

Although the implementation of technology has demonstrated considerable usage in the hospitality sector, academic research on software solutions to augment concierge-guest interactions remains limited. Some studies have started investigating this field indicating the potential advantages provided by software applications that boost these types of interactions (Zhang, X. and Kim, H. 2021). In a study conducted by Jauhari and Sanjeev, the authors suggested that with advanced front-office automation applications and concierge technology, hotels can attain higher levels of guest satisfaction (Sanjeev, G.M. and Jauhari, V. 2012).

The significance of Information Communication Technology in managing customer relationships was emphasised by Sigala (Sigala, M. 2003). Through technological advancements, hotels could enhance their customer service. Likewise, Law *et al.* discussed the potential use of software for efficiently handling guest requests and inquiries which can lead to improved guest satisfaction (Law, R., Leung, R. and Buhalis, D. 2009).

Our study expands on the aforementioned findings and intends to conduct a thorough investigation into how software technologies can effectively bridge the gap between hotel concierge services and guests. Our objectives are centred around identifying distinct challenges that can be resolved using software solutions, developing such applications accordingly, and assessing their impact in a practical setting.

This study has the potential to offer valuable guidance for hotels and other providers of hospitality services seeking to elevate their service offerings through the deliberate utilisation of technology. In addition, it could enrich the body of knowledge on technology and customer service by shedding light on how software can be leveraged to enhance guest satisfaction in the context of hospitality.

## 2. Methodology

The methodology utilised in this study involves a thorough mixed methods research design, which incorporates both qualitative and quantitative approaches to conduct a comprehensive analysis of the issue being studied (Tegan, G. 2023). Dabholkar's categorization scheme served as an inspiration for the study's differentiation

between the concierge service delivery process and outcome dimensions (Dabholkar, P.A. 1994). This approach enables a precise comprehension of the complexities involved while also guiding technology-based solutions' development and assessment aimed at enhancing both aspects of service delivery.

The techniques employed to gather data for this research comprised software testing and validation stage, semi-structured interviews, and group deliberations. The selection of these methods was based on their appropriateness in obtaining a comprehensive understanding of the information necessary to respond to the study's inquiries (Creswell, J. W. 2014).

## 2.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

To gather data, semi-structured interviews were conducted with two significant stakeholder groups: hotel guests and concierges. A total of 20 interviews took place, with eight among the former and twelve among the latter. The number of interviewees was determined based on data saturation principles, where conducting additional interviews no longer provides new insights (Saunders, M.N., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. 2018). During the interviews, constant analysis of data was performed to detect emerging themes and problems. After conducting 20 interviews we noticed that further questioning did not reveal any new insights or issues. This observation indicated that data saturation had been achieved in the research process.

The primary goal of the concierge interviews was to comprehend the obstacles encountered during their routine operations and delivery of services. The challenges encompassed management concerns concerning guest inquiries, communication with guests, as well as technology-related predicaments. To elicit comprehensive and detailed information regarding the concierges' encounters, obstacles, and viewpoints on how software applications could augment their service provision approaches, a series of interview questions were developed. The inquiries are structured into four primary domains guided by Dabholkar's taxonomy and previous studies centred on innovation in hospitality services, which are the following:

- *Concierge's Roles and Responsibilities*: Comprehending the duties and obligations of a concierge is crucial to comprehend how they accomplish their tasks on a day-to-day basis, as well as understanding their utilisation of technology (Bardi, J.A. 2011). This understanding facilitates placing their difficulties in context and initiating discussions regarding prospective software enhancements. For this section we have formulated the following open-ended questions:
  - Can you describe your daily tasks as a concierge?
  - What do you consider as the most important part of your job?
  - How do you currently use technology in your role?
- *Challenges and Difficulties*: Buhalis and Law suggest that recognizing the obstacles and complexities in providing services is essential to enhance service excellence (Buhalis, D. and Law, R. 2008). These inquiries intend to pinpoint aspects of service delivery that can be enhanced through software implementation. To facilitate a comprehensive discussion, we have devised the following open-ended inquiries for this section:
  - What are the common challenges you face while serving guests?
  - Can you describe a situation where you found it difficult to fulfil a guest's request?
  - How do these challenges impact your ability to deliver excellent service?
- *Technology Use and Perception*: Assessing the technology usage and outlook of concierges is crucial in determining their ability to leverage technology-based solutions (Sigala, M. 2003). Furthermore, it enables the identification of possible obstacles that may hinder software integration. In this portion, we have created the subsequent open-ended inquiries:
  - How comfortable are you with using technology in your role?
  - What technology tools or software are you currently using?
  - What are some of the pros and cons of using these technology tools?
  - Are there any tasks or processes that you wish could be automated or improved with software?
- *Suggestions for Improvement*: The contribution of concierges in enhancing the quality of their service with software is significant as they are the ones who utilise technology (Ivanov, S.H. and Webster, C. 2017). Thus, their feedback on characteristics that can enhance efficiency and customer contentment holds practical value. For this section we have formulated the following open-ended questions:
  - What features would you like to see in a software tool that would assist you in your role?
  - How do you think a well-designed software tool could improve guest experience?

