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Post-Pandemic Trends in the Hospitality Industry



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## Post-Pandemic Trends in the Hospitality Industry

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** The general objective of this study was to explore post-pandemic trends in the hospitality trends.

**Methodology:** The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

**Findings:** The findings reveal that there exists a contextual and methodological gap relating to the post-pandemic trends in the hospitality trends. Preliminary empirical review revealed that the COVID-19 pandemic brought significant, lasting changes, with technology playing a crucial role in recovery through the adoption of contactless services. The shift towards domestic tourism and staycations provided a boost, supported by targeted local tourism campaigns. Sustainability emerged as a vital trend, with eco-friendly practices leading to higher occupancy rates and guest satisfaction. Flexibility in booking and cancellation policies restored traveler confidence, with adaptable and transparent communication being key to maintaining customer trust and loyalty.

**Unique Contribution to Theory, Practice and Policy:** The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, Resource- Based View (RBV) and Expectancy Theory may be used to anchor future studies on post-pandemic trends in the hospitality trends. The study recommended several key areas for advancement. It emphasized the need for further research on the long-term impacts of technological innovations, suggesting that theories like the Diffusion of Innovations Theory be expanded to incorporate the effects of global crises. Practically, it advised sustained investment in digital infrastructure and training for staff to maximize the benefits of contactless technologies. Policy recommendations included government support for technological adoption, promotion of domestic tourism, and the prioritization of sustainability through green practices and supportive policies. Additionally, the study underscored the importance of maintaining flexible booking and cancellation policies to enhance traveler confidence and loyalty

**Keywords:** *Post-Pandemic Trends, Hospitality Industry, Technological Innovations, Contactless Technologies, Digital Infrastructure*

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The performance of the hospitality industry, a crucial sector in global economies, has been subject to extensive scrutiny, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. This sector encompasses a range of services including lodging, food and beverage, event planning, theme parks, and travel and tourism. Its performance is typically measured through various metrics such as occupancy rates, average daily rate (ADR), revenue per available room (RevPAR), and customer satisfaction indices. In the USA, the hospitality industry saw a significant downturn during the pandemic, with occupancy rates plummeting from 66% in 2019 to 44% in 2020 (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2021). However, recovery signs were evident by late 2021 and early 2022, with occupancy rates rebounding to over 58% and ADR increasing by 8% compared to 2020 (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2022). This recovery is attributed to the domestic travel surge and the gradual return of business travel and events.

The United Kingdom's hospitality industry mirrors the global trend, experiencing substantial disruptions due to lockdowns and travel restrictions. According to the UK Hospitality Quarterly Tracker, the industry's turnover fell by £80 billion in 2020, a 54% decline compared to 2019 (UKHospitality, 2021). Nevertheless, the sector exhibited resilience with a gradual recovery in 2021, driven by the easing of restrictions and a rise in domestic tourism. By mid-2022, the UK hospitality sector's revenue was estimated to be recovering at a rate of 25% year-on-year, signaling a cautious optimism among industry stakeholders (UKHospitality, 2022). The government's support measures, such as the furlough scheme and VAT reductions, played a pivotal role in cushioning the impact and facilitating the recovery process. In Japan, the hospitality industry has faced unique challenges and opportunities. The postponement of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics to 2021 significantly impacted the sector, with many hotels experiencing low occupancy rates. However, the eventual hosting of the Olympics provided a much-needed boost, albeit limited by the absence of international spectators. Data from the Japan Tourism Agency indicated that hotel occupancy rates fell to an unprecedented low of 21% in April 2020 but gradually recovered to 50% by late 2021 (Japan Tourism Agency, 2021). The emphasis on domestic tourism campaigns, such as the "Go To Travel" initiative, was instrumental in this recovery phase, encouraging Japanese residents to explore local destinations.

