THE ROLE OF CHATGPT ON CUSTOMER SERVICE IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY OF HOSPITALITY WORKERS' EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS

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Abstract

Purpose – This study explains the impact of ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence (AI) language model, on customer service in the hospitality industry by exploring the experiences and perceptions of hospitality employees who have utilized ChatGPT in their customer interactions.

Methodology – A qualitative approach was adopted using in-depth interviews to collect data from a heterogeneous group of 15 individuals consisting of employees, managers, and other stakeholders directly involved in the hospitality industry in Krabi, Thailand.

Findings – Integrating ChatGPT into customer service in the hospitality industry has a significant positive impact. It improves employee skills and knowledge, bridges language barriers, provides valuable recommendations, and helps with productivity and workflow management. In conclusion, ChatGPT is a valuable tool for improving customer service in the hospitality industry, ultimately contributing to a better overall guest experience.

Originality of the research – Limited research has been conducted on the specific impact of ChatGPT in the hospitality industry, particularly in Krabi, a popular tourist destination in Thailand. This study aims to fill this gap by examining how ChatGPT affects customer service in the hospitality industry of Krabi, Thailand, and shedding light on its impact.

Keywords: ChatGPT, Hospitality Industry, Customer Service, Artificial Intelligence (AI) Technology, Customer Interactions

INTRODUCTION

The hospitality and tourism industry presents a diverse and complex landscape, offering both challenges and opportunities for professionals and researchers alike (Praharaj et al., 2023). The global hospitality and tourism industry is a significant and rapidly expanding sector, ranking among the largest in the world (Ruel & Njoku, 2021). The hospitality industry encompasses a diverse range of activities, including hotel operations, tourism services, event planning, and transportation, making it a significant multibillion-dollar industry (Ali et al., 2021; Meo et al., 2023). The global hospitality and tourism industry generates a staggering US$7.6 trillion in revenue and creates job opportunities for approximately 292 million individuals, constituting nearly 10% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) and accounting for one in every ten jobs. This industry's remarkable success is attributed to the emphasis placed on service quality and customer satisfaction by hospitality and tourism enterprises. Apart from factors such as pricing, reliability, and the availability of sophisticated destinations in desirable locations, the ability to attract and retain guests predominantly hinges on delivering exceptional service and ensuring customer satisfaction. This focus on service excellence is vital for the industry's continued growth, with the expectation of creating even more employment opportunities in the years to come (Ruel & Njoku, 2021).

In Thailand, the hospitality sector holds immense economic significance. The tourism and hotel sectors within this industry serve as a vital cornerstone of the Thai economy. Their substantial contribution is evident from the impressive revenue of THB 301 trillion generated in 2019, solidifying their position as the backbone of Thailand's economy (Siripipattanakul et al., 2022; Siripipatthanakul et al., 2022). Thailand, positioned in the heart of mainland Southeast Asia, is renowned for its rich cultural heritage and diverse ecosystems. The country boasts tranquil beaches in the East and South, hilly forested regions in the North and East, and lush green rice paddies in the Central region. Krabi, situated on the Andaman Coast, epitomizes the allure of Thailand with its captivating blend of pristine beaches and striking limestone formations. It stands as one of Thailand's most picturesque provinces, offering a plethora of tourist attractions, including tropical islands, palm-fringed beaches, cascading waterfalls, and enchanting caves. Over the years, Krabi has become a popular destination for both domestic and international travelers, witnessing a steady growth in visitor numbers. In 2019 alone, Krabi welcomed over 4.9 million visitors, marking a 4% increase and generating a total revenue of 84 million Baht. This remarkable achievement positions Krabi as the fourth most visited province in Thailand (Sukrod & Wongsurawat, 2020).

With the rise of the digital economy, many businesses are poised to leverage technological advancements, enabling them to embrace digital-centric approaches in their operations, management, and change processes. The integration of AI and robotics into both human and global economies is expected to have far-reaching implications for the nature, structure, and dynamics of

work (Reis et al., 2020; Ruel & Njoku, 2021). Various industries are incorporating AI technology due to its versatile applications and advantages (Almelhes, 2023). Moreover, the global economy has undergone a significant transformation through the advent of the fourth industrial revolution, characterized by the seamless integration of advanced technologies. This transformation has prompted widespread recognition of its profound impact on various industries, including the vibrant hospitality and tourism sector (Osei, Ragavan, & Mensah, 2020). Technology plays a transformative role in the tourism industry, shaping the strategies and competitiveness of tourism organizations and destinations. Many stakeholders have had to adapt their strategic management, marketing, and operational practices to capitalize on the paradigm shifts brought about by technology. Rather than simply being adopted, technology innovations have been the driving force behind developments and competitiveness within the tourism sector. These innovations facilitate collaboration among all stakeholders in tourism service ecosystems. Moreover, technology-empowered tourism experiences enable travelers to actively participate in co-creating value at every stage of their journey (Buhalis, 2020).