The purpose of conducting interviews with hotel guests was to gain insights into their satisfaction levels, experiences and potential areas for improvement regarding the concierge services. Open-ended questions were



utilised to gather diverse perspectives (Bryman, A. 2012). The interview questions were formulated to obtain comprehensive perspectives from hotel guests regarding their experiences with concierge services. Moreover, the questionnaire was categorised into four main groups based on Dabholkar's classification similar to the above case. The goal of these inquiries is to explore how software could enhance guest experiences by gaining insights from their expectations and opinions:

- *Experience with Concierge Services:* To gain insight into ways of enhancing concierge services, hospitality providers need to have a comprehensive understanding of the experiences and expectations that guests possess concerning such services (Buhalis, D. and Law, R. 2008). This forms the basis for their suggestions on how best to improve these amenities. To guide our inquiry, we have developed the subsequent open-ended queries:
  - Can you describe your typical interaction with the hotel concierge during your stay?
  - What do you expect from the concierge services when you stay in a hotel?
  - How do you currently use technology to interact with hotel services?
- *Satisfaction and Challenges:* Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry indicate that examining the challenges and opportunities of concierge services can uncover critical areas for advancement while providing insight into how these encounters affect a hotel guest's overall perception (Zeithaml, V.A., Parasuraman, A.P. and Berry, L.L. 1990). For this section we have formulated the following open-ended questions:
  - What were the most satisfying experiences you had with concierge services?
  - Have you ever experienced any difficulties or challenges with concierge services? Can you describe those situations?
  - How did these experiences influence your overall impression of the hotel?
- *Technology Use and Perception:* Gaining knowledge about how comfortable guests are with technology and their experience regarding it will help identify any potential obstacles or doubts they might have in hospitality settings (Law, R., Buhalis, D. and Cobanoglu, C. 2014). This information assists in determining the readiness of guests for solutions based on technology. The following open-ended query has been developed for this purpose:
  - How comfortable are you with using technology to interact with hotel services?
  - Can you describe any experiences where you used technology to access hotel services? What were the pros and cons of those experiences?
  - Do you feel that technology can replace personal interaction with hotel staff? Why or why not?
- *Suggestions for Improvement:* It is highly beneficial to collect feedback from guests about how software can enhance their interactions with concierge services, given that they are the primary users of such services (Ivanov, S.H. and Webster, C. 2017). Guests' input can lead to valuable recommendations for new features which would improve overall satisfaction and participation in these services. About this matter, we have devised open-ended queries as follows:
  - If there was a software tool to enhance your interaction with the concierge services, what features would you find helpful?
  - How do you think a well-designed software tool could improve your experience with hotel services?

The verbatim transcription of the interviews was analysed thematically using Braun and Clarke's approach to detect essential patterns and themes (Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006). Additionally, Dabholkar's theoretical framework facilitated an examination that distinguished process-related from outcome-related concerns in scrutinising the interview data.

### 2.3 Design and Categorization of Software Solutions

After analysing the difficulties and concerns highlighted in the interview process, possible software remedies were proposed. These remedies were developed to be smoothly integrated into current hotel procedures while offering guests a user-friendly experience.

The classification of every solution was conducted by applying Dabholkar's scheme, which involves categorising them based on whether they improve the efficiency and seamlessness of service delivery (process-related) or enhance guest satisfaction and engagement (outcome-related) (Dabholkar, P.A. 1994).

According to Hevner *et al.*, a collaboration between software developers, IT professionals, and the research team during design ensured that the resulting solutions were strong, viable, and suitable for their intended use (Hevner *et al.* 2014).

