

# Chatbot Adoption in Hospitality and Tourism: A Systematic Literature Review with Implications for Technological Readiness in New Zealand

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## Abstract

Chatbots and conversational artificial intelligence are increasingly used in hospitality and tourism to support customer enquiries, booking assistance, travel planning, service communication, and post-service support. Existing research has identified several factors influencing chatbot adoption, but less attention has been given to the organisational and technological readiness conditions required to support chatbot implementation in practice. This gap is particularly relevant for New Zealand hospitality and tourism, where direct chatbot-specific evidence remains limited. This dissertation addresses the gap by systematically synthesising literature on chatbot adoption, technological readiness, and the alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions, with interpretive implications for the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector.

The study adopts a qualitative, interpretive secondary research approach using a systematic literature review. Following PRISMA 2020 guidance, 142 records were initially identified, 52 duplicates were removed, 90 records were screened, and 28 peer-reviewed studies were included in the final corpus. The selected studies were analysed using thematic synthesis. Coding was organised around three research questions: the factors influencing chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism, the technological readiness conditions that can be interpreted in relation to New Zealand hospitality and tourism, and the alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions.

The findings show that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism is shaped by functional, relational, and post-adoption factors. Functional drivers include perceived usefulness, ease of use, information quality, service quality, and task fit. Relational and social-cognitive drivers include trust, privacy risk, anthropomorphism, perceived competence, communication quality, disclosure, and perceived control. Post-adoption outcomes include confirmation, satisfaction, continuance intention, loyalty, rebooking intention, destination visit intention, and service recovery experience. The findings also show that technological readiness depends on organisational capability, technological knowledge, system integration, interoperability, governance, human support, disclosure management, recovery processes, and readiness for more advanced conversational systems.

The dissertation concludes that chatbot adoption and technological readiness should not be treated separately. Chatbot use is most sustainable when customer expectations of usefulness, trust, and service quality are supported by organisational capability, governance, human support, and recovery design. Because direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence remains limited, the New Zealand contribution is interpretive rather than empirical. The dissertation contributes by offering a structured adoption-readiness perspective for understanding chatbot implementation in hospitality and tourism, with practical implications for New Zealand.

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## **Attestation of Authorship**

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed:

Date: 2 June 2026

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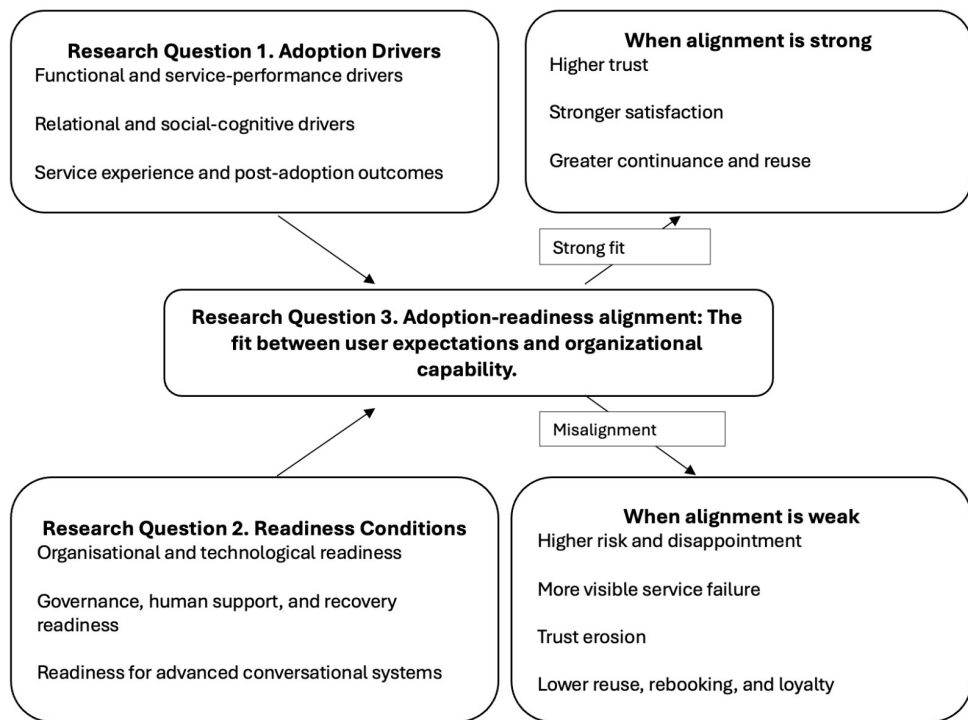
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| <b>AI Tool(s) Used:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | ChatGPT (Thinking)                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Prompts or queries entered into the AI tool (only the instructive portion of the prompt is required). Include all relevant variations.</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <p>Create a more polished version of the uploaded image while keeping all written content the same.</p> <pre> graph TD     A[Chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism] --- B[Practical service value]     A --- C[Trust, risk, and social quality]     A --- D[Disclosure and expectation management]     A --- E[Service quality and post-adoption outcomes]     B --- B_list[• usefulness<br/>• ease of use<br/>• task fit<br/>• efficiency]     C --- C_list[• trust<br/>• privacy concerns<br/>• anthropomorphism<br/>• social presence]     D --- D_list[• chatbot disclosure<br/>• transparency<br/>• authenticity<br/>• service framing]     E --- E_list[• confirmation<br/>• satisfaction<br/>• continuance<br/>• loyalty<br/>• recovery]           </pre> <p><b>Prompts Used:</b></p> |                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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**Student Name:** Jaideep Kumar Dalal

**Signature:**

**Date:** 2/06/2026

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Digital transformation is becoming increasingly important in hospitality and tourism service delivery. Among the technologies now reshaping customer interaction, chatbots and other conversational artificial intelligence (AI) systems have gained attention because they can support communication before, during, and after the service encounter. In hospitality and tourism contexts, chatbots are already being used for travel planning, booking support, online travel agency (OTA) enquiries, airline customer interaction, and hotel service communication (Melián-González et al., 2021). Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) show that AI-based chatbots are already being considered in hospitality and tourism service contexts. Li et al. (2021) show that chatbot use is established in online travel agency environments. Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2021) also demonstrate that chatbot interaction is relevant in airline service settings.

The development of conversational AI has widened what these systems can do. Earlier chatbots were mainly useful for simple and repetitive informational tasks. More recent systems are capable of supporting more natural and extended interaction. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that voice assistants and conversational technologies are increasingly connected to wider hotel service systems. Aransyah et al. (2026) further show that conversational AI is now discussed across booking, concierge or guest service, recommendation, and service-recovery touchpoints in hospitality and tourism. These developments suggest that chatbots are no longer treated only as narrow service tools. They are increasingly positioned as service interfaces within the broader customer journey.

The New Zealand context gives this issue additional significance. Mat Aripin and Brougham (2024) suggest that the post-COVID period increased acceptance of disruptive technologies in New Zealand organisations. Hemmington and Neill (2022) also show that technology-mediated innovation became more visible in New Zealand hospitality during the COVID period. Erickson (2023) further shows that digital intermediaries can reshape customer relationships in New Zealand service settings. This means that the success of chatbot service in New Zealand is unlikely to depend only on whether the technology is available. It is also likely to depend on whether firms are ready to implement and govern chatbot use in a way that fits the service realities of the sector.

## 1.2 Research Problem and Knowledge Gap

Existing literature has identified several factors influencing chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) show that perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, perceived

intelligence, and anthropomorphism significantly influence chatbot adoption intention. Li et al. (2021) show that service quality dimensions such as understandability and reliability influence confirmation, satisfaction, and continuance. Pham et al. (2024) show that warmth, competence, trust, and satisfaction are important in continued use of chatbot for travel services. Together, these studies provide a strong foundation for understanding why customers may adopt and continue using chatbot service.

However, important gaps remain. Although the literature on chatbot use in hospitality and tourism is expanding, it does not always provide one integrated account of how chatbots fit into service delivery, customer experience, and organisational practice. Alhashmi et al. (2025) show that chatbot research in tourism and hospitality has grown across themes such as customer interaction, operational efficiency, and user experience. Aransyah et al. (2026) similarly show that conversational AI research in hospitality and tourism now spans multiple touchpoints. Even so, the evidence is still dispersed, which makes it difficult to understand chatbot use as a broader industry issue rather than as a collection of isolated findings.

The literature also gives less sustained attention to the organisational and technological conditions needed to support chatbot implementation in practice. Ho et al. (2022) show that technological knowledge and perceived cost shape intention to adopt AI-powered online service in tourism and hospitality companies. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that interoperability and integration are important for conversational technologies in hotel environments. Gnewuch et al. (2024) further show that hybrid service design has consequences for customer communication and employee workload. These findings suggest that chatbot adoption cannot be understood fully without considering readiness conditions such as implementation capability, governance, human support, and service recovery.

A further gap is that the relationship between adoption drivers and readiness conditions remains underdeveloped. Existing studies often explain why customers may adopt chatbots or why firms may implement them, but give less attention to how these two sides align within hospitality and tourism service systems. Xing et al. (2022) show that service recovery depends on perceived governance and failure type. Ozuem et al. (2024) show that frustration, aggression, and loyalty in chatbot-led service recovery are influenced by the availability of human and chatbot touchpoints. These findings suggest that sustainable chatbot use depends not only on customer acceptance, but also on whether organisations can support, govern, and recover the service effectively.

A separate gap concerns context. Direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence remains limited. This means the dissertation cannot rely on a strong local empirical base to explain readiness directly. Instead, it must identify adoption and readiness conditions from the wider literature and then interpret their relevance for New Zealand hospitality and tourism carefully.

The research problem addressed in this dissertation is therefore not only about why customers may adopt chatbots. It is also about what organisational and technological conditions are needed to support chatbot use in practice, how adoption drivers and readiness conditions align within hospitality and tourism, and how those readiness conditions can be interpreted in relation to New Zealand hospitality and tourism.

### **1.3 Aim, Research Objectives, and Research Questions**

The aim of this dissertation is to systematically synthesise peer-reviewed evidence on chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism and to interpret how the technological readiness conditions identified in the literature relate to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector.

To achieve this aim, the study has three objectives:

1. to identify the main factors influencing chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism;
2. to identify the technological readiness conditions that enable or constrain chatbot implementation in hospitality and tourism settings and interpret their relevance to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector;
3. to examine how adoption factors and readiness conditions align within hospitality and tourism contexts.

Based on these objectives, the dissertation is guided by the following Research Questions:

- RQ1. What factors influence the adoption of chatbots in hospitality and tourism?
- RQ2. How can technological readiness conditions for chatbot adoption identified in the literature be interpreted in relation to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector?
- RQ3. How do the factors influencing chatbot adoption align with technological readiness conditions in hospitality and tourism?

### **1.4 Significance of the Study**

The significance of this study lies in synthesis, clarification, and contextual interpretation. No primary data are collected, so the contribution is not presented as major empirical evidence. Instead, the study brings together existing literature on chatbot adoption, technological readiness, and service outcomes in hospitality and tourism.

The study clarifies the main factors influencing chatbot adoption. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) show that usefulness, ease of use, trust, perceived intelligence, and anthropomorphism influence chatbot adoption intention. Li et al. (2021) show that service quality affects satisfaction and continuance intention. These findings help explain why chatbot adoption depends on both functional value and service experience.

The study connects chatbot adoption with technological readiness. Ho et al. (2022) show that technological knowledge and perceived cost influence organisational adoption of AI-powered online service. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that integration and interoperability are important for conversational technologies in hospitality. These findings position readiness as necessary for sustainable chatbot use.

The study strengthens the New Zealand focus. Direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence remains limited, so the study interprets international findings in relation to New Zealand hospitality and tourism. This gives the New Zealand context clearer relevance without overstating the evidence.

The study also has practical value. It helps hospitality and tourism organisations consider where chatbots may be useful, what risks may weaken adoption, and what readiness conditions should be addressed before implementation is expanded.

## **1.5 Dissertation Structure**

This dissertation is organised into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the research background, defines the research problem and knowledge gap, presents the aim, objectives, and Research Questions, and explains the significance of the study. Chapter 2 reviews the literature on chatbots in hospitality and tourism, including their evolution, service applications, adoption patterns, theoretical foundations, the New Zealand hospitality and tourism context, and the technological readiness conditions relevant to chatbot implementation. Chapter 3 explains the methodological approach adopted in the dissertation, including the interpretivist paradigm, the systematic literature review design, the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol, the search strategy, the inclusion and exclusion criteria, the data extraction and coding process, and the assessment of study credibility. Chapter 4 presents the findings of the thematic synthesis and reports the six themes generated from the final study set, with Themes 1 to 3 addressing chatbot adoption, Themes 4 and 5 addressing technological readiness, and Theme 6 addressing the alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions. Chapter 5 discusses these findings in relation to the Research Questions, interprets their implications for New Zealand hospitality and

tourism, outlines the study's theoretical and practical contributions, considers limitations and future research, and concludes the dissertation.

## **1.6 List of Abbreviations**

**AI:** artificial intelligence

**COVID-19:** Coronavirus Disease 2019

**GDP:** Gross Domestic Product

**IT:** Information Technology

**LLM:** Large Language Model

**OTA:** Online Travel Agency

**PRISMA:** Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses

**SLR:** Systematic Literature Review

**RQ:** Research Question

**UTAUT:** Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology

## 2 Literature Review

This chapter reviews literature relevant to chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism and establishes the conceptual foundation for the dissertation. It begins by examining chatbots in hospitality and tourism, including their evolution, service applications, and adoption patterns. It then outlines the key theoretical approaches used to explain adoption, introduces the New Zealand hospitality and tourism context, and concludes by discussing technological readiness for chatbot adoption and its implications for New Zealand. In doing so, the chapter supports the later analysis by linking chatbot adoption, technological readiness interpreted in relation to New Zealand, and the broader alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions.

### 2.1 Chatbots in Hospitality and Tourism

Chatbots in hospitality and tourism have evolved from simple rule-based systems into more advanced conversational service interfaces. Earlier chatbot systems were mainly used to answer routine questions, direct customers to information, or support repetitive service tasks. As natural language processing, machine learning, and generative artificial intelligence have improved, chatbots have become more capable of sustaining dialogue, interpreting customer requests, and responding in more flexible ways (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In hospitality and tourism, this has expanded their use from basic information support to booking assistance, itinerary guidance, online travel agency communication, airline customer service, hotel guest support, and post-service interaction.

This development is visible across several hospitality and tourism settings. Li et al. (2021) show that chatbot services are already established in online travel agency environments, where they support travel-related information search and service interaction. Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2021) show that airline chatbot interaction can shape customer experience, satisfaction, and attitudes toward the chatbot. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) extend this operational view by showing that voice assistants and related conversational technologies in hotels are increasingly connected to wider service processes. These studies show that chatbots are no longer only efficiency tools; they are becoming service interfaces that mediate communication between firms and customers across the travel journey.