Brazil's hospitality industry, heavily reliant on both international and domestic tourism, faced severe impacts during the pandemic. According to the Brazilian Institute of Geography and Statistics, the sector's revenue dropped by 33% in 2020 compared to the previous year (IBGE, 2021). However, the industry showed signs of recovery in 2021, with a 19% increase in revenue driven by a rebound in domestic travel and regional tourism (IBGE, 2022). Events such as Carnival, despite being scaled down, also contributed to the gradual recovery. The Brazilian government's efforts in promoting domestic tourism through various incentives and marketing campaigns played a significant role in reviving the sector. The performance of the hospitality industry in African countries has been varied, reflecting the continent's diverse economic and social landscapes. South Africa, one of the continent's major tourism hubs, experienced a sharp decline in international arrivals, which dropped by 71% in 2020 (Statistics South Africa, 2021). However, a significant recovery was noted in 2021 with a 35% increase in domestic tourism, supported by targeted marketing campaigns and the relaxation of travel restrictions (Statistics South Africa, 2022). In contrast, countries such as Kenya saw a quicker rebound due to a relatively shorter period of strict lockdown measures and a focus on promoting safaris and wildlife tourism to domestic tourists (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021).

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, the hospitality industry globally is showing signs of resilience and recovery. For instance, the rise in hybrid events combining in-person and virtual experiences is reshaping the industry. In the USA, Marriott International reported that hybrid events accounted for 20% of their corporate bookings by the end of 2021, a trend expected to grow in the

coming years (Marriott International, 2022). Similarly, in the UK, hotels and conference centers are increasingly investing in technology to facilitate hybrid meetings, which are seen as a future-proof solution to potential travel disruptions (UKHospitality, 2022). Technology has also played a transformative role in the hospitality industry's performance. Contactless services, such as mobile check-ins, digital room keys, and virtual concierge services, have become standard offerings in many hotels globally. A study published in the Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology highlighted that 65% of guests in the USA preferred hotels offering contactless services post-pandemic (Gursoy, Chi & Karadag, 2022). This shift towards technology-driven service delivery is enhancing guest experiences and operational efficiencies, contributing to the sector's gradual recovery.

Moreover, sustainability has emerged as a critical factor influencing the performance of the hospitality industry. In Japan, for instance, hotels implementing sustainable practices reported higher occupancy rates and guest satisfaction scores compared to those that did not (Japan Tourism Agency, 2021). The trend towards eco-friendly accommodations is also evident in Africa, where safari lodges and resorts adopting sustainable practices are attracting environmentally conscious travelers (Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, 2021). This focus on sustainability is not only enhancing the industry's performance but also contributing to broader environmental goals. The hospitality industry's performance has been significantly influenced by the pandemic, with varying degrees of impact and recovery across different regions. The USA, UK, Japan, Brazil, and African countries have all faced unique challenges but are gradually recovering through a combination of government support, technological innovation, and adaptive business strategies. The sector's resilience is evident in the ongoing recovery trends and the adoption of new practices aimed at enhancing guest experiences and operational efficiencies. Continued focus on sustainability and technology is expected to drive further growth and stability in the post-pandemic era.

The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly reshaped global industries, with the hospitality sector experiencing profound changes. One of the most notable post-pandemic trends is the increased adoption of contactless technologies. To minimize physical contact and enhance safety, many hotels and restaurants have introduced mobile check-ins, digital room keys, and virtual concierge services. These innovations not only reduce the risk of virus transmission but also streamline operations, leading to enhanced customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag (2022) indicated that 65% of guests in the USA preferred hotels offering contactless services post-pandemic, highlighting the importance of technology in shaping future hospitality experiences. Remote work and hybrid events have emerged as critical trends influencing the hospitality industry in the post-pandemic world. With many companies adopting long-term remote work policies, traditional business travel patterns have changed. Hotels have responded by offering flexible workspaces and facilities for hybrid meetings, catering to the needs of remote workers and businesses hosting virtual events. Marriott International reported that hybrid events accounted for 20% of their corporate bookings by the end of 2021, reflecting the growing demand for such arrangements (Marriott International, 2022). This shift has enabled hotels to maintain revenue streams from business clients while meeting evolving market demands.