## 2.4 Focus Group Discussions and Software Testing

In the ultimate stage of data gathering, a focus group was established consisting of five participants that comprised both concierge staff and guests. The primary objective of this particular focus group was to evaluate the recommended software solutions in an environment that is regulated for testing purposes.

The software solutions were evaluated by the members of the focus group who actively used them. Feedback was collected through structured discussions, and this cyclical process facilitated ongoing improvements to enhance the effectiveness of the software in meeting both guest and concierge needs.

A quantitative analysis was employed to process the feedback obtained from the focus group. This involved using descriptive statistics to present data that showcased how effective the software solutions were in bridging the divide between hotel guests and concierge services. Overall, the rigorous methodology employed in this study ensured that every aspect of the research process was conducted meticulously and systematically. The study used both process-related and outcome-related categorization to classify the proposed software solutions.

## 3. Findings

The outcomes of the study can be presented in two main parts, namely discussions with hotel concierges and conversations with guests. These sections have been further classified utilising a thematic analysis methodology.

### 3.1 Findings from Concierge Interviews

*Roles and Responsibilities:* The concierges' everyday responsibilities revolve around customer satisfaction and involve a diverse set of duties. Among these tasks are arranging bookings for guests such as dining reservations, transportation arrangements and tours, providing details about points of interest in the vicinity while also resolving any concerns or issues raised by visitors.

*Challenges and Difficulties:* According to concierges, they face various hurdles in their job that includes handling a large number of guest requests during busy hours and managing requests beyond their knowledge or authority (like booking tables at popular restaurants). Additionally, staying informed about the latest happenings and updates within the locality can be arduous.

*Technology Use and Perception:* A majority of concierges utilise technology, such as property management systems and online resources for local knowledge. Although these technologies serve primarily administrative purposes rather than enhancing the guest experience.

*Suggestions for Improvement:* According to the concierges, there are various methods by which technology can enhance their productivity and guest satisfaction. These include utilising a centralised platform for handling guest requests, creating an up-to-date database of local knowledge that is easily accessible, and incorporating it with other hotel systems.

Table 1. Findings from Concierge Interviews Source: own creation

Themes	Description	Interview Quotes
Roles and Responsibilities	Tasks centred around customer service, logistics, problem-solving, and knowledge provision	I assist guests in booking services, provide information about the city, and help solve any issues they might have
Challenges and Difficulties	Difficulties managing high volume of guest requests, especially during peak times, and obtaining timely and accurate local information	During peak hours, it gets really challenging to manage all requests promptly
Technology Use and Perception	Use of property management systems and online resources for local information, but mainly for administrative purposes	We have a system for bookings, but it doesn't really enhance guest interaction
Suggestions for Improvement	Centralised system to manage guest requests, dynamic local	A software that can centralise guest requests and update local

Themes	Description	Interview Quotes
	information database, and integration with other hotel systems	information in real-time would be helpful

### 3.2 Findings from Guest Interviews

*Experience with Concierge Services:* Guests usually seek the concierge's assistance for suggestions, bookings, and travel arrangements. While many guests have positive views of personalised service from concierges, some may feel reluctant to request support as they perceive high demand on the concierge's time.

*Satisfaction and Challenges:* Although guests generally expressed satisfaction with concierge services, there were several cases where their expectations were not met due to service delays, miscommunication and insufficient knowledge. These problems occurred more frequently during peak periods and consequently resulted in a negative effect on the overall hotel experience.

*Technology Use and Perception:* Technology was widely used by hotel guests during their stay, although they still acknowledged the importance of personalised service provided by a human concierge. While guests were comfortable using technology for some tasks, it was not viewed as a complete replacement for person-to-person interaction with staff.

*Suggestions for Improvement:* Guests recommended various functionalities for a software tool, such as the capacity to submit requests from their handheld devices, availability of up-to-date local information at all times and an instant messaging feature that enables them to communicate directly with the concierge.