Generative artificial intelligence has accelerated this shift. Gursoy et al. (2023) describe ChatGPT as a disruptive innovation likely to reshape how tourists search for information, make decisions, and interact with hospitality and tourism businesses. Carvalho and Ivanov (2024) argue that large language models can affect both front-of-house customer service and back-of-house productivity. Sigala et al. (2024) similarly show that generative AI is now relevant to tourism marketing, hospitality

services, travel services, destination management, and tourism analytics. However, greater conversational fluency does not automatically guarantee better service. These systems also create new risks around reliability, trust, customer expectations, staff roles, and governance.

The literature therefore shows that chatbot adoption cannot be explained only by technological availability. Customers adopt, resist, or continue using chatbots according to how they evaluate the service encounter. Four adoption patterns are especially visible: practical service value; trust, risk, and social quality; disclosure and expectation management; and service quality with post-adoption outcomes.

### **2.1.1 Practical Service Value**

Practical service value is the most basic condition of adoption. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) show that perceived usefulness and ease of use significantly influence chatbot adoption intention in hospitality and tourism. Melián-González et al. (2021) similarly show that expected performance, habit, hedonic motivation, social influence, and human-like behaviour shape intention to use chatbots in travel and tourism. These studies suggest that customers first judge whether the chatbot is helpful, efficient, and worth using. However, usefulness is task-dependent. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit improves confirmation and perceived usefulness in travel-planning chatbot use, while Lei et al. (2021), using an online survey comparing chatbot and human instant-messaging service, found that media richness and social presence improved trust and reuse intention. However, customers evaluated human service more positively in more complex interactions, indicating that the suitability of chatbot service depends partly on the complexity and relational demands of the encounter.

Chi et al. (2022), using a survey across tourism service scenarios, found that tourists were more willing to accept artificial intelligence devices in utilitarian tourism services than in more hedonic hospitality services. Their findings also showed that acceptance was shaped by social influence, anthropomorphism, expectancy, and emotions toward artificial intelligence service delivery. This indicates that acceptance depends not only on technological capability but also on the type and experiential value of the service being delivered.

Shin et al. (2025) extend this issue to ChatGPT-supported trip planning. Across five experimental studies, they examined how travellers responded when ChatGPT narrowed multiple travel options. The studies found negative effects when ChatGPT reduced options from an initially large recommendation set and highlighted the importance of a hybrid decision-making process involving both the traveller and ChatGPT. This suggests that greater artificial intelligence involvement does not

necessarily increase perceived service value when it reduces travellers' sense of involvement or control over the decision.

Taken together, this evidence shows that practical service value is conditional rather than universal. Chatbots may be particularly suitable for structured, routine, and information-rich tasks, while more complex, experiential, or personally significant decisions may require greater customer control or human involvement.

### **2.1.2 Trust, Risk, and Social Quality**

Trust, risk, and social quality form a second adoption pattern. Song et al. (2022) show that communication quality and privacy risk influence adoption intention in artificial intelligence-mediated service encounters. Their evidence was generated through five scenario-based experiments, which also showed that the effects of communication quality and privacy risk varied according to users' need for human interaction. This is important in hospitality and tourism because chatbot interactions may involve booking details, travel preferences, payment-related information, or service complaints. Cai et al. (2022) show that emotional anthropomorphic message cues influence online travel agency chatbot adoption through trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment. Using a mixed-method design, they also found that simple social-presence cues alone were insufficient, suggesting that making a chatbot appear more human does not automatically strengthen adoption unless the interaction itself produces trust, intelligence, or enjoyment. De Cicco et al. (2020) similarly show that a social-oriented interaction style can increase social presence, trust, enjoyment, and positive attitudes toward the chatbot. Their survey experiment with Italian millennials found that social-oriented interaction increased perceived social presence, which subsequently improved enjoyment, trust, and attitudes, whereas avatar presence alone had no significant effect. These studies show that customers evaluate chatbots not only as technical tools, but also as communicative and social service agents.

However, human-like design can create risks. Scarpi (2024) shows that replacing the human component of a tourism customer relationship with a chatbot can reduce psychological ownership, weaken relationship commitment, and lower rebooking intention. The study used a tourism customer survey and found that reduced psychological ownership provided an important mechanism through which chatbot-managed relationships weakened commitment and rebooking intention. This finding is important because hospitality and tourism services often depend on emotional connection, relationship quality, and trust. The evidence therefore presents a more conditional view of human-like chatbot design. Anthropomorphism and social presence can support adoption when they strengthen

trust and interaction quality, but they can also create expectations or replace valued human relationships in ways that weaken customer responses.

### **2.1.3 Disclosure and Expectation Management**

Disclosure, transparency, and expectation management form a third pattern. Meng et al. (2023) show that, after disclosure of a chatbot's nonhuman identity, a double-sided message acknowledging both strengths and limitations can improve willingness to communicate by increasing perceived authenticity. Their evidence came from a hotel field experiment and online vignette experiments, showing that the framing accompanying disclosure can influence how customers respond to knowledge that they are interacting with artificial intelligence. Mozafari et al. (2022) examined chatbot disclosure through two experiments across different service frontline settings. They found that disclosure reduced trust and retention in highly critical service situations. However, when the chatbot failed to resolve the service issue, disclosure could produce more positive reactions. This indicates that disclosure can alter how customers interpret chatbot performance and that its effect depends on both service criticality and service outcome. Van der Goot et al. (2024) provide a different result through a mixed-method study combining interviews and an experiment. They found that disclosure versus non-disclosure had limited direct effects by itself, while users responded more strongly to the chatbot's willingness to help and friendly tone. This suggests that service behaviour may sometimes be more influential than disclosure itself.

The contrasting findings therefore show why disclosure should not be treated as automatically beneficial or harmful. In highly critical settings it may undermine trust, whereas following service failure it may help customers interpret chatbot limitations. Where chatbot service is helpful and friendly, disclosure itself may play a smaller role. Transparency therefore needs to be considered together with service context, communication framing, and chatbot performance.

### **2.1.4 Service Quality and Post-Adoption Outcomes**

Service quality and post-adoption outcomes complete the adoption picture. Li et al. (2021) show that understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity improve confirmation, which then strengthens satisfaction and continuance intention in online travel agency chatbot use. Their survey of Chinese online travel agency users therefore shows how customers move from evaluating actual chatbot performance to confirmation, satisfaction, and continued use. Ashfaq et al. (2020) similarly show that information quality and service quality improve satisfaction, while perceived usefulness,

ease of use, and enjoyment support continuance intention. Their survey of actual chatbot users reinforces the distinction between initial acceptance and post-adoption evaluation, because continued use depends on the quality of the experience after customers have interacted with the system. Pham et al. (2024) show that in ChatGPT-supported travel services, warmth, communication speed, competence, trust, and satisfaction shape continued use. Using a survey of tourists who used ChatGPT for travel services, they found that warmth, communication speed, and competence strengthened trust and attitude, which subsequently supported satisfaction and continuance intention, while technology anxiety weakened continued use. Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) also show that information quality, usefulness, and enjoyment support continuance, which then predicts destination visit intention. Their survey of destination chatbot users found that information quality improved usefulness, satisfaction, and enjoyment, while usefulness and enjoyment increased continuance intention and continuance subsequently predicted destination visit intention. These studies indicate that chatbot adoption is not only about first use; it depends on whether the service experience remains useful, reliable, and satisfying over time.

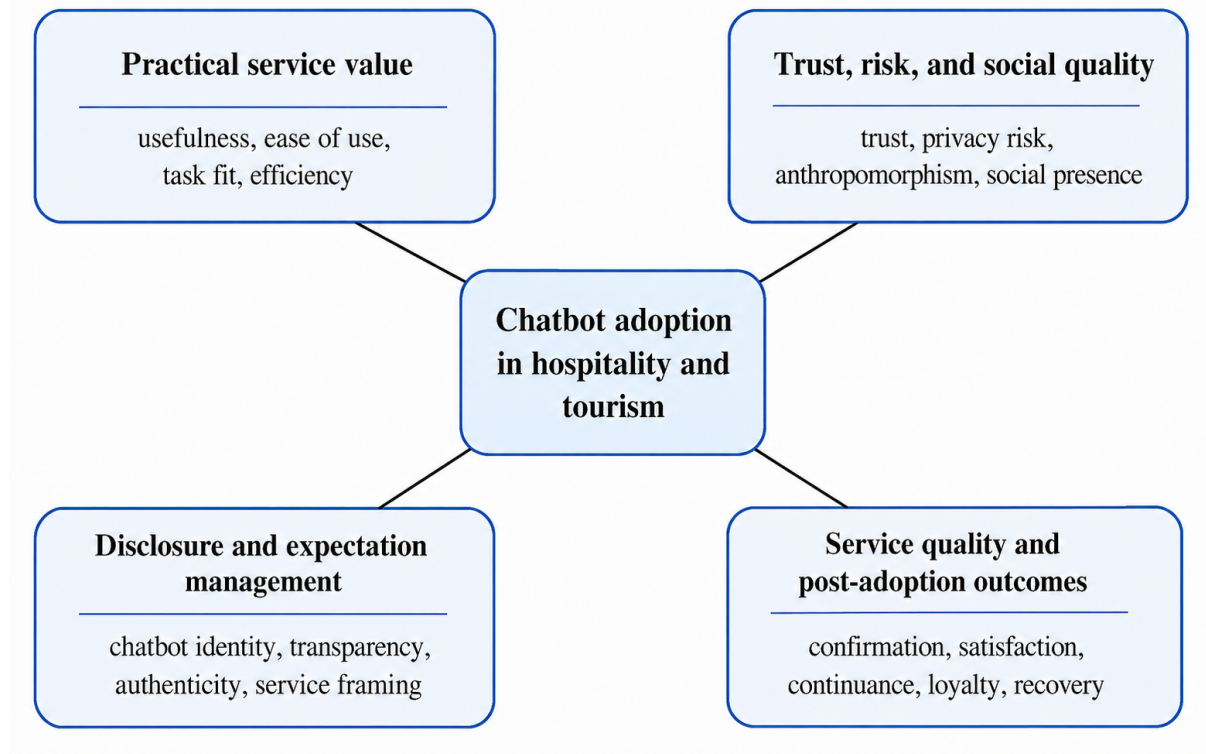
More recent tourism studies also show that chatbot interaction can shape broader travel outcomes. Tosyali et al. (2023) show that informative tourist-chatbot interaction improves destination image and visit intention. Majid et al. (2025) show that chatbots can also be conceptualised as tools for extending tourists' sustainable travel practices. These studies extend the adoption discussion beyond immediate chatbot use by showing that chatbot interaction may influence destination perception, travel intention, and sustainability-related behaviour.

Negative post-adoption outcomes also matter. Ozuem et al. (2024) show that chatbot-led service recovery can shape frustration, aggression, loyalty, and future chatbot use. This means that chatbot adoption is sustained not only by successful routine interactions, but also by how well organisations manage service breakdowns. Poor recovery, weak escalation, or inaccurate responses can damage trust and reduce continued use.

Taken together, these studies show that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism depends on four interrelated dimensions, as shown in Figure 1. Practical service value explains whether customers see the chatbot as useful and task-appropriate. Trust, risk, and social quality explain whether the interaction feels credible, safe, and socially acceptable. Disclosure and expectation management explain how customers respond to chatbot identity, transparency, and service framing. Service quality and post-adoption outcomes explain whether chatbot use continues after the first interaction and whether it supports satisfaction, loyalty, destination intention, or recovery.

**Figure 1**

*Four Adoption Patterns in Chatbot Adoption Literature in Hospitality and Tourism*



## 2.2 Theoretical Approaches to Chatbot Adoption

The literature on chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism draws on several theoretical approaches rather than a single model. This is because chatbot use sits at the intersection of technology acceptance, service encounter evaluation, and post-adoption experience.

The Technology Acceptance Model remains relevant because perceived usefulness and ease of use continue to shape chatbot adoption. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) show this clearly in hospitality and tourism. The broader Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) tradition widens that explanation by including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and social influence. Melián-González et al. (2021) use this logic to explain travel and tourism chatbot intention, while Chen et al. (2025) extend it by combining UTAUT with affordance theory and self-determination theory in travel AI chatbot adoption. These studies show that hospitality and tourism adoption is shaped by both instrumental beliefs and the quality of the interaction.

Expectation-confirmation and task-technology fit perspectives are especially useful for post-adoption analysis. Li et al. (2021) show that confirmation influences satisfaction and continuance in online travel agency chatbot use. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit and confirmation

are central to continued use in travel-planning settings. These approaches matter because they shift attention from initial acceptance to the durability of chatbot use over time.

More recent generative AI studies show the value of broader interaction-based perspectives. Pham et al. (2024) use the stimulus-organism-response model to explain how warmth, communication speed, and competence shape trust, satisfaction, and continuance in ChatGPT travel-service use. Xu et al. (2024) show that parasocial interaction also helps explain tourist acceptance of ChatGPT. These perspectives are useful because hospitality and tourism interactions are not judged only by efficiency. They are also judged by emotion, social quality, and trust.

Taken together, these approaches show that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism depends on usefulness, effort, trust, confirmation, social response, and experience. At the same time, they do not fully explain what organisations must have in place to support chatbot use in practice. That is where technological readiness becomes important. If adoption theories explain why users may accept or continue using chatbots, readiness explains whether organisations can support that use in a reliable and sustainable way. This distinction also provides the basis for examining the broader alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions in hospitality and tourism.

## **2.3 New Zealand Hospitality and Tourism Context**

The New Zealand context is central to this dissertation because the study does not only review chatbot adoption in general. It also interprets technological readiness conditions in relation to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector. This context is important because hospitality and tourism remain economically and socially significant in Aotearoa New Zealand, while the sector is also experiencing digital change, workforce pressure, and changing customer expectations.

Williamson et al. (2025) show that tourism supports 303,420 jobs, representing 10.7% of workers nationwide. The same report states that hospitality directly employs 193,000 people and supports 221,440 jobs when supplier-linked employment is included. It also reports that tourism's combined direct and indirect contribution to Gross Domestic Product reached \$28.7 billion, while total tourism expenditure for the year ending March 2024 was \$44.4 billion. These figures indicate that any shift toward AI-enabled service, including chatbots and other conversational tools, has implications for a large and economically important service sector rather than for a marginal niche.

Williamson et al. (2025) show that AI use in hospitality and tourism is emerging but still uneven, with around one-third of employees reporting AI use at work. They also report that only 29% of respondents perceived managerial support through staff resources, funding, or operational materials

for AI-related initiatives, while 70% still wanted more training and development. These findings are important because they suggest that chatbot readiness in New Zealand cannot be assumed simply from sector interest in technology. Chatbot and generative AI adoption are likely to depend on whether firms can provide frontline staff with training, managerial support, and the organisational conditions needed to use AI confidently and consistently in service delivery.