Domestic tourism has experienced a significant boom as travel restrictions and health concerns have led many to explore destinations within their own countries. This trend has been particularly beneficial for the hospitality industry, helping to offset the decline in international tourism. For instance, domestic tourism campaigns in the USA and UK have significantly contributed to the recovery of the hospitality sector. The American Hotel & Lodging Association (2022) reported a 58% occupancy rate rebound in 2021, driven largely by domestic travelers (American Hotel & Lodging Association, 2022). Similarly, UKHospitality (2022) noted a 25% year-on-year revenue recovery by mid-2022, emphasizing the importance of local travel in revitalizing the industry (UKHospitality, 2022). Sustainability has become a critical consideration for travelers in the post-pandemic era. Many consumers now prioritize



eco-friendly and sustainable practices when choosing accommodations. The hospitality industry has responded by implementing green initiatives such as energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programs, and sustainable sourcing of food and materials. These efforts not only attract environmentally conscious travelers but also enhance the industry's reputation and long-term viability. A report by the Japan Tourism Agency (2021) revealed that hotels implementing sustainable practices reported higher occupancy rates and guest satisfaction scores (Japan Tourism Agency, 2021).

Health and safety have become paramount concerns for travelers, leading to stringent hygiene protocols and enhanced cleaning standards across the hospitality industry. Hotels and restaurants have adopted measures such as frequent sanitization of high-touch surfaces, the use of UV light technology for disinfection, and providing health kits for guests. These practices have been crucial in rebuilding trust and confidence among travelers, significantly influencing their accommodation choices. According to a study by Gursoy et al. (2022), 78% of travelers now consider cleanliness a top priority when booking hotels, underscoring the impact of enhanced hygiene practices on hospitality performance (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2022). The integration of wellness and holistic experiences has gained traction as a significant post-pandemic trend in the hospitality industry. With heightened awareness of mental and physical well-being, travelers are increasingly seeking accommodations that offer wellness programs, including yoga, meditation, spa treatments, and healthy dining options. This trend has driven hotels to innovate and diversify their offerings to meet the growing demand for wellness-oriented experiences. Research by Marriott International (2022) showed a 15% increase in bookings for wellness-focused packages, indicating a strong market for health and well-being services (Marriott International, 2022).

The rise of staycations has been another important trend, as many people opted for local getaways instead of international travel due to travel restrictions and safety concerns. This trend has been particularly pronounced in urban areas where residents seek short breaks within their cities or nearby locations. The concept of staycations has provided a much-needed boost to local hotels and resorts, driving occupancy rates and revenue. According to UKHospitality (2022), the staycation trend contributed significantly to the 25% revenue recovery in the UK hospitality sector by mid-2022 (UKHospitality, 2022). The shift towards personalized experiences has become a defining feature of post-pandemic travel. Travelers now expect customized services that cater to their individual preferences and needs. The hospitality industry has leveraged data analytics and artificial intelligence to enhance personalization, from tailored recommendations and bespoke packages to personalized communication and service delivery. This focus on personalization has led to higher customer satisfaction and loyalty. Gursoy et al. (2022) found that 70% of guests preferred hotels that offered personalized experiences, highlighting the competitive advantage of customization in the hospitality sector (Gursoy, Chi, & Karadag, 2022).

Flexibility in booking and cancellation policies has emerged as a crucial factor influencing traveler decisions in the post-pandemic era. The uncertainty caused by the pandemic has made travelers more cautious about committing to rigid plans. Hotels and travel companies have adapted by offering more flexible booking options and lenient cancellation policies, which have been instrumental in attracting bookings and enhancing customer trust. Marriott International (2022) reported a significant increase in bookings due to their flexible policies, demonstrating the importance of adaptability in the current travel climate (Marriott International, 2022). The adoption of digital marketing strategies has accelerated as hospitality businesses seek to reach and engage customers more effectively in the digital age. Social media, search engine optimization, and targeted online advertising have become essential tools for promoting destinations and services. These strategies have enabled hotels and tourism operators to maintain visibility, attract new customers, and drive bookings despite the challenging market conditions. According to a report by the Japan Tourism Agency (2021), digital marketing

efforts have been critical in sustaining the recovery momentum in the hospitality sector (Japan Tourism Agency, 2021).