In the present day, advancements and innovations in chatbots and generative AI find applications across various industries, including customer service, and are constantly evolving alongside technological advancements. Among the cutting-edge AI chatbot technologies is ChatGPT, which leverages natural language processing and machine learning to enable users to engage in conversational interactions with a virtual assistant. Developed through pioneering research conducted by OpenAI, an American AI research laboratory, ChatGPT belongs to the generative pre-trained transformer (GPT) family of large language models (LLMs). Its development involved a meticulous fine-tuning process that incorporated supervised learning and reinforcement learning techniques. Designed to possess high intelligence, intuition, and the ability to respond to intricate requests in a human-like manner, ChatGPT represents a remarkable breakthrough in conversational AI (Limna et al., 2023; Iskender, 2023; Rudolph, Tan, & Tan, 2023; Xames & Shefa, 2023).

ChatGPT can play a pivotal role in empowering service providers, particularly in the hospitality sector, to deliver exceptional customer assistance. By leveraging its advanced natural language processing capabilities, ChatGPT can act as a highly intelligent and responsive virtual assistant for businesses, offering real-time support and personalized interactions to customers (Dogru et al., 2023; Saini, 2023). To begin with, ChatGPT can efficiently handle customer inquiries and provide instant responses, ensuring swift and effective communication. Its ability to understand context and intent enables it to address complex queries and offer accurate information, making it a valuable tool in delivering timely and helpful solutions to customers. Furthermore, ChatGPT can be integrated with knowledge bases and databases, enabling it to access and retrieve relevant data on products, services, and policies. This allows the virtual assistant to deliver up-to-date and accurate information to customers, instilling trust and confidence in the brand. ChatGPT's adaptability and continuous learning capabilities also make it an ideal partner for service providers. As it interacts with customers and gathers feedback, it can improve its responses over time, becoming more attuned to the unique needs and preferences of the customers it serves. This personalization enhances the overall customer experience and fosters stronger customer loyalty. Additionally, ChatGPT can support service providers by acting as a proactive customer service agent. It can reach out to customers to gather feedback, conduct surveys, or even offer personalized promotions and recommendations based on previous interactions. Such proactivity enhances customer engagement and satisfaction, as customers feel valued and understood by the brand. Moreover, ChatGPT can assist service providers in identifying patterns and trends in customer queries, enabling them to make data-driven decisions to improve their products and services continually. By analyzing the data it accumulates, ChatGPT can help businesses anticipate customer needs and pain points, leading to the development of more customer-centric solutions. In summary, ChatGPT's role as an aid to service providers in delivering exceptional customer assistance is multifaceted. From instant support and access to relevant information to personalization and proactive engagement, ChatGPT enhances the overall customer experience, promotes customer loyalty, and enables businesses to better understand and meet the needs of their clientele (Arman & Lamiya, 2023; Frąckiewicz, 2023a; Frąckiewicz, 2023b; Frąckiewicz, 2023c).

The hospitality industry relies heavily on effective customer service to ensure guest satisfaction and loyalty. With the advancements in artificial intelligence, ChatGPT has emerged as a promising tool to support customer interactions in various domains. However, the specific implications of ChatGPT in the context of the hospitality industry, particularly in Krabi, one of Thailand's premier tourist destinations, have not been extensively explored. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by explaining the impact of ChatGPT on customer service within the hospitality sector in Krabi, Thailand. The study will delve into the benefits, challenges, and potential limitations of integrating ChatGPT into customer service processes. The findings of this research will provide valuable insights into the role of AI technology in enhancing customer service experiences in the hospitality industry.

1. LITERATURE REVIEW

In today's digital economy, the hospitality industry is continually seeking innovative ways to enhance customer service experiences. The advent of advanced AI models, such as ChatGPT, has revolutionized customer interactions by providing intelligent and personalized support (George & George, 2023; Korzynski et al., 2023; Starkov, 2023). ChatGPT, a prominent generative AI platform, was developed by OpenAI, a San Francisco-based tech and research company. It was publicly released at the end of November 2022. Powered by the latest version of GPT-4 (Generative Pretrained Transformer 4), ChatGPT serves as a notable large language model (LLM). By leveraging extensive text data from the internet, ChatGPT is capable of generating coherent

and convincing sentences, imitating the linguistic statistical patterns present in the collected literature. The versatility of ChatGPT allows it to respond to a wide range of topics and subjects, making it a valuable tool for various applications, including chatbots, academia, and customer support. Thus, the platform has garnered significant attention from early adopters, and its impact has been described as disruptive across multiple sectors (Bhattacharya & Saxema, 2023; Ivanov & Soliman, 2023).