Table 2. Findings from Guest Interviews Source: own creation

Themes	Description	Interview Quotes
Experience with Concierge Services	Interaction with concierge for recommendations, reservations, and logistical support	I usually ask the concierge for restaurant recommendations and bookings
Satisfaction and Challenges	Positive experiences with personalised service, but issues with service delays and lack of information during peak times	Once, I had to wait quite long for my tour booking because the concierge was too busy
Technology Use and Perception	Comfort with using technology for hotel services, but belief that technology cannot fully replace personalised service	I use the hotel app for room service, but I prefer talking to the concierge for recommendations
Suggestions for Improvement	Software features for direct request making, real-time local information, and direct communication with the concierge	An app where I can make requests and chat with the concierge would be great

### 3.3 Identified Gaps from Interviews

Table 3 presents the principal gaps affecting guest requests, local information provision and technology use in service delivery. Concierges face difficulties managing high volumes of requests as well as staying current on local knowledge which results in guests experiencing delays or receiving inadequate information. Both concierges and guests acknowledge the potential for greater advancements made possible by integrating technology to improve hotel services further.

Table 3. Identified Gaps from Interviews Source: own creation

Issues and Challenges	From Concierge's Perspective	From Guest's Perspective
Managing Requests	Difficulty handling high volume of requests during peak times	Long waiting times to get requests processed
Access to Local Information	Difficulty staying updated with all local events and offerings	Limited or outdated information provided
Use of Technology	Current systems are administrative and don't enhance guest interaction	Desire for more seamless integration of technology into service provision

### 3.4 Findings from Focus Group Testing

To evaluate the suggested enhancements to the software, a focus group comprising both concierges and guests was established. The prototype software that includes features such as request management capabilities, an active local information database and seamless integration with existing hotel systems for service provision was demonstrated to the group. Thematic analysis of feedback was performed during the testing period to enhance comprehensibility and accuracy.

Table 4. Feedback from Focus Group Testing Source: own creation

Proposed Improvements	Feedback from Concierges	Feedback from Guests
Request Management Capabilities	Improved efficiency in handling requests; Reduced stress during peak times	Shorter waiting times; Appreciation for the ability to track their own requests
Dynamic Local Information Database	Ease in keeping updated with local events; Ability to provide more accurate information to guests	Appreciation for real-time local information; Enabled better trip planning
Integration with Existing Hotel Systems	Seamless interaction with other hotel services; Improved guest service	More convenient and cohesive service experience; Improved perception of the hotel's service quality

The proposed enhancements were favourably received by the focus group, according to Table 4. Both hotel guests and concierges appreciated the request management capabilities since they helped improve the effectiveness of their requests and reduced waiting time for services provided. Additionally, a dynamic local information database was well-received which assisted both guests and concierges; it offered precise data so that informed decisions could be made regarding trip-planning activities. The integration with present hotel systems increased convenience level, and enhanced cohesion among members as staff worked seamlessly together enhancing a streamlined customer service experience; this ultimately upgraded customers' perception towards high-end quality service rendered at the hotel premises.

The feedback implies that utilising software could effectively facilitate decreasing the distance between a hotel concierge and their guests. Notwithstanding, it is crucial to acknowledge that technology functions solely as an improvement to the service provider and must not substitute or supersede the personalised and interpersonal dimension of concierge services.

### Analysis

The examination of the results obtained from this investigation provides an understanding of the intricate interaction between concierge personnel and hotel patrons, underscoring how technology has a significant part in this dynamic. Additionally, it highlights that there is still potential for technological advancements to improve their connection even more profoundly.

Inadequacies in service delivery highlight a gap between the operational difficulties faced by concierges and guest expectations. According to both parties, common challenges include request management, the accuracy of local information, and the usage of technology for service provision. These observations are consistent with the literature on hospitality services that emphasise the demanding nature of hotel operations (Kandampully, J. 2012).

The implementation of a software system was proposed as a potential remedy to address these challenges. Surprisingly, both concierges and customers showed openness to the concept of incorporating technology more extensively into their interactions with each other. This willingness to embrace technological innovation reflects an emerging trend in hospitality research that emphasises the ongoing digitalization of this sector (Neuhofer, B., Buhalis, D. and Ladkin, A. 2014; Ivanov, S.H. and Webster, C. 2017).

According to the feedback given by the participants, utilisation of the software has a promising capability in promoting efficiency, generating real-time information and delivering an uninterrupted service experience. These functionalities resonate with current efforts focused on incorporating technology towards achieving higher levels of personalization and effectiveness within service-oriented industries (Ozturk, A.B. 2016).