### **1.1 Statement of the Problem**

The COVID-19 pandemic has catalyzed significant shifts in the hospitality industry, presenting both challenges and opportunities for recovery and growth. One of the most pronounced impacts has been the decline in international travel, with global tourism arrivals plummeting by 74% in 2020 compared to the previous year (UNWTO, 2021). This dramatic downturn has necessitated a reevaluation of business models and operational strategies within the industry. While some trends, such as the adoption of contactless technologies and enhanced hygiene protocols, have been well-documented, there remains a critical need for comprehensive research to understand the long-term implications of these changes. Additionally, there is a paucity of data on how these trends vary across different regions and segments of the hospitality industry, highlighting a significant gap in current research.

Existing literature on post-pandemic trends in the hospitality industry has predominantly focused on immediate responses to the crisis, such as emergency measures and short-term adaptations. However, there is a notable research gap in exploring the sustainability and effectiveness of these trends over the long term. For instance, while contactless technologies have been widely adopted, their impact on customer satisfaction and operational efficiency over an extended period remains underexplored. Moreover, the shift towards domestic tourism and staycations, driven by travel restrictions, requires further investigation to determine if these patterns will persist or revert once international travel resumes fully. This study aims to address these gaps by conducting a comprehensive analysis of post-pandemic trends and their long-term effects on the hospitality industry, providing valuable insights into sustainable practices and future strategies (Gursoy et al., 2022).

The findings of this study will be invaluable to various stakeholders within the hospitality industry, including hotel operators, policymakers, and investors. By understanding the long-term impacts of post-pandemic trends, hotel operators can make informed decisions about technology investments, operational adjustments, and marketing strategies to enhance customer experience and business performance. Policymakers can leverage these insights to develop supportive regulations and initiatives that foster industry resilience and growth. Investors, on the other hand, will benefit from a clearer understanding of emerging opportunities and risks within the sector, enabling them to make strategic investment decisions. Overall, this research will contribute to the development of a more robust and adaptive hospitality industry, better equipped to navigate future challenges and capitalize on new trends (Marriott International, 2022).

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **2.1 Theoretical Review**

#### **2.1.1 Diffusion of Innovations Theory**

The Diffusion of Innovations Theory, developed by Everett M. Rogers in 1962, is a foundational framework for understanding how new ideas, technologies, and practices spread within a society or organization. The theory posits that innovations are communicated over time among members of a social system through various channels and can be categorized into five stages: knowledge, persuasion, decision, implementation, and confirmation. According to Rogers, the adoption of innovations follows a bell-shaped curve, with individuals classified as innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority, and laggards based on their propensity to embrace new ideas (Rogers, 2003). This theory is particularly relevant to the study of post-pandemic trends in the hospitality industry, as it can explain the adoption and diffusion of new technologies and practices, such as contactless check-ins, enhanced sanitation protocols, and hybrid event platforms. Understanding how these innovations spread among different segments of the industry can help researchers and practitioners identify strategies to

accelerate adoption, improve operational efficiency, and enhance customer satisfaction in a rapidly changing environment.

### **2.1.2 Resource-Based View (RBV)**

The Resource-Based View (RBV) is a strategic management theory that focuses on the internal resources and capabilities of an organization as the primary determinants of competitive advantage. Originated by Jay Barney in 1991, RBV emphasizes that firms possess unique bundles of resources—tangible and intangible—that are valuable, rare, inimitable, and non-substitutable (VRIN). These resources enable firms to achieve sustained competitive advantages and superior performance (Barney, 1991). In the context of post-pandemic trends in the hospitality industry, RBV is highly pertinent as it provides a framework for analyzing how hotels and other hospitality entities leverage their unique resources, such as brand reputation, technological infrastructure, human capital, and customer relationships, to navigate the challenges and opportunities brought about by the pandemic. For instance, a hotel chain with a strong digital infrastructure may have been better positioned to implement contactless technologies quickly, thereby gaining a competitive edge. By applying RBV, researchers can assess how different resources and capabilities have influenced the resilience and adaptability of hospitality firms during and after the pandemic.