ChatGPT is recognized as a significant disruptive innovation that holds the potential to transform operations across various industries, including the hospitality and tourism sector. The implementation of ChatGPT is expected to bring about substantial changes throughout the industry, reshaping how customers search for information, make decisions, and altering the methods by which businesses generate, develop, and deliver personalized services and experiences. The adoption of ChatGPT has the capacity to revolutionize the hospitality and tourism industry as a whole (Gursoy, Li, & Song, 2023). Since its introduction, ChatGPT has emerged as a disruptive force in the realm of electronic tourism (e-tourism), prompting significant attention and interest from major players in both the supply and demand sides. The potential of ChatGPT is being closely monitored by digital companies engaged in booking services, including web agencies, and various other stakeholders in the tourism industry. These entities are keenly observing the initial tests and experiences involving ChatGPT, as they anticipate and adapt to the changes it brings to the field (Mich & Garigliano, 2023). In addition, utilizing AI technology, particularly ChatGPT, holds immense promise for enhancing services and enriching the travel experience within the tourism sector. With its capability to swiftly and effectively address inquiries and offer solutions, ChatGPT can aid service providers in delivering exceptional customer assistance. Moreover, it can bolster the standing of companies and organizations in the face of intensifying industry rivalry (Baratti, 2023; Harahap et al., 2023; Sorrells, 2023).

Traveler satisfaction heavily relies on access to pertinent information. This includes searching for information, creating itineraries, and evaluating various products and services. As the essence of tourism entails venturing into unfamiliar territories to co-create experiences, the industry inherently presents challenges. Travelers seek products and services that cater to their current needs, necessitating comprehensive information from multiple organizations, presented in a meaningful and accessible format. Traditionally, search engines like Google have been relied upon since the early 2000s to gather information, build itineraries, locate specialized services, narrow down choices, and develop dynamic travel plans. This involved scouring numerous websites to piece together a personalized experience. However, the advent of ChatGPT offers a novel approach by consolidating diverse resources into a cohesive text, providing comprehensive answers to queries. By leveraging ChatGPT, tourists can receive prompt and accurate information in natural language, aiding them in planning their trips and maximizing their travel experiences. The extensive utilization of innovative digital marketing, particularly among younger demographics, will significantly amplify online influence and foster customer loyalty. The convergence of ChatGPT with voice assistants and real-time contextual services holds immense potential for revolutionizing smart customer service in the tourism industry (Buhalis & Moldavska, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

ChatGPT offers valuable assistance to organizations in the tourism, travel, transport, and hospitality sectors, benefiting both customer-facing and back-office functions. Its potential impact on the travel industry is particularly evident in trip planning. By leveraging AI capabilities, ChatGPT enables travelers to efficiently create itineraries and discover top-rated hotels, eliminating the time-consuming process of sorting through countless options. In terms of customer service, ChatGPT serves as a virtual concierge, generating relevant information and answers about destinations, attractions, events, activities, hotels, restaurants, and other travel services. It can provide valuable advice on local customs, visa requirements, and travel tips, enhancing the value-added services offered to travelers. Additionally, ChatGPT assists with booking and reservation inquiries, helping guests with availability, pricing, and the overall booking process. Personalized recommendations based on individual interests, abilities, disabilities, and preferences further enhance the customer experience. For travel planners, corporate travel companies, agencies, and tour operators, ChatGPT is capable of creating alternative itineraries, routes, and transportation options. By evaluating various alternatives, it streamlines the decision-making process and offers enhanced options for travelers (Calvaresi et al., 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Vianna, 2023). Furthermore, with multilingual support, ChatGPT facilitates communication with travelers in multiple languages, contributing to improved satisfaction and overall experience. ChatGPT also proves valuable in generating marketing content, providing detailed descriptions of attractions, hotel rooms, facilities, and services. It aids in developing destination-specific content for websites and social media platforms, enabling organizations to effectively promote their offerings and attract a larger audience. Beyond customer-facing functions, ChatGPT assists with fact-finding inquiries and resource identification, benefiting various back-office operations. Overall, ChatGPT revolutionizes customer communication, improves service quality, enhances the travel experience, streamlines operations, and provides access to extensive knowledge databases for organizations in the tourism, travel, transport, and hospitality sectors (Barak, 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023; Frąckiewicz, 2023 a and b).