The assessment highlights the importance of adopting a well-balanced approach toward technology integration in the hotel industry. Although technological advancements can enhance operational efficiency and customer engagement, it should not diminish the significance of personalised human service provided by concierges - an essential feature highlighted by Mody *et al.*'s research findings (Mody, M., Suess, C. and Lehto, X.Y. 2017). This emphasis on balance is consistent with the scholarly debate surrounding the 'high-tech, high touch' paradox prevalent within hospitality literature as discussed by Huang and Rust (2018).

Moreover, the feedback gathered from the focus group highlights the significance of integrating software with current systems. Implementations that are disruptive or not user-friendly can lead to unfavourable outcomes by causing annoyance instead of facilitating service. Hence, any improvement in hotel technology, especially those related to concierge services should prioritise a guest and staff-friendly approach while being consistent with established procedures and practices (Buhalis, D. and Law, R. 2008).

The study corroborates the assumption that properly crafted software can improve the connection between guests and concierge. Additionally, it emphasises the crucial importance of preserving human interaction in hospitality services. The results propose a possible direction for future concierge services, which entails an integration of technology and personal service with empathy-driven implementation and design to achieve optimal outcomes. Such developments show potential but require careful consideration to ensure they yield positive effects on guest experiences.

## Conclusion

The primary objective of this research was to examine the discrepancies between hotel concierges and guests, as well as analyse the feasibility of incorporating software technology to address these gaps. The results deduced from interview sessions and evaluation through a trial version offer significant insights that broaden our comprehension regarding intricate dynamics involved in interactions among hotel guests and their respective concierges.

Based on this study, it is apparent that the concierge and guests encounter difficulties in handling requests, providing local knowledge, and utilising technology. Notably, a positive inclination towards adopting technological advancements presents encouraging possibilities for enhancing the future of concierge services.

Undoubtedly, technology can aid in the smooth running of operations and improve customers' experience. However, it should not dismantle the fundamental concept of concierge services which is personalised touch. This human element cannot be overlooked as it forms an indispensable part of a guest's stay and constitutes the foundation of the hospitality industry.

The study highlights the significance of ensuring that newly introduced software blends smoothly with pre-existing hotel systems. The implementation of new software causing aggravation or complications could result in an unpleasant encounter for both guests and concierges, contradicting the main objective of enhancing service experience.

Moving ahead, this research serves as a basis for future investigations to expand upon. Subsequent studies could investigate the optimal design and implementation of technology that complements and enriches human service furnished by concierges. Further exploration into the 'high-tech, high-touch' dichotomy in the hospitality sector could be conducted simultaneously.

To summarise, the findings of this study emphasise that appropriately created software has the potential to significantly improve communication between hotel guests and concierges by tackling hindrances that arise

often and streamlining service operations. Nevertheless, when introducing technological advancements in hotels, it should be done cautiously with a focus on user needs while recognizing the importance of human-centred personalization services. This harmonised strategy may set a solid foundation for an enhanced guest experience through improved concierge services.

### Recommendations

After analysing and interpreting the results of this study, we suggest the subsequent suggestions:

1. *Develop User-Focused Software:* The potential for technology to improve the guest experience and facilitate concierge tasks is evident in the hospitality industry, as staff and guests are increasingly open to incorporating it into their interactions. A software solution designed around user needs can help bridge this gap by offering streamlined request management, real-time local information, and an intuitive interface that enhances communication between guests and concierge employees.

2. *Maintain a Balance between Technology and Personal Service:* Although technology has the potential to enhance service delivery and improve efficiency, it is crucial not to overlook the human component that comes with concierge services. Rather than replacing personnel, technological solutions should aim at supporting them in their roles as an integral part of hotels' guest experience management strategy. Huang and Rust recommend adopting a 'high-tech, high-touch' philosophy which ensures that while technology augments quality service provision, human interaction remains paramount.

3. *Ensure Seamless Integration:* It is crucial to ensure that any software proposed for implementation in hotels integrates smoothly with their existing systems and procedures. This step is necessary to prevent disruptions of present operations, which might result in frustrating experiences for hotel guests and concierge staff members.

4. *User Training and Support:* When implementing new technology in the hospitality industry, it is crucial to provide comprehensive training and assistance for both guests and concierges. This facilitates efficient navigation and usage of the software, leading to optimised advantages for users.

5. *Continued Research and Improvement:* To stay abreast of evolving guest and concierge needs, it is advisable to undertake ongoing research aimed at enhancing the efficacy of hotel software. Conducting regular feedback sessions and user experience studies are effective methods for accomplishing this goal.