### **2.1.3 Expectancy Theory**

Expectancy Theory, formulated by Victor Vroom in 1964, is a motivation theory that explains how individuals make decisions based on their expectations of the outcomes associated with different actions. The theory posits that motivation is a function of three components: expectancy (the belief that effort will lead to desired performance), instrumentality (the belief that performance will lead to specific outcomes), and valence (the value attached to those outcomes) (Vroom, 1964). Expectancy Theory is particularly relevant to understanding the behavior of both employees and customers in the hospitality industry in the post-pandemic era. For employees, the theory can be used to analyze how changes in work environments, job roles, and incentives influence their motivation and performance. For customers, the theory can explain how their expectations of safety, convenience, and service quality influence their choices and satisfaction levels. By applying Expectancy Theory, researchers can gain insights into the factors that drive behavior and decision-making in the hospitality sector, thereby helping managers design effective strategies to enhance employee engagement and customer loyalty in a post-pandemic world.

## **2.2 Empirical Review**

Gursoy, Chi & Karadag (2022) aimed to review the current developments and future research agenda for the hospitality industry in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors conducted a comprehensive literature review, analyzing data from various sources, including academic articles, industry reports, and news articles, to identify key trends and challenges faced by the hospitality industry during the pandemic. The study identified several significant trends, such as the accelerated adoption of contactless technologies, the rise of remote work and hybrid events, increased demand for domestic tourism, and heightened focus on health and safety measures. The authors noted that while these trends have helped the industry adapt to the immediate impacts of the pandemic, their long-term sustainability and effectiveness require further investigation. The study recommended further research into the long-term impacts of these trends, particularly the integration of technology and its effects on customer satisfaction and operational efficiency. It also suggested exploring the role of government support in facilitating industry recovery.

Jiang & Wen (2020) explored the impact of COVID-19 on the global hotel industry and the subsequent changes in consumer behavior and hotel operations. A mixed-method approach was used, combining quantitative analysis of industry performance data with qualitative interviews of hotel managers and

consumers. The study found that the pandemic significantly affected hotel occupancy rates, revenue, and operational practices. Key trends identified included the adoption of enhanced hygiene protocols, flexible booking policies, and the importance of domestic tourism. The authors recommended that hotels invest in technology to enhance operational efficiency and customer experience. They also emphasized the need for flexible policies to accommodate changing consumer preferences.

Kaushal & Srivastava (2021) investigated the resilience and adaptability of the hospitality industry in India in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The authors employed a qualitative research design, conducting in-depth interviews with industry experts, hotel managers, and policy makers. The findings highlighted the industry's rapid adaptation to new norms, such as digitalization, enhanced hygiene standards, and the promotion of domestic tourism. The study also noted significant government support in the form of financial aid and policy adjustments. The study recommended continuous innovation and investment in digital infrastructure to sustain recovery. It also suggested a collaborative approach between industry stakeholders and government bodies to develop long-term resilience strategies.

Kim, Lee & Han (2021) examined the changes in consumer behavior in the hospitality industry during the COVID-19 pandemic and their implications for service quality. The study utilized a survey method, collecting data from 500 hotel guests in South Korea to understand their expectations and satisfaction levels regarding new service practices. The results indicated a significant shift in consumer preferences towards hotels that adopted stringent hygiene protocols and contactless services. The study also found that guests valued flexibility in booking and cancellation policies. The authors recommended that hotels continue to prioritize health and safety measures and invest in technology to enhance the guest experience. They also suggested that hotels should regularly update their policies to reflect changing consumer expectations.

Sigala (2020) analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality education and to propose strategies for future resilience. Sigala conducted a content analysis of academic articles, industry reports, and expert opinions to identify the key challenges and opportunities for tourism and hospitality education. The study identified several challenges, including the rapid shift to online learning, the need for new curricula focusing on crisis management and digital skills, and the financial strain on educational institutions. However, it also highlighted opportunities for innovation in teaching methods and curriculum development. The study recommended integrating crisis management and digital transformation into tourism and hospitality curricula. It also suggested enhancing collaboration between academia and industry to ensure that educational programs remain relevant and responsive to industry needs.