However, this New Zealand evidence concerns broader artificial intelligence use, workforce capability, and organisational support rather than direct empirical evidence of chatbot implementation. Its relevance to chatbot readiness is therefore interpretive rather than evidence that New Zealand hospitality and tourism organisations currently possess or lack specific chatbot capabilities.

Gursoy et al. (2023) describe ChatGPT as a disruptive innovation likely to reshape how tourists search for information, make decisions, and interact with hospitality and tourism businesses. Carvalho and Ivanov (2024) similarly argue that ChatGPT and large language models can streamline front-of-house customer service and improve back-of-house efficiency, while also introducing risks related to reliability, overreliance, and workforce implications. Sigala et al. (2024) further show that generative AI now has implications across hospitality services, travel services, destination management, and tourism analytics. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) add that conversational technologies in hospitality depend on interoperability and integration with wider service systems. Read together, these international studies identify organisational and technological conditions relevant to chatbot implementation, which can be interpreted alongside the New Zealand evidence discussed above.

Broader New Zealand research reinforces this interpretation. Mat Aripin and Brougham (2024) suggest that the post-COVID period increased acceptance of disruptive technologies and heightened awareness of technology dependency in New Zealand organisations. Hemmington and Neill (2022) show that technology-mediated innovation in hospitality became tied to adaptation, continuity, and business responsiveness. Erickson (2023) also found that digital platforms in Auckland restaurant settings helped firms generate trade while shifting customer loyalty toward the platform rather than the business itself. Liu and Chong (2023) similarly show that digital communication channels shape information search and purchase intention in New Zealand tourism. Read together, these studies identify conditions relevant to chatbot and conversational artificial intelligence implementation, while the New Zealand evidence provides contextual information about the broader organisational environment in which such implementation would occur.

Taken together, the literature points to a New Zealand context characterised by economic importance, uneven digital capability, continuing workforce pressure, and strong reliance on customer relationships. This makes technological readiness especially important. The wider literature suggests that chatbot adoption in New Zealand hospitality and tourism is likely to depend not only on

technology availability, but also on whether organisations can integrate chatbot use into service delivery in ways that support trust, workforce capability, operational resilience, and relationship quality. This remains a contextual interpretation rather than a direct measurement of chatbot readiness in New Zealand.

## **2.4 Technological Readiness for Chatbot Adoption in Hospitality and Tourism: Implications for New Zealand**

Technological readiness is the point at which customer-facing adoption becomes an organisational issue. In hospitality and tourism, readiness is not captured by the presence of chatbot software alone. It includes system integration, organisational capability, governance, human support, recovery design, and the ability to manage stronger expectations created by more advanced conversational systems.

Organisational and technological capability is a core readiness condition. Ho et al. (2022) show that technological knowledge and perceived cost influence organisational intention to adopt AI-powered online service in tourism and hospitality. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that conversational technologies in hospitality depend on interoperability and integration with wider hotel systems and processes. These findings suggest that readiness begins with whether organisations can support chatbot service with reliable systems, current service information, and workable operational processes.

Service reliability and information quality also shape readiness. Li et al. (2021) show that reliability, understandability, assurance, and interactivity shape confirmation and continuance in online travel agency chatbot use. Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) show that information quality affects usefulness, satisfaction, enjoyment, and destination-related intention. These findings imply that readiness depends partly on whether organisations can maintain accurate, current, and consistent information behind the chatbot interface.

Governance and disclosure management form another readiness requirement. Mozafari et al. (2022) show that the effects of chatbot disclosure depend on service criticality and service outcome. Van der Goot et al. (2024) show that users' responses also depend on tone and willingness to help. Gnewuch et al. (2024) show that disclosure of human involvement in hybrid service agents changes customer communication style and increases employee workload. These findings indicate that readiness includes how organisations decide to communicate chatbot identity, when to disclose human support, and how to manage the service consequences of those choices.

Service recovery and relationship protection are also central to readiness. Xing et al. (2022) show that different chatbot service failures require different recovery strategies and that perceived governance influences willingness to forgive. Ozuem et al. (2024) show that loyalty and future use are shaped by frustration, aggression, and the availability of both chatbot and human touchpoints in service recovery. Husnain et al. (2025) further show that negative chatbot experiences can damage consumer-brand relationships through irritation, helplessness, and brand hate. Readiness therefore depends partly on whether organisations can repair the service relationship when chatbot interaction performs poorly.

Advanced conversational systems create additional readiness demands. Gursoy et al. (2023) show that ChatGPT may reshape customer search, decision-making, and service delivery in hospitality and tourism. Sigala et al. (2024) show that generative AI now affects tourism marketing, hospitality services, destination management, and analytics. Seyfi et al. (2025) add that tourist resistance to generative AI in travel planning is shaped by innovation resistance and personality traits. Together, these studies suggest that stronger apparent capability increases both opportunity and risk. As conversational systems become more powerful, the need for oversight, trust management, and careful deployment becomes stronger rather than weaker.

Interpreted in relation to New Zealand, these readiness conditions suggest a cautious rather than simplistic pathway. Williamson et al. (2025) show that AI uptake in hospitality and tourism is still modest and uneven, training demand remains strong, and organisational support for AI is limited. It also shows that retention, fair pay, career progression, inclusion, and wellbeing remain major workforce issues. These conditions matter because chatbot implementation in New Zealand will occur within workplaces already shaped by staffing pressures, uneven digital support, and variable managerial capability. Chatbot readiness in this setting is therefore likely to depend on staged implementation, reliable system support, workforce development, transparent governance, and clear human fallback rather than on rapid deployment alone.

Overall, the literature suggests that technological readiness in hospitality and tourism should be understood as a layered capability involving system integration, information quality, governance, human support, recovery design, and the management of more advanced conversational systems. Interpreted in relation to New Zealand, these conditions highlight the importance of practical implementation, workforce support, and relationship protection. These observations address the readiness dimension of the dissertation, while the broader alignment between adoption drivers and readiness conditions is examined later at the general hospitality and tourism level.

### 3 Methodology

This chapter explains the methodological approach used to address the dissertation's three Research Questions concerning: first, the factors influencing chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism; second, how technological readiness for chatbot adoption can be interpreted in relation to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism sector; and third, how adoption factors and readiness conditions align. The study is based on secondary research rather than primary data collection. It uses a systematic literature review (SLR) to identify and select relevant peer-reviewed studies and applies thematic synthesis to interpret the final study set. This approach is suitable because research on chatbots in hospitality and tourism is dispersed across multiple disciplines, publication outlets, and methodological traditions (Snyder, 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). The chapter is organised into eight sections covering the research paradigm, research method, PRISMA protocol, search strategy and databases, inclusion and exclusion criteria, data extraction and coding, quality appraisal and summary.

#### 3.1 Research Paradigm

This dissertation is positioned within an interpretivist research paradigm. Interpretivism assumes that knowledge is understood through meanings, context, and interpretation rather than treated as a single objective reality waiting to be measured directly (Walsham, 1995). This paradigm is appropriate because the present study is concerned with how chatbot adoption and technological readiness are conceptualised across different hospitality, tourism, and related service settings. The aim is not to calculate a universal causal effect or statistically aggregate outcomes, but to interpret recurring patterns, tensions, and conditions in the literature.

Interpretivism is commonly used in information systems and service research where constructs such as trust, usefulness, risk, service quality, and organisational capability are context dependent and may be framed differently across studies (Klein & Myers, 1999). This is especially relevant here because the studies included in the review come from different countries, sectors, and methodological traditions. They do not all define adoption, readiness, or service quality in the same way. An interpretivist stance allows these differences to be treated as meaningful rather than as inconsistencies that must be removed.

The paradigm also fits the New Zealand focus of the dissertation. The study does not claim to measure New Zealand hospitality and tourism readiness directly through primary fieldwork. Instead, it interprets how readiness conditions identified in the wider literature can be applied cautiously to the New Zealand context. This form of contextual transfer is consistent with interpretivist reasoning

because it emphasises explanation and interpretation rather than direct statistical generalisation (Klein & Myers, 1999; Walsham, 1995). Boell and Cecez-Kecmanovic (2015) similarly argue that systematic reviewing in information systems should not be treated as a purely mechanical process, because it also requires judgement about relevance, meaning, and interpretation. For these reasons, an interpretivist paradigm provides an appropriate foundation for this dissertation.

### **3.2 Research Method**

This study adopted a qualitative, interpretive research approach. Within this approach, the research method is a systematic literature review and the analytical technique is thematic synthesis. A qualitative interpretive approach was selected because the dissertation seeks to understand how chatbot adoption and technological readiness are discussed in the literature, and how those discussions can be interpreted in relation to the New Zealand hospitality and tourism context. The study does not aim to test hypotheses using primary numerical data, nor to conduct statistical pooling across studies. Instead, it examines how different studies frame adoption drivers, service conditions, organisational capabilities, and readiness concerns. This makes a qualitative interpretive approach more appropriate than a quantitative synthesis design (Snyder, 2019; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

The systematic literature review was used because it provides explicit and transparent procedures for searching, screening, selecting, and documenting studies (Siddaway et al., 2019; Tranfield et al., 2003). In this dissertation, the SLR helped reduce ad hoc study selection and ensured that inclusion decisions were aligned with the Research Questions. This was particularly important because chatbot research spans hospitality management, tourism studies, information systems, and service research, meaning that relevant studies are dispersed rather than located within a single disciplinary stream (Snyder, 2019).

After study selection, the evidence was analysed using thematic synthesis rather than meta-analysis. Meta-analysis was not appropriate because the included studies were methodologically heterogeneous and did not share a common design, population, or outcome structure. Thematic synthesis, by contrast, is suited to integrating diverse empirical and conceptual evidence through coding, grouping, and theme development (Thomas & Harden, 2008). In this study, thematic synthesis made it possible to move from study-level findings to broader analytical themes linked to the three Research Questions. Trustworthiness in this process was supported by transparent coding procedures and explicit links between extracted evidence and developed themes (Nowell et al., 2017).

### 3.3 PRISMA Protocol

The review was guided and reported using the PRISMA 2020 framework. PRISMA 2020 provides a structured approach for documenting how studies move through the stages of identification, screening, eligibility assessment, and final inclusion (Page et al., 2021). In this dissertation, PRISMA was used both as a reporting framework and as a procedural guide to strengthen transparency in the review process.

Using PRISMA was important for several reasons. First, it required explicit reporting of the databases searched, the number of records identified, the number of duplicates removed, and the number of studies excluded at each stage. This created an auditable trail showing how the final study set was formed (Page et al., 2021). Second, it supported consistency in title and abstract screening and in full text assessment by requiring clear documentation of exclusion decisions. Third, it made the review easier for readers to follow by presenting the study selection process in a clear and recognised format.

In this dissertation, PRISMA was used in a way consistent with the purpose of the study. The review does not conduct a meta-analysis and does not statistically pool findings. Instead, PRISMA was used to structure and report the review pathway within a qualitative interpretive synthesis (Siddaway et al., 2019). The PRISMA flow diagram therefore summarises the study selection process and provides a transparent record of how the final corpus was established.

### 3.4 Search Strategy and Databases

The search strategy was designed to maximise coverage while maintaining alignment with the Research Questions, consistent with best practice guidance on systematic searching (Siddaway et al., 2019). Multiple search sources were used because relevant hospitality and tourism technology research is distributed across management, tourism, information systems, and related service literature. Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar were used to provide multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary coverage.

The search strategy was structured around three concept blocks representing the technology, the hospitality and tourism context, and the adoption or readiness focus. The technology block included chatbot, conversational agent, virtual assistant, artificial intelligence assistant, generative artificial intelligence, large language model, and ChatGPT. The domain block included hospitality, tourism, hotel, restaurant, and travel. The explanatory block included adoption-related concepts such as adoption, acceptance, intention to use, continuance, and trust, together with readiness-related concepts such as technological readiness, digital readiness, organisational readiness, information technology

capability, implementation capability, and data governance. These concept blocks were used to maintain consistency between the search strategy and the Research Questions.

The searches were conducted during January 2026. The exact core Boolean search string used in Scopus and Web of Science was: ("chatbot" OR "conversational agent" OR "virtual assistant" OR "AI assistant" OR "generative AI" OR "large language model" OR "ChatGPT") AND ("hospitality" OR "tourism" OR "hotel" OR "restaurant" OR "travel") AND ("adoption" OR "acceptance" OR "intention to use" OR "continuance" OR "trust" OR "technological readiness" OR "digital readiness" OR "organisational readiness" OR "IT capability" OR "implementation capability" OR "data governance")

In Scopus, the search was applied to the title, abstract, and keyword fields, while in Web of Science it was applied using the Topic Search field. Because Google Scholar does not support the same field-specific search syntax, shorter combinations based on the same technology, domain, and explanatory concepts were used. The exact Google Scholar search strings were: "chatbot" hospitality tourism adoption; "chatbot" hospitality tourism trust; "chatbot" tourism "intention to use"; "chatbot" tourism continuance; "conversational agent" hospitality tourism; "virtual assistant" hospitality tourism; "ChatGPT" tourism adoption; "generative AI" hospitality tourism; "chatbot" hospitality "technological readiness"; and "AI assistant" tourism "organisational readiness".

Records identified through the three search sources were consolidated into a single combined record set and tracked at the aggregate level rather than by individual database. Consequently, database-specific retrieval counts are not available separately.

To support the New Zealand focus of Research Question 2, geographic identifiers such as New Zealand and Aotearoa were incorporated as keywords and/or filters where database tools allowed (Page et al., 2021). Because country-specific evidence was expected to be limited, the search strategy was designed to retrieve both New Zealand-specific studies and internationally situated hospitality and tourism readiness studies that could provide transferable constructs. Backward and forward citation searching was also used to identify relevant studies that may have been missed because of terminology differences across research communities (Siddaway et al., 2019).

Across the search process, a total of 142 records were identified before duplicate removal. After removing 52 duplicate records, 90 records remained for title and abstract screening. Thirty-eight records were excluded during screening, leaving 52 full-text articles for eligibility assessment. Twenty-four articles were subsequently excluded, resulting in 28 studies being included in the final systematic literature review and thematic synthesis.

### 3.5 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

Pre-defined inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to ensure that study selection was consistent, transparent, and aligned with the Research Questions. Establishing criteria in advance reduces the risk of post-hoc selection decisions that can introduce bias into the review (Siddaway et al., 2019).

Studies were included when they were peer-reviewed publications that examined chatbots or conversational agents in hospitality and/or tourism contexts, or in comparable service contexts where the findings were relevant and transferable to hospitality and tourism. Studies had to contribute evidence relevant to chatbot adoption, technological readiness and implementation capability, or the alignment between adoption outcomes and readiness conditions. For example, Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) was included because it directly examined adoption intention for AI-based chatbots in hospitality and tourism, while Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) was included because it addressed interoperability and implementation requirements in hospitality service systems.