2. METHODOLOGY

In this study, a qualitative research approach was employed as a research strategy. The goal of qualitative research is to understand decision-making processes and actions and explain specific phenomena (Alam, 2021; Limna et al., 2022). In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted to collect comprehensive responses and meet the research objectives precisely. In qualitative research, in-depth interviews are particularly useful when exploring complex and nuanced phenomena, such as the impact of ChatGPT on customer service in the hospitality industry. Through interviews, researchers can gain rich and detailed insights

into the experiences and perceptions of the participants, allowing for a deeper understanding of their thoughts, emotions, and experiences related to using ChatGPT in customer interactions. Interviews also provide an opportunity for the participants to express themselves freely and in their own words, enabling the researchers to capture unique and authentic perspectives (Knott et al., 2022). This approach is especially relevant in studying an emerging technology like ChatGPT, as it allows researchers to explore unforeseen issues or benefits that may not have been anticipated in a more structured data collection method. The interview data were collected in April 2023.

Informed consent was obtained, and ethical research practices were followed. The interview protocol utilized in this study involved conducting in-depth interviews with participants to explore the impact of ChatGPT on customer service in the hospitality industry. The interviews began with an introduction, where the purpose of the study was explained, and participants were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Basic demographic information, such as age, gender, and role in the hospitality industry, was collected from each participant. Subsequently, participants were asked about their experiences with ChatGPT in customer interactions, including the frequency of usage and specific tasks it assisted them with. Their perceptions and experiences related to how ChatGPT influenced their work in customer service were thoroughly examined, considering whether it enhanced their skills, knowledge, and ability to assist customers effectively. The protocol also explored how ChatGPT helped overcome language barriers and provided valuable recommendations, as well as its impact on productivity and workflow management in the hospitality industry. Participants were encouraged to provide feedback, suggestions, and any challenges or concerns they had regarding ChatGPT's implementation. The interview concluded with participants sharing their overall perceptions of ChatGPT's role in improving customer service in the hospitality industry. Interviews were conducted in English, with in-person or remote options. Audio recordings facilitated analysis, and if appropriate, detailed notes or recordings were taken. The structured interview protocol allowed the researchers to gather comprehensive and detailed insights, addressing the specific implications of ChatGPT within the context of the hospitality sector in Krabi, Thailand.

To ensure question clarity and refine the interview protocol for the main study, a pilot test was conducted with a small group of participants. The pilot test involved presenting the interview questions to this group and asking for their feedback. Participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on the clarity, relevance, and appropriateness of the questions. The feedback gathered during the pilot test was invaluable in identifying any potential ambiguities or misunderstandings in the questions. Based on the participants' input, necessary adjustments and improvements were made to the wording and structure of the interview questions. Additionally, the pilot test provided an opportunity to gauge the participants' comfort level with the questions and the overall interview process, ensuring that they felt at ease during the actual interviews.

Participant feedback is an essential aspect of qualitative research that involves seeking input from the study participants on the research process and findings. In this study, the researchers actively sought feedback from participants during and after the interviews. The participants were encouraged to share their thoughts on the interview process, the questions asked, and any insights they felt were valuable but might not have been covered. By incorporating participant feedback, the researchers gained valuable insights into the participants' perspectives, ensuring that their voices were accurately represented in the final analysis. Additionally, feedback from participants can help researchers validate the accuracy and credibility of the study's findings, enhancing the overall trustworthiness of the research outcomes. Furthermore, data triangulation is a technique used to enhance the validity and reliability of qualitative research findings by corroborating data from multiple sources. In this study, data triangulation involved cross-referencing information obtained from different participants, interview sessions, and data collection methods. The researchers conducted interviews with a diverse group of participants, including employees, managers, and stakeholders directly involved in the hospitality industry. By considering perspectives from various roles within the industry, the study aimed to capture a comprehensive view of the impact of ChatGPT on customer service.

The study employed purposive sampling to select 15 key informants, a recognized qualitative research technique that involves deliberately selecting a sample based on the researchers' expertise to suit the study's objectives. This method aims to gather comprehensive knowledge about a specific population or phenomenon of interest. The inclusion of frontline employees, managers, and other stakeholders in the hospitality industry was based on their experience, expertise, and familiarity with the subject under investigation, ensuring valuable insights. The participants needed to meet the following inclusion criteria: being at least 18 years old, being Thai employees, managers, or stakeholders directly involved in the hospitality industry in Krabi, Thailand, having recent knowledge and experience in using ChatGPT, and having used ChatGPT in their customer service interactions for at least two months. Additionally, pre-screening questions were conducted during the participant selection process to assess the participants' familiarity and experience with ChatGPT, ensuring that they met the requirement of having recent knowledge and experience in using ChatGPT. In Table 1, the respondents' information is presented, encompassing their gender, age, position, as well as the date and time of the interviews.