### Acknowledgments

The author(s) wish to express gratitude to all those who provided insights and feedback during the preparation of this article.

### Credit Authorship Contribution Statement

**Norbert Forman:** Conceptualization, Literature review, Methodology, Investigation, Data curation, Writing - original draft preparation, Writing - review and editing, Visualization, Project administration, and Supervision.

**József Udvaros:** Conceptualization, Literature review and Data processing.

### Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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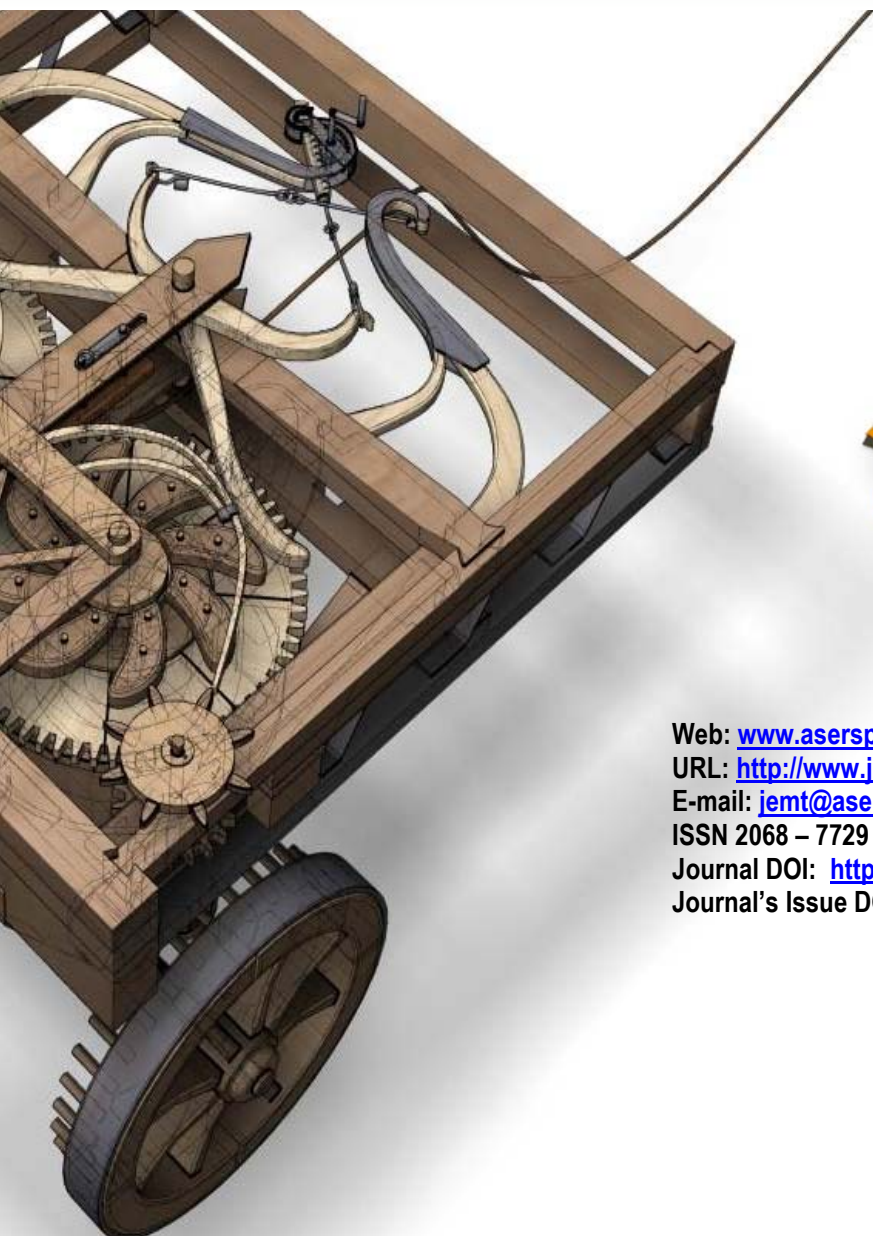
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ISSN 2068 – 7729

Journal DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt>

Journal's Issue DOI: [https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6\(70\).00](https://doi.org/10.14505/jemt.v14.6(70).00)