To clarify how transferability was determined, studies from comparable service contexts were considered eligible only when three conditions were met. First, the technology examined had to involve a conversational or artificial intelligence-mediated service interface that performed a function relevant to chatbot-based service interaction. Second, the study had to examine factors or outcomes directly relevant to the Research Questions, such as adoption, trust, disclosure, service quality, technological capability, governance, human support, service failure, or service recovery. Third, the findings had to be applicable to a hospitality or tourism service interaction without depending primarily on conditions unique to the original sector. Studies were therefore not included merely because they examined artificial intelligence or digital technology; there had to be a clear conceptual connection between the service mechanism examined and chatbot adoption or readiness in hospitality and tourism.

The same criteria were applied to studies involving related but conceptually different technologies, including voice assistants, artificial intelligence-powered online services, ChatGPT, and other conversational artificial intelligence systems. These technologies were not treated as identical to conventional chatbots. Instead, studies involving them were included only when the technology performed a comparable conversational or service-support function and when the specific findings contributed directly to adoption or technological readiness constructs relevant to the review. This allowed relevant evidence from emerging conversational technologies to be considered while maintaining the focus on chatbot adoption and implementation in hospitality and tourism.

Retail and broader service studies were assessed using the same transferability criteria. For example, Mozafari et al. (2022) and Xing et al. (2022) were retained because their findings concerning chatbot

disclosure, trust, service failure, and recovery addressed customer–chatbot service processes that were directly relevant to hospitality and tourism service encounters. Evidence from broader contexts was therefore used selectively rather than assumed to be automatically generalisable to hospitality and tourism.

A publication timeframe was applied to maintain relevance to contemporary chatbot capability and deployment conditions, particularly given the rapid development of AI-enabled and LLM-enabled systems (Dwivedi et al., 2023). The review prioritised studies published from 2020 onwards, while allowing earlier papers only when they were essential for theoretical foundations or methodological guidance, such as the Technology Acceptance Model, UTAUT, expectation-confirmation theory, or systematic review methodology (Siddaway et al., 2019).

Studies were excluded if they were not peer-reviewed, such as news articles, blogs, or vendor white papers. They were also excluded if they were purely technical and focused only on engineering, model architecture, or algorithm performance without discussing adoption, service implications, implementation, governance, or readiness in hospitality/tourism settings or a justified comparable service context (Boell & Cecez-Kecmanovic, 2015). Studies from broader service contexts were excluded when the technology or service mechanism was not sufficiently comparable, when the findings were strongly dependent on sector-specific circumstances, or when there was no clear connection to the Research Questions. For example, a technical paper evaluating chatbot model accuracy alone would be excluded, whereas a customer-service study examining chatbot disclosure, trust, or service recovery could be included when it met the transferability criteria described above.

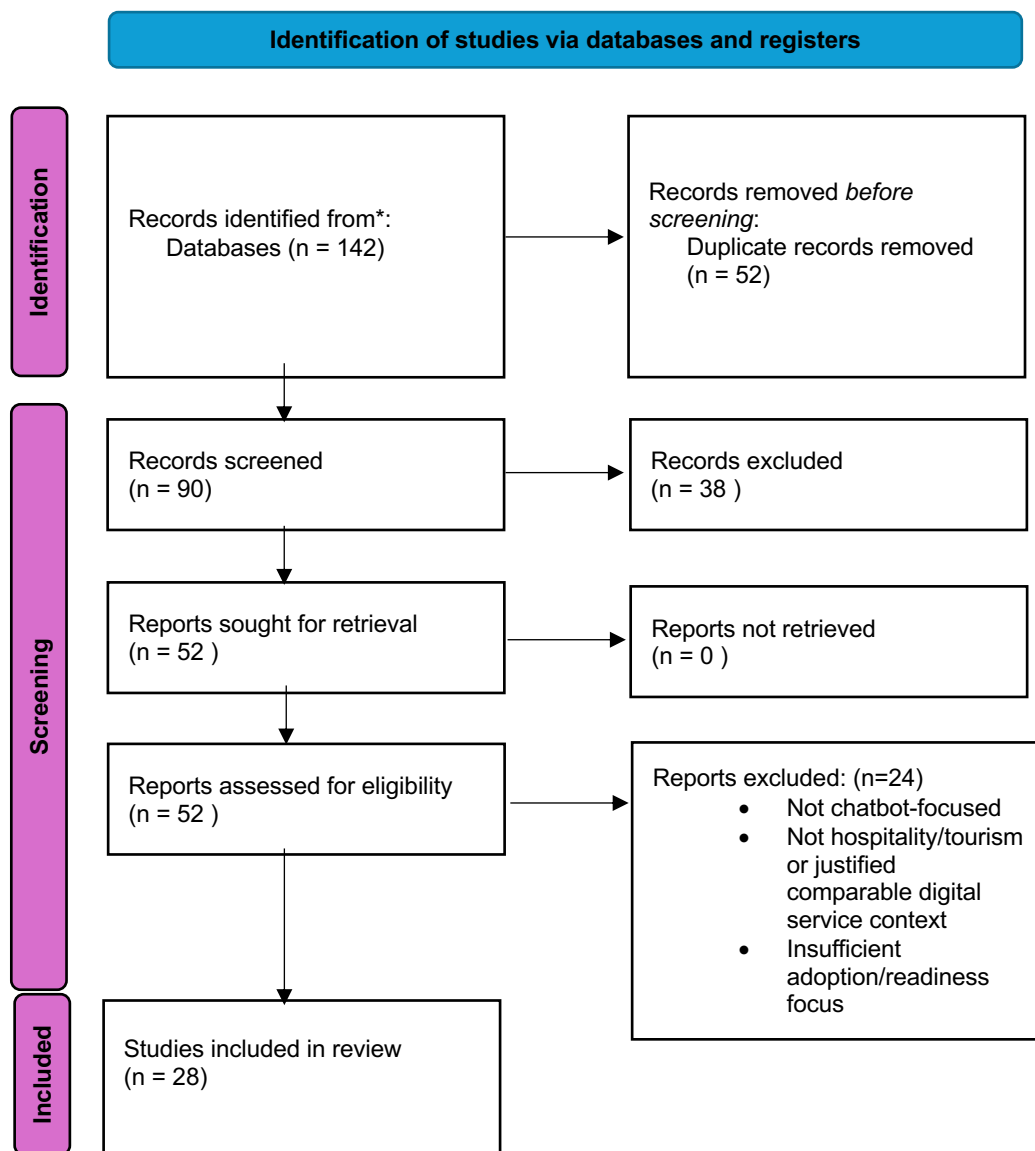
The study selection process followed the PRISMA 2020 framework. A total of 142 records were identified through database searching. After removing 52 duplicate records, 90 records remained for title and abstract screening. During this stage, 38 records were excluded due to lack of relevance to chatbots/conversational agents, non-service contexts, or insufficient focus on adoption/readiness. The remaining 52 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, of which 24 were excluded because they were not chatbot-focused, did not relate to hospitality/tourism or justified comparable service contexts, or did not provide relevant evidence on adoption or technological readiness. This resulted in 28 studies being included in the final systematic literature review and thematic synthesis.

The final corpus comprised 28 studies published between 2020 and 2026, with the strongest concentration in 2022 and a broader cluster across 2021 to 2024, indicating that chatbot scholarship in hospitality and tourism expanded rapidly in the early 2020s. Methodologically, the sample was dominated by quantitative survey-based studies and experiments, alongside a smaller number of mixed-method, qualitative interview, bibliometric, and review studies. Geographically, most empirical studies were conducted in Asian and European settings, while the final sample also included

international, multi-country, and global review studies. In publication terms, the studies were distributed across 22 journals, with the greatest concentration in the International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management and the Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, followed by Electronic Markets and the Journal of Business Research. Overall, the final sample reflects a recent, internationally distributed, and methodologically varied evidence base, although direct New Zealand empirical work remains limited.

**Figure 2**

*PRISMA Flow Diagram*



### 3.6 Data Extraction and Coding Process

Following the final screening stage, a structured data extraction process was applied to ensure that evidence from the included studies was recorded consistently and could be synthesised transparently (Page et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003). A standardised extraction template was used to capture descriptive information such as author(s), year, journal, study context, country, and research design, alongside key findings relevant to adoption and technological readiness. This supported systematic comparison across the final set of 28 studies.

After descriptive extraction, the analysis proceeded through an inductive coding process consistent with reflexive thematic analysis and thematic synthesis. Following Braun and Clarke (2006), relevant findings and interpretive statements within each study were read repeatedly to identify recurring meaning units. Initial codes were then assigned to capture patterns linked to chatbot adoption, technological readiness, and the relationship between them. Coding remained iterative throughout the process, meaning that early codes were refined, merged, or clarified as additional studies were reviewed. This allowed the coding framework to evolve from the dataset rather than being imposed in advance.

To maintain clear alignment between the methodology and the findings chapters, coding was organised explicitly around the three research questions. Findings relating to perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, anthropomorphism, service quality, and continuance were grouped under adoption-related categories linked to RQ1. Findings relating to organisational support, technological knowledge, integration, interoperability, governance, escalation, human oversight, and data reliability were grouped under readiness-related categories linked to RQ2. Findings capturing the fit between user-facing adoption conditions and organisational capability were grouped under alignment-related categories linked to RQ3. This step ensured that the coding process remained analytically focused while preserving enough flexibility for themes to emerge across studies.

Following Thomas and Harden (2008), related initial codes were then grouped into broader descriptive categories and refined into higher-order themes. Theme boundaries were reviewed to ensure internal coherence and clear distinction from other themes. Table 1 provides worked examples of this process by showing how extracted study findings were translated into initial codes, descriptive categories, final themes, and linked research questions. The final thematic structure consisted of six themes: Functional and Service-Performance Drivers; Relational and Social-Cognitive Drivers; Service Experience and Post-Adoption Outcomes; Organisational and Technological Readiness; Governance, Human Support, Recovery, and Advanced-System Demands; and Adoption-Readiness Alignment. These themes were then used to structure the findings chapter and to address the three research questions systematically.

**Table 1***Worked Examples of Thematic Coding From Extracted Findings to Themes*

| <b>Extracted study finding / content</b>                                                                                                                                   | <b>Initial codes</b>                                                                          | <b>Descriptive category</b>                         | <b>Theme</b>                                                              | <b>Linked RQ</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit improves perceived usefulness in travel-planning chatbot use.                                                       | task-technology fit; perceived usefulness; satisfaction                                       | functional service conditions                       | Theme 1: Functional and Service-Performance Drivers                       | RQ1              |
| Cai et al. (2022) show that emotional anthropomorphic message cues influence usage intention through trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment.               | anthropomorphism; trustworthiness; perceived intelligence; enjoyment                          | relational and social-cognitive adoption conditions | Theme 2: Relational and Social-Cognitive Drivers                          | RQ1              |
| Li et al. (2021) show that understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity improve satisfaction, continuance intention, and online travel agency chatbot use. | understandability; reliability; assurance; interactivity; satisfaction; continuance intention | service quality and post-adoption evaluation        | Theme 3: Service Experience and Post-Adoption Outcomes                    | RQ1              |
| Ho et al. (2022) show that technological knowledge and perceived cost shape organisational intention to adopt online tourism and hospitality technologies.                 | technological knowledge; perceived cost; organisational capability                            | organisational and technological capability         | Theme 4: Organisational and Technological Readiness                       | RQ2              |
| Xing et al. (2022) show that different chatbot service failures require different recovery strategies and that perceived governance influences willingness to forgive.     | service failure; recovery strategy; perceived governance; forgiveness                         | governance, recovery, and support conditions        | Theme 5: Governance, Human Support, Recovery, and Advanced-System Demands | RQ2              |
| Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that voice assistants and                                                                                                                | customer service improvement; operational capability;                                         | expectation-capability fit                          | Theme 6: Adoption-Readiness Alignment                                     | RQ3              |

| Extracted study finding / content                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Initial codes                                                                     | Descriptive category | Theme | Linked RQ |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------|-----------|
| conversational technologies in hotel environments can improve customer service, expand operational capability, and reduce costs, but their value depends on interoperability, integration, and fit with wider hotel systems and service processes. | interoperability; system integration; hotel service processes; service-system fit |                      |       |           |

### 3.7 Quality Appraisal and Study Credibility

Quality appraisal is an important feature of systematic reviews because it supports the credibility of the resulting synthesis and prevents weak evidence from disproportionately shaping conclusions (Page et al., 2021; Tranfield et al., 2003). The included literature in this review spans multiple research designs, including surveys, experiments, mixed-method studies, and review-based studies. Such methodological diversity complicates the use of a single scoring-based appraisal tool without risking inappropriate comparisons across designs (Gough, 2007; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

Accordingly, this review adopted a structured credibility assessment rather than a numerical scoring approach. First, a baseline quality threshold was implemented through the inclusion criteria by restricting the dataset to peer-reviewed publications and ensuring that each study demonstrated direct relevance to chatbot adoption and/or technological readiness in hospitality, tourism, or justified comparable service contexts (Page et al., 2021). Second, during synthesis, greater analytical weight was given to studies that demonstrated clear methodological transparency, coherent linkage between data and claims, and findings that were conceptually consistent with the study's design and evidence base (Gough, 2007; Tranfield et al., 2003).

This approach reflects the “weight of evidence” logic, in which quality in evidence synthesis is judged not only by methodological rigour, but also by relevance to the review questions and contribution to explanation (Gough, 2007). As a result, studies were not excluded solely because they used different methods. Instead, limitations were considered in interpretation so that the final synthesis remained cautious and appropriately grounded (Page et al., 2021; Thomas & Harden, 2008).

### 3.8 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodological approach used to address the three Research Questions. The dissertation adopted an interpretivist, qualitative secondary research design using a systematic literature review and thematic synthesis. The review process was guided by PRISMA 2020, with explicit procedures for searching, screening, study selection, transferability assessment, data extraction, coding, and quality appraisal. Across the search process, 142 records were identified before duplicate removal, 90 records remained after duplicates were removed, 52 full-text articles were assessed for eligibility, and 28 studies were included in the final review.

The selected studies were analysed through an iterative coding process in which extracted findings were grouped into initial codes, descriptive categories, and six higher-order themes linked to the three Research Questions. The final evidence base was methodologically and geographically diverse, although direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence remained limited. The methodological approach therefore provided a structured basis for synthesising evidence on chatbot adoption, technological readiness, and adoption-readiness alignment. The following chapter presents the findings generated through this thematic synthesis.