Table 1. **Demographic Information on the Respondents and Interview Dates and Times**

No.	Gender	Age	Position	Date and Time of Interview
1	Male	32	Guest service agent	April 12, 2023 at 09:00 am
2	Male	30	Guest service agent	April 12, 2023 at 10:00 am

3	Male	46	Human resources officer	April 14, 2023 at 09:00 am
4	Male	38	Guest service supervisor	April 14, 2023 at 10:00 am
5	Male	31	Travel desk agent	April 15, 2023 at 10:00 am
6	Male	39	Training officer	April 15, 2023 at 11:00 am
7	Male	44	Hotel supervisor	April 15, 2023 at 01:00 pm
8	Male	42	Customer relationship manager	April 18, 2023 at 09:00 am
9	Female	29	Travel desk agent	April 18, 2023 at 10:00 am
10	Female	30	Human resources officer	April 20, 2023 at 10:00 am
11	Female	36	Human resources officer	April 20, 2023 at 11:00 am
12	Female	32	Hostel co-owner	April 21, 2023 at 09:00 am
13	Female	28	Guest service agent	April 21, 2023 at 11:00 am
14	Female	48	Hotel and F&B manager	April 22, 2023 at 10:00 am
15	Female	33	Training officer	April 22, 2023 at 11:00 am

As shown in Table 1, the sample consisted of 15 individuals, including frontline employees, managers, and other stakeholders directly engaged in the hospitality industry in Krabi, Thailand. The distribution of the sample comprised 8 males and 7 females. The ages of the respondents ranged from 28 to 48. Regarding their positions, there were 3 guest service agents, 3 human resources (HR) officers, 1 guest service supervisor, 2 travel desk agents, 2 training officers, 1 hotel supervisor, 1 customer relationship manager, 1 hostel co-owner, and 1 hotel and food and beverage (F&B) manager.

For data analysis, the researchers employed content analysis, which is a widely used method in qualitative research to identify patterns, themes, and relationships within textual data. The collected data from the in-depth interviews were transcribed and carefully reviewed to extract meaningful insights. To facilitate the data analysis process and manage the extensive qualitative data, the researchers utilized NVivo, a powerful qualitative data analysis tool. NVivo allows researchers to organize, categorize, and analyze data efficiently, enabling a systematic and rigorous exploration of the themes and patterns identified during content analysis (Allsop et al., 2022; Kaefer et al., 2015). The combination of content analysis and NVivo ensured a robust and thorough examination of the data, leading to a deeper understanding of the participants' experiences, perceptions, and the impact of ChatGPT on customer service in the hospitality industry. The use of a qualitative data analysis tool like NVivo enhanced the rigor and credibility of the study's findings, contributing to the overall strength of the research outcomes.

3. RESULTS

Based on the participants' responses, the study identified various themes regarding the utilization of ChatGPT. These themes included training and education, customer service support, language assistance, travel recommendations, as well as time management and organization. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis and NVivo software. To facilitate comprehension of the findings, a word frequency query was applied, and the commonly used words by the participants during the interviews were visualized in a word cloud (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Word Cloud (Source: Authors, Using NVivo Software)

3.1. Training and Education

ChatGPT can provide training materials and resources to help hospitality workers enhance their skills and knowledge. It can offer guidance on customer service techniques, industry best practices, language skills, and more.

ChatGPT is an amazing AI tool that can provide training materials and resources to help hospitality workers enhance their skills and knowledge. It can provide guidance on various topics like customer service techniques, industry best practices, language skills, and much more. It is incredibly helpful for hospitality workers. It is like having a personalized training assistant available at any time. It can be accessed through a chat interface, making it convenient for workers to seek guidance whenever they need it. And since it's AI-powered, it can continuously learn and improve, staying up-to-date with the latest industry trends and information (a HR officer).

ChatGPT can really empower workers to enhance their skills and provide better service to guests. I can see this being particularly valuable for new employees who are still learning the ropes. It can act as a virtual mentor, guiding them through different scenarios and helping them develop their skills. Plus, it can provide a consistent training experience across the organization, ensuring that everyone receives the same level of knowledge and expertise (a HR officer).

I think this could be a game-changer for the hospitality industry. It's great to see technology being leveraged to support and empower workers in such a practical way. With ChatGPT, hospitality workers can have a valuable resource right at their fingertips, enabling them to continuously learn, improve, and deliver exceptional service. It's an exciting development for the industry (a training officer).

3.2. Customer Service Support

ChatGPT can assist workers in handling customer inquiries and resolving issues effectively. It can provide responses to frequently asked questions, offer suggestions for common problems, and even simulate customer interactions to help workers improve their communication skills.

Through AI-driven algorithms, ChatGPT can analyze customer preferences, booking history, and demographic information to offer personalized recommendations. By understanding individual needs, ChatGPT can suggest tailored experiences, such as local attractions, dining options, or room upgrades. This personalized approach enhances the overall guest experience, leading to increased customer satisfaction and potential upselling opportunities for the hospitality industry (a guest service agent).