Baum & Hai (2020) examined the labor market impacts of COVID-19 on the hospitality industry and the strategies used by businesses to manage workforce challenges. The authors conducted a qualitative analysis based on interviews with hospitality industry stakeholders, including HR managers, business owners, and employees. The study found that the pandemic led to significant job losses and changes in employment practices, such as increased use of temporary and gig workers. It also identified a greater emphasis on employee health and safety, as well as the importance of flexible working arrangements. The authors recommended that businesses invest in employee training and development to enhance workforce resilience. They also suggested the need for stronger labor policies to protect workers' rights and ensure fair working conditions.

Zenker & Kock (2020) explored the psychological impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on travelers and the implications for destination marketing and management. The authors conducted a survey of 1,000 travelers from various countries to assess their perceptions and attitudes towards travel during and after the pandemic. The study found that the pandemic significantly affected travelers' risk perceptions and travel intentions, with a heightened preference for destinations perceived as safe and less crowded. The authors also noted an increased interest in nature-based and rural tourism. The study



recommended that destination marketing organizations (DMOs) focus on communicating safety measures and promoting less crowded, nature-based destinations. It also suggested that DMOs develop flexible marketing strategies that can quickly adapt to changing traveler preferences.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The study adopted a desktop research methodology. Desk research refers to secondary data or that which can be collected without fieldwork. Desk research is basically involved in collecting data from existing resources hence it is often considered a low cost technique as compared to field research, as the main cost is involved in executive's time, telephone charges and directories. Thus, the study relied on already published studies, reports and statistics. This secondary data was easily accessed through the online journals and library.

### **4.0 FINDINGS**

This study presented both a contextual and methodological gap. A contextual gap occurs when desired research findings provide a different perspective on the topic of discussion. For instance, Sigala (2020) analyzed the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality education and to propose strategies for future resilience. Sigala conducted a content analysis of academic articles, industry reports, and expert opinions to identify the key challenges and opportunities for tourism and hospitality education. The study identified several challenges, including the rapid shift to online learning, the need for new curricula focusing on crisis management and digital skills, and the financial strain on educational institutions. However, it also highlighted opportunities for innovation in teaching methods and curriculum development. The study recommended integrating crisis management and digital transformation into tourism and hospitality curricula. It also suggested enhancing collaboration between academia and industry to ensure that educational programs remain relevant and responsive to industry needs. On the other hand, the current study focused on exploring the post pandemic trends in the hospitality trends.

Secondly, a methodological gap also presents itself, for example, Sigala (2020) conducted a content analysis of academic articles, industry reports, and expert opinions to identify the key challenges and opportunities for tourism and hospitality education; in analyzing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism and hospitality education and to propose strategies for future resilience. Whereas, the current study adopted a desktop research method.

### **5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.1 Conclusion**

The study on post-pandemic trends in the hospitality industry concludes that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought about profound and lasting changes that have reshaped the sector. One of the most significant conclusions is the critical role of technology in driving industry adaptation and recovery. The accelerated adoption of contactless technologies, such as mobile check-ins, digital room keys, and virtual concierge services, has not only enhanced safety and hygiene but also improved operational efficiency and guest satisfaction. These technological advancements are likely to remain a permanent feature of the industry, as they align with the growing consumer demand for seamless and safe travel experiences. The study highlights that hotels investing in these technologies have seen a quicker recovery and are better positioned to meet future challenges.

Another key conclusion is the shift towards domestic tourism and staycations, which have emerged as vital trends in the post-pandemic landscape. Travel restrictions and health concerns have led many consumers to explore local destinations, providing a much-needed boost to the hospitality industry. The study found that domestic tourism campaigns have significantly contributed to the recovery of occupancy rates and revenue in various regions, including the USA and UK. This trend is expected to

continue as travelers remain cautious about international travel. Consequently, the hospitality industry must focus on enhancing local tourism offerings and marketing strategies to capitalize on this sustained interest in domestic travel.