**Table 2**

*Systematic Literature Review Articles*

| Study ID | Author(s), Year               | Title                                                                                    | Journal                                                      | Methodology                        | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|----------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1        | Pillai & Sivathanu (2020)     | Adoption of AI-based chatbots for hospitality and tourism.                               | International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management | Mixed methods: interviews + survey | A mixed-method study in Indian hospitality and tourism found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, perceived intelligence, and anthropomorphism significantly increased chatbot adoption intention, whereas attachment to traditional human travel agents reduced actual chatbot use. |
| 2        | Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2021) | “Find a flight for me, Oscar!” Motivational customer experiences with chatbots.          | International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management | Multimethod                        | In an airline chatbot context, competence, autonomy, and relatedness strengthened customer experience, which then improved attitudes toward and satisfaction with the chatbot.                                                                                                                 |
| 3        | Lei et al. (2021)             | A comparison between chatbot and human service: Customer perception and reuse intention. | International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management | Online survey                      | A comparison of chatbot and human instant-messaging service showed that media richness and social presence improved trust and reuse, but                                                                                                                                                       |

| Study ID | Author(s), Year               | Title                                                                                                                     | Journal                                                   | Methodology                                    | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------|-------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                               |                                                                                                                           |                                                           |                                                | customers still evaluated human service more positively in more complex interactions.                                                                                                                                                                   |
| 4        | Melián-González et al. (2021) | Predicting the intentions to use chatbots for travel and tourism.                                                         | Current Issues in Tourism                                 | Survey                                         | A survey of recent travellers found that expected performance, habit, hedonic motivation, social influence, and human-like behaviour increased intention to use chatbots for travel and tourism, whereas communication inconvenience reduced intention. |
| 5        | Li et al. (2021)              | What makes you continuously use chatbot services? Evidence from Chinese online travel agencies.                           | Electronic Markets                                        | Survey                                         | Among Chinese OTA users, understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity strengthened confirmation, which then increased satisfaction and continuance intention toward chatbot services.                                                   |
| 6        | Meng et al. (2023)            | Double-sided messages improve the acceptance of chatbots.                                                                 | Annals of Tourism Research                                | Field experiment + online vignette experiments | Hotel field and vignette experiments showed that, after AI identity disclosure, a double-sided message acknowledging both strengths and limitations increased willingness to communicate with AI chatbots by enhancing perceived authenticity.          |
| 7        | Scarpi (2024)                 | Strangers or friends? Examining chatbot adoption in tourism through psychological ownership.                              | Tourism Management                                        | Survey                                         | A tourism customer survey found that replacing the human component of the relationship with a chatbot reduced psychological ownership, which then weakened commitment and rebooking intention.                                                          |
| 8        | Pham et al. (2024)            | What drives tourists' continuance intention to use ChatGPT for travel services? A stimulus-organism-response perspective. | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services                | Survey                                         | Among tourists using ChatGPT for travel services, perceived warmth, communication speed, and competence increased trust and attitude, which then strengthened satisfaction and continuance intention, while technology anxiety weakened continued use.  |
| 9        | Ho et al. (2022)              | Intention to adopt AI-powered online service among tourism and hospitality companies.                                     | International Journal of Technology and Human Interaction | Survey                                         | A survey of tourism and hospitality firms showed that usefulness, ease of use, attitude, perceived cost, and                                                                                                                                            |

| Study ID | Author(s), Year            | Title                                                                                                                                              | Journal                                       | Methodology                    | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                            |                                                                                                                                                    |                                               |                                | technological knowledge significantly influenced intention to adopt AI-powered online service.                                                                                                                                                           |
| 10       | Dhiman & Jamwal (2022)     | Tourists' post-adoption continuance intentions of chatbots: Integrating task–technology fit model and expectation–confirmation theory.             | Foresight                                     | Survey                         | A travel-planning study found that task–technology fit improved confirmation and perceived usefulness, which then increased satisfaction and continuance intention toward chatbot use.                                                                   |
| 11       | Cai et al. (2022)          | Anthropomorphism and OTA chatbot adoption: A mixed methods study.                                                                                  | Journal of Travel & Tourism Marketing         | Mixed methods                  | A mixed-method OTA study found that emotional anthropomorphic message cues increased usage intention through trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment, whereas simple social-presence cues alone were insufficient.                        |
| 12       | Chi et al. (2022)          | Tourists' attitudes toward the use of artificially intelligent (AI) devices in tourism service delivery: Moderating role of service value seeking. | Journal of Travel Research                    | Survey                         | Across tourism service scenarios, tourists were more willing to accept AI devices in utilitarian than hedonic services, and acceptance was shaped by social influence, anthropomorphism, expectancy, and emotions toward AI service delivery.            |
| 13       | Buhalis & Moldavska (2022) | Voice assistants in hospitality: Using artificial intelligence for customer service.                                                               | Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology | Qualitative interviews         | Interviews with hospitality technology providers and users showed that voice assistants could improve hotel service and operations, but their effectiveness depended on interoperability and integration with wider hotel systems and service processes. |
| 14       | Aransyah et al. (2026)     | Conversational AI in hospitality and tourism: A bibliometric–systematic review.                                                                    | Cogent Business & Management                  | Bibliometric–systematic review | A bibliometric–systematic review showed that conversational AI research in hospitality and tourism has expanded across booking, concierge or guest service, recommendation or personalisation, and service-recovery touchpoints.                         |
| 15       | Alhashmi et al. (2025)     | Two decades of chatbot research in tourism and hospitality:                                                                                        | Sustainable Communities                       | Bibliometric analysis          | A bibliometric analysis of two decades of scholarship showed strong growth in tourism and hospitality chatbot research, with                                                                                                                             |

| Study ID | Author(s), Year        | Title                                                                                                                                     | Journal                                                   | Methodology                     | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                        | Bibliometric analysis and future directions.                                                                                              |                                                           |                                 | dominant themes around customer interaction, operational efficiency, and user experience, but also important research gaps.                                                                                                             |
| 16       | Mozafari et al. (2022) | Trust me, I'm a bot – Repercussions of chatbot disclosure in different service frontline settings.                                        | Journal of Service Management                             | Two experiments                 | Experimental evidence showed that chatbot disclosure reduced trust and retention in highly critical service settings, but disclosure could produce more positive reactions when the chatbot failed to resolve the service issue.        |
| 17       | Song et al. (2022)     | Will artificial intelligence replace human customer service? The impact of communication quality and privacy risks on adoption intention. | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services                | Five scenario-based experiments | Five scenario-based experiments showed that adoption intention depended on communication quality and privacy risk, and that these effects varied according to users' need for human interaction.                                        |
| 18       | Ashfaq et al. (2020)   | I, Chatbot: Modeling the determinants of users' satisfaction and continuance intention of AI-powered service agents.                      | Telematics and Informatics                                | Survey                          | A survey of actual chatbot users found that information quality and service quality increased satisfaction, while usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment supported continuance intention toward AI-powered service agents.              |
| 19       | Zogaj et al. (2023)    | It's a match! The effects of chatbot anthropomorphization and chatbot gender on consumer behavior.                                        | Journal of Business Research                              | Multi-study design              | Multiple studies showed that chatbot anthropomorphization and chatbot gender influenced consumer behaviour through self-congruence and purchase-intention mechanisms.                                                                   |
| 20       | Pizzi et al. (2021)    | Artificial intelligence and the new forms of interaction: Who has the control when interacting with a chatbot?                            | Journal of Business Research                              | Experiment                      | Two experiments showed that non-anthropomorphic digital assistants triggered stronger psychological reactance, while human-like assistants activated by the user reduced reactance and improved perceived performance and satisfaction. |
| 21       | De Cicco et al. (2020) | Millennials' attitude toward chatbots: An experimental study in a social relationship perspective.                                        | International Journal of Retail & Distribution Management | Survey experiment               | A survey experiment with Italian millennials found that a social-oriented interaction style increased perceived social presence, which then improved enjoyment, trust, and positive attitudes toward the chatbot, whereas avatar        |

| Study ID | Author(s), Year            | Title                                                                                                                                             | Journal                                    | Methodology                                     | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------|----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                            |                                                                                                                                                   |                                            |                                                 | presence had no significant effect.                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 22       | Adam et al. (2021)         | AI-based chatbots in customer service and their effects on user compliance.                                                                       | Electronic Markets                         | Randomized online experiment                    | A randomized online experiment found that verbal anthropomorphic design cues and the foot-in-the-door technique increased compliance with chatbot requests, and social presence mediated the anthropomorphism effect.                                         |
| 23       | Fan et al. (2022)          | (Im)balanced customer-oriented behaviors and AI chatbots' efficiency–flexibility performance: The moderating role of customers' rational choices. | Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services | Large-scale dialogue data + experiment + survey | Using large-scale dialogue data and follow-up studies, balanced functional and relational chatbot behaviours improved efficiency–flexibility ambidexterity and customer patronage, with these effects shaped by privacy concern and non-personalization cost. |
| 24       | Xing et al. (2022)         | Effects of different service failure types and recovery strategies on the consumer response mechanism of chatbots.                                | Technology in Society                      | Questionnaire-based study                       | After chatbot service failures, consumers preferred different recovery strategies depending on failure type, and perceived governance influenced willingness to forgive.                                                                                      |
| 25       | Ozuem et al. (2024)        | Exploring the relationship between chatbots, service failure recovery and customer loyalty: A frustration–aggression perspective.                 | Psychology & Marketing                     | Qualitative interviews                          | Qualitative evidence on chatbot-led service-failure recovery showed that frustration and aggression shaped loyalty and future use, while multiple touchpoints, including human support, improved recovery outcomes.                                           |
| 26       | van der Goot et al. (2024) | Understanding users' responses to disclosed vs. undisclosed customer service chatbots: A mixed methods study.                                     | AI & Society                               | Mixed methods: interviews + experiment          | A mixed-method study found that disclosure versus non-disclosure had limited direct effects by itself, while users responded more strongly to the chatbot's willingness to help and friendly tone.                                                            |
| 27       | Gnewuch et al. (2024)      | More than a bot? The impact of disclosing human involvement on customer interactions with hybrid service agents.                                  | Information Systems Research               | Randomized field experiment + online experiment | Field and online experiments showed that disclosing human involvement in hybrid service agents changed customers' communication style and increased employee workload by shifting more requests to human staff.                                               |
| 28       | Orden-Mejía et al. (2025)  | Analysing how AI-powered chatbots                                                                                                                 | PLOS ONE                                   | Survey                                          | A survey of destination chatbot users found that                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

| Study ID | Author(s), Year | Title                            | Journal | Methodology | Key Chatbot-Related Findings                                                                                                                                                                            |
|----------|-----------------|----------------------------------|---------|-------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|          |                 | influence destination decisions. |         |             | information quality improved usefulness, satisfaction, and enjoyment; usefulness and enjoyment increased continuance intention, and continuance intention predicted intention to visit the destination. |

## 4 Findings

This chapter presents the findings of the thematic synthesis. The final corpus of 28 peer-reviewed studies was analysed to identify patterns relevant to chatbot adoption, technological readiness, and adoption-readiness alignment in hospitality and tourism. Six themes were generated. Themes 1 to 3 address Research Question 1 by identifying the main factors influencing chatbot adoption. Themes 4 and 5 identify technological readiness conditions that inform Research Question 2 and are later interpreted in relation to New Zealand hospitality and tourism in Chapter 5. Theme 6 addresses Research Question 3 by examining how adoption factors align with technological readiness conditions in hospitality and tourism.

The evidence base was stronger for customer adoption, service experience, and continuance than for organisational readiness. Most empirical studies examined adoption intention, satisfaction, trust, service quality, or continued use in tourism, hospitality, online travel agency, airline, destination, or comparable service contexts. A smaller group of studies examined organisational adoption, interoperability, disclosure, hybrid service agents, failure recovery, and governance. This means that readiness is treated as an emerging but important theme rather than as a fully settled area of chatbot research.

Across the included studies, chatbot adoption was not presented as a single decision to use a technology. It was shaped by functional value, relational judgement, post-adoption experience, and the organisational capability behind the chatbot interface. The findings therefore show that chatbot adoption and technological readiness should be examined together rather than separately.

### 4.1 Themes

#### 4.1.1 Theme 1: Functional and Service-Performance Drivers

Functional and service-performance drivers were the most consistently reported adoption factors. These include perceived usefulness, ease of use, expected performance, information quality, task-technology fit, efficiency, and convenience. The evidence shows that customers are more likely to adopt chatbots when they believe the chatbot can help them complete a service task quickly, accurately, and with less effort.

Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) provide one of the clearest hospitality and tourism adoption studies. They found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, trust, perceived intelligence, and anthropomorphism influenced chatbot adoption intention. This shows that customers evaluate chatbots not only as

convenient tools, but also as intelligent and trustworthy service agents. However, the same study found that attachment to traditional human travel agents weakened the relationship between adoption intention and actual chatbot use. This suggests that functional value may increase intention, but existing habits and preferences for human service can still limit actual usage.

Melián-González et al. (2021) extend this adoption logic in travel and tourism by showing that expected performance, habit, hedonic motivation, social influence, self-service technology predisposition, and human-like behaviour shaped intention to use chatbots. Their findings show that customers do not only ask whether the chatbot works. They also evaluate whether chatbot use feels familiar, socially acceptable, enjoyable, and suitable for the travel-service context. Communication inconvenience reduced intention, which shows that chatbot adoption weakens when the interaction becomes difficult or frustrating.

Post-adoption studies add an important qualification. Li et al. (2021) found that understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity strengthened confirmation, satisfaction, and continuance intention in online travel agency chatbot use. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) similarly show that task-technology fit improved confirmation and perceived usefulness, which then supported satisfaction and continuance in travel-planning chatbot use. Ashfaq et al. (2020) also found that information quality and service quality influenced satisfaction, while perceived usefulness, ease of use, and enjoyment supported continuance intention. These studies show that functional adoption depends on sustained service quality, not only initial convenience.

The evidence also shows that functional value depends on service context. Chi et al. (2022) found that tourists were more willing to accept AI devices in utilitarian tourism services than in more hedonic hospitality services. Lei et al. (2021) found that users evaluated human service more positively than chatbot service in relation to communication experience, attractiveness, and trust. Fan et al. (2022) further show that chatbot performance improves when functional and relational customer-oriented behaviours are balanced. Together, these findings suggest that chatbots are more acceptable in routine, structured, and information-rich service tasks than in interactions requiring emotional judgement or complex personalisation.

Overall, Theme 1 shows that functional value is a necessary but conditional adoption driver. Chatbots are more likely to be adopted when they provide useful, easy, reliable, and information-rich support for structured tasks. However, functional value weakens where service encounters require complexity, flexibility, emotional judgement, or deeper interpersonal relationship work.

#### 4.1.2 Theme 2: Relational and Social-Cognitive Drivers

Theme 2 shows that chatbot adoption is not only shaped by functional performance. It is also shaped by relational and social-cognitive factors, including trust, privacy risk, communication quality, anthropomorphism, social presence, perceived intelligence, authenticity, disclosure, self-congruence, and perceived control. These factors matter because hospitality and tourism services are often evaluated through warmth, responsiveness, trust, and relationship quality.

Trust was a recurring adoption condition. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) identified perceived trust as a predictor of adoption intention, while Song et al. (2022) show that communication quality and privacy risk influence adoption intention in AI-mediated service encounters. Song et al. (2022) show that customers assess both the quality of chatbot communication and the risks associated with sharing personal or service-related information. In hospitality and tourism, this is especially relevant because chatbot interactions may involve travel preferences, booking details, payment-related information, or service complaints.