ChatGPT can significantly enhance the level of service provided by hospitality workers. It saves time and helps them make informed recommendations. Guests appreciate personalized suggestions, and ChatGPT can assist workers in delivering just that. It acts as a valuable tool that complements the knowledge and skills of hospitality workers. Indeed. It's a win-win situation. Workers can provide guests with a wide range of recommendations, and guests benefit from a curated selection of local attractions and experiences (a guest service supervisor).

ChatGPT can understand customer inquiries, respond promptly, and provide accurate information. Through interactive and conversational interactions, customers can obtain personalized recommendations, make reservations, inquire about amenities, and address concerns in real-time, leading to heightened satisfaction and loyalty (a customer relationship manager).

3.3. Language Support

In the hospitality industry, workers often interact with guests from different linguistic backgrounds. ChatGPT can help bridge language barriers by providing translations, offering language learning tips, or even serving as a real-time language interpreter when needed.

Imagine a situation where a guest needs assistance in their native language, but the staff doesn't speak that language. ChatGPT can step in and provide translations or even help the staff learn some basic phrases to facilitate communication. It not only enhances the guest experience but also helps create a more inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone. ChatGPT also promotes better understanding and allows hospitality workers to provide personalized service to guests, regardless of their language proficiency (a hotel and F&B manager).

ChatGPT can be trained on multilingual datasets, enabling it to provide support in various languages. This feature allows hospitality establishments to cater to an international clientele, eliminating language barriers and ensuring seamless interactions. Moreover, ChatGPT can be programmed to exhibit cultural sensitivity, making it adept at understanding and respecting cultural nuances during customer interactions (a customer relationship manager).

3.4. Travel Recommendations

Hospitality workers may frequently receive requests for travel recommendations or local attractions. ChatGPT can assist by suggesting popular tourist spots, local restaurants, entertainment venues, and other points of interest, helping workers provide valuable suggestions to guests.

ChatGPT can be a great resource for hospitality workers when it comes to providing travel recommendations and local attractions to guests. ChatGPT has a wealth of information and can suggest popular tourist spots, local restaurants, entertainment venues, and other points of interest based on user inquiries (a travel desk agent).

Instead of relying solely on their own knowledge, hospitality workers can consult ChatGPT to provide guests with valuable suggestions and insider tips. It ensures that workers can cater to guests' interests and preferences, even if they're not familiar with all the local attractions. ChatGPT can help workers stay up-to-date with the latest hotspots and ensure that guests have a memorable and enjoyable experience during their stay (a travel desk agent).

3.5. Time Management and Organization

ChatGPT can assist workers with managing their schedules, prioritizing tasks, and organizing their workflow. It can provide reminders, productivity tips, and even help with basic administrative tasks, allowing workers to focus on delivering excellent service.

ChatGPT can help hospitality workers with managing their schedules and organizing their workflow. It can assist workers by providing reminders, productivity tips, and even help with basic administrative tasks. It's like having a personal assistant! Workers can keep track of their schedules, prioritize tasks, and ensure they stay on top of their responsibilities. It frees up their time and mental energy to focus on delivering excellent service to guests (a hotel and F&B manager).

ChatGPT can also provide reminders for important deadlines, suggest efficient ways to handle tasks, and offer productivity tips to optimize workflow. By leveraging ChatGPT's capabilities, workers can ensure they stay productive and focused, enhancing their overall performance (a hotel supervisor).

Traditional customer service methods often struggle to handle the volume of inquiries, resulting in long response times and frustrated customers. ChatGPT, with its ability to handle multiple conversations simultaneously, significantly improves efficiency and scalability. It can handle routine inquiries, freeing up human staff to focus on more complex tasks. The 24/7 availability of ChatGPT ensures uninterrupted support, regardless of time zones, boosting customer satisfaction (a hostel co-owner).