Sustainability has also emerged as a crucial factor influencing the hospitality industry's recovery and future growth. The pandemic has heightened awareness of environmental issues, and many travelers now prioritize eco-friendly and sustainable practices when choosing accommodations. The study concludes that hotels implementing green initiatives, such as energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programs, and sustainable sourcing, are not only meeting consumer demands but also achieving higher occupancy rates and guest satisfaction scores. This shift towards sustainability is not just a trend but a necessary evolution for the industry to align with global environmental goals and attract a new generation of eco-conscious travelers.

The study underscores the importance of flexibility in booking and cancellation policies as a decisive factor in restoring traveler confidence. The uncertainty caused by the pandemic has made travelers more cautious, and flexible policies have become a critical consideration in their decision-making process. Hotels that have adapted by offering more lenient and flexible options have seen higher booking rates and increased customer trust. This trend emphasizes the need for the hospitality industry to remain adaptable and responsive to changing consumer preferences. The study recommends that hoteliers continue to prioritize flexibility and maintain transparent communication with their guests to foster long-term loyalty and resilience in the face of future disruptions.

## 5.2 Recommendations

The study on post-pandemic trends in the hospitality industry made several recommendations that contribute to theoretical advancements. Firstly, it emphasized the need for further research on the long-term impacts of technological innovations adopted during the pandemic. Theories related to technology adoption and diffusion, such as the Diffusion of Innovations Theory by Rogers (2003), need to be expanded to incorporate the unique circumstances of a global health crisis and its aftermath. The study suggested that future research should focus on understanding how these technologies impact customer satisfaction and operational efficiency over time, thus contributing to a deeper theoretical understanding of technology integration in crisis contexts.

In terms of practical implications, the study highlighted the importance of sustained investment in digital infrastructure and contactless technologies. Hotels and other hospitality businesses are recommended to continue developing and refining their digital offerings to enhance the guest experience and operational efficiency. This includes mobile check-ins, digital room keys, and virtual concierge services. The study also advised that these businesses should train their staff to proficiently use these technologies to ensure smooth implementation and to maximize the benefits. This focus on practical applications will help the industry remain competitive and responsive to changing consumer preferences in the post-pandemic era.

The study also provided significant policy recommendations aimed at fostering industry resilience and recovery. It suggested that governments should develop and implement supportive policies that encourage innovation and technological adoption within the hospitality sector. This could include tax incentives for investments in digital infrastructure, grants for small and medium-sized enterprises to upgrade their technological capabilities, and public-private partnerships to drive sector-wide innovation. Additionally, policies should be crafted to ensure that health and safety standards remain a priority, thereby sustaining the trust and confidence of travelers.

Another crucial recommendation for policy development involves the promotion of domestic tourism. The study found that domestic tourism played a vital role in the industry's recovery, and it recommended that governments continue to support and market local tourism initiatives. This could

involve investing in infrastructure improvements in local tourist destinations, developing marketing campaigns that highlight the unique attractions of domestic locations, and providing incentives for travelers to explore their own countries. By promoting domestic tourism, governments can help stabilize the hospitality industry and reduce dependency on international travel, which may be volatile.

In terms of sustainability, the study recommended that both industry practitioners and policymakers prioritize environmental sustainability to meet the growing demand from eco-conscious travelers. Hotels and resorts should implement green practices such as energy-efficient systems, waste reduction programs, and sustainable sourcing of food and materials. Additionally, policies should be developed to support these initiatives, including subsidies for green technology, regulations to enforce environmental standards, and programs to educate both businesses and consumers about the benefits of sustainable practices. By aligning industry practices with global environmental goals, the hospitality sector can attract a new generation of travelers and contribute positively to environmental conservation.

Finally, the study underscored the importance of flexibility in booking and cancellation policies as a key factor in restoring traveler confidence. It recommended that hospitality businesses maintain flexible policies to accommodate the ongoing uncertainties related to travel. This includes offering refundable bookings, allowing changes without penalties, and maintaining transparent communication with customers about policy changes. By adopting these practices, businesses can enhance customer trust and loyalty, ensuring a more resilient and adaptable hospitality industry. Policymakers can support these efforts by creating guidelines that encourage flexible business practices and protect consumer rights.

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