Anthropomorphism and social presence also shaped adoption. Cai et al. (2022) found that emotional anthropomorphic message cues influenced online travel agency chatbot usage intention through perceived trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment. However, they also found that simple social presence cues, such as a human avatar or use of the customer's name, were not sufficient by themselves. De Cicco et al. (2020) similarly show that a social-oriented interaction style increased social presence, which then strengthened trust, enjoyment, and attitude toward the chatbot. Adam et al. (2021) also found that verbal anthropomorphic cues increased user compliance through social presence. These studies suggest that human-like design works best when it improves the perceived quality of the interaction, rather than merely making the chatbot appear human.

The evidence also shows risks around human-like design. Pizzi et al. (2021) found that digital assistant appearance and activation affected psychological reactance, perceived choice difficulty, perceived performance, and satisfaction. Zogaj et al. (2023) show that chatbot anthropomorphisation and gender can influence consumer behaviour through perceived self-congruence. Scarpi (2024), however, shows that replacing the human component of tourism customer relationships with a chatbot can reduce psychological ownership, relationship commitment, and rebooking intention. These studies show that relational design can support adoption, but can also create resistance or relationship loss if the chatbot replaces valued human service.

Disclosure and transparency produced different outcomes across the reviewed studies, depending on service criticality, the way disclosure was communicated, and the chatbot's performance. Meng et al. (2023) found that double-sided messages can improve willingness to communicate with AI chatbots

by increasing perceived authenticity after nonhuman identity disclosure. Mozafari et al. (2022), using two experiments, found that chatbot disclosure reduced trust and retention in highly critical service settings, but could produce more positive reactions when the chatbot failed to resolve the service issue. Van der Goot et al. (2024), using interviews and an experiment, found that disclosure versus non-disclosure had limited direct effects, while users responded more strongly to the chatbot's willingness to help and friendly tone. The contrasting findings suggest that the effect of disclosure depends on the conditions surrounding the interaction: in highly critical service settings it may undermine trust, whereas after a service failure it may help users interpret the chatbot's limitations; where the chatbot is helpful and friendly, disclosure itself appears to play a smaller role. These findings show that transparency matters, but its effect depends on context, framing, and service performance.

Overall, Theme 2 shows that relational and social-cognitive factors strongly influence chatbot adoption. Trust, communication quality, privacy risk, anthropomorphism, social presence, authenticity, disclosure, and perceived control all shape customer response. However, relational design is double-edged: it can increase trust and engagement, but it can also raise expectations, privacy concerns, or resistance when chatbot service does not match the human qualities it appears to suggest.

#### **4.1.3 Theme 3: Service Experience and Post-Adoption Outcomes**

Theme 3 shows that chatbot adoption does not end at first use. Several studies examined what happens after customers interact with chatbots, including confirmation, satisfaction, continuance intention, loyalty, rebooking intention, destination visit intention, and service recovery experience. This theme shifts adoption from initial acceptance to service continuity.

Li et al. (2021) provide strong evidence for this theme. Their online travel agency study found that understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity influenced confirmation. Confirmation then strengthened satisfaction, which supported continuance intention. This shows that continued chatbot use depends on whether actual performance confirms user expectations. If users expect accurate and reliable support but receive confusing or incorrect responses, satisfaction and continuance are likely to weaken.

Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) also focus on post-adoption continuance in travel-planning chatbot use. Their study integrates task-technology fit and expectation-confirmation theory. It found that task-technology fit affected confirmation and perceived usefulness, while perceived usefulness and

confirmation influenced satisfaction. Satisfaction then predicted continuance intention. This shows that tourists continue using chatbots when the technology fits their travel-planning tasks and confirms their expectations.

Ashfaq et al. (2020) provide similar evidence in a broader chatbot service context. They found that information quality and service quality positively influenced satisfaction, while perceived enjoyment, perceived usefulness, and ease of use predicted continuance intention. Jiménez-Barreto et al. (2021) extend this into airline chatbot experience by showing that competence, autonomy, and relatedness supported customer experience, which then improved attitude toward and satisfaction with the chatbot. Pham et al. (2024) add evidence from ChatGPT travel services, showing that warmth, communication speed, competence, trust, attitude, satisfaction, and technology anxiety shaped continuance intention.

Post-adoption outcomes also include broader tourism effects. Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) found that destination chatbot information quality improved usefulness, satisfaction, and enjoyment, while continuance intention predicted intention to visit the destination. This suggests that chatbot quality can influence not only technology use but also destination decision-making. However, Scarpi (2024) shows that chatbot-managed tourism relationships can reduce psychological ownership and rebooking intention. Ozuem et al. (2024), using qualitative interviews, examined chatbot-led service-failure recovery and found that frustration and aggression arising from negative chatbot experiences shaped customer loyalty and future chatbot use. Their findings also showed that multiple service touchpoints, including access to human support, improved recovery outcomes. This indicates that negative chatbot experiences can influence post-adoption outcomes such as loyalty and future use, while the availability of human support can help improve service recovery.

Overall, Theme 3 shows that chatbot adoption becomes meaningful only when the service experience confirms user expectations and supports satisfaction, continuance, loyalty, or recovery. The evidence is strongest for satisfaction and continuance, while longer-term outcomes such as loyalty, rebooking intention, and destination visit intention remain more limited and should be interpreted cautiously.

#### **4.1.4 Theme 4: Organisational and Technological Readiness**

Theme 4 identifies organisational and technological readiness conditions that inform Research Question 2. Because direct New Zealand chatbot evidence remains limited, this theme does not measure New Zealand readiness directly. Instead, it identifies readiness conditions from the wider

hospitality, tourism, and comparable service literature that are interpreted in relation to New Zealand in Chapter 5.

Ho et al. (2022) provide direct evidence on organisational adoption. Their study of tourism and hospitality companies found that perceived usefulness, ease of use, attitude, perceived cost, and technological knowledge influenced intention to adopt AI-powered online services. This shows that readiness is not simply willingness to use AI. It also depends on knowledge, resources, and perceived implementation feasibility. Perceived cost is especially important because hospitality and tourism firms may face resource constraints when implementing new digital systems.

Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) add a hospitality-specific system perspective. Their study of voice assistants in hotel environments shows that conversational technologies are connected to smart hospitality, AI, Internet of Things systems, and wider hotel service processes. Their findings indicate that voice assistants can improve customer service, expand operational capability, and reduce costs, but depend on interoperability, integration, and fit with hotel operations. This means that conversational systems are not isolated tools; they need to connect with organisational systems and service workflows.

Readiness also appears indirectly in customer-side studies. Li et al. (2021) show that understandability, reliability, assurance, and interactivity influence confirmation and continuance. These dimensions are experienced by customers, but they depend on organisational ability to maintain accurate information, stable performance, and trustworthy interaction. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit supports satisfaction and continuance, which implies that firms must match chatbot functions to suitable service tasks. Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) similarly show that destination chatbot information quality affects usefulness, satisfaction, enjoyment, continuance, and destination visit intention.

Review-based studies reinforce this readiness pattern. Alhashmi et al. (2025) show that chatbot research in tourism and hospitality has grown around customer interaction, operational efficiency, and user experience. Aransyah et al. (2026) show that conversational AI research now spans booking, concierge or guest service, recommendation, personalisation, and service recovery touchpoints. As chatbot use expands across the customer journey, readiness must also expand from basic technical adoption to service design, data quality, governance, and operational integration.

Overall, Theme 4 shows that organisational and technological readiness includes the capability to understand, adopt, integrate, and support chatbot systems within wider service operations. The evidence for readiness is less extensive than the evidence for customer adoption, but it consistently shows that customer-facing service quality depends on backend capability.

#### **4.1.5 Theme 5: Governance, Human Support, Recovery, and Advanced-System Demands**

Theme 5 extends the readiness discussion by showing that chatbot implementation also requires governance, human support, disclosure management, escalation, and recovery capability. These are readiness conditions because they must be designed before chatbot service is expanded. They shape whether organisations are prepared to manage trust, failure, employee workload, customer expectations, and advanced conversational systems.

Xing et al. (2022) provide important evidence on chatbot service failure and recovery. Their study found that different types of chatbot service failure influenced customers' preferred recovery strategies. After functional failures, consumers were more willing to accept chatbot involvement in recovery. After non-functional failures, consumers preferred human involvement. The study also found that perceived governance influenced willingness to forgive. This shows that recovery readiness requires organisations to decide when chatbot recovery is appropriate and when human support is needed.

Ozuem et al. (2024) add a more emotional and relational view of chatbot-led service recovery. Their qualitative study found that chatbot recovery interactions can shape frustration, aggression, loyalty, and future chatbot use. They also emphasise the value of making more than one touchpoint available, including both human and chatbot options. This shows that service recovery is not only technical. It affects customer emotion and brand relationship.

Human support creates another readiness issue. Gnewuch et al. (2024) examined hybrid service agents involving AI and human employees behind a single interface. Their findings show that disclosing human involvement changed customers' communication style and increased employee workload because more requests were delegated to humans. This shows that human fallback can improve support but also creates staffing and workload consequences.

Disclosure and transparency also form part of governance readiness. Mozafari et al. (2022) show that chatbot disclosure can reduce trust and retention in highly critical service settings, but can become more positive when the chatbot fails to handle the issue. Meng et al. (2023) show that double-sided messages can improve chatbot acceptance after nonhuman identity disclosure by increasing authenticity. Van der Goot et al. (2024) show that helpfulness and friendly tone may matter more than disclosure alone. These studies show that transparency needs careful framing and must be supported by service performance.

Advanced conversational systems create further readiness demands. Pham et al. (2024) show that ChatGPT-supported travel services are shaped by warmth, communication speed, competence, trust, satisfaction, and technology anxiety. More fluent AI may increase customer expectations, but it also increases readiness requirements around accuracy, escalation, service boundaries, and governance.

Overall, Theme 5 shows that readiness involves more than technical implementation. It includes governance, disclosure and expectation management, human support, hybrid service design, recovery capability, and advanced-system control. Chatbot implementation becomes risky when organisations lack clear escalation, recovery, and governance arrangements.

#### **4.1.6 Theme 6: Adoption-Readiness Alignment**

Theme 6 addresses Research Question 3 by bringing together the adoption findings and readiness findings. The adoption-readiness relationships presented in this theme represent an integrative synthesis of evidence across separate studies rather than relationships directly tested within individual studies. The synthesis suggests that outcomes such as usefulness, trust, satisfaction, and continuance may be more sustainable when customer-facing expectations are supported by organisational systems, governance, human support, and recovery capability. This alignment does not imply that every adoption factor has a direct corresponding readiness condition.

The first alignment pattern concerns functional value and system capability. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) and Melián-González et al. (2021) show that customers adopt chatbots when they expect usefulness, ease of use, performance, habit, enjoyment, and human-like behaviour. However, Ho et al. (2022) show that organisational adoption depends on technological knowledge, cost, usefulness, ease of use, and attitude. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that conversational technologies depend on integration and interoperability. Read together, these studies show that customer-perceived usefulness is more sustainable when organisations have the knowledge, systems, and operational capability to support it.

The second alignment pattern concerns information quality and service quality. Li et al. (2021), Dhiman and Jamwal (2022), and Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) show that confirmation, satisfaction, usefulness, enjoyment, continuance, and destination intention depend on reliable, understandable, and task-appropriate chatbot service. These adoption outcomes depend on what customers experience at the interface, and, when considered alongside the readiness evidence, suggest a corresponding need for backend capability. If information is inaccurate, outdated, or disconnected from service systems, then usefulness and satisfaction become difficult to sustain.

The third alignment pattern concerns trust and governance. Song et al. (2022) show that communication quality and privacy risk influence adoption intention. Cai et al. (2022) show that anthropomorphic message cues influence usage intention through trustworthiness, intelligence, and enjoyment. These adoption-side studies show that trust is central to customer response. However, Mozafari et al. (2022), Meng et al. (2023), and Gnewuch et al. (2024) show that trust also depends on disclosure, authenticity, transparency, human involvement, and operational consequences. Taken together, these studies suggest that sustaining trust may depend not only on interface design, but also on governance behind the interface.

The fourth alignment pattern concerns continuance and recovery capability. Li et al. (2021), Dhiman and Jamwal (2022), and Pham et al. (2024) show that continued use depends on satisfaction, usefulness, trust, warmth, competence, and reduced anxiety. Xing et al. (2022) and Ozuem et al. (2024) show that recovery outcomes depend on failure type, perceived governance, human support, frustration, aggression, loyalty, and future chatbot use. Considered together, these findings suggest that effective organisational recovery capability may help support continued adoption following service breakdowns.

**Figure 3**

*Adoption-Readiness Alignment Framework for Chatbot Use in Hospitality and Tourism*

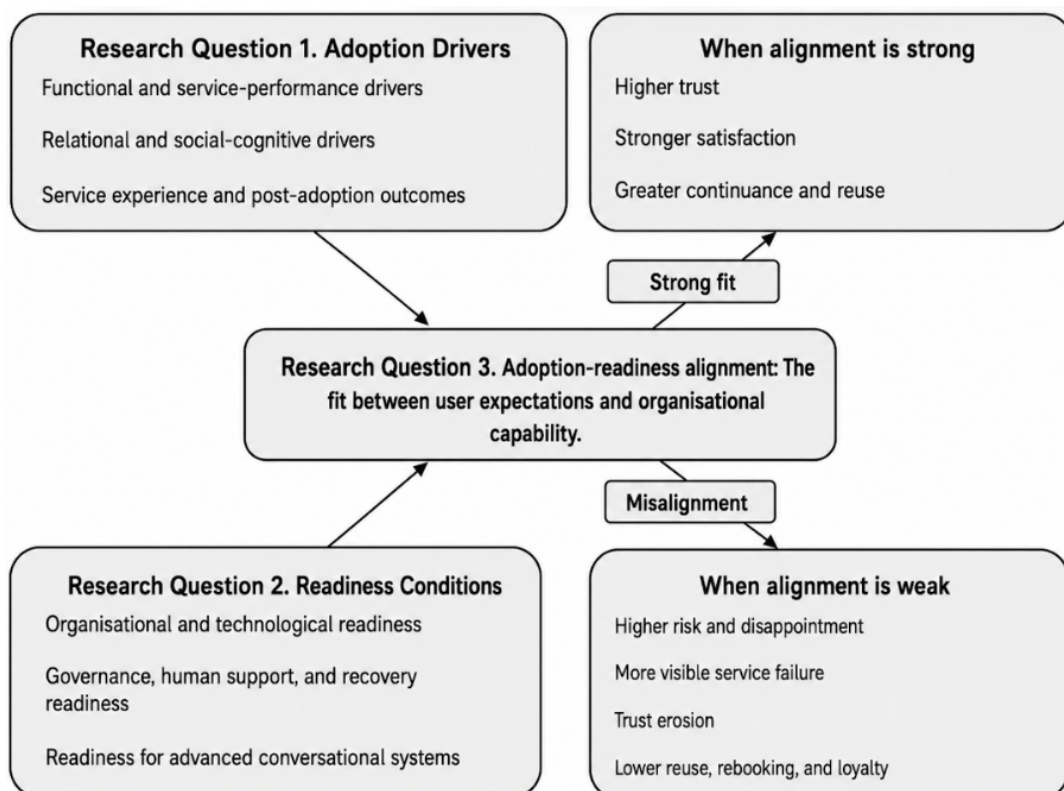


Figure 3 summarises the central relationship developed in Theme 6 by showing how the adoption drivers identified under RQ1 and the readiness conditions identified under RQ2 are brought together through an integrative synthesis. These relationships were developed by comparing evidence across separate adoption-side and readiness-side studies rather than being directly tested within a single study. When the alignment is weak, chatbot service may create disappointment, visible service failure, trust erosion, and lower reuse or rebooking. The figure therefore represents a conceptual synthesis suggesting that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism may be more stable when user expectations are matched by organisational capability.