4. DISCUSSIONS

The utilization of technology, such as ChatGPT, in the hospitality industry offers a wide range of advantages across training, customer service, language support, travel recommendations, and time management. By incorporating ChatGPT into operations, hospitality establishments can unlock significant benefits in these areas. The results of the study aligned with the research conducted by Trunfio and Pasquinelli (2021), which concluded that smart technologies had a crucial impact on managing tourism flows and influencing visitor behavior during the COVID-19 crisis. Reis et al. (2020) also observed that service robots outperformed humans in standardized tasks within environments involving frequent customer interaction. This was attributed to the robots' mechanical and analytical capabilities. However, it is important to acknowledge that current evidence suggests service robots have not yet achieved the desired level of technological maturity to fully replace human workers, particularly in certain contexts. This requires careful consideration of the existing technological capabilities. Vancia et al. (2023) revealed that a participant mentioned using AI for searching information about tourist destinations, indicating that AI technologies, particularly in the form of the GPT Chat platform, might not yet be widely adopted or recognized for this specific purpose. However, the participant's positive experience highlights the potential benefits of integrating AI into the tourism industry's information search processes. The participant's use of the GPT Chat platform to seek information about tourist destinations demonstrates how AI-powered chatbots can play a valuable role in assisting travelers with their queries. The platform's ability to provide super cool recommendations, such as interacting with locals in the area, showcases the AI's capability to offer personalized and contextually relevant suggestions, enhancing the overall travel experience. The specific questions the participant posed, "What to visit in city X" and "How many days are enough to visit destination X," demonstrate how AI can serve as an efficient and convenient tool for travelers seeking detailed and tailored information about their intended destinations. By using natural language queries, the participant was able to receive prompt and accurate responses, avoiding the need to sift through extensive web search results. Furthermore, the study's findings, consistent with the research carried out by Carvalho and Ivanov (2023), provided confirmation that ChatGPT and similar models are poised to significantly impact various tourism processes. These technologies are expected to streamline customer service in front-of-house operations and improve productivity and efficiency in back-of-house operations. While there may be some anticipated negative consequences for human resources, overall, this technology predominantly benefits tourism employees.

ChatGPT can serve as a valuable resource for training materials and resources. It can provide hospitality workers with access to industry best practices, customer service techniques, and other relevant information. By offering guidance and knowledge enhancement, ChatGPT empowers workers to improve their skills and stay updated with the latest trends in the industry. The study's results are consistent with the article conducted by Puorto (2023), demonstrating that ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for delivering training and development materials to hospitality employees. Furthermore, one of the key strengths of ChatGPT is its ability to assist workers in handling customer inquiries and resolving issues effectively. It can provide responses to frequently asked questions, offer suggestions for common problems, and simulate customer interactions to help workers refine their communication skills. By leveraging AI-driven algorithms, ChatGPT can analyze customer preferences and booking history to offer personalized recommendations, enhancing the overall guest experience and potentially leading to upselling opportunities. The results of the study aligned with the research conducted by Harahap et al. (2023), which indicated that ChatGPT can assist service providers in providing solutions and responding to tourists' inquiries in a timely and effective manner, while also strengthening the company's or organization's position in the face of increasingly fierce competition. Moreover, Frąckiewicz (2023b) indicated that ChatGPT can seamlessly integrate into different customer support channels, ensuring a consistent and high-quality experience across platforms while reducing response time. The model's ability to learn and adapt to new languages and dialects facilitates business expansion into new markets effortlessly. Overall, ChatGPT-4 offers a powerful solution for businesses to enhance customer support and reach wider audiences globally. The findings also align with Frąckiewicz (2023c), indicating that ChatGPT is an effective and efficient solution for businesses that need to create customer service and support content. The AI-powered chatbot can automate the process, personalize content, and provide accurate information, all while being cost-effective.

In an industry that often interacts with guests from diverse linguistic backgrounds, ChatGPT can be a valuable tool for bridging language barriers. It can provide translations, language learning tips, and even serve as a real-time interpreter when needed. By being trained on multilingual datasets, ChatGPT can support various languages, ensuring seamless interactions with international guests. Also, it can be programmed to exhibit cultural sensitivity, respecting and understanding cultural nuances during customer interactions. The results of the study aligned with the article conducted by Frąckiewicz (2023b), which indicated that ChatGPT-4 brings significant benefits to businesses by overcoming language barriers that have traditionally posed challenges in operating across multiple countries. Unlike traditional customer support systems that require multilingual agents, ChatGPT-4 enables instant, accurate, and contextually relevant responses in various languages, eliminating the need for extensive language training and maintenance costs. Moreover, ChatGPT can assist workers in providing travel recommendations and suggestions for local attractions. By suggesting popular tourist spots, restaurants, entertainment venues, and other points of interest, ChatGPT helps workers deliver valuable suggestions to guests, enhancing their overall experience. The study's findings align with the research conducted by Carvalho and Ivanov (2023), highlighting one of the key advantages of utilizing ChatGPT in the tourism industry. ChatGPT has the capability to provide personalized information and recommendations that cater to the specific interests and needs of individual travelers. Additionally, ChatGPT can assist workers in managing their schedules, prioritizing tasks, and organizing their workflow. By providing reminders, productivity tips, and even helping with basic administrative tasks, ChatGPT enables workers to focus on delivering excellent service without getting overwhelmed by day-to-day operations. The study's findings support the research conducted by Perifanis and Kitsios (2023), emphasizing the vast opportunities that arise from deploying ChatGPT in the tourism industry. The integration of AI technology in this digital era presents a multitude of advantages for service providers and customers alike. By leveraging ChatGPT, the service process can be accelerated and simplified, leading to reduced operational costs and shorter service delivery times. This technological implementation has the potential to enhance efficiency and improve the overall customer experience in the tourism industry.