Overall, Theme 6 suggests that chatbot adoption may be more sustainable where user expectations and organisational capability are aligned. Functional drivers can be interpreted alongside system integration and information quality; relational drivers alongside governance, transparency, and human support; and post-adoption outcomes alongside service quality and recovery design. These relationships are integrative rather than directly established within individual studies, as they were developed by comparing evidence from adoption-side and readiness-side research.

## 4.2 Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the thematic findings generated from the 28 studies included in the systematic literature review. The findings show that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism is not determined by one factor alone. Instead, adoption is shaped by the interaction between functional service value, relational and social-cognitive judgements, post-adoption experience, and the organisational conditions that support chatbot service delivery.

In relation to Research Question 1, the findings show that customers are more likely to adopt and continue using chatbots when they perceive them as useful, easy to use, reliable, trustworthy, and appropriate for the service task. Functional and service-performance factors are therefore important, but they are not sufficient by themselves. Trust, privacy risk, anthropomorphism, communication quality, disclosure, and perceived competence also shape how customers evaluate chatbot interactions. The findings further show that chatbot adoption is not limited to initial use. Satisfaction, confirmation, continuance intention, loyalty, rebooking intention, destination visit intention, and recovery experience all influence whether chatbot use is sustained over time.

In relation to Research Question 2, the findings show that technological readiness depends on more than access to chatbot technology. Readiness is linked to organisational capability, technological

knowledge, system integration, interoperability, data reliability, governance, human support, disclosure management, and recovery processes. These conditions are especially important because weak organisational support can make chatbot limitations more visible to customers, particularly when service tasks become complex or when chatbot failure occurs.

In relation to Research Question 3, the synthesis suggests that adoption drivers and readiness conditions can be interpreted as aligning when customer-facing expectations are supported by organisational capability. Functional adoption drivers can be considered alongside information quality and system integration; relational drivers alongside governance, transparency, privacy protection, and human support; and post-adoption outcomes alongside service quality, escalation, and recovery design. These relationships represent an integrative synthesis across separate adoption-side and readiness-side studies rather than relationships directly tested within individual studies. Overall, the findings suggest that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism can be understood through an adoption-readiness perspective that considers both customer expectations and the organisational capability required to support them. This provides the basis for Chapter 5, which discusses the meaning of these findings and interprets their implications for New Zealand hospitality and tourism.

## 5 Discussion and Implications

This chapter discusses the findings presented in Chapter 4 in relation to the three research questions. Chapter 4 reported the thematic findings from the systematic literature review. This chapter interprets those findings by explaining what they mean for chatbot adoption, technological readiness, adoption-readiness alignment, and the New Zealand hospitality and tourism context. The chapter then outlines theoretical implications, practical implications, limitations and future research, and the final conclusion.

The central argument is that chatbot adoption and technological readiness should not be treated as separate issues. Adoption studies explain why customers may accept, trust, use, or continue using chatbots. Readiness studies explain whether organisations have the systems, resources, governance, human support, and recovery capability required to support chatbot service in practice. Because direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence remains limited, the New Zealand discussion is presented as contextual interpretation rather than empirical measurement.

### 5.1 Discussion of Chatbot Adoption Factors (Research Question 1)

In response to Research Question 1, the findings show that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism is shaped by functional, relational, and post-adoption factors. This supports existing chatbot adoption literature by confirming that usefulness, ease of use, trust, service quality, and satisfaction remain important adoption conditions. However, the synthesis also extends that literature by showing that these factors are not sufficient when examined separately. In hospitality and tourism, chatbot adoption is not only a technology acceptance issue. It is also a service encounter issue shaped by task fit, relationship quality, transparency, and recovery capability.

The findings support technology acceptance-based studies by confirming the importance of practical service value. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) and Melián-González et al. (2021) show that customers are more likely to adopt chatbots when they perceive them as useful, easy to use, efficient, and suitable for travel and tourism service tasks. This is consistent with models that emphasise perceived usefulness, effort, and performance expectations. However, the findings also show that hospitality and tourism customers judge more than technical convenience. They evaluate whether the chatbot fits the service situation and whether it can support the level of responsiveness expected in travel and hospitality encounters.

The task-fit evidence qualifies broad claims about chatbot adoption. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit supports confirmation, usefulness, satisfaction, and continuance in travel-

planning chatbot use. Lei et al. (2021) and Chi et al. (2022) show that customers may still prefer human service where interactions are more complex, hedonic, or relationship-sensitive. This means that chatbots are more appropriate for structured, routine, and information-rich tasks than for encounters requiring empathy, judgement, flexibility, or emotional reassurance. Therefore, the dissertation extends existing adoption literature by arguing that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism is conditional on service-task suitability.

The findings also support relational and social-cognitive chatbot literature. Song et al. (2022) show that communication quality and privacy risk shape adoption intention, while Cai et al. (2022) show that anthropomorphic message cues influence usage intention through trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment. These studies confirm that customers evaluate chatbots as communicative service agents, not only as technical tools. In hospitality and tourism, this matters because interactions may involve uncertainty, personal information, travel preferences, payments, and time-sensitive decisions.

At the same time, the findings differ from simple assumptions that more human-like chatbot design is always beneficial. Anthropomorphism and social presence can increase trust and engagement, but they can also create expectations that the chatbot may not meet. Scarpi (2024) shows that replacing the human component of tourism relationships with chatbots can reduce psychological ownership, weaken relationship commitment, and lower rebooking intention. This suggests that human-like design supports adoption only when it remains credible and does not undermine relationship value.

The post-adoption evidence further extends the literature by shifting attention from initial acceptance to continued use. Li et al. (2021), Ashfaq et al. (2020), Dhiman and Jamwal (2022), and Pham et al. (2024) show that confirmation, satisfaction, usefulness, service quality, trust, competence, warmth, and technology anxiety affect continuance. These findings show that chatbot adoption does not end when a customer first uses the system. Continued use depends on whether the service encounter confirms expectations and remains useful over time.

Overall, the answer to Research Question 1 is that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism is shaped by the interaction between functional value, relational assurance, and post-adoption experience. The findings support existing adoption literature by confirming the importance of usefulness, ease of use, trust, service quality, satisfaction, and continuance. They extend that literature by showing that these factors are conditional on service-task fit, relationship quality, transparency, and recovery capability.

## 5.2 Interpreting Technological Readiness for New Zealand (Research Question 2)

In response to Research Question 2, the findings suggest that technological readiness for chatbot adoption in New Zealand hospitality and tourism should be interpreted as practical organisational capability rather than as the simple availability of chatbot software. The readiness conditions identified in the literature include technological knowledge, perceived cost, system integration, interoperability, information quality, governance, human support, disclosure management, and recovery capability. These are not direct measurements of New Zealand chatbot readiness. They are wider readiness conditions that can be cautiously interpreted in relation to the New Zealand context.

The evidence supporting this interpretation comes from two different sources and should be distinguished accordingly. Chatbot-specific readiness conditions are derived primarily from international hospitality, tourism, and comparable service studies, whereas the New Zealand evidence discussed in this dissertation concerns broader artificial intelligence adoption, digitalisation, technology-mediated service, and workforce capability rather than direct chatbot implementation. Applying these broader New Zealand findings to chatbot readiness therefore represents a contextual interpretation rather than direct empirical evidence of chatbot readiness in New Zealand hospitality and tourism.

The findings support international readiness literature by showing that organisational capability matters. Ho et al. (2022) show that technological knowledge, perceived cost, usefulness, ease of use, and attitude influence organisational intention to adopt AI-powered online service in tourism and hospitality. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that conversational technologies in hotel environments depend on interoperability, integration, and connection with wider hotel systems and service processes. These findings extend customer-facing adoption research by showing that chatbot value depends on what happens behind the interface. A chatbot cannot deliver reliable service if the organisation lacks current information, connected systems, staff knowledge, and operational procedures.

The New Zealand interpretation should therefore be read as contextual rather than empirical. This dissertation does not collect primary data from New Zealand hospitality and tourism organisations, so it cannot claim that New Zealand firms are ready or unready for chatbot adoption. Instead, it identifies conditions through which readiness should be assessed. In the New Zealand context, the evidence discussed in Chapter 2 suggests that AI use is emerging but uneven, and that training, managerial support, workforce capability, and digital confidence remain important. This means that readiness should be understood through staff capability, managerial support, system integration, reliable information, governance, and human fallback.

The findings also extend readiness literature by connecting chatbot implementation with relationship-based service. Hemmington and Neill (2022) show that technology-mediated innovation in New Zealand hospitality became linked to adaptation, continuity, and business responsiveness during the COVID-19 period. Erickson (2023) shows that digital intermediaries in Auckland restaurant settings helped generate trade but could also shift customer loyalty toward platforms rather than the business. These studies are not direct chatbot studies, but they help interpret the service environment in which chatbot adoption would occur. They suggest that readiness in New Zealand should include relationship protection and control over customer experience, not only technical deployment.

Digital information behaviour also supports this cautious interpretation. Liu and Chong (2023) show that digital communication channels influence information search and purchase intention in New Zealand adventure tourism. This suggests that tourists already engage with digital channels when making travel decisions. However, it does not prove that chatbot adoption will automatically succeed. It only suggests that chatbots may fit existing digital information behaviours if they provide accurate, timely, useful, and trustworthy information.

Overall, Research Question 2 is answered cautiously. Technological readiness for chatbot adoption in New Zealand hospitality and tourism should be interpreted through practical organisational capability. The key readiness conditions are staff capability, managerial support, system integration, reliable information, governance, human fallback, recovery design, and relationship protection. These findings do not show that New Zealand firms are ready or unready for chatbot adoption. They show what readiness would need to involve if chatbot implementation is to support service quality, customer trust, staff confidence, and relationship value.

### **5.3 Alignment Between Adoption Drivers and Technological Readiness (Research Question 3)**

In response to Research Question 3, the synthesis suggests that adoption factors and readiness conditions can be interpreted as aligning when customer-facing expectations are supported by organisational capability behind the chatbot interface. This is the central synthesis of the dissertation. Many chatbot studies focus either on customer adoption or technological implementation, but fewer consider how these two areas may relate to one another. The relationships presented here were developed by comparing separate adoption-side and readiness-side studies rather than being directly tested within individual studies. The alignment perspective extends the existing literature by showing that adoption factors such as usefulness, trust, satisfaction, and continuance may be more sustainable

when they are considered alongside readiness conditions such as information quality, system integration, governance, human support, escalation, and recovery design.

As shown in Figure 3, adoption drivers and readiness conditions are brought together conceptually through adoption-readiness alignment. Strong alignment is more likely to produce trust, satisfaction, continuance, reuse, loyalty, and positive service outcomes. Weak alignment is more likely to create visible failure, disappointment, trust erosion, and lower reuse or rebooking. The figure therefore represents a conceptual synthesis rather than a directly tested causal model, suggesting that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism can be understood not only a customer acceptance issue, but a socio-technical service outcome.

Functional value aligns with system capability. Customers may adopt chatbots because they expect usefulness, speed, convenience, and easy access to information. However, when these adoption findings are considered alongside the readiness evidence, such expectations may be more sustainable where the organisation has accurate data, reliable systems, appropriate task allocation, and integration with booking or service processes. This integrative interpretation extends adoption literature by showing that perceived usefulness is not only a customer belief but may also depend on organisational delivery capability. It is also an organisational delivery condition. If a chatbot promises convenience but gives inaccurate information or cannot complete the service task, the functional value that encouraged adoption becomes unstable.

Trust aligns with governance. Customers are more likely to use chatbots when they perceive the interaction as trustworthy, safe, communicatively competent, and transparent. However, trust does not come only from the chatbot's language, tone, or human-like design. It also depends on organisational decisions about disclosure, privacy, escalation, and human support. Mozafari et al. (2022), Meng et al. (2023), and Gnewuch et al. (2024) show that disclosure and human involvement can affect trust, authenticity, communication style, and employee workload. Considered together with the adoption evidence, these findings suggest that sustaining trust may involve organisational decisions about disclosure, privacy, escalation, and human support as well as interface design.

Satisfaction and continuance align with recovery capability. Studies on continuance show that satisfaction, usefulness, confirmation, competence, warmth, and trust support continued chatbot use. However, these outcomes are vulnerable when chatbot service fails. Xing et al. (2022) and Ozuem et al. (2024) show that failure type, recovery strategy, perceived governance, frustration, loyalty, and future use are connected. This means that post-adoption outcomes depend partly on whether the organisation can repair the service encounter when the chatbot performs poorly.

Expectation management is also central to adoption-readiness alignment. Human-like or advanced conversational systems can increase adoption because they appear more intelligent, warm, or capable. However, stronger apparent capability can also create stronger expectations. If the organisation cannot support the level of service implied by the chatbot's design, a mismatch between customer expectations and organisational capability may occur. This is especially relevant for LLM-enabled systems because fluent responses may create confidence even when accuracy, service boundaries, and escalation are not fully controlled. The findings therefore suggest that advanced conversational ability may increase the need for organisational readiness rather than replacing it.

The answer to Research Question 3 is that the synthesis identifies potential alignment between what customers expect and what organisations can reliably deliver. Usefulness can be interpreted alongside information quality and system integration. Trust can be interpreted alongside governance, disclosure, privacy protection, and human support. Satisfaction and continuance can be interpreted alongside service reliability, task fit, and recovery capability. The contribution of this dissertation is therefore to propose an integrative adoption-readiness perspective based on relationships identified across separate bodies of evidence, rather than to claim that these relationships have been directly established within individual studies.

## 5.4 Theoretical Implications

The main theoretical contribution of this dissertation is the adoption-readiness alignment perspective. Existing chatbot adoption studies often explain customer acceptance through factors such as usefulness, ease of use, trust, anthropomorphism, satisfaction, and continuance. The synthesis suggests that customer-facing adoption drivers may be more sustainable when organisations also possess the readiness conditions required to support them, including system integration, information quality, governance, human support, and recovery capability. The adoption-readiness perspective therefore integrates two bodies of literature that are often examined separately rather than proposing a directly tested causal model.

The findings are consistent with existing technology adoption research in confirming that usefulness, ease of use, performance expectancy, social influence, and habit remain important in hospitality and tourism chatbot adoption. Pillai and Sivathanu (2020) found that perceived usefulness and ease of use contributed to chatbot adoption intention, while Melián-González et al. (2021) identified performance expectancy, habit, social influence, and other acceptance-related factors as important influences on intention to use travel chatbots. These similarities support the continuing relevance of technology acceptance perspectives in explaining initial chatbot adoption. However, the synthesis also indicates

that these theories provide only part of the explanation because hospitality and tourism adoption depends on the nature of the service encounter as well as the characteristics of the technology.

This qualification becomes clearer when studies are compared across different service contexts. Dhiman and Jamwal (2022) show that task-technology fit supports usefulness, satisfaction, and continuance in travel-planning chatbot use. In contrast, Lei et al. (2021) found more positive evaluations of human service than chatbot service in relation to communication experience, attractiveness, and trust, while Chi et al. (2022) found greater acceptance of artificial intelligence devices in utilitarian tourism services than in more hedonic hospitality settings. These findings do not necessarily contradict technology acceptance theory, but they show that the effects of perceived usefulness and ease of use are conditional on service-task suitability and the relational demands of the encounter. Adoption theory in hospitality and tourism therefore needs to account for contextual differences between structured, information-oriented tasks and interactions requiring greater emotional, experiential, or interpersonal value.

The relational evidence also reveals an important tension in previous research. Studies such as Cai et al. (2022) show that anthropomorphic message cues can support usage intention through trustworthiness, perceived intelligence, and enjoyment. However, Scarpi (2024) found that replacing the human component of tourism relationships with chatbot interaction could reduce psychological ownership, relationship commitment, and rebooking intention. Taken together, these findings qualify the assumption that greater human-likeness or stronger social characteristics will consistently improve adoption. Human-like design may support adoption when it strengthens interaction quality, but its benefits appear to depend on whether the technology can meet the relational expectations that its design creates.

The post-adoption evidence further extends traditional acceptance perspectives. Li et al. (2021), Ashfaq et al. (2020), Dhiman and Jamwal (2022), and Pham et al. (2024) show that confirmation, satisfaction, usefulness, service quality, trust, competence, warmth, and technology anxiety influence continued chatbot use. This differs from theoretical approaches that concentrate primarily on behavioural intention at the point of initial acceptance. The evidence suggests that chatbot adoption should instead be understood as an ongoing service process in which initial expectations are repeatedly evaluated through actual service experience. Technology Acceptance Model and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology perspectives can therefore explain important aspects of initial acceptance, while expectation-confirmation, task-fit, and continuance perspectives provide additional explanation of whether chatbot use is sustained.

The findings also suggest that readiness should be treated as an enabling condition for adoption outcomes. Ho et al. (2022) show that organisational AI adoption depends partly on technological

knowledge and perceived cost, while Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) show that conversational technologies in hospitality depend on integration and interoperability. These organisational findings operate at a different level from customer-focused adoption studies. When considered together, they suggest that customer perceptions of usefulness or service quality may depend partly on organisational capabilities that are not normally represented in individual-level acceptance models. This does not replace adoption theory, but it indicates that adoption theory should be connected more clearly with organisational readiness and service capability.

The findings further suggest that chatbot theory should not focus only on positive adoption drivers. The literature on disclosure, failure, recovery, and hybrid service design shows that chatbot implementation can create disappointment, relationship damage, or operational strain when organisations lack governance or human support. For example, disclosure produced different outcomes across Mozafari et al. (2022), Meng et al. (2023), and van der Goot et al. (2024), indicating that transparency does not operate as a universally positive or negative adoption factor but depends on service criticality, framing, and chatbot performance. Similarly, service-failure and hybrid-service studies show that human support and recovery capability become particularly important when the chatbot cannot meet customer expectations. These contextual differences reinforce the need to connect customer adoption theory with governance and organisational service capability.

The theoretical contribution of this dissertation is therefore integrative rather than predictive. It supports established adoption theories by confirming the importance of usefulness, ease of use, trust, satisfaction, and continuance; qualifies them by showing that these relationships vary according to task, service context, and relational demands; and extends them by linking customer-facing adoption outcomes with organisational readiness conditions. The adoption-readiness perspective consequently provides a framework for interpreting how these separate bodies of evidence may fit together in hospitality and tourism, while recognising that the proposed relationships require direct empirical testing in future research.

## **5.5 Practical Implications for New Zealand Hospitality and Tourism**

For New Zealand hospitality and tourism operators, the findings suggest that chatbot implementation should be staged, governed, and service-led. These implications are indicative rather than definitive because they are derived from synthesised literature and interpreted in relation to New Zealand, not tested through primary fieldwork. The practical value of the findings lies in identifying conditions that managers should consider before expanding chatbot use.

New Zealand hospitality and tourism firms should begin with bounded and routine use cases. Chatbots are most suitable for structured tasks such as frequently asked questions, opening hours, booking support, simple itinerary information, basic destination enquiries, and routine service updates. These tasks fit chatbot strengths because they are information-rich, repeatable, and less emotionally complex. This recommendation is supported by Dhiman and Jamwal (2022), who show the importance of task-technology fit, while Chi et al. (2022) found greater acceptance of artificial intelligence devices in utilitarian tourism services than in more hedonic hospitality settings. Lei et al. (2021) also found more positive evaluations of human service than chatbot service for communication experience, attractiveness, and trust. Sensitive tasks, such as complaints, disrupted travel, accessibility needs, or complex itinerary problems, should therefore not be fully automated without human support.

Information quality should be addressed before firms focus on chatbot personality or interface design. A friendly or human-like chatbot will not create value if the information it provides is inaccurate, outdated, or disconnected from actual service operations. Li et al. (2021) show that understandability and reliability support confirmation and continuance, while Orden-Mejía et al. (2025) link information quality with usefulness, satisfaction, enjoyment, and continuance. Buhalis and Moldavska (2022) further demonstrate the importance of integration and interoperability in hospitality conversational technologies. New Zealand operators should therefore ensure that chatbot responses are linked to current service information, booking rules, pricing, availability, cancellation policies, accessibility information, and destination updates.

Chatbot implementation should also include staff training, managerial support, and human fallback. Frontline employees need to understand what the chatbot can and cannot do, how to handle escalation, and how to respond when customers refer to chatbot advice. Xing et al. (2022) found that customers' preferred recovery approach differed according to the type of chatbot failure, with human involvement becoming particularly important for non-functional failures. Ozuem et al. (2024) also emphasise the value of providing multiple service touchpoints, including human and chatbot support. However, Gnewuch et al. (2024) show that greater human involvement can increase employee workload, indicating that human fallback must also be supported by appropriate staffing and operational planning. Managers therefore need to decide who maintains chatbot content, who monitors failures, and who manages escalated interactions. Clear escalation pathways can reduce frustration and help protect customer relationships when problems become complex or emotionally sensitive.

Advanced conversational systems should be used cautiously. Pham et al. (2024) show that ChatGPT-supported travel services are influenced by factors including warmth, communication speed, competence, trust, satisfaction, and technology anxiety, indicating that more advanced conversational

ability does not remove the need for careful service design. Operators should monitor chatbot responses, define service boundaries, and ensure that human escalation remains available where necessary. Disclosure also requires careful management because Mozafari et al. (2022), Meng et al. (2023), and van der Goot et al. (2024) show that the effects of chatbot disclosure vary according to service context, framing, helpfulness, and performance. Disclosure policies should therefore be designed alongside service quality and governance rather than treated as an isolated transparency measure.

Overall, chatbot adoption should be selective and readiness-based. New Zealand firms should ask not only whether a chatbot can be introduced, but whether the organisation can support it with accurate information, trained staff, managerial oversight, governance, human fallback, and service recovery processes. These recommendations reflect the review findings on task fit, information quality, organisational capability, governance, human support, and recovery rather than direct evidence that all New Zealand hospitality and tourism organisations currently require the same implementation approach.

## **5.6 Limitations and Future Research**

The main limitation of this dissertation is that it is based on secondary research. The study synthesises existing literature but does not collect primary data from New Zealand hospitality and tourism organisations. Therefore, the New Zealand contribution is interpretive rather than empirical. This limitation is important because readiness conditions such as staff capability, managerial support, system integration, information quality, governance, and recovery design may differ across hotels, restaurants, destinations, online travel agencies, small tourism operators, and larger tourism firms. Future research should collect primary data from New Zealand hospitality and tourism managers, frontline employees, technology providers, and customers to examine how chatbot readiness is experienced in practice.

Another limitation is the limited amount of direct New Zealand-specific chatbot evidence. The dissertation uses New Zealand hospitality, tourism, and technology-related studies to interpret readiness conditions, but these studies are not direct empirical studies of chatbot implementation in New Zealand hospitality and tourism. Future research should therefore examine chatbot use directly in New Zealand settings. Case studies of hotels, restaurants, tourism operators, destinations, or online booking services could provide deeper insight into how chatbot systems are adopted, governed, and supported in local service environments.

The size and composition of the systematic literature review corpus also create limitations. The final corpus included 28 peer-reviewed studies, which is sufficient for thematic synthesis but still limited in a fast-developing research area. Chatbot research is changing quickly, especially with the rise of generative AI and LLM-enabled systems. Studies published only a few years ago may not fully capture the capabilities, risks, and governance demands of current conversational AI tools. Future reviews could expand the corpus as more studies become available and compare earlier chatbot research with newer studies on ChatGPT and other advanced conversational systems.

The included studies also differed in method, context, and measurement. Some focused on adoption intention, while others examined continuance, satisfaction, anthropomorphism, disclosure, service quality, failure recovery, hybrid service agents, or organisational adoption. This diversity was useful for thematic synthesis because it allowed the dissertation to identify broad adoption and readiness patterns. However, it also means that the findings cannot be treated as statistically equivalent or directly comparable across all studies. Future research could develop and test a more standardised chatbot readiness framework across hospitality and tourism subsectors.

Future research should also examine employee-side readiness and chatbot service recovery in more depth. Many chatbot adoption studies focus on customers, but readiness also depends on staff capability, workload, trust in AI systems, and willingness to work alongside chatbot tools. Further research should also investigate when human escalation is needed, which recovery strategies work best after chatbot failure, and how firms can protect relationship quality while using automation.

## 5.7 Conclusion

This dissertation set out to systematically synthesise literature on chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism and to interpret technological readiness conditions in relation to New Zealand. The findings show that chatbot adoption is shaped by functional, relational, and post-adoption factors. Customers are more likely to adopt chatbots when they perceive them as useful, trustworthy, communicatively competent, and capable of supporting a satisfactory service experience. However, adoption is conditional on service-task fit and is weaker where service encounters require complex judgement, emotional reassurance, or strong human relationship work.

The dissertation also shows that technological readiness is essential for sustainable chatbot implementation. Readiness includes organisational capability, technological knowledge, system integration, information quality, governance, human support, and recovery processes. In the New

Zealand context, these conditions should be interpreted through practical organisational capability rather than technology availability alone.

The central conclusion is that chatbot adoption in hospitality and tourism should be understood as an adoption-readiness alignment issue. Chatbots are more likely to support sustainable service outcomes when customer expectations of usefulness, trust, satisfaction, and service quality are matched by organisational capability, system integration, governance, human support, and recovery design. For New Zealand hospitality and tourism, the implication is cautious but important: chatbot readiness should not be judged by whether chatbot technology is available, but by whether organisations can implement it in ways that protect customer trust, service quality, staff capability, and relationship value.

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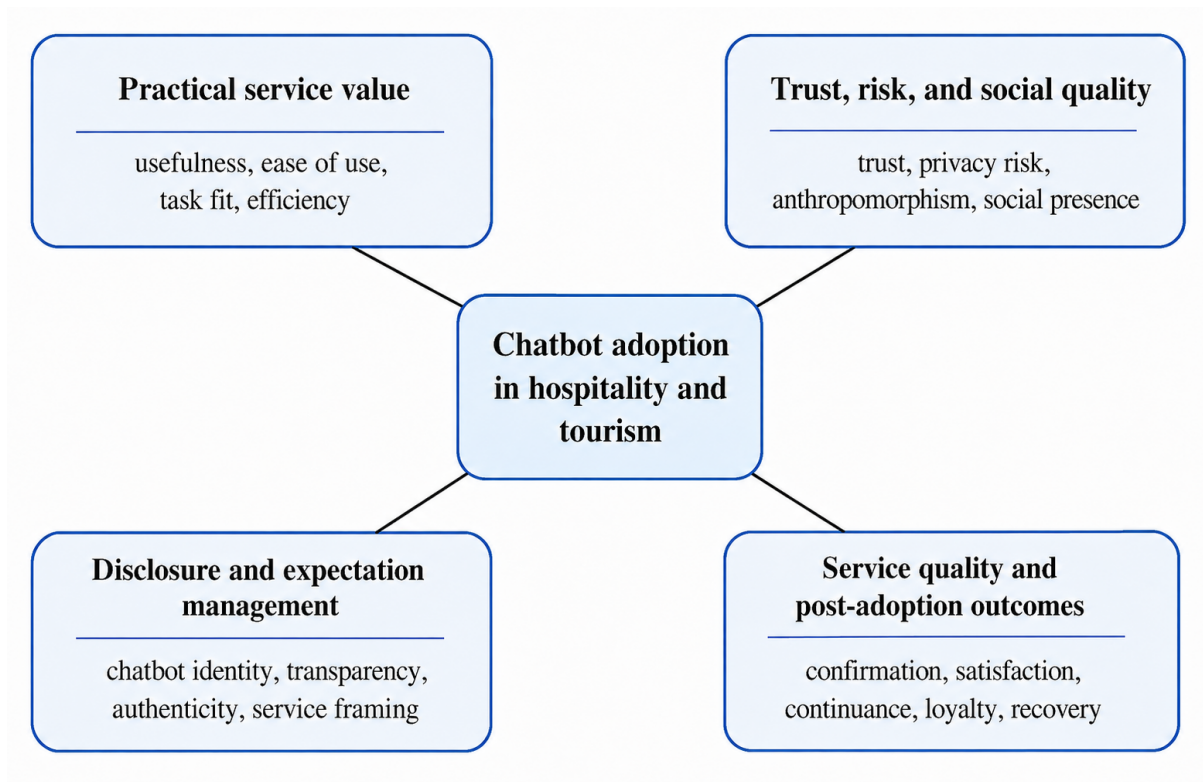
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## Appendix A

**Figure 1. Four Adoption Patterns in Chatbot Adoption Literature in Hospitality and Tourism**

## Appendix B

**Figure 3. Adoption-Readiness Alignment Framework for Chatbot Use in Hospitality and Tourism**