This study significantly contributes to the understanding of the integration of ChatGPT into customer service operations within the hospitality industry. It provides practical insights and implications for organizations considering the implementation of AI language models like ChatGPT, helping them make informed decisions about improving their customer service. The study highlights the positive effects of ChatGPT, such as enhancing worker skills, bridging language barriers, providing recommendations, and increasing productivity. By exploring the experiences and perceptions of hospitality workers who have used ChatGPT, the study offers valuable firsthand perspectives on the benefits and challenges of employing AI language models in real-world customer service scenarios. Additionally, the study's focus on the hospitality industry in Krabi, Thailand provides a specific and context-dependent understanding of ChatGPT's impact within this region. This localized perspective offers nuanced insights that can guide similar organizations operating in comparable settings. Furthermore, the study contributes to the existing literature on AI in hospitality, further expanding our knowledge in this domain. The empirical evidence and real-world experiences provided by this study can inform future research and shape industry practices related to AI integration in the hospitality sector. Overall, this study's findings have practical, contextual, and academic significance, paving the way for further advancements in the field of AI-driven customer service in hospitality.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study highlight the positive impact of ChatGPT on customer service in the hospitality industry. The qualitative data collected through in-depth interviews with frontline employees, managers, and other stakeholders in the hospitality sector demonstrate that ChatGPT provides valuable support to hospitality workers in various aspects of their jobs. One key area where ChatGPT proves beneficial is in enhancing the skills and knowledge of hospitality workers. By providing training materials and resources, ChatGPT assists employees in improving their customer service techniques, understanding

industry best practices, and developing language skills. This support helps workers handle customer inquiries and resolve issues more effectively. Language barriers often arise in the hospitality industry due to interactions with guests from diverse linguistic backgrounds. ChatGPT plays a crucial role in bridging these barriers by offering translations, language learning tips, and even serving as a real-time language interpreter when necessary. This feature greatly aids hospitality workers in communicating with guests and ensuring a positive customer experience. Another advantage of ChatGPT is its ability to provide recommendations for travel destinations, local attractions, restaurants, and entertainment venues. This feature enables workers to offer valuable suggestions to guests, enhancing their overall experience and satisfaction. In terms of productivity and workflow management, ChatGPT proves to be a valuable assistant for hospitality workers. It helps with schedule management, task prioritization, and basic administrative tasks, allowing employees to focus on delivering excellent service to guests.

As the digital economy continues to evolve, leveraging AI-powered solutions like ChatGPT becomes increasingly critical for the hospitality industry to remain competitive and provide exceptional service in our interconnected world. While ChatGPT brings immense value to the industry, it is essential to proactively address any potential challenges. Ensuring accuracy and preventing biased or inappropriate responses necessitates meticulous training and ongoing monitoring of the AI model. Hospitality establishments should establish clear guidelines for the usage of AI systems, regularly review customer interactions, and actively seek feedback from both customers and staff. Ethical considerations, data privacy, and finding the right balance between automation and maintaining a human touch remain of utmost importance. By carefully navigating these areas, the hospitality industry can fully harness the benefits of ChatGPT while upholding high standards of service, ethics, and customer satisfaction.

While this study provides valuable insights into the impact of ChatGPT on customer service in the hospitality industry, there are several limitations that should be acknowledged. These limitations open avenues for future research to expand on the topic. First, this study collected data from a relatively small sample of 15 individuals in a specific location (Krabi, Thailand). To increase the generalizability of the findings, future studies should consider expanding the sample size and including participants from diverse locations and hospitality contexts. This would help to capture a wider range of perspectives and experiences. Second, as this study relied on in-depth interviews, there is a possibility of participant bias and subjectivity in the responses. To address this limitation, future studies could incorporate mixed methods, combining qualitative approaches with quantitative measures. Surveys and observations could provide additional objective data and enhance the validity of the findings. Third, the experiences and perceptions of the participants may be influenced by their personal biases, individual backgrounds, and prior experiences with AI technology. It is important to consider these factors when interpreting the findings. Future studies could incorporate additional methods, such as surveys or observations, to complement the qualitative data and provide a more comprehensive understanding of the impact of ChatGPT. Forth, while this study focused on the experiences and perceptions of hospitality workers, future research could also consider incorporating the perspectives of customers. Surveys, focus groups, or feedback analysis from guests who have interacted with ChatGPT in customer service scenarios would provide a more holistic understanding of its impact on the overall guest experience. Last but not least, as AI technology becomes increasingly prevalent in customer service, it is essential to address ethical considerations. Future studies could delve into the ethical implications of using AI language models in the hospitality industry, such as privacy concerns, data security, and the potential impact on human interactions and employment.